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**30 years of peace?**

As the school year begins, it is often an opportunity to review and re-emphasize the values embedded in your school’s culture. The Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter Church Meeting offer these resources to encourage you to keep striving for the peaceful society that Christ calls us towards. These resources are part of our Good Relations Week (16-22nd September) culminating in an event on 19th September at the University of Ulster, York Street, Belfast at 7.30 pm where there will be a reception followed by a panel discussion reflecting on the 30-year journey after the ceasefires. We hope that some representatives from your school will join us at this event.

**Why this resource?**

It is important to acknowledge milestones in the story of peace in order to reflect on what has been achieved and what lessons we need to keep learning.

On 31st August 1994 the IRA announced their ceasefire. This was closely followed by the combined loyalist military command announcing their ceasefire on 13th October 1994. Whilst complete cessation of violence was not thoroughly achieved through these ceasefires, nonetheless it is important to reflect on the journey that Northern Ireland has been on and how our society might continue to model reconciliation. History should not become detached from current experience but rather serve to help determine better outcomes. Over the Summer there have been a number of violent protests on our streets, serving as a sharp reminder of the ongoing work in envisioning a peaceful society that benefits all residents.

30 years on from the ceasefires, we encourage you to think of ways to utilize this school assembly resource and the single lesson teaching plan to encourage your school community to reflect on the different threads that make up a peaceful future.

**What is in this resource?**

This pack contains:

* a single lesson plan that looks at the ceasefire 30 years ago and encourages students to understand how people make decisions to enter into paramilitary/criminal activity and the factors that could help shape a better future. By humanizing the past and imagining the future, students are invited to consider.
* a pack of 30 hexagons to do the exercise at the end of the single lesson plan.
* a school assembly with accompanying PowerPoint slides

**Who is this resource for?**

The lessons were prepared for KS3 students in either an English or Religious Education class.

**What do we hope for in terms of outcome?**

* In the short term, we hope that this will be an opportunity for discussion, reflection and decision making about what might contribute to violence on our streets in light of the past 30 years and what are some of the pathways out of violence.
* In the medium term, we hope that some representatives from your school will be able to join us at the panel discussion on 19th September at 7.30 pm in the University of Ulster
* In the longer term, we hope that by participating in either the lesson plan or the school assembly, it will transform understanding to enable students to engage in positive decision making as well as be part of a wider network of support that works together for peace.