

## Picturing Peace

### Finding Peace in the Pandemic

To understand Picturing Peace, and to gain some inspiration for this week's activities, watch the slide show of photographs by clicking [here](#).

While Picturing Peace has always emphasized peace, these are unusual times. Today there is an Invisible Enemy that is a great disruptor of personal and community peace. The photographs we take now can act as shields against the Covid-19 virus, capturing within a picture's frame our fears and anxieties, but also showing images of strength and determination.

As we confront the latest assault on our feelings of peace, the coronavirus pandemic, the Picturing Peace method of using language and photography can help cope with the worries all of us have. Search your emotions to express through photographs how you feel about this daily threat. What is your approach to fighting the enemy? Exercise your imagination to create photographs and short narratives that help you—and everyone—overcome this disruption to our peace of mind.

#### Start by exploring these questions:

Why is peace important?

Where is it important to have peace?

Can I contribute to peace?

#### Words often associated with peace include these:

Calm/Tranquility

Harmony

Sharing

Caring

Happiness

Spirituality

Empathy

Love/Affection

Unity

Friendship

Order

Giving

Serenity

Do you agree with these words? Would you add any?

## Daily Photo Prompts

Here are some ideas for photos that you can take to capture yourself and the community around you during the pandemic. Add a caption or explanation to your images. If you have other ideas, feel free to take photos or write about those instead.

Send your submissions to [heather@mattmuseum.org](mailto:heather@mattmuseum.org). Be sure to share all your photos on social media and tag the Museum by using the hashtag **#picturingpeace**.

### Day 1: An Oasis of Calm

The first word on the peace list is “Calm”. It’s the opposite of stress. We are in a stressful time right now. Can you imagine a photograph that captures an Oasis of Calm? Use the art of photography to convey your thoughts and feelings.

Photograph a place or person or take a selfie that captures your feelings of calm and well-being. Write a few lines to go with your photo. What does your photograph say to you and who/what is in it? Why did you choose to share these thoughts or feelings? Your photo might capture other peace words—what are they? Your explanation will help us experience and empathize with some of the same positive emotions as you.

#### *Sample response*

The reason I chose this photograph is because it makes me feel relaxed, and releases all of my anger. Such as when I’m in my own world, where it is bright, quiet, and nothing is disturbed, everything is untouched, no noise, or destruction. This photograph feels like a gateway to heaven, where I can ignore all the bad things and everything that’s wrong in my life and things that make me scared. **#picturingpeace**



## Day 2: Finding Balance

Try your hand at an exercise of patience and balance by creating a cairn, a structure made by stacking stones. If you can't find stones, use other objects that can stack and lean against each other, for example, pieces of wood, boxes, kitchen pots and pans, etc.

People from many periods of history and in different parts of the world have assembled collections of stones as monuments to something or someone they wanted to mark and remember. Some of the more famous and frequently built types of stone structures are called cairns (pronounced 'kern'). Cairns can still be found around the world although they originated thousands of years ago. Explorers used them to mark newly discovered geographic areas and to conceal their messages. Travelers and hikers have used them as trail markers and guides to help them find their way through the wilderness where a trail could easily be lost. Some cultures used them as memorials and for burials.

Take a photograph of your cairn. Does it look different if you stand on different sides of it? Which vantage point do you like best for your photo? Add some text. What does your sculpture mean to you? Is it a marker or a remembrance, a wish or a hope? Does it commemorate the time of our pandemic or does it point the way out?

### *Sample response*

Piles of stones placed along a trail signify that you are on the right track. They mean "keep going this way!" My stones show the right path through the pandemic, that we're all in this together supporting each other. #picturingpeace



**Activity:** Create your own Cairn

## Day 3: Finding Happiness

Happiness can seem far away and hard to find during a pandemic. When people are suffering or in need, it doesn't even seem fair for us to try to be happy. But happiness is a gift that we should hope to experience, and for others to experience too. Perhaps the pandemic will end soon. That deliverance from anxiety and pain would be a source of happiness for everyone.

In the meantime, each of us has people, memories or possessions that recall happiness to our minds and hearts. Photograph one or more of yours, or create an image that would bring you future happiness.

### *Sample response*



This photograph is of glass stones arranged in a heart shape. The image of the heart brings thoughts and memories of my family and friends to mind. Making this image of the heart recalled the time that I had a pillow fight with my parents and their friends, and how full of joy I was in that moment. **#picturingpeace**

## Day 4: Hero Peacemakers

Peace is a personal feeling, but peace is also found in social relationships. Community peace is dependent on people getting along and helping each other. Social peacemakers exist around us in many forms. They are people who help preserve the peace, or who help restore lost peace.

Take this time to reflect on who you consider a peacemaker. Why did you choose this person? What do they do (or have they done) that makes them a peace hero to you? Do they care for others? What peace words and positive feelings belong with your hero?

### *Sample response*



The healthcare workers in hospitals are heroes right now. I know many who are working long hours to save people's lives. While the rest of us are at home, they are putting themselves at risk. Putting other people first is courageous and loving and makes them a hero. #picturingpeace

## Day 5: Creating a Shrine to Peace in the Pandemic

Create your own Shadowbox or Collage using some of the photos you have taken this week. Include other memorable photos and items that represent these and other aspects of the troubled time of the pandemic:

Isolation

Virus

Fear

Shield

Mask

Fighters

Magic

Science

Peace signs

Dedication

Secrets

Beauty

Care

Hope

Artist Joseph Cornell was a pioneer of assemblage art. He is most known for his glass-fronted shadowboxes. A shadowbox is a display that contains objects of artistic or personal significance. Channel Joseph Cornell and create a Pandemic Shadowbox that contains objects, images, words, and photos that reflect your experience of this pandemic. If you do not have or want to use a box, create a collage (an assemblage glued to a flat surface).

Remember, Cornell created his boxes from items, objects and photographs that were personally meaningful. Each box collection had a theme that was very expressive. When people view his boxes, sometimes the things inside them are surprising. Other times, we might see objects we recognize from our own memories and experiences. Create a shrine to peace in the midst of pandemic, to lead you back to positive feelings whenever you look at it.



**Activity:** Create your own Shadowbox

## Other Prompts

Below are some other ideas for activities during Picturing Peace week:

- **Masks:** Take a photo and make a mask out of it! Then, wear the mask and take a selfie. What does the photo represent? Why did you choose it? What does your mask say about you?
- **Staying Safe:** In a photograph, show how you practice social distancing or other safety practices. How does that contribute to feelings of peace?
- **Make your own prompt:** This week is all about using photography to fight the virus, escape the virus, or celebrate the end of the pandemic. Share your idea for a new prompt with us.

## Picturing Peace Contest

Mattatuck Museum staff will judge photographs that are submitted to the Museum and share them on our website.

Picturing Peace will award \$100 to the most interesting photograph in each category (Day 1, Day 2, etc.).

Send your submissions to [Heather@mattmuseum.org](mailto:Heather@mattmuseum.org). Share your images on social media using the hashtag **#picturingpeace**