LESSON/ACTIVITY: Collaborative Mandala Collage

by Courtney Jepson

LEVEL: K-5th

SUGGESTED TIME: Discussion time plus 1 hour for artwork/mural

OBJECTIVE(S): Students will:
1. investigate the concept of community and their place in it.
2. create an individual hand design that represents their strengths and individuality.
3. collaborate with classmates on the design and creation of a class mandala.

MATERIALS/TOOLS:
construction paper
color media such as crayons
markers and/ or colored pencils
large sheet of butcher paper
scissors
glue

PREPARATION:
After reading Grandfather Gandhi, discuss the Sevagram that Gandhi lived in and how everyone had a role to play. Even though everyone has different personalities and strengths, they joined together for the greater good. Discuss how people can work together while still maintaining their own identity. This Mandala collage will demonstrate the importance of both individuality and unity, by using individual personalized hands to build a collective communal art piece. Explain to students that Gandhi was a Hindu. Hinduism
is one of the world’s oldest religions and the main religion of India. It is more than a religion, however, it is a way of life. Hindus follow the eternal way by demonstrating morality, honesty, mercy, purity, and self-restraint.

PROCEDURE:

Have students trace one or both of their hands onto a piece of white construction paper. Color in the hand(s) with personal symbols and designs (hearts, flag, favorite objects, etc.) using many colors, lines, shapes, and patterns. Cut out the hand(s) on the traced line. Working as a group, collaborate to arrange the hands in a radial design. Glue hands down making sure to put glue on each finger. Embellish collage with additional drawings or magazine cutouts if so desired. Display class mandala for all to enjoy.

VOCABULARY:

Mandala—A Hindu or Buddhist graphic symbol of the universe; usually a circle enclosing a square with a deity on each side that is used chiefly as an aid to meditation.

Radial Balance—A type of balance where a design radiates outward from a central point in a circular fashion.

Community—A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

Collage—A type of artwork made by gluing together various materials such as pieces of paper, photographs, or fabric.

Composition—The placement or arrangement of visual elements in a work of art.

RESOURCES:

Grandfather Gandhi by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus. Examples of Hindu mandalas.

POINTERS/ PITFALLS:

When arranging the hands, make sure to balance colors as well. Students should color in the hands before cutting them out so as not to rip the fingers.

VARIATIONS:
Use images cut from magazines that relate to your community and incorporate them into the hand mandala to give more of a variety of shapes and images. Make sure to keep a balanced radial composition when incorporating the magazine images.