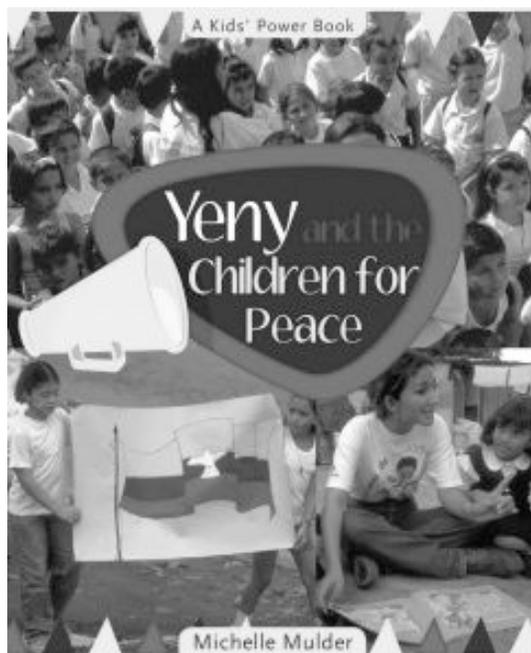


Teachers' Guide

Yeny and the Children for Peace by Michelle Mulder



ISBN: 9781897187456

\$14.95 CDN, PAPERBACK

6.5 X 8; 118 PAGES

AGES 9 - 13

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Second Story Press
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Consider the following question as you read *Yeny and the Children for Peace*:
Why is peace important, and what can you do to promote it?

Story

“Here in the city, Yeny knew no one and nothing was familiar. The houses were side by side, with no space between them, and each was a different color. Few had gardens, and several had round white scars like the ones she had seen in pictures in the newspapers that her father had sometimes brought from the city. Elena said the marks were bullet holes, but Yeny thought her sister was only trying to scare her. Their parents had said they would be safer here in the city, so how could there be guns here too?”

Yeny’s family escaped violence in their Colombian village to live in the city. Now Yeny and her friends are determined to promote peace. Before long, their peace movement attracts young people across the country. Can a group of kids made a difference in one of the world’s most violent countries?

Yeny and the Children for Peace is inspired by real events. The Colombian Children’s Movement for Peace has been nominated for every Nobel Peace Prize since 1996.

Author

When growing up, **Michelle Mulder**’s favorite spot was the library, so it’s no surprise that she studied literature at university. After graduating, she cycled across Canada, taught creative writing in the Arctic and married the pen pal that she’d been writing to since she was fourteen. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia. For more information about Michelle and her books, please visit her website at www.michellemulder.com

Curricular Integration

Language Arts

- September 21 is World Peace Day. Have students imagine a peace carnival of their own. Who would they invite? Where would it be held? How would they decorate? Which activities would it include? Have them write about their carnivals, and if time and resources permit, your class might organize a carnival of its own.
- What are the rights of the child? Have students write short skits or public service announcements sharing this information with other people in the school.
- In the book, Yeny not only has to convince her parents to let her go to the Peace Carnival, but she must also face a bully. In what ways are the two problems related? Have students discuss ways of dealing with a bully and how these techniques might relate to peace on a national or international level.
- Yeny misses her friend from the village, María Cristina. Have students write letters from Yeny to her friend discussing her new home in the city, children's rights, the peace carnival, Joaquin, or another aspect of Yeny's new life.

Social Studies

- Challenge students to find Colombia on a world map. Divide the class into small groups and assign each one a topic, such as geography, traditions, food, or flora and fauna. Have them research that topic with respect to Colombia and present their findings to the class.

- Invite to the classroom someone who is from (or has lived in) Colombia to talk about the country. You might also have kids explore their own ethnic backgrounds and share a few of their cultural traditions with the class.
- Food is an important part of any culture, and *Yeny and the Children for Peace* mentions several foods unique to Colombia. Have students write about their favorite food or favorite food memory.

Art

- As a follow-up to the planning of the peace carnival, have students create decorations for the event. Decorations might have a peace theme, or they could reflect the location of the peace carnival in the book, featuring plants that might grow in Colombia, or landmarks mentioned in the story, for example.
- Have students create posters, either advertising the peace carnival, or perhaps celebrating peace in general.
- As a follow-up to the skits and public announcements about the rights of the child, have students make posters that can be placed around the school or online.

Science

- In Chapter 6 (page 57) of the book, Yeny tells her friend Rocio about making chocolate. Have students research the industrial process of making chocolate and discuss how it is similar and different from the process that Yeny describes. How can they account for the differences?

Drama

- Have students rewrite one of the scenes of the book as a short play. They may perform with or without props and costumes. In the latter case, encourage them to explore language and student voice to shape the work.
- In the picture on page 101, a child gives a peace sticker to a soldier with a gun. Ask students to write and perform the interaction between a group of children and the soldiers.

Suggested Resources

Themes: peace, rights of the child, activism, freedom of speech, kids making a difference, Colombia.

Fiction

Foreman, Michael. *Mia's Story: a sketchbook of hopes and dreams*.

Skarmeta, Antonio. *The Composition*. (Takes place in Chile, but provides an excellent child's view of life in a country where it's dangerous to speak one's mind)

Non-fiction

(Dewey Decimal Classification Numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

Cameron, Sara, in conjunction with UNICEF. *Out of war: true stories from the front lines of the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia*. (305.23)

DuBois, Jill. *Colombia*. (918.61)

Fry-Miller, Kathleen M. *Young peacemakers project book*. (327.172)

Hoose, Phillip. *It's Our World, Too! : Stories of Young People Who Are Making a Difference*. (302.14)

Hoose, Phillip. *It's Our World, Too! : Young People Who Are Making a Difference: How They Do It - How YOU Can, Too!* (361.37)

Kessler, Paula. *Amazing Kids!* (305.23)

Kielburger, Marc and Craig. *Take Action! : a Guide to Active Citizenship*.
(323.042)

Rajan, Bilal. *Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever*.
(361.70681)

Scholes, Katherine. *Peace Begins with You*. (303.66)

Shoveller, Herb. *Ryan and Jimmy: and the Well in Africa that Brought Them Together*. (361.70492)

Wilson, Janet. *One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists*. (327.172)

Online

1000 Classrooms (a great example of kids making a difference)
<http://www.1000classrooms.org/>

Children's Movement for Peace
<http://www.colombianyouthforpeace.org/CPF/history.htm>

Classroom Activities for Children's Rights
http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca/en/resources/elementary_lesson_plans.htm

Individuals in the Children's Movement for Peace
<http://www.myhero.com/myhero/hero.asp?hero=colombiaChildren>

Ladybug Foundation (another great example of kids making a difference)
<http://www.ladybugfoundation.ca/>

Peace Activities for Kids
<http://www.dosomethingforpeace.org/kids.html>

Ryan's Well Foundation (a third great example of kids making a difference)
www.ryanswell.ca

We Generation: Youth Hub for Global Change
<http://we.freethechildren.com/>

World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child
<http://www.childrensworld.org/prizelaurates/page.html?pid=340>

A Few Words from the Author

Dear Readers,

Until I started writing *Yeny and the Children for Peace*, I never heard good things about Colombia. I knew it as a dangerous country in the middle of a drug war, where people were being killed or kidnapped or tortured. I never imagined the delicious food, the amazing plants and animals, the music, people laughing, or children playing.

And then I met Clara and Juan. They were born and raised in Colombia and came to Canada in their twenties to escape the dangerous situation in their own country. I met them in Montreal, and we became good friends. Hearing them speak about their culture, families and friends made Colombia come alive for me, and when they told me the story of the Children's Movement for Peace, I knew I wanted to write about it.

I love the idea of children gathering together to improve the world around them. I believe that children are full of great ideas and can be very powerful. These things should be celebrated, and I hope you'll find the story of the Children's Movement for Peace as inspiring as I do.

Happy reading!

Sincerely,
Michelle.