

Hiroshima Day Activities

The sheer magnitude and power of the Hiroshima bombing can lead many to feel numb. Four things seem to help people reflect meaningfully on such events: to hear about it and reflect *with others*; to make *prayer* central to our reflection; to look at the *human experience*, not just statistics; and to make our commemoration *participatory* as well as verbal. Here are some suggested activities for observing the 60th anniversary of our use of the atom bomb.

- 1. Make peace a central theme of the worship service** in your congregation on Sunday, August 7, 2005. Use hymns, scripture readings, and the story of a “hibakusha” survivor to help worshipers reflect on the meaning of Hiroshima, sixty years of the nuclear age, and Christ’s call for us to be peacemakers. May the events of 1945 strengthen our response to that call (see LPF’s worship guide and bulletin insert at: www.LutheranPeace.org).
- 2. Share the story of Sadako**, a young Japanese girl who developed leukemia in 1955 as a result of the bombing of Hiroshima. Following a tradition in which ill people fold 1,000 paper cranes, Sadako began folding cranes, but died before reaching her goal. The story touched others, however, and cranes came from all over. Paper cranes have since become a symbol of peace. Teach children and adults to fold cranes; display them as a reminder of the effects of nuclear war and our need for peace; see: www.sadako.com, www.cranesflyforpeace.com
- 3. Show and discuss a video** on Hiroshima and peacemaking, such as “Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes,” “Survivors” or “Rain of Ruin.” Sources include college AV departments and libraries, peace groups, or your synod film library.
- 4. Float lanterns** to commemorate those who died. Ten or twenty lanterns in a public pond, river, or lake can create a very moving image. Invite musicians, other artists, and speakers; share readings. Close with a silent reflection. (For ideas and tips, see www.pgs.ca/updir/Resource_Kit.pdf page 10.)
- 5. Develop a Shadow Project.** When the Hiroshima bomb exploded, those near ground zero were evaporated; all that was left was a “shadow” on the pavement. Use life-sized shadow stencils of fallen persons, and non-permanent white wash to draw attention to the “disappearance of life.” Explain the purpose of your action with a leaflet or placard, calls to media and dialogue. (Information: www.pgs.ca/updir/Resource_Kit.pdf on page 10)
- 6. Plan an adult forum on current nuclear issues**, discuss advocacy options, and encourage action by participants. Help this anniversary transcend mere observance to a genuine response to Christ’s call for us to be peacemakers. Use the ELCA-endorsed “Urgent Call on the Nuclear Danger” and other resources from LPF, ELCA Advocacy, or Urgent Call. See: www.elca.org/advocacy, www.nrdi.org, www.LutheranPeace.org Other useful sites include: www.forusa.org, www.ipj-ppj.org, www.fpif.org
- 7. Join with others to ensure no more Hiroshimas!** While the US has never issued an apology for the destruction caused by the use of the atomic bomb, individuals can and are working towards healing. In many ways the people of Japan are leading the way to a nuclear free world, e.g. the *Mayor’s Emergency Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, a call from the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for a global abolition treaty by 2020. Invite the mayor of your city to join other mayors around the world in this worthy effort: www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/mayors
- 8. Join others in a Pilgrimage for Peace.** Gather together at a significant place in your community, i.e. a government building or military site, and walk together to a place signifying your commitment to peace, such as your church. Conclude with a worship service, speaker, video and discussion, etc.
- 9. Participate in a national Gathering** at a major US nuclear installation. Actions and workshops are planned at four significant nuclear sites across the country. For more information on this campaign, see: www.abolitionnow.org/augustactions.html

