

(workshop)

Storytelling for World Peace

Charles Kowalski

(Tokai University)

Storytelling is a variety of performing language that has been experiencing a renaissance in recent years, especially among educators. The world's great teachers have always been storytellers, and every culture uses stories to transmit its values to the next generation; this is no less true in the age of the Internet and satellite television than it was in the days when the tribe gathered around the campfire to hear sacred stories from the shaman.

This workshop will focus on using storytelling to teach peace. "No society that feeds its children on tales of successful violence can expect them not to believe that violence is rewarded" (Margaret Mead). First, we will discuss uses of stories in peace education: reframing (presenting complex issues in an easily understandable form, including parable and satire); peacemakers as heroes in legend and history; and giving

"the enemy" a human face ("An enemy is one whose story we have not heard" ? Gene Knudsen Hoffman). The practical part of the workshop will develop and refine participants' natural talent in storytelling performance, an art that requires no costumes, props or stage sets, only the storyteller's voice and body. Activities will include warm-ups, exercises in storytelling techniques (remembering a story; using facial expression, voice, and body language to create scenes and characters; etc.) and practice in telling stories. Sample "peace stories" from many traditions, suitable for a broad range of ages, will be provided.