

SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

The Symbols of Solidarity is an optional activity aimed at bringing to life our campaign's theme and main message. The symbols can be used in a procession before or during Mass, or at any other gathering. If you plan on using the Symbols of Solidarity during Mass, it is important that you first consult with the pastor to see if it meets diocesan liturgical directives as well as the approved liturgical practice of your parish. Schools can also consider displaying these symbols throughout Lent in the chapel or another appropriate place.

The procession of each symbol starts when the narrator begins to read the section for that symbol, and it ends at the front of the church or room, or whichever location the pastor has judged best. You may wish to have just one narrator or different voices for each part. Allow a brief pause between each symbol for reflection. The entire procession generally takes between 10 and 15 minutes, but can be shortened (or lengthened) in order to suit your parish's particular needs. Those who carry the symbols should remain at the front of the church or room so that all participants can join hands after the presentation of the last symbol.

You will need:

A place to put the symbols after they are carried in – perhaps close to the sanctuary, on a table decorated for this purpose, or a special area in the room where the procession will take place.

The symbols are:

A picture or other portrayal of a **bridge** to represent the word dialogue.

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A **branch**, or an image of an olive branch to indicate peace.

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A large piece of paper with the word "**AGREEMENT**" visibly written to show the result of dialogue.

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The hands of two of the presenters, to be used in making a sign of peace – a **handshake**.

Script for narrator

Pope Francis says of peace that it "will be lasting in the measure that we arm our children with the weapons of dialogue, that we teach them to fight the good fight of encounter and negotiation. In this way, we will bequeath to them a culture capable of devising strategies of life, not death, and of inclusion, not exclusion."

The word dialogue has its roots in Greek antiquity. *Dia*, the first part, means through or across. *Logos*, the second part, can be translated as word, but also as "the meaning of the word." It implies relationship.

This word continues to inspire philosophers, writers and educators. "A stream of meaning flowing among and through people; out of this a new understanding emerges," says one. "Thinking together in relationship," says another. "Ultimately, real dialogue presupposes an openness to modify deeply held convictions," notes a third.

As our Holy Father says: "Dialogue is gentleness, it is the capacity to listen, it is putting yourself in the other person's shoes, and building bridges."

Development and Peace partners in the Global South have been engaged in dialogue for more than 50 years. They have developed projects that encourage women and men to participate peacefully in democratic processes; projects that teach them the skills to live peacefully with their neighbours; and projects that impart the skills to speak up peacefully for the needs of their communities. Today, with our symbols of solidarity, we stand with several of these projects, the peace they build, and the people whom they touch.

1st symbol: **A drawing or other representation of a bridge**

We bring this representation of a bridge here because the word dialogue implies a bridge between people. It brings them into relationship, and bridges the gulf that intolerance and misunderstanding create. Through dialogue, new ideas can emerge; ideas that did not exist before.



In Lebanon, Development and Peace partner Adyan is contributing to peace in the Middle East by building cultural and religious tolerance, particularly amongst youth and students. Their goal is to bridge the distance between Christians and Muslims that intolerance has created. Today, youth from both religions work side by side to promote peace, justice and democracy in their communities.

2nd symbol: **A branch from any kind of tree, representing an olive branch**

This branch represents an olive branch. The olive branch has long been a symbol of peace in Christianity. We say that we extend an olive branch when we wish to engage in peace. The olive tree is an ancient symbol of life and peace in the Middle East, mentioned in the Koran and the Torah as well as the Bible.



In Nigeria, Development and Peace partner SERAC (the Social and Economic Rights Action Centre) works with communities who have suffered forced evictions. SERAC trains community leaders to talk about human rights and political issues with some of the most marginalized communities. Those communities now have the knowledge and tools to engage in effective dialogue with their government and political authorities.

3rd symbol: **An agreement**

This piece of paper with the word AGREEMENT on it represents the outcome of a peace negotiation, and the hope that a lasting and durable peace can be created. It takes great effort to implement a signed peace accord.



The people of Colombia, who have suffered from a decades-long civil war, know this well. In 2016, a significant peace accord was signed. Despite hope for the future, this accord is a fragile one. Against this backdrop, the National Agrarian Coalition continues to build peace at the grassroots level. At their training school, women learn how to speak for their communities' needs with local, regional and national representatives. "For me, peace is the right to live a dignified life," says Luz Estella Cifuentes, the leader of the school. She is a partner of Development and Peace.

4th symbol: **A sign of peace**

Two of the processors stand before the congregation clasping hands while the announcer reads the following:

At every Mass we are invited to share a sign of peace with those around us. This is a moment where our Church asks for peace and unity for herself and the entire human family, and where the faithful express their charity and reconciliation with each other before communion.



In Cambodia, Development and Peace partner ICSO (the Indigenous Community Support Organization) works with that country's minority Indigenous communities. The communities wish to have their rights recognized by the government, defend their land from corporate interests and develop economic activities that are sustainable and allow them to live in dignity. Dialogue gives them a platform for negotiation. Most importantly, it encourages cooperation and peaceful discussion of the issues.

Narrator

We now invite you to shake hands with your neighbour to express your own symbol of solidarity with each other and with all those around the world who work for peace.