

Prize Winner Video Guide: Nicholas

Time: 20-30 min

Purpose: To explore how young peacemakers can take on challenging problems and create change.

Skills: Appreciating similarities and differences, Communication, Empathy, Problem Solving

About The Peace First Prize

The Peace First Prize showcases young people who have confronted injustice, crossed lines of difference, and had the courage and compassion to create lasting change. Peace First's goal is to share this daring work far and wide, invest in winners' leadership, and inspire others to make peacemaking a part of their daily lives.

In October 2013, ten Prize Winners received \$50,000 and a two year Peace First Fellowship to take their peacemaking to the next level of impact. Nicholas was chosen as one of the inaugural Peace First Prize Winners.

[Click here](#) to meet the other winners.

About This Guide

This guide is designed to support educators in using the Prize Winners' stories to inspire young people to take action and become part of a growing youth peacemaking movement. Watch Nicholas's video and read his profile page together as a group. Then, choose from any of the following discussion questions and extension activities below to help participants explore how young people can take on challenging problems and create lasting, positive change.

You will need...



- Early Elementary School age participants or older (age 6 and up)
- Access to the internet, speakers, and a computer
- Printed copies of the Winner Profile handout (attached)
- Pencils, pens, and/or highlighters
- Enough space for participants to discuss in large and small groups

Before You Begin



- Review Nicholas's online profile and video ([click here](#)). Note any moments in the video where you might want to pause to provide additional information or context.
- Select discussion questions from the list below, and decide how you would like to structure the discussion (whole group, small group, written reflection, or a combination).
- Prepare any additional questions that may help participants better understand or engage with Nicholas's story.
- Select extension activities, if desired.



Tip: Consider how you will introduce the video and provide context to ensure participants understand the issues Nicholas's project addresses (poverty, homelessness, economic justice, etc.). See the Extension Activities below for ideas.

Discussion

Watch Nicholas's video as a group. Pause at any point if additional information or context is needed to support participants' understanding of the project.



Distribute the Winner Profile handout. Participants may wish to underline or highlight information they find interesting, inspiring, or confusing.

Choose any of the following questions to support your discussion.



To invite participants to think more deeply about Nicholas's project, ask:

- Nicholas noticed that many people *only* donate items to shelters when those items are old or worn out. Why does Nicholas believe this is a problem? How do you think this problem is affecting others?
- Nicholas said, "A lot of people have the mindset that just because someone's in the shelter they don't deserve as much as somebody who lives in their own house and can afford it." What does he mean by this? Why might this mindset be a problem?
- What parts of Nicholas's project did you find particularly useful or inspiring? Why do you think his project worked so well?



To invite participants to think more deeply about Nicholas's approach, ask:

- Nicholas believes that it is important for people in shelters to have new shoes that they can "call their own and wear-in themselves". What are some of the reasons why this might be important?
- In the video, we see Nicholas in a shelter, talking with young people and adults as he hands out new shoes. Why do you think he does this? How might his work be different if he did not spend time talking with people in the shelter?



To invite participants to explore how they might apply Nicholas's approach to their own lives, ask:

- Nicholas has been able to bring his project to 15 different states by collaborating (working together) with others. Why is it important to collaborate? How do other people's voices and ideas help us do a better job of creating change?
- Nicholas noticed something unfair in his community and took action. What do you see in your community that is unfair? What is one action you could take to stand up for fairness?
- Nicholas said, "I would say the most important thing is to find something you are passionate about. It is very important to find the passion first and then the action." What does it mean to be passionate about something? What are you passionate about? How could you use your passion to help others?

Extension Activities



To encourage participants to continue exploring peacemaking on their own, with a friend, or with a group, invite them to try out any of the following activities:

- Watch all ten Winners' videos at peacefirst.org/prize to see more youth peacemaking in action.
- Walk around your school or neighborhood, paying attention to the people, places and qualities you love about the community. What strengths do you notice? What do you think your community needs? Write down your thoughts on our [Community Mapping Grid](#). For a more in-depth look at community asset mapping, see this workbook by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory ([click here](#))
- Think about a problem your own community faces. How might an approach like Nicholas's be useful in addressing that problem? What other solutions or approaches might be useful in creating positive change? Invite your friends to brainstorm together.
- Read books about poverty, homelessness, and economic justice with your class. Try *My Heart Will Not Sit Down* by Mara Rockliff, *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan, or *Fly Away Home*, by Eve Bunting.
- Try this activity that Nicholas facilitates with volunteers: Have each member of your class or group switch shoes with someone else in the group. Take a walk around the room. Ask, "What is it like to wear another person's shoes? How do they feel on your feet? Do they fit you? What if you needed to walk to school in these shoes?" Use this activity to discuss why giving out new shoes is so important to Nicholas.
- Start a drive at your school! Contact a local homeless shelter to learn what resources they need most – in Nicholas's community, there was a need for shoes, but every community is different. Research which items can be donated gently used, and which items must be new. Work together to collect items, and make arrangements to deliver them to a local shelter.
- Show a young person you believe in their peacemaking work by nominating them for the Peace First Prize. Nominations and applications for the Prize are open from January to March each year. To nominate a young person, or to learn more about the Prize, visit <http://peacefirst.org/prize/>.



Parents and teachers:

- Make peacemaking a regular part of your family or class. To get started, search our library of over a hundred peacemaking games and activities on the [Peace First Digital Activity Center](#).

Nicholas

Gotta Have Sole Foundation

Cranston, Rhode Island

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<http://www.gottahavesole.org/>



Mission

Providing children living in shelters across the United States with brand-new footwear to call their own.

Summary

While shoes may not be commonly associated with peacemaking, Nicholas proves through his work that providing new footwear to homeless children promotes dignity and independence and helps show these children that they are loved and valued.

Motivation

At the age of 5, Nicholas started visiting shelters with his mom. There he met children who missed school, couldn't participate in activities, and had low self-esteem— all because they lacked adequate footwear. After giving a young boy a pair of his own winter boots and seeing how happy the boy was to have shoes to call his own, Nicholas knew that he wanted to dedicate himself to providing new footwear to homeless children.

Impact to date

With the help of his volunteers, Nicholas has provided new footwear to over 8,000 homeless children in 15 states in the U.S. He has raised over \$125,000 in monetary donations, and has received over 5,500 pairs of new footwear to donate.

Project overview

Nicholas started the Gotta Have Sole Foundation to donate brand-new footwear to children living in homeless shelters throughout the U.S. He also donates athletic footwear to children of similar backgrounds who are involved in sports, organizes community service events, and speaks to audiences with the hope of changing their mindsets about homelessness and of encouraging volunteerism.

Future plans

Nicholas hopes to continue to scale his work to provide footwear for needy children across the U.S. He strives to spread awareness of the importance of promoting peace and to empower young people with the message that they have the ability to make a difference.