

KIDS AND WAR

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students of today believe what they see, Streb added.

"Students need to see the devastation of war," she said. "Children of all ages are very interested in war, but often this is because they think that war is a way to gain glory, or to be a hero."

Some students may be too young to fully comprehend the experiences of a soldier or the devastation of war, but there are still ways to help them understand and deal with war's effects. In January, students at St. Pius Tenth School in Chili made Valentine's Day cards to send to the soldiers serving overseas.

As the children made the cards, they began to appreciate the sacrifice others were making on their behalf, principal Stephen Oberst told the *Catholic Courier* for a February 2004 article. Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, elementary-school and religious-education classes in schools throughout the diocese have collected food, clothing, toiletries and money to donate to those in need, either in New York City and Pennsylvania or in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It is our job as classroom teachers to help students understand war and its effects from multiple perspectives," Streb said.

As such, many teachers in diocesan schools encourage students to learn about Catholic social teaching and study war from that perspective. The religion curriculum in the schools helps students look at world situations from themes of discipleship, peace and justice. Many schools take advantage of materials offered by Ruth Putnam, Works of Love coordinator for diocesan Catholic Charities.

"In 1998 the U.S. bishops issued a statement challenging Catholic educators to become more informed about Catholic social teaching and to make education for justice a more consistent part of their curriculum. Works of Love was Catholic Charities' response to that challenge," Putnam said.

An initiative of diocesan Catholic Charities, the program incorporates justice education and service, and provides curriculum materials, speakers and service opportunities to schools, youth groups, faith-formation programs and social-ministry committees.

As coordinator of the program, Putnam promotes awareness of Catholic social teaching and facilitates meaningful volunteer service. She also helps teachers incorporate Catholic social teaching into their curricula.

Sister Mancuso said the Institute for Peace and Justice also offers re-



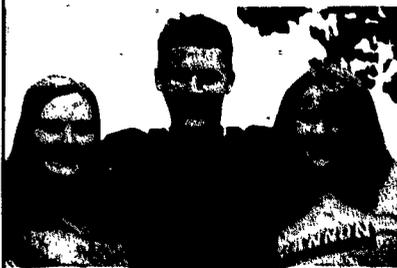
St. Pius Tenth School third-grader Katie Zaso (left) and her sixth-grade buddy Vanessa Moon made Valentine's Day cards Jan. 26 that were sent to servicemen and women stationed overseas.

sources for schools. According to its Web site, the IPJ is an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization that creates resources, provides learning experiences and advocates publicly for alternatives to violence and injustice at multiple levels.

The IPJ Web site includes such resources as "Teaching Peace After

9/11 and the War in Iraq: Suggestions for Christian Educators." In this resource, IPJ founder Dr. James McGinnis suggests that, among other things, educators proclaim Jesus' vision and mission of peace, promote Catholic social teaching and offer a range of options for promoting peace and love.

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