

Afterword

We are presenting the 31st Elementary and Junior High School Students' Essay Collection: "Thinking about Peace." This year, we received 108 essays in total: 34 from elementary school students and 74 from junior high school students. We have a great variety of essay themes, which tell us about their serious attitude towards peace, the war, nuclear weapons and more from their own point of view.

The government gave notice of a new course of study in 2017 and it says "morals" is a new subject. Though elementary school students are supposed to start learning "morals" as a special subject and junior high school students are supposed to in 2021, some schools have already started to teach it. The topic was widely covered by the media when morals was introduced as a new subject. Peace education is mainly handled in social studies class, Japanese class, both integrated studies class, and in moral studies class from the viewpoints of both international understanding and mutual understanding. In 2014, the Central Council of Education submitted a report that stated that students should adopt a serious attitude towards various values as a moral problem, which is a basic topic learned in their moral studies class. Now, morals have made a transition from that approach towards one focusing more on thinking and discussion. When we think about peace, we need to talk with others after coming to understand them and the global situation as a whole, as well as matters concerning Japan. In this collection, the students came to think more deeply about peace after considering the idea from other's point of view.

Everyone wishes for a peaceful world, but their own positions and ideas about each country adds complexity to that problem. Globalization and constant technological innovation have changed society rapidly. Children have to live in a society that is difficult to anticipate. It is necessary that each of them should have an attitude towards making a better world by accepting various opinions from multiple viewpoints.

Through this essay collection, we hope that elementary and junior high school students in Numazu will talk with people in the world about what peace is like and pass their wish on to the future. Students are expected to reconfirm the weight of the responsibility to "protect our beautiful Earth and peaceful lives for future generations," as Numazu City declared and to keep making a constant effort to that end.

Finally, we would also like to express our sincere gratitude for all of the readers of this essay collection.