

UPF Int'l: May 8 - 9 as Days of Memory, Reconciliation, and Family Responsibility

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Key Takeaways

Memory should lead to reconciliation

May 8 and 9 are not only days of victory or liberation, but also days to remember suffering, loss, and the need to heal historic wounds.

Families carry the legacy of war

The consequences of conflict live on in families through grief, displacement, silence, and inherited memory, making the home a vital place for peace education.

Peace is built through responsibility and service

UPF's Month of Family and 100 Days of Serving Community show how remembrance can become

practical action through dialogue, youth engagement, service, culture, and reconciliation.

From remembrance of war to the renewal of families in the spirit of the United Nations, the Month of Family, and the 100 Days of Serving Community campaign.

Across nations, May 8 and 9 are remembered in different ways. For some, they signify victory; for others, liberation. For many families, however, they remain days marked by grief, sacrifice, separation, and unfinished memory. The United Nations, through its recognition of the [Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War](#), provides a broader moral framework for these dates, one that calls humanity to remember all who suffered and to reaffirm the shared commitment that such devastation must never be repeated.

The Human Cost of War Lives On in Families

Through Resolution [59/26](#), the United Nations General Assembly invited Member States and organizations to observe May 8 and 9 as a time of remembrance and reconciliation. The United Nations Charter begins with a determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. This commitment remains urgent, as the consequences of war extend far beyond the cessation of conflict. They endure in widowed lives, displaced families, broken trust, and historical pain passed from one generation to the next. While public memory is preserved in monuments and ceremonies, private memory lives most deeply within families.

Why Remembrance Belongs in UPF's Month of Family

For this reason, these May observances resonate directly with the Universal Peace Federation's (UPF)

[Month of Family](#). If conflict enters history through nations, it enters daily life through homes. Children inherit stories, fears, loyalties, and silences long before they understand politics. Families can transmit resentment, but they can also pass on dignity, compassion, and the courage to recognize the humanity of former enemies. The family is where individuals first learn memory, responsibility, and respect for others.



From Family Responsibility to Sustainable Peace

The founders of the Universal Peace Federation, [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Dr. Sun Myung Moon](#), emphasized that peace must be cultivated in human character, relationships, and the moral habits formed within the home. This perspective aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which calls for peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and accountable institutions. Institutions are essential, but they remain fragile when families and communities are divided at their core.

Connecting May 8 - 9 with the International Day of Families and Global Day of Parents

Observing May 8 and 9 can meaningfully connect remembrance with the family-centered observances that follow in May and June. These days prepare the ground for the [International Day of Families on May 15](#) and point toward the Global Day of Parents on June 1, marking the culmination of the 100 Days of Serving Community campaign. Together, these dates highlight a fundamental truth: peace among nations cannot be separated from responsibility within families, just as family life cannot be isolated from humanity's shared future.

Turning Memory into Service, Dialogue and Education

Here, the practical contributions of the Universal Peace Federation become evident. Through its

Ambassadors for Peace network, interfaith dialogue, community service initiatives, youth engagement, and programs such as [Peace Road](#) and [Play Football, Make Peace](#), remembrance is translated into concrete acts of service, dialogue, and education. The founders also supported cultural diplomacy through [the Little Angels](#), whose performances, including in Pyongyang and Moscow, demonstrated how art can open pathways to mutual respect where politics alone may fall short. These efforts reflect a simple yet profound conviction: peace is not built through declarations alone.

Peace is also built through shared service, common purpose, sport, culture, and human encounters that restore dignity across social, cultural, ethnic, and national divides. Around the world, such initiatives have brought together participants, especially young people, from communities shaped by conflict or historical grievance, including in the Middle East, Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe. A local observance of May 8 or 9 might include testimonies from families affected by war, service to elderly survivors, dialogue among religious and civic leaders, educational programs for youth, sports and cultural activities that foster trust, or family-centered gatherings that connect historical memory with present moral responsibility. Though modest in appearance, such efforts help cultivate a culture of peace that institutions alone cannot create.

Learning from Global Models of Reconciliation

The international context also deserves recognition. The postwar efforts of organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the early European integration process that eventually led to the European Union merit sincere respect. So too do initiatives that have made reconciliation tangible across generations and former divides, including the [Franco-German Youth Office](#), the [German-Polish Youth Office](#), and the [Regional Youth Cooperation Office](#) in the Western Balkans.

Other organizations have demonstrated that reconciliation becomes credible when grounded in genuine human encounter. The [Parents Circle - Families Forum](#), formed by bereaved Israelis and Palestinians, chose dialogue over revenge. [Seeds of Peace](#) has spent decades developing young leaders across conflict lines. [PeacePlayers](#) and [Football for Peace](#) have shown how sport can foster respect, teamwork, and coexistence among children and communities shaped by division.

Responsible Remembrance Without Triumph or Hatred

The Second World War affected Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and beyond. Its legacy is not confined to any single national narrative. Responsible remembrance avoids triumphalism and rejects hatred. It creates space for mourning, gratitude, truthfulness, and reconciliation. This reflects the vision of "[One Family under God](#)" not as a sentimental phrase, but as a demanding moral standard guiding how humanity remembers suffering and shapes its future.

A Shared Call to Build a More Peaceful Future

These May observances offer an opportunity for governments, civil society, educators, faith communities, and families themselves to strengthen a culture of responsibility across generations. In this shared effort, memory need not imprison the future, it can help educate and transform it. The Universal Peace Federation welcomes continued partnership with all who seek to turn remembrance into reconciliation, and reconciliation into more humane and peaceful world.