

A Suggested Process for Churches Seeking to Determine Their Justice/Peacemaking Call

This might be used for a planning meeting of a church's Peacemaking Committee, Social Justice Committee, or Mission Committee, etc. You should allow two to three hours for this planning meeting.

I. REMEMBERING YOUR HISTORY

Ask one or two people (former chairpersons, committee members, pastor, etc.) familiar with the history of social justice and peacemaking in your church to bring a ten minute report on when it was started, some of its high moments, and challenges. (10-20 minutes)

II. UNDERSTANDING WHO YOU ARE NOW

Name and put on newsprint the current standing commitments of this committee, i.e. the Commitment to Peacemaking, partnerships with a church or presbytery in another country, Two Cents a Meal, Covenant Church with Habitat for Humanity, etc. (5 minutes)

III. GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS BETTER AND DISCOVERING YOUR SPECIAL INTERESTS IN PEACEMAKING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- A.** Have each person on the committee share 2-3 minutes of what has brought them to be on this committee, for example, their history in peacemaking or concern for other issues under this committee. (10-30 minutes)
- B.** Pass around an earth ball or something else that can represent the earth, and ask each person to share where they most long for healing in the world. This can be a geographical place like Sudan or a situational place like AIDS orphans or disabled people. Make a list on newsprint of the places as they share. (5-10 minutes)
- C.** Put the 2 lists together (#II and# III B) and ask if there are any other areas that someone feels strongly, should be added to this combined list. (5-10 minutes)

IV. DETERMINING YOUR CALL

- A.** Look for commonalities, or common threads on the list and group those together that may fit together. Check with the committee to see if they are in agreement about the revised list. (5-10 minutes)
- B.** Then do an energy vote on the list. Tell each member of the committee that they have 10 energy votes to cast on choosing the goals/areas of interest around which they have the most energy. Explain that this is not a "guilt vote" - it isn't a matter of which goal they "should" choose but for which one(s) they have the most energy. They can divide their energy up among several different areas or cast all of their votes on one. Count the energy votes that each area gets and then ask how they feel about the conclusions. (5-15 minutes)
- C.** Determine the areas of concern that members of the committee have the most energy around. Narrow this list down to the top one to three areas. (5-15 minutes)
- D.** If there are standing historic commitments that don't receive many energy votes, you may want to appoint a subcommittee to consider how to proceed with the decision about whether to continue this commitment. For instance, you may want to enlist feedback from the congregation to see if anyone else might want to work on this commitment, or brainstorm low maintenance ways to continue the commitment. Or it might be time to end a particular commitment so there will be energy to start work in other areas.
- E.** Ask members of the committee to choose one area to work on for the next fifteen minutes.
- F.** Ask each group to look at their area and dream about what they would like their church to be doing in this area in three years and to write headlines that might appear in a local newspaper three years hence. Example: "Presbyterian Church Had Record Crowds Attend Their 2nd Annual Interfaith Symposium on Peace". (15 minutes)
- G.** Have each group share their headlines. Now ask the committee how they feel about the areas that have been chosen? If there is dissent it may be important to do steps B and C again. (10-20 minutes)

V. SETTING MEASURABLE AND ATTAINABLE GOALS

- A.** When you feel like you have some common goals that excite and energize members of your committee, you might want to set one to three measurable, attainable goal(s) for your work in this next year. If you have agreed on a direction set by one of the headlines you might begin by asking "In order to reach our headline in three years what would we need to accomplish this first year?" (5-15 minutes)

VI. ORGANIZING YOUR WORK

- A.** Make a chart of **who** will do **what** tasks by **when** and **to whom** will they report to keep track of how the work will be getting done. (5-15 minutes). This chart can be the core of your minutes as well as the starting point of your next meeting's agenda.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN	TO WHOM
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			