

What Is Peacemaking?

Goals

- To reflect on the biblical vision of peace
- To explore the biblical call to peacemaking
- To consider ways to live as peacemakers

Scripture

- Genesis 9:12–17
- Isaiah 65:17–25
- Micah 4:1–4
- Matthew 5:1–12
- Luke 10:25–28
- John 14:25–27
- Romans 12:14–21
- Ephesians 2:13–22
- Philippians 4:4–7

Materials

- Bibles
- markers
- crayons
- bulletin board
- old magazines
- scissors
- glue
- a piece of construction paper for each participant
- newsprint or butcher paper
- masking tape
- an index card for each participant
- pens or pencils

Advance Preparation

- Gather old magazines with a variety of pictures.
- Bookmark each of the nine Scripture passages in a different Bible.
- Write the following questions on newsprint, and post:
 - What vision of peace is proclaimed by the passage?
 - What does this passage say about peacemaking?
 - What does this passage call you to do as a peacemaker?
- Tape a sheet of butcher paper on the wall where the participants can post their peace collages.
- Write the following on newsprint and post:

Living as a peacemaker

 - within myself
 - in families
 - in congregations
 - in communities
 - with the enemy
 - with the earth
 - among nations

Welcome and Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Briefly describe the purpose of this session—to explore the biblical vision of peace and God’s call in Jesus to be peacemakers. Lead a prayer, invite a participant to lead a prayer, or use the following prayer:

Gracious God, open us to you and to one another as we explore your call to be peacemakers. Fill us with your vision of peace. Inspire us with ways in which we may live to help you bring that vision into being. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Create a Peace Collage (15 minutes)

Distribute a piece of construction paper and a marker to each participant. Invite the participants to write “Peace Is” on their paper and to create a collage on it by cutting out pictures or words that illustrate peace or give them a feeling of peace. Participants may also draw or write words or create the collage in whatever way they want. Allow about seven minutes to create the collages. Ask the participants to post their individual collages together to create a group collage. Invite participants to look at the collage silently for a minute to notice the images and the vision of peace it expresses.

Debrief for seven minutes using some of the following questions:

- What do you notice about our group collage?
- What themes/images of peace do you see?
- What shared vision emerges from the collage?
- How would you need to live to help bring that vision into reality?

Note: If your group has more than twelve members, consider working on this activity in groups of two or three.

Influences on Our Understanding of Peace

(10 minutes)

Divide the participants into groups of three or four. Invite the participants to think about the persons or events that helped shape the way they feel about peace. Allow each participant an opportunity to share for two minutes or less.

Remind the participants that they may choose to pass. Ask that the other group members listen and refrain from commenting as each participant speaks. This is an opportunity to listen carefully to one another and better understand the experiences that have helped shape us and our views.

Peacemaking Is Central to Our Faith (15 minutes)

Have the participants remain in the same small groups. Give each group a Bible with one of the passages marked. Tell the participants that each group will be invited to share briefly one or two key insights. Call their attention to the questions that are posted:

- What vision of peace is proclaimed by the passage?
- What does this passage say about peacemaking?
- What does this passage call you to do as a peacemaker?

After ten minutes, invite each group to share. Suggest that they limit their comments to thirty seconds.

Note: Depending on the size of the group, you may need to reduce the number of Bible passages that are used or ask more than one group to explore the same passage.

Living as Peacemakers (10 minutes)

Distribute an index card and a pen or pencil to each participant. Call the participants' attention to the "Living as a peacemaker" newsprint. Remind the participants that God calls us to live as peacemakers in a variety of arenas. Ask the participants to reflect in silence on how they are experiencing God calling each of them to be a peacemaker. After two minutes, invite the participants to write on the card one or two ways they will respond to God's call to be a peacemaker. After five minutes, invite the participants to share briefly what they have written if they wish to do so. Participants need not share if they do not want to do so.

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

Thank the participants. In closing, lead a prayer, invite a participant to lead a prayer, or use the following prayer:

*God of justice and of love, we thank you for this time.
Continue to guide us as we seek to respond to your call to be peacemakers. Help us support one another. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

For Further Study and More Information

- Contact the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program at (888) 728-7228, ext. 5784. Also see the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program Web page, www.pcusa.org/peacemaking.
- View the Presbyterian United Nations Office's Web site at www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/un.
- Subscribe to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program's quarterly publication, *Peace Notes*, or to the electronic listservs at www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/subscribe/index.htm.

Basic Peacemaking Resources

Call Presbyterian Distribution Service at (800) 524-2612 to order.

- *An Introduction to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program* (free)
 - English—PDS 70-270-03-003
 - Spanish—PDS 70-270-02-006
 - Korean—PDS 70-270-02-007
- *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*
This 1980 foundational document called for the establishment of a churchwide peacemaking emphasis. PDS #OGA-88-047; \$1.50.
- *Commitment to Peacemaking* (free)
 - English—PDS 70-270-03-024
 - Spanish—PDS 70-270-05-006
 - Korean—PDS 70-270-05-011The *Commitment to Peacemaking* is a tool that helps congregations and other groups affirm that peacemaking is a central aspect of their ministry and that it helps them organize their peacemaking efforts.

About This Study

The Rev. W. Mark Koenig, Associate for Resources and Publications in the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, compiled this study for which he drew on the work of Presbyterian peacemakers who have explored the meaning of God's vision of peace and Christ's call to peacemaking through the years.



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