



# Seeking Peace

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

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### Study Guide VI: Bringing Peace Home

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#### Materials Required:

- *Bringing Peace Home* study guide for each participant
- flip chart, easel, and markers
- watch/clock for time keeping
- colorful construction paper and crayons
- writing paper and pens

**Room Arrangement:** semi-circle facing flip chart and facilitator(s)

#### EXERCISE 1—U.S. and the World

##### Facilitator Tips:

- **Process:** Provide participants with colorful paper, markers, and crayons. This exercise asks each participant to draw a picture symbolizing their view of the relationship between the U.S. and the world, then each participant will have the opportunity to explain what they have created to the group. The purpose of the exercise is to generate and name common themes around the topic of the relationship between the U.S. and the world. Briefly wrap up this exercise by naming some of the common themes that arose. For example, many pictures may depict that the U.S. has a great deal of power in relationship to other nations. Close this exercise by transitioning from some generated themes about the U.S. and the world to relationships in local communities. For example, just as the U.S. is a superpower in the world, so there are people and groups within our own community that have a great deal of power and others who are relatively powerless.
- **Communication:** Reassure participants that no one is required to have artistic talent for this exercise. The drawings can be basic or detailed, realistic or highly symbolic. Remind participants that the relationship between the U.S. and the

world is nuanced. In other words, it is not wholly good or bad. Participants' pictures may depict very different, even competing, views of the relationship between the U.S. and the world; ensure that all opinions are shared in a safe space.

### **EXERCISE 2—The Span of Peacemaking**

**Advance Preparations:** Review the Biblical stories discussed in this exercise if you are not already familiar with them (2 Samuel 12:1-10, Esther 4:13-16; 7:2-4, and John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:4-8, 15-17). Post each writing question on the flip chart.

#### **Facilitator Tips: Process**

- This exercise is most effective if participants are familiar with these Biblical stories. The facilitator should familiarize themselves with the texts.
- The three sections of the exercise include: prophecy, wisdom, and reconciliation. Begin each section by reading the introduction by the facilitator, the summary of each story, then the text (note: participants can volunteer to read as well). Engage in a discussion of the questions that follow.
- Ask a volunteer to read the background and words of the modern figure (Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, or Sister Helen Prejean) that follows, then provide some time for participants to write quietly their own response to the writing question.
- At the end of the three sections of the exercise, share one of your responses to a writing question with the larger group. Then invite a participant to share. This participant may either pass or speak, then will invite another participant to share. For the sake of time, you may encourage each person to share only one of their responses to the three writing questions.
- If the group decides to write an open letter to the congregation, determine whether you will do this as individuals or a group. The advantage of creating a group letter is that it can be published in church materials, such as the bulletin, a newsletter, or on the website. It can also be read during worship. Ask if there are any writers in the group who might consider penning the final version, and brainstorm the main points of the letter as a group. Appoint someone to follow up with publishing the letter or reading it in worship.
- Lead the group in the closing prayer.
- After all participants have shared, let them know that the facilitator's introduction guide has resources for follow up action. Facilitators can distribute this information after class in whatever way works well for her/his group of participants (such as posting on the web, creating a flyer, or even continuing to meet as a group to explore next steps in taking action).

**Facilitator Tips: Content**

- **Prophecy:** Symbolic story-telling allows Nathan to put a mirror in front of David—to talk about what David has done in a symbolic way, so that David himself agrees with the unjust nature of his deeds. Like David, many of our elected officials are moved by stories about their constituents. If our communities have stories about injustice, we can tell them to our elected officials as an example of the issues that must be resolved for a peaceful and more just future for our children. Biblically speaking, prophets were called to speak out regardless of whether Israel repented, and sometimes Israel did not repent.

- **Wisdom:** Esther risked death, the loss of her identity as a Jew, and compromise—the chance that the king would not fully grant her request but offer to save her family, just the women, etc. Esther’s strategies included: weighing the consequences of her action, prayer and fasting, soliciting prayer and fasting from her community, softening the king with a feast, and boldly stating her claim.

- **Reconciliation:** Jesus’ pattern of questioning (asking the question three times) is a painful acknowledgement of Peter’s denial of Jesus, which happened three times. Reconciliation can extend beyond those reconciling, because it transforms us to go out into the world to do God’s work. Prior to his reconciliation with Jesus, Peter had gone back to what he knew best before he became a disciple—fishing. After years with Jesus, witnessing his death, and hearing rumors of his resurrection, Peter still did not go out into the world to do God’s work. Only after reconciling with Jesus did his ministry of preaching and healing become clear.