

PEACE POINTS

The Core Activity of LPF's "What Is Christian Peacemaking"

Lutheran Peace Fellowship

Jesus' Way of *Shalom*

...an exploration of Biblical peacemaking

For Christians, the role of peacemaker is rooted in our experience of a God who *is peace*, who *gives us peace*, and who *calls us* to be about *making peace with justice*. Peacemaking is a specific way of living out Jesus' teachings and bearing witness to the presence of God.

This "Peace Points" activity can help your group explore the biblical sources of that vision, that gift, that calling. This resource (replaces the original one and two session activity) and contains the following elements:

1. A **Leader's Guide** with clear instructions on how to organize a successful group activity.
2. Originals to copy **Participant Handouts** for as many as 5 (or more) small groups, A, B, C, D, E.
3. A **Peace Litany** to conclude the session that helps reinforce key concepts of the activity.

The original **Peace Points** resource guide, "What Is Christian Peacemaking," offers additional activities and insights for one or two sessions, or a series of five sessions. LPF's discussion essay *Shalom!* offers a fully developed picture of biblical peacemaking, as well as an extensive annotated bibliography.

This activity has proved helpful for youth and adult groups who wish to help their members respond to the gift and call of Jesus Way of *Shalom*. It also offers help in transcending the many myths and stereotypes of peacemaking. For example, Christian peacemaking is not weakness or passive submission but rather a kind of persistent, disciplined, occasionally courageous good will. It is active confrontation with conflict or evil that respects the humanity of the opponent and seeks both to end a threat or injury and reconcile the adversary.

This is the basic one-session activity for
"What is Christian Peacemaking"
developed by Lutheran Peace Fellowship

Leader's Guide

Agenda: 1. Opening prayer, introduction to activity, count off: 6-8 minutes (*approximate*). 2. Small groups, 15-20 min. 3. Full group sharing & compiling results of small groups, 8-10 min. 4. Discuss how might this change the way we approach conflicts in our lives? 8-10 min. 5. Closing "Peace Litany," helps reinforce key concepts, 4 min.

Materials needed: 1. Newsprint, whiteboard, or overhead projector to record group information. 2. Plenty of the LPF "Peace litany" 3. Enough copies of the small group sheets for the largest number of participants you expect to have (and a few extra full sets to for participants who wish to delve deeper)...Groups of 4- 5 seem to invite the most useful discussion, though 3 can work. Count the participants before beginning: fewer than 18, you may wish to form only 4 groups, skip group "E", under 12, skip "D" & "E", more than 25 total, form additional groups beginning with "A". (Plan groups of 4 if 20 are present; a few groups of 5 if more, 3 if fewer.)* The texts are numbered for 5 groups.

Directions: INTRODUCTION After the opening prayer, begin by asking the group, "When Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Blessed are the peacemakers. . .' what does he mean by the word *peace*?" Note what participants answer. Continue by sharing the following: This question is both more important and less simple than it may seem at first: The word for 'peace' used in the Hebrew scriptures, by Jesus and the disciples, and in the early church had a much broader meaning than the word "peace" does in the modern world. The word "shalom" means not just the absence of conflict, or the ending of conflict but also our concepts for "justice," "community," and "wholeness."

SMALL GROUPS "We're going to break into ___* groups to explore this further. Let's count off 1-to-5 (or 4 *) to see what group you're in..." [do so]. "When you get to your group, begin by taking turns reading all the bible texts on your sheet. Break longer texts into several reading parts. When you've read all your texts, take 8 or 10 minutes to discuss and write down a word or phrase for each of the dimensions of peacemaking you discover in your texts. Your "recorder" will share what you came up with when you return to the full group. Is everyone clear how this will go? OK let's count off 1-to-5.*

When finished, point to the areas of the room where you want each group to go and give whatever instructions are needed like "please carry your chairs." Give someone in each group enough sheets for each participant. Then move around the room to see that each group is able to get started reading their texts, and then later that they've begun discussion after 6 or 7 minutes and that someone is writing down a word or phrase for each dimension they discover. A couple minutes before the end of the discussion period ask "can we wrap up in a couple minutes?" If groups seem to need more time, you may extend small group time several minutes (then encourage people to return promptly to the full group. Make sure to leave at least 12-15 minutes for the full group discussion and closing peace litany.)

FULL GROUP: When time is up, ask "May we please come back together and share what each group found in their texts" [If there is much noise, you may need to repeat yourself. When folks are re-assembled, Restate the question:] "Since each group worked with different texts, let's share what you came up with. We'll take turns sharing one a word or phrase that expresses a dimension of biblical peacemaking." Have a scribe with neat printing record the answers on newsprint (or whiteboard or overhead...). Keep going around the groups until you have every idea (usually 10-15 different dimensions, from "love of enemy" to "seeking justice").

"How is this different from what "peace" means in the U.S. today? How would our congregations behave differently if this is what we thought of when we share the peace, or say "Peace be with you" each Sunday? What might you do differently in the way you approach conflicts in your family. . . workplace. . . and world? Make a commitment to make such a change." Close with the "Peace Litany."

For Christians, the role of peacemaker is rooted in our experience of a God who is peace, who gives us peace, and who calls us to be about making peace with justice. Peacemaking is a specific way of living out Jesus' teachings and bearing witness to the presence of God.

The central elements of Christian Peacemaking have strong biblical roots. In this activity begin by taking turns reading all the bible texts on your sheet. Then take 8 or 10 minutes to decide on a word or phrase for each of the dimensions of peacemaking that you discover in your texts. Choose a group member to record your list and later share it with the full group.

1. *Matthew 5:43-45*

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of God in heaven. For God causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (*1b below*)

2. *II Kings 6:20-23*

20 After they entered the city, Elisha said, "God, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then God opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria.

21 When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?"

22 "Do not kill them," he answered. "Would you kill prisoners you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." 23 So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.

3. *Luke 22:24-27*

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, "The leaders of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

4. *Romans 12:14-21*

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it's possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says our God. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals upon head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

5. *Exodus 1:15-21*

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, God gave them families of their own.

1b. Psalms 10:17-18

17 You hear, O God, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,

18 defending the orphaned and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

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1. Matthew 7:1-5

1 Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your neighbor's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

2. Psalms 82:1-4

1 God presides in the great assembly;
God gives judgment among the "gods":
2 "How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?"

Selah

3 Defend the cause of the weak and orphaned;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
4 Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

3. Isaiah 58: 6-11

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-
when you see the naked, to clothe them, and
not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;

then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of God will be your rear guard.
9 Then you will call, and God will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the
hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
11 God will guide you always;
God will satisfy your needs.

4. Matthew 26:52

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to Peter, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

4b. Isaiah 42:6

6 God says to God's servant, "I have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth."

5. Matthew 5:38-42

38 You have heard that it was said, "An eye for eye, and a tooth for tooth. " 39 But I tell you, Do not react violently against one who is evil. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer the other also. 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, give them your cloak as well. 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

4c. Psalms 34:14, I Peter 3:11

14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

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1. Luke 6:20-31, 36

20 Looking at his disciples, he said:
 "Blessed are you who are poor,
 for yours is the kingdom of God.
 21 Blessed are you who hunger now,
 for you will be satisfied.
 Blessed are you who weep now,
 for you will laugh.
 22 Blessed are you when people hate you,
 when they exclude you and insult you
 and reject your name as evil,
 because of the Son of Man.
 23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because
 great is your reward in heaven. For that is how
 their fathers treated the prophets.
 24 "But woe to you who are rich,
 for you have already received your comfort.

2.

25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
 for you will go hungry.
 Woe to you who laugh now,
 for you will mourn and weep.
 26 Woe to you when all people speak well of you,
 for that is how their fathers treated the false
 prophets.
 27" But I tell you who hear me: Love your
 enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless
 those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat
 you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn
 and offer the other also. If someone takes your
 cloak, give freely your tunic also. 30 Give to
 everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what
 belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to
 others as you would have them do to you.
 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

3. Acts 4:34 There were no needy persons among them, for from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them and brought the money from the sales.

3b. Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

4. Micah 4:3-4 (and Isaiah 2:3-4)

3 God will judge between many peoples and will
 settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
 They will beat their swords into plowshares
 and their spears into pruning hooks.
 Nation will not take up sword against nation,

nor will they train for war anymore.
 4 Every man will sit under his own vine
 and under his own fig tree,
 and no one will make them afraid,
 for the Lord Almighty has spoken.

5. Amos 5:21-24

21 "I hate, I despise your religious feasts;
 I cannot stand your assemblies.
 22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and
 grain offerings,
 I will not accept them.

Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,
 I will have no regard for them.
 23 Away with the noise of your songs!
 I will not listen to the music of your harps.
 24 But let justice roll on like a river,
 righteousness like a never-failing stream!

3c. Micah 6:8

8 He has showed you, O people, what is good.
 And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy
 and to walk humbly with your God.

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1. Romans 12:3-5

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

2. Romans 12:16-18

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

3. Matthew 25:35-39 (or 46)

35 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. "

37 Then the righteous will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

God will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these sisters or brothers of mine, you did for me."

4. Isaiah 65:19-24

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress....

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat;

for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,

and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by God—and the descendants as well.

24 Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

5. Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is –what is good, pleasing and perfect.

5b. 2 Cor. 5:17-18

17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to God's self and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

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1. 1 Peter 3:8-15

8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For,

"Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from deceitful speech.	he must seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of our God are on the righteous and God's ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of God is against those who do evil." <i>(quoting Ps 34:12-16)</i>
11 He must turn from evil and do good;	

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

1. Romans 14:1,13,19

1 Accept those whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.
13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your neighbor's way. 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

2. Luke 3:11

John answered, "The one with two tunics should share with the one who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

2. Luke 14:7-8,11

7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:
8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor.... 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

3. Matthew 26:52

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

3. Hosea 2:18-19

18 I will make for you a covenant on that day... and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety.	And I will Join you to me forever; I will join you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.
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4. John 8:23

23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

5. Matthew 5:9

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

A Litany for Peace

Reader: Do you have a vision of God's *Shalom*?

All: Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called. (1 Peter 3:8-9)

Reader: Do you have a vision of Christian peacemaking?

All: "Put your sword back in its place," said Jesus, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52)

Reader: Do you have a vision of Christian community?

All: There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

Reader: Do you have a vision of the Christian in the world?

All: God says to His servant, "I have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth." (Isaiah 42:6)

Reader: Do you have a vision of Jesus' way with conflict?

All: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:43-48) "Seek peace, and pursue it." (Psalms 34: 14, 1 Peter 3:11)

Reader: Do you have a vision of Christian leadership?

All: Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them...But not so with you. Rather, the greatest among you becomes like the youngest, the leader is one who serves." (Luke 22:24-27)

Reader: Do you have a vision of Christian discipleship?

All: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed... Live in harmony with one another.... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. If your enemies are hungry, feed them...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:2ff)

Reader: Have you glimpsed God's vision?

All: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Reader: Have you glimpsed the hope that is in God?

All: I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. (Isaiah 65:19)