



Peacemaker Group

Discover what Scripture says about becoming a biblical peacemaker.

This study is designed to be used in small groups but can also be done in the context of a family, with friends, or as an individual.

Week 1 // Peacemakers embody the heart of Jesus

Connect // 20-25 min.

- Have everyone introduce themselves: Name, neighborhood, connection (if any) to OCC, and why they joined the group.
- Take time to share any concerns that the group has and pray together.

Read // 5 min.

Read the passages twice through in 2 different versions.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17-20
- Matthew 5:9

Observe // 15-20 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Reflect on these questions...

- What got your attention? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- What is Jesus saying to us in terms of peacemaking from these passages?

The message of Jesus is very clear. As Christ followers, we are to engage the ministry of peace and reconciliation. So, what exactly does it mean to be a peacemaker? The word for peacemakers used in Matthew 5:9 is taken from the Hebrew word for peace, *Shalom*, (mentioned 237 times in the Old Testament) which means total or complete well-being—both personally and communally. It's the joining together of opposites, especially with regards to reconciliation of relationship. It is more than an absence of conflict, it's about a day to day reconciled relationship with one another. Making peace is not easy, but it is possible. It starts with LOVE for God and one another.

Discuss // 15-20 min.

- Is there anything that surprises you about the Biblical meaning of peace? How is it different from how we usually think of peace?
- How might it look to be an agent of reconciliation in your home? In your workplace? In your community?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to apply these learnings to everyday life...

- What is God saying to you regarding what we have learned? What are you going to do about it?
- Create & share an **"I will"** statement for the week. (Ex. "I will commit to...") Think SMART statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)

Week 2 // Peacemakers choose love over hate

Connect // 20-25 min.

- Share what you are feeling grateful for this week.
- Take time to share any concerns that the group has and pray together.
- Check in on how everyone did with their “I wills” from the week.

Read // 5 min.

Read the passages twice through in 2 different versions.

- Matthew 5:38-39, 43-44
- Romans 12:14-21

Observe // 15-20 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Reflect on these questions...

- What got your attention? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- What is Jesus saying to us in terms of peacemaking from these passages?

Love is an active choice. As followers of Jesus, we have a choice in how we can respond to conflict, to those who have opposing views and values from us. Do we respond with anger, defense, or even violence or perhaps is there another way? Scripture encourages us to engage gently, with curiosity, with a heart to listen, learn and understand, not to prove others wrong or seek vengeance. We are called to consider the needs of everyone and have respect for one another.

Discuss // 15-20 min.

- How do you typically respond to conflict or to those who disagree with you?
- How difficult is it for you to listen and seek to understand vs reacting? Why?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to apply these learnings to everyday life.

- What is God saying to you regarding what we have learned? What are you going to do about it?
- Create & share an “**I will**” statement for the week. (Ex. “I will commit to...”) Think SMART statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)

Week 3 // Peacemakers embrace diversity

Connect // 20-25 min.

- General check in on how everyone is doing, including how “I wills” went from the week.
- Share any experiences you were able to have this week practicing listening vs reacting. How did it go? What did you find challenging?
- Spend time praying together.

Read // 5 min.

Read the passages twice through in 2 different versions.

- Philippians 2:1-8
- Galatians 3:26-29

Observe // 15-20 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Reflect on these questions...

- What got your attention? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- What is Jesus saying to us in terms of peacemaking from these passages?

That fact that Jesus, fully God, chooses to become human to reach across the divide is truly humbling. Jesus did not allow his “otherliness” to dissuade him from dwelling among us and ultimately giving his life to reconcile us together with Him forever. This is an ultimate picture of Jesus embracing oneness despite differences. Being that we are all created in His image, we are therefore interconnected regardless of our differences (race, nationality, social/economic status, etc.) This does not mean we don’t recognize our differences, in fact, we should celebrate them, it just means there can be unity in diversity!

Discuss // 15-20 min.

- How often do you spend time or interact with those who are different from you? Do you find it difficult or easy? Why or why not?
- What are some ways you can intentionally broaden your community of people to include others different from you? How might God use you to build bridges between groups that are different from one another?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to apply these learnings to everyday life...

- What is God saying to you regarding what we have learned? What are you going to do about it?
- Create & share an “**I will**” statement for the week. (Ex. “I will commit to...”) Think SMART statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)

Week 4 // Peacemakers seek forgiveness

Connect // 20-25 min.

- General check in on how everyone is doing, including how “I wills” went from the week.
- Share any learnings you had this week with broadening your community and/or building bridges with those different than you. How did it go? What did you find challenging?
- Spend time praying together.

Read // 5 min.

Read the passages twice through in 2 different versions.

- Colossians 3:12-14
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- 2 Corinthians 13:11

Observe // 15-20 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Reflect on these questions...

- What got your attention? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- What is Jesus saying to us in terms of peacemaking from these passages?

Peacemaking is deeply personal. The life of a peacemaker calls for a certain response to hurt or when you have been wronged. Peacemakers come to grips with their hurts; they name them, recognize them, and let them go. They forgive others and are not afraid to evaluate themselves on where they have perhaps wronged someone else. Then they seek out forgiveness from that person. The justice called for by Jesus is not one of punishment, vengeance, or retaliation, but one of restoring right relationships. The end result is one of redemption and reconciliation.

Discuss // 15-20 min.

- How do you typically respond when you’ve been hurt or wronged by someone?
- In these situations, is it easy or difficult for you to offer forgiveness? Why or why not?
- Are any situations coming to mind where perhaps you have hurt or wronged someone else? What might be a next step you could make toward making right that relationship?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to apply these learnings to everyday life...

- What is God saying to you regarding what we have learned? What are you going to do about it?
- Create & share an “**I will**” statement for the week. (Ex. “I will commit to...”) Think SMART statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)

Week 5 // Peacemakers stand for justice

Connect // 20-25 min.

- General check in on how everyone is doing, including how “I wills” went from the week.
- Share any next steps you were able to take in reconciling relationship. How did it go? What was challenging?
- Spend time praying together.

Read // 5 min.

Read the passages twice through in 2 different versions.

- Luke 4:16-21
- Isaiah 1:17
- Proverbs 31:8-9

Observe // 15-20 min.

Discover together what the Scripture is saying. Reflect on these questions...

- What got your attention? Any words or phrases that stood out?
- What is Jesus saying to us in terms of peacemaking from these passages?

There are many things that are not right in our world. Every day we see injustice, oppression and suffering all around us. God calls us to be agents of reconciliation in this broken world, to restore that which is broken, to seek justice for those who are oppressed, but this will not come without cost. It will require us to be brave and it will require sacrifice. One of the most powerful things is when we voluntarily enter into hardship or the suffering of another, for the establishment of peace, for justice, and for the well-being of all.

Discuss // 15-20 min.

- What are ways that you personally can be an active participant in bringing about justice and engaging in restorative work?
- In what ways have you noticed this work of peacemaking to be costly? Where have you personally seen sacrifice in your own peacemaking efforts?

Apply // 10 min.

Share how God is asking you to apply these learnings to everyday life...

- What is God saying to you regarding what we have learned? What are you going to do about it?
- Create & share an “**I will**” statement for the week. (Ex. “I will commit to...”) Think SMART statements. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)