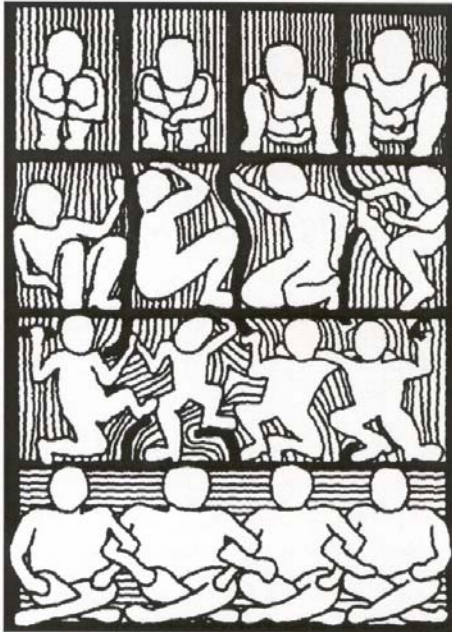


Sample Content



Engaging Our Conflicts: An Exploration of Nonviolent Peacemaking

A module
for learning, practicing, and
experimenting with the power of nonviolence
to transform ourselves and our world

edited by Ken Preston, adapted from
Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living by

Laura Slattery, Ken Butigan, Veronica Pelicaric, and Ken Preston-Pile

A Project of Peace e Bene Nonviolence Service in collaboration with JustFaith
Ministries

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Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service. *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living. Engaging Our Conflicts* is a process for learning, practicing, and experimenting with the power of nonviolence to change us and our world.

Notice: The materials presented in this book are resources for exploring nonviolent living. How these resources are employed is the responsibility of the readers and program participants. Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service does not accept responsibility for the way these materials are presented and used.

Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service

Pace e Bene (pronounced *pah-chay bay-nay*) means “peace and all good” in Italian. St. Francis of Assisi used this expression as a greeting and as a means of proclaiming the way of peace in the midst of a violent world.

Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service is based in Las Vegas, Nevada, with offices and program staff in Oakland, California; Chicago, Illinois; Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Perth, Western Australia, Australia; and a growing network of collaborators in North and South America. Pace e Bene offers resources to assist in the journey of personal and social transformation, such as retreats, workshops, presentations, classes, and a variety of publications, including *The Wolf*, its quarterly newsletter.

Pace e Bene’s staff and animating group engage in nonviolent action and work with a wide range of nonviolent movements for justice and peace. We are available to lead one-day and weekend *Engaging Our Conflicts Workshops* and the weekend *Engaging Our Conflicts Facilitator’s Workshop* in local communities.

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JustFaith Ministries

Inspired by the vision and hope of God's justice and prompted by the cries of the poor, JustFaith Ministries serves to empower both spiritual maturity and parish renewal and outreach by offering and supporting faith formation programs that emphasize Catholic social teaching, the intersection of spirituality and action, and active, compassionate communities of faith.

Personal transformation begins with a willingness to be changed – to encounter faith and understanding of the world in a new way. JustFaith programs that facilitate personal transformation include the JustMatters series of modules which provide an occasion for participants to focus on one particular and critical social issue through the lens of faith.

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Introduction

An Exploration of Nonviolent Peacemaking Engaging Our Conflicts

Welcome to *Engaging Our Conflicts*. This eight-part module offers participants a wide variety of principles, stories, exercises, and readings for learning, practicing, and experimenting with the power of creative nonviolence for personal and social transformation. We invite you to join with others and embark on this exploration of, and experimentation with, nonviolence.

The Need for Skills for Personal and Social Change

Every day, throughout the world people face the daunting challenge and consequences of violence and injustice. Some people confront this violence with violence. Others remain passive in the face of this destructiveness. Neither of these approaches, in our estimation, lead to long-term solutions because they often fail to address the root causes of violence or stop the cycle of destruction, resentment, and retaliation that violence and injustice create.

There are a growing number of people around the world, however, who are using the more effective approach of creative nonviolence, the subject of our module, to bring about change in their societies. Some current examples include the bringing down of Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, the frustrated electoral fraud and restored democracy in the Republic of Georgia in 2003, and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, which cleared the way for the rightful installation of the popularly elected president.

People are also using nonviolence to challenge personal, interpersonal, and social patterns of violence in their own lives. The more we are equipped with the vision and skills of nonviolence, the greater the chance for the emergence of effective nonviolent solutions in our lives and in the world. *Engaging Our Conflicts* has been created for this purpose.

We chose the word “engaging” because, despite the growing success of nonviolence, nonviolent people power is often ignored, misunderstood, and under-utilized. Assumptions based on selective readings of history and a set of persistent stereotypes (which assert that nonviolence is passive, weak, and ineffective, in spite of growing evidence to the contrary) block access to this power and hinder its deployment. The understanding of nonviolence that we have and that is used throughout this book is that nonviolence is a creative and active power for justice and the well-being of all that uses neither violence nor passivity.

Other Peace e Bene Programs

Engaging Our Conflicts is an adaptation of Peace e Bene’s *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living* curriculum for JustFaith Ministries. *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living* is a thorough revision and expansion of *From Violence To Wholeness*, Peace e Bene’s nonviolence education and training program. Since 1997, twenty thousand people have participated in 400 *From Violence To Wholeness* and *Engage* workshops, trainings,

courses, and study groups in the U.S. and around the world. This programming has provided participants with a vision, method, and skills to challenge and transform patterns and policies of violence in their lives and in the larger world. *From Violence To Wholeness* and *Engage* have helped thousands of people in a variety of contexts discover powerful alternatives to violence in their lives and in society, including:

- the residents of a housing project in a Midwestern city in the United States who used this process for a year to constructively transform the despair, rage, injustice, and violence they faced in their interpersonal relationships and in the midst of dehumanizing conditions. After this yearlong program, a pattern of suicide and physical violence ended.
- a *From Violence To Wholeness* facilitator who survived the genocide in Rwanda used FVTW with other Rwandan refugees living in southern France.
- a statewide coalition that used the *From Violence To Wholeness* process for training and strategizing in mounting a long-term campaign to stop state budget cuts.
- communities who have used this process in areas of war and intense social conflict, including hundreds of Colombians who traveled through numerous militarized zones to take part in seven *From Violence To Wholeness* trainings.

These are just a few of many ways that this program has been used to help in the creation of nonviolent transformation.

Building on the success of these projects, this module, developed in collaboration with JustFaith Ministries is designed for use in a wide variety of settings to bring the power and tools of nonviolent living to people throughout society

Engaging Our Conflicts

Engaging Our Conflicts: An Exploration of Nonviolent Peacemaking offers you and others an orientation and process for introducing you to the ongoing spiritual journey of the nonviolent life. It recognizes that this journey is life-long. It does not pretend that one “achieves” this in eight weeks or even eight years. Pace e Bene regards this training as a modest introduction to some tools and techniques with which to experiment. It offers a vision and toolbox that may be handy in applying grounded nonviolence to the challenges of our lives and to the cry for change and healing in our world.

Guided by four commitments to relationship building, diversity, spiritual practice, and nonviolent action, *Engaging Our Conflicts* seeks to support the deep, slow work of becoming more whole human beings. It seeks to do this by:

- Cultivating the integration of the whole person: mind, heart, body, and spirit;
- Connecting personal transformation and social change;
- Offering spiritual grounding for the nonviolent life;
- Exploring the history and practice of active nonviolence;
- Providing concrete skills for putting nonviolent power into practice;
- Creating safe space for transforming personal and social violence;
- Helping people make connections with many different movements for change;
- Encouraging the development of nonviolence support groups to help make a difference in our lives and our world; and
- Offering a leadership training program for those interested in facilitating and

supporting workshops, retreats, and study groups.

The Structure of *Engaging Our Conflicts*

This program is designed to be a small-group learning process in personal and social transformation appropriate for a wide range of settings. It can be led by people with a minimum of facilitation experience, not only by those with significant background in leading group process. The process will be quite familiar for those who have completed the 30-week JustFaith process or another of the JustMatters modules but this is not a prerequisite to participate in this module.

The more experienced a facilitator is, the more effective she or he will likely be, but the curriculum has been organized so that people with little formal facilitation training can lead it..

The Module is composed of eight 2.5-hour small-group sessions.

Part I (Sessions 1-6) familiarizes the participants with how violence and nonviolence work including an exploration of nonviolent responses to structural violence.

Part II (Sessions 7-8) guides participants through the process of developing and carrying out nonviolent action.

Each session uses a multiplicity of learning styles and methods to explore nonviolence: story telling; role-plays; small and large group discussions; creative imagination exercises; journaling; and action. At the end of each session in this book, several blank pages are provided for participants to write about the process, their actions, and their reflections on the readings.

For more details on facilitating this eight-part process, please see Engaging Our Conflicts Facilitation Guidelines in Part Four of this book.

A Word About This Book

Engaging Our Conflicts represents an adaptation of Pace e Bene's *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living* and *From Violence to Wholeness* curricula. *Engaging Our Conflicts* is developed jointly with JustFaith Ministries as part of the JustMatters series. It incorporates Christian scripture, prayers, readings, stories, and Church teaching about justice to empower participants to learn, act, and reflect upon the stories, experiences, principles, tools, and strategies of nonviolent peacemaking for living more fully a Christian life grounded in peace and justice.

Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living is a substantially revised and expanded version of the *From Violence to Wholeness* curriculum that Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service first published in 1996. It reflects the feedback that Pace e Bene has received after leading hundreds of workshops based on this material and after hearing from many people who have used this book in modules, classes, and trainings.

More significantly, *Engage* was broadened to be useful and accessible to people from all walks of life. *From Violence to Wholeness*, emerging as it did from a Franciscan nonviolence project, had been designed primarily as an exploration of Christian nonviolence for people in churches and faith-based organizations. The response in the intervening years has been very robust from many churches and denominations, and we are passionately committed to continuing strong and vital *From Violence To Wholeness* programming in many religious settings.

With *Engaging Our Conflicts*, we believe we have integrated the very best from the development of the process as reflected in *Engage* with the exploration of Christian Nonviolence

as exists in *From Violence to Wholeness*. Furthermore, with *Engaging Our Conflicts*, we believe we have strengthened the experience of Christian nonviolence through additional scripture passage, prayers, stories and Catholic Social Teaching.

An Inclusive Spirituality

The development of this Module has been guided by a desire to offer a nonviolence education process that is inclusive and accessible to people from many contexts and orientations. As a program of JustFaith Ministries, we also wanted to create a program that would resonate with the rich traditions of Catholic social teaching and to fit nicely with the JustFaith process as well. Nonviolence is rooted in the depths that make alternatives to cruelty and injustice possible: love, compassion, hope, possibility, self-transcendence. These are powerful forces and energies that draw human beings to our inmost, elemental foundations, even as they urge us to change the world.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost we acknowledge all the known and unknown cultures, peoples, or communities throughout the world who have experienced enormous violence and have experimented creatively throughout history with the possibilities of active and powerful nonviolence. We especially acknowledge communities of color and all communities who have faced the searing violence of racism, poverty, and cultural destruction. Without their experiments in truth and relentless persistence there would be no body of nonviolent theory or practice of nonviolence as we know it. The book in your hands is rooted in this powerful tradition, and we gratefully honor this reality.

This *Engaging Our Conflicts* Module represents an adaptation of *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living*, written by Laura Slattery, Ken Butigan, Veronica Pelicarić, and Ken Preston, and *From Violence To Wholeness* that was first written by Ken Butigan and published in 1996. (Sr. Patricia Bruno, O.P., contributed to the original book's editing; she also gathered four of the readings used in the original text.)

In addition, this process represents the thought and work of many past and present members of the Pace e Bene community, including Alain Richard, OFM, Rosemary Lynch, OSF, Louis Vitale, OFM, Michele Fischer, SC, Mary Litell, OSF, Peter Ediger, Julia Occhiogrosso, Patricia Bruno, OP, Joan Brown, OSF, Mary Morton, Brendan McKeague, Moira Finley, Graciela Martinez, Cynthia Stateman, Christina Leano, Joi Morton-Wiley, Jonathan Relucion, and Linda Jaramillo. A special thanks to our readers and copyeditors, including L. R. Berger, Peter Ediger, Lyn Fine, Cynthia Okayama Dopke, and Robert A. Irwin; and to our pilot groups: Bay Area Nonviolent Peaceforce; Tidewater/Hampton Roads Network for Nonviolence in Virginia; and Tuolumne County Citizens for Peace.

We have adapted and used exercises and readings from many communities and individuals, and have tried to credit them faithfully in the Credit and Citation portion following the last session.

For more information on any of the readings or exercises, please refer to those pages.

Session 1

The Power of Peacemaking

Objectives

- To become familiar with the goals and methods of the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Study Program
- To begin to explore the meaning and dimensions of nonviolent peacemaking
- To begin getting to know each other

Agenda

- Welcome [2 min.]
- Opening Prayer [3 min.]
- Ritual [15 min.]
- Sharing Our Names [25 min.]
- Sharing our Passion [10 min.]
- Introducing the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Study Program [5 min.]
- Break [15 min.]
- Making Agreements [10 min.]
- Beginning to Explore Nonviolent Peacemaking [20 min.]
- Peacemaking partners [20 min.]
- Conclusion [25 min.]
 - Peacemaking Journal
 - Action/Activity
 - Next Session's Reading
 - Homework
 - Commitments
 - Closing

Notes for the Facilitator

Preparation: Two Weeks Before

- Review the Facilitation Guidelines found in the Introduction. Review the entire session in depth. Role-play or practice setting up and facilitating exercises beforehand. Wherever possible, put material into your own words. Feel free to make notes for this purpose on 3x5 cards or in the book next to the written instructions.
- Always attempt to put the material into your own words.
- Find a site for the study program, or at least Sessions 1 & 2. Make sure the site is accessible if that is a concern of one or more of the participants. Provide the participants with directions to the meeting site.
- Set meeting dates for the eight sessions. It's generally most helpful to meet every week or every other week. There should be several weeks to a month or so between the last two sessions to allow time for the group to complete its nonviolent peacemaking activity/action.
- Establish a meeting time that will work for everyone. Arrange carpools or rides if necessary. Consider providing (or organizing) refreshments.
- Gather everyone's contact information. Make sure that everyone has yours. Complete the Participant roster document sent with the module and return it to JustFaith Ministries.(Box 221348 Louisville, KY 40252)
- If possible, send copies of the Starting Points and the Commitments (found in Session 1) to the participants.

Preparation: On the Day of the Session

- Write the following items (found in Session 1) on separate pieces of easel paper or provide as handouts:
 - The Goals of the program
 - The Agreements
 - The Goals of the program, p.12.
 - The Agreements, p.13.
 - The Description of Nonviolent Peacemaking, p15
 - The three questions under the *Peacemaking Partners* exercise, p.16..
- Arrange the chairs, including yours, in a circle, with a small table in the center. Place candle, holder, and matches on table.
- As people arrive, ask them to sign in with their contact information.
- Play some appropriate background music on a CD player as people enter. Play music at a low volume during the Sharing of Names exercise.
- Make sure everyone has the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Participant Book.
- Invite participants to bring a sacred object to Session 2 that they would be comfortable sharing with the group during the Opening Ritual.

Needed Materials: Name badges; felt pens for writing names; compact disk or audiotape player; recorded music; small table; a candle, candleholder or plate, and matches; easel; easel paper pads (also known as “flip chart” paper); a bell;

art supplies (this could include crayons, color markers, pastels, white 8 1/2 X 11" paper, colored construction paper, clay, wire, aluminum foil, etc).

Session 1

The Power of Peacemaking

WELCOME -- 2 MIN.

Review the Facilitation Guidelines ahead of time as you prepare to begin the Engaging Our Conflicts Program.

After people have arrived and have settled in, present the following in your own words:

Welcome to the first session of the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Program. This program is an exploration of the power and potential of nonviolent peacemaking in our lives and in the world. My/Our name(s) is/are _____ and I/we will be facilitating this program.

In this opening session, we will begin to explore the power of nonviolent peacemaking, and we will also be introduced to the goals and process of this program.

SCRIPTURAL READING AND OPENING PRAYER -- 3 MIN.

Say:

We will open with a scripture passage from the Gospel of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount.

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

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

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." (Matthew

5: 1-12)

Opening Prayer

Spirit of God, we long to mend the broken circle.

We long to heal the fractures in the world around us and within our own souls.

To learn from one another the ways of living fully alive.
To transform those parts of ourselves and our world
that block our making contact with our deepest reality
and with the deepest, richest and most sacred dimensions of all other beings.

Spirit of God, we long to see reality.
To contact our deepest yearning for a world pulsing with justice and truth.
To dream of a society where we all sit down at the Great Banquet,
where every person eats until they are full.

Spirit of God, we long to discover anew the courage deep within us.
To see and to listen. To discover our true selves.
To take steps to stop the cycle of violence
in our homes, in our work-places, in our neighborhoods, in our country, in our wide
world.

OPENING RITUAL – 15 MIN.

Convey the following in your own words:

Let's have a short breathing meditation to ground and center us. Place everything on the floor and sit up straight and comfortably in your chairs. Close your eyes and breathe in and out slowly and deeply. Breathe peace into yourself, and breathe peace out into the world. Bring peace in...and out.

Let this run for a couple of minutes.

Then, say:

As you continue to breathe peace in and out, bring into your heart and mind someone who has meant peace for you in your life...someone who has lived peace and inspired you on your own journey of peace. Maybe this is someone you know personally. Or maybe this is someone you've heard or read about. And as you feel moved, I invite you to come to the table one at a time and light a candle in honor of that person who has been an example of peace for you. Feel free to share this person's name out loud if you feel comfortable doing so, and to say a sentence or two about how she or he has influenced you.

Model this by going first. After the last person has finished, offer the following in your own words:

Let's take a moment of silence to honor and thank the spirit of all those who, in the past or the present, have worked to make the world a better place. May their work support and encourage us on our journey to explore and experiment with the power of nonviolence for personal and social change. Thank you!

Before we start looking at the material, let me share a few housekeeping items.

Share any necessary housekeeping or logistical information.

SHARING OUR NAMES -- 25 MIN.

The following exercise uses an easel, easel paper and non-toxic felt markers. If an easel is not available, distribute a sheet of paper on which each person may write his or her full name. Distribute felt markers for this purpose. To introduce this exercise, put the following into your own words:

As we begin this study program, let's take a moment to get better acquainted. I'd like to invite each of you, one at a time, to write your name on the easel. This can include middle names, nicknames, or names you (or your family) no longer use.

Then take a minute or less to share with the group something about your names. (This could include where they come from; why your parents named you what they did; what your names mean; or anything else you'd like to share about them.) I'll begin.

Model this process by going first. As you are about to finish, share with the group the name you prefer to be called. When you are finished, ask the person to your right to go. When she or he is finished, ask the person what she or he prefers to be called. Welcome the person using her or his name and clapping. -Then invite the next person to the right. Continue this process around the circle until everyone has shared. Then share in your own words the following sentiment:

Sharing our names, and where they come from, can help call to mind the web of relationships that has made us who we are: our families, our ancestors, our cultures, and the societies we have emerged from. This study program explores the importance of

A human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. [We] experience [our]selves, [our] thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical illusion of [our] consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for only the few people nearest us. Our task must be to ... widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.

connectedness are at the heart of nonviolent peacemaking.

SHARING OUR PASSION -- 10 MIN.

Share the following in your own words:

Before introducing the goals of the *Engaging Our Conflicts* program, I invite you to take a moment to think about an issue that you are passionate about, that you want to make change in and that you are interested in taking action on. As you shall see, nonviolence is not a passive venture, but an active engagement in the world around us. What is it that you hope to address with nonviolent action?

After a minute or two of silence invite the participants to share, at whatever level they feel comfortable, the issue they are interested in taking action on. Ensure that they know it is okay not to share. After all who have spoken that want to, thank them for their sharing and conclude in your own words:

The *Engaging Our Conflicts* study program includes learning about nonviolence, and applying it by taking nonviolent action to transform injustices we are concerned about. Allow the issue you identified to serve as an anchor and reference point for you as you continue through the weeks of the program. In the last several sessions we will plan and take a nonviolent action together.

INTRODUCING THE ENGAGING OUR CONFLICTS STUDY PROGRAM -- 5 MIN.

Share the following in your own words:

Before we continue, let's take a look at the goals of the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Program. These goals include:

- To strengthen our understanding of and commitment to the practice of nonviolent peacemaking
- To cultivate a deeper communal practice of nonviolent peacemaking in our group, culminating in a group action/activity

How are we going to achieve these goals?

Overview of Content of Sessions:

- Session 1 *The Power of Peacemaking*
- Session 2: *The Dynamics and Experiences of Violence*
- Session 3: *The Principles of Nonviolent Peacemaking*
- Session 4: *Interpersonal Nonviolence: Tools for Transforming Conflicts*
- Session 5: *Noticing and Responding to Structural Violence*
- Session 6: *Nurturing Nonviolent Peacemaking Communities: Construction and Resistance*
- Session 7: *Planning a Nonviolent Peacemaking Activity/Action*

- Session 8: *Evaluation and Integration: Where We Go From Here*

Overview of a Typical Session:

Each 2 ½ hour session starts with goals and an agenda outline, with times allotted next to each agenda item. I want to stress that the agenda is a guideline. Occasionally we may spend more time on items than the allotted time. This is especially true if deep sharing happens, and transformation is occurring in the group. If we don't get to all the items in the outline, that's ok. We would like to hold an attitude that whatever happens is what is supposed to happen. Conversely, sometimes the facilitator(s) will move the group along to the next agenda item because we would like to cover more material. For example, we may not call on all the hands that are raised during a large group debrief. If you have your hand raised but you are not called on, perhaps you can ask us the question aton the break. Once again, we would like us all to hold these situations lightly. We will do the best we can to balance covering the material, allowing depth sharing to occur, and equalize the sharing amongst all of you.

Overview of Process of Sessions:

This program uses an interactive group process approach where we are all co-teachers and co-learners together. The approach uses a variety of learning styles, including prayers, readings, small group and large group sharing, interactive exercises, journaling, and action items. It strives to achieve a balance between education, skills-building, and transformation. It focuses somewhat less about knowledge of nonviolent peacemaking, and more about developing the skills to become a better peacemaker (for example, through practicing in role-plays), and putting them into practice weekly between sessions (in your own personal actions).

BREAK -- 15 MIN.

Five Starting Points of the Study Program

- **We begin by acknowledging the roots of nonviolent peacemaking.** The *Engaging Our Conflicts* Study Program acknowledges the many rich sources of nonviolent peacemaking, especially movements of poor people, communities of color, and all who have faced fierce oppression and who have long histories of nonviolent struggle.
- **Nonviolent peacemaking does not mean perfection!** Alain Richard, a former Peace Bene staff member who has been engaged in peacemaking activities for much of his life, often says, "Just because I talk about nonviolence doesn't mean that I *am* nonviolent. I will probably not be really nonviolent until fifteen minutes after I am dead!" Nonviolence is not a state of idealistic perfection. It is something we construct and grow into. As Gandhi stressed, nonviolence is a continual series of "experiments with truth" through which we gradually learn how to be nonviolent.
- **Nonviolent peacemaking does not assume that the world is nonviolent.** Sometimes we think that for nonviolent peacemaking to be effective, the whole world has to somehow become nonviolent. Nonviolent peacemaking does not hold to this illusion. In fact, it assumes that the world is often violent and unjust. But it also recognizes that there is a path that can heal.

Nonviolence does not attempt to create a world where there is no conflict. It recognizes that we face conflict all through our lives. This program explores the ways in which nonviolence is a more effective means of addressing and resolving conflict than violence.
- **The Engaging Our Conflicts Study Program is only a first step.** The path of nonviolent peacemaking is a lifelong journey. Much experimentation, learning, and action are needed. Therefore, we are modest about this ten-part study program. Typically, one will not fully understand, much less integrate, the power of nonviolence in such a short time. Nevertheless, this process has an important goal: to offer an orientation to nonviolent living and to begin the process of grounding oneself in that life. *Engaging Our Conflicts* introduces a vision and a toolbox of methods and techniques for nonviolent peacemaking.
- **This process is grounded in our Christian spiritual tradition.** We, as people of faith, believe that God is a part of this transformative power for action. That is not saying that we wait on God, rather we accept God's invitation and become the actors of this invitation inspired and inspired by the Holy.

MAKING AGREEMENTS -- 10 MIN.

Present the following in your own words:

Engaging Our Conflicts depends on creating safe space for sharing and learning. Safe space helps create an environment where we are free to reflect deeply on our own experience of violence and nonviolence. Based on past experience and the work of other groups, we invite the group to agree to use the following four guidelines. A fuller version of each of these agreements is found in the nearby sidebar.

I invite a participant to read these four agreements aloud to the group.

Ask for a volunteer to read the following:

During our time together:

- I agree to share and participate at whatever level feels safe and comfortable.
- I agree to consider sharing and participating when I feel uncomfortable because I know that's when learning occurs.
- I agree to maintain confidentiality about personal stories or experiences shared in my small group or in the large group, unless I have been given permission to share them with others.
- I agree to step up when I've been quiet in the group, and to step back when I have shared to allow others to have a chance to share.
- I agree to listen with my full and complete attention, and to wait until a person has completed his or her thoughts before I speak. I agree not to interrupt or speak out of turn.
- I will strive to appreciate and honor our differences.

Then ask:

Are there any questions?

Are there any modifications or additions?

Do we agree to use these guidelines during this program?

When agreement is reached, post the list on a nearby wall for this and all subsequent sessions.

Explain that, since the facilitator may not always notice if one of these agreements has been broken, all participants should feel empowered to interrupt the process if they notice this has happened and ask that the situation be addressed.

BEGINNING TO EXPLORE NONVIOLENT PEACEMAKING -- 20 MIN.

Brainstorm and write on the easel (in a column down the left side of the paper) responses to the following question:

What are some typical beliefs, societal views or stereotypes about nonviolent peacemaking? What might be some of your own concerns about nonviolent peacemaking?

Some of the examples may include: Nonviolent peacemaking is passive, ineffective, utopian; nonviolent people are wimpy, unpatriotic, unemployed, unrealistic, doormats. Develop a long list. Then reflect with the group on this list. For example, ask people to reflect on “passivity” – what does this mean? Why do they think people draw this conclusion? Explore several of these terms and help the participants explore the reasoning behind these views and attitudes. Then ask:

What are some of the “actual” qualities or attributes of people who practice nonviolent peacemaking?

Write down the words people suggest in a column on the right side of the easel paper (opposite the list of “typical beliefs”).

This list may include qualities like courage, creativity, spiritual centeredness, passion, a disarming spirit, compassion, and determination. Reflect with the group on this list. Then ask:

When we contrast these two lists, what do we see?

Then ask participants:

Where do you think the “typical beliefs” about nonviolent peacemaking come from? Do we hold some of these beliefs? What impact do we think they have?

After the group reflects on this, share the following in your own words:

It is crucial that we explore the typical beliefs – what we might call “stereotypes” – -- of nonviolence.

This is important because many people in our society hold these views. This is also important because it is quite possible that *we ourselves* hold these views. Our views about nonviolent peacemaking can sometimes reinforce the rationale for “acceptable violence.” This rationale can sound like this:

If nonviolent peacemaking is ineffective, then the only recourse must be violence. When these attitudes and assumptions lead people to dismiss nonviolent peacemaking,

they prevent us from claiming and making use of one of the most important forms of power at our disposal.

This study program will be an opportunity to explore this power and see if it offers ways to create alternatives in our lives and in the world. As we begin our nonviolent peacemaking journey, we are all invited to test these “stereotypes” and “qualities and attributes” of nonviolent peacemaking throughout our time together.

I also invite you to explore and test the following understanding of nonviolent peacemaking that we will be using:

Tape the definition of nonviolent peacemaking to the wall, and then read it aloud:

Nonviolent peacemaking is a creative power for justice and the well-being of all
that uses neither passivity nor violence.

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his [or her] own heart?”

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, 1970 Nobel Laureate

PEACEMAKING PARTNERS -- 20 MIN.

Please convey the following in your own words:

At the start of every session after the opening prayer, you will have about 15 minutes to check-in with one other person on the integration of last week’s material, anything you reflected on in the week in between, and the readings for the current week’s session. As a group you can choose whether you will have the same person throughout the program or have a new partner each week.

In this program we invite each participant to form a “peacemaking partnership” with one other member. A peacemaking partner is someone you can reflect with about the issues and material of this program on an ongoing basis. This partnership will offer one another mutual support and encouragement in the peacemaking journey.

Specifically, at the beginning of each session we will check in with our peacemaking partner on our “homework” and on what has come up for us in the intervening time. If partners wish, they can also check in between sessions.

To form our “peacemaking partnerships,” I invite everyone to get up from your seats and to come out into the center of the room.

Form a line in alphabetical order using your last name. Then pair up the first person with the last person, the second with the second to last, etc.

We have several options for peacemaking partners in this program:

1. Stay with the same partner throughout the program (advantage: get to know one person deeply and can contact that person between each session).
2. Each person has a new partner each week (advantage: get to know many people in the group a bit more deeply).
3. Stay with one partner for first four sessions, then each person gets a new partner for final four sessions (advantage: get to know two people fairly deeply).

Do a quick tally of hands and see if people can decide on one option.

If there is an odd number, ask the final group of three people to form a group.

Share the following in your own words:

Please turn to the person you are with and meet your Peacemaking Partner. I invite you to pull two chairs together, reintroduce yourselves, and reflect together on the following questions, with each person taking one minute for each question:

Post the questions for partners to discuss.

- “Some wishes I have for this study program are...”
- “Some fears or reservations I have about this study program are...”
- “Some support I could use might be...”

After four minutes, sound the bell and invite the other person to share on the questions. Then, after the pairs have finished sharing, state the following:

As we travel together, do not hesitate to talk over your experiences with each other. And if you have questions, bring them in. They are often the most intriguing part

“Nonviolence is not primarily a tactic. It is a way of living and being and expressing the truth of your soul in the world.”

Daniel Berrigan

CONCLUSION -- 25 MIN.

Present the following components one at a time:

Peacemaking Journal

Please use the blank page entitled “Peacemaking Journal” following this section to describe any feelings, thoughts, images, or issues sparked by this session, and during the week as you reflect back or as you complete your homework and readings. These journals are confidential. It is up to you if you would like to share from it with your partner or in the larger group.

Action/Activity

Take one or more of the following actions between now and the next session:

- a) Ask one or two people what they think of when they hear the words: “nonviolent peacemaking;”
- b) Ask one or two people what they think of when they hear the words: “nonviolent power;”
- c) Take some time to reflect on specific people who have modeled what might be considered nonviolent peacemaking. Pick one or two of these people and express your gratitude for their presence in your life and how they have influenced you. Then, on the second blank page, write down any reflections you have after completing one or more of these actions.

Next Session’s Reading

To prepare for the next session, please do the readings and reflections found at the end of this session and at the end of Session 2 between now and the next gathering and write any thoughts or insights that come from the readings on the blank page entitled “Reflections on Readings” on pp. 32 and 62. (Please do *not* read the material in the *body* of Session 2, and for subsequent sessions ahead of time because some of the exercises are better experienced first than read.)

Homework - Other

Participants are invited to bring a sacred object to Session 2 which they would be comfortable sharing with the group during Session 2’s Opening Ritual.

Commitments

Our Conflicts Study - Program Commitments

Weekly components of the *Engaging Our Conflicts* program include:

- Attending each session
- Journaling (at least one page)
- Nonviolent action/activity (as described at the end of each session)
- Reading the 2 or 3 readings of each session and noting reflections
- Reflecting with my Peacemaking Partner

Please indicate your willingness to participate fully in this program by making the commitment to yourself *before the beginning of the third session*. You are invited to symbolize your commitment by signing below. If you can't attend a particular session, please let the facilitator know.

*Understanding that the more I put into something, the more I get out
of it,
I commit myself to completing each of the components of the
Engaging Our Conflicts Study Program.*

Signature _____

CLOSING -- 15 MIN.

Sharing Our Hopes and Goals

As our closing, I'd like to ask for a moment of silence for each of us to consider what our hopes are in learning about nonviolence for ourselves, our community, and our planet. If you want, feel free to open your book and write them in the space provided.

My hope or goal for this process is:

Invite the participants to close their books and join in a circle holding hands.

I invite each person, one at a time, to again share your name, where you are from, and, at whatever level you feel comfortable, a hope or goal for your participation in this process.

After everyone is finished ask people to take a moment of silence.

Summary of Session:

Say the following in your own words, and provide a narrative rather than bullet point summary:

- Recited an Opening Prayer from the Sermon on the Mount and The Peace Prayer of St . Francis
- Performed an opening ritual where we each lit a candle and made present an inspiring peacemaker in our lives.
- Shared stories about our names with each other
- Introduced the *Engaging Our Conflicts* Study Program
- Made agreements about how we would interact with each other
- Began to explore peacemaking by looking at its stereotypes and characteristics
- Chose a nonviolent partner
- Learned about how we will integrate and apply what we learned between sessions through the Journal and Action/Activity items
- Looked at how we will prepare for the next session with the reading
- Reflected on our hopes and goals for the process

Now we will close the session with the Peace Prayer of St. Francis.

THE PEACE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS -- 2 MIN.

Read this, or sing this, together:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Key Organizations:

NONVIOLENCE TRAINING

Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service. www.paceebene.org; 2501 Harrison St, Oakland, CA 94612, 510-268-8765, info@paceebene.org. Launched in 1989, Pace e Bene cultivates nonviolent living and the emergence of nonviolent cultures through training, publishing, advocacy, and spiritual practice. Pace e Bene has led hundreds of nonviolence trainings, workshops, retreats and classes for thousands of people throughout the world.

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP/USA). www.avpusa.org; 1050 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104; 877-926-8287; avp@avpusa.org. AVP empowers people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation, and trust. AVP/USA is an association of community-based groups and prison-based groups offering experiential workshops in personal growth and creative conflict management. The national organization provides support for the work of these local groups.

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR/USA). www.forusa.org; 521 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960; 845-358-4601. FOR seeks to replace violence, war, racism, and economic injustice with nonviolence, peace, and justice. It is an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. They educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in nonviolent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.

Training for Change, 3241 Columbus Avenue, South Minneapolis, MN 55407; peacelearn@igc.org • (612) 827-7323; www.trainingforchange.org. Training for Change offers workshops, teaching skills and tools to individuals and groups working for nonviolent social change.

Peacemaking Journal (Each session) Action/Activity (Each Session)

Take one or more of the following actions between now and the next session:

- a) Ask one or two people what they think of when they hear the word: “nonviolent peacemaking.”
- b) Ask one or two people what they think of when they hear the words: “nonviolent power.”
- c) Take some time to reflect on specific people who have modeled what might be considered nonviolent peacemaking. Pick one or two of these people and express your gratitude for their presence in your life and how they have influenced you.

Write down any reflections you have after completing one or more of these actions.