

# starters

## called to be peacemakers

### AIMS

To explore some examples of conflict that occur in the gospels and relate our discussions of these examples to our witness as Christians today.

### INTRODUCTION

The call for Christians to be peacemakers is one that is emphasised by the United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship. In this material they invite us all to consider our calling as peacemakers from a biblical perspective and see how we might be more faithful to this aspect of our discipleship.

### YOU WILL NEED

A written version of the Bible is probably best for this activity that involves a close and careful reading of the written text. You may want to consider looking at several different translations to see how this influences your discussion.

The main thing you will need is a context to meet in which the participants feel comfortable and confident in order to contribute. This could be over a meal, or at least consider serving refreshments, in which case you could use this as a kind of extended starter on peace and make it to a whole session. Equally you could use this at the start of a meeting or in a more informal worship setting. Make sure people know the names of other group members before you start and give people a chance to introduce themselves.

**READ**      **Matthew 26:47 – 52**

### DISCUSS

1. Why do you think at least one of the disciples was armed with a sword?
2. Do you think Jesus knew about this and/or encouraged it?  
(you might like to look up Luke 22:38 as a contrasting passage)
3. Do you think Jesus' statement in verse 52 is a call always to find a non-violent means to resolve conflict?

**READ**      **Matthew 5:9, 43 – 48**

### DISCUSS

1. How do these verses support or conflict with your response to question 3 above?
2. Do you think that individuals should be allowed to carry weapons to protect themselves?
3. How does this link in with your attitude to, for example, young people who carry knives?
4. In what ways do you feel called to be a peacemaker?

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### TAKING THINGS FURTHER

Depending on the amount of time available and if the group wants to consider this issue further you might like to think about the following:

Consider Fred Kaan's hymn "God, while the world with war and hatred burns" as a basis for discussion especially noting the lines "Weep with our tears, as every weapon made robs yet another child of human bread" and the links between justice and peace that it makes.

The words for this hymn can be found at <http://www.stainer.co.uk/hymns/remember.html>

If you want to use this hymn with your group remember you may need copyright permission from Stainer and Bell.

### Prayer

Close your session with prayer, perhaps by gathering up all the suggestions about peacemaking that have been generated by the group.

Conclude by saying the International Prayer for Peace together. You can find this at Rejoice and sing 627.

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more starters please revisit the menu. If you want to do onto a main course considering Jesus effect on the people he met and his call to discipleship you may want to try one of the new Markan Encounters that will be on the website after Easter.

### Acknowledgements

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