

## Appendix C -- Closing Prayer, Session 1; Facilitator's Remarks, Session 2



PRAY  
AND ACT  
FOR  
PEACE



### A Peacemakers Prayer

Gracious Lord, we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression, and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence. And we pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression, help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them..., and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle, help us to remember that you fed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish..., and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others tempts us not to speak up for the least among us, help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers..., and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive, help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you..., and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world, help us to remember your sacrifice..., and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves in serving you and our neighbors.

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers. Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children. Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self honesty and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror.

AMEN

*Written by Jack Knox, pastor of Salem (OR) Mennonite Church. Jack recently finished a three-year term on the Peace and Justice Support Network Leadership Team.*

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For more information on Mennonite Church USA peace and justice work: <http://MennoniteUSA.org/peace>  
To receive weekly prayers: <http://peace.mennolink.org/prayersforpeace.html>

## Facilitator's Opening and Closing Remarks, Session 2

*The following remarks and passages of Scripture were used to frame Session 2, an evening devoted to hearing the voices of different Israelis and Palestinians and to considering the ways that traumatic experiences can affect individuals, families, and societies over many generations.*

### **Welcome**

(Brief welcoming remarks, noting members of the class who are ill or traveling and asking for prayers on their behalf.)

### **Overview**

Last week, thanks to Ambassador Wilcox, we got an overview of the history and politics shaping the situation in the Holy Land today.

Tonight, we will turn our attention to Israelis and Palestinians as individuals

- whose memories have deep roots in that history
- whose perceptions of each other are shaped by those memories
- whose lives are affected by the realities of the conflict today
- who have various visions of the future
- and whose choices of how to act towards one another will, ultimately, determine how the future will really turn out

Of course, we can't meet all the individuals who live in the Holy Land this evening.

There are approximately 7.5 million of them living in Israel and another 3.5 million living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Instead, we have worked hard to find a sample of voices that represent the wide range of experiences and perspectives – some starkly divergent...others surprisingly similar.

We're about to ask you to break into four groups to share the narratives you've read. In each group you will hear four Israeli voices and four Palestinian voices.

With a few exceptions, the voices to be shared in Groups A and B are the same, as are those in Groups C and D.

We don't expect you to agree with the perspective of the person whose narrative you have read. Indeed some of them may be very troubling to you.

All we ask is that you faithfully represent these voices to one another....and that you listen to them with your hearts as well as your heads....so that you may hear "where they are coming from," so to speak.

### **Schedule & Send-off**

(Brief review of the schedule for the evening, as written up on a flip-chart, with approximate starting times for each segment.)

Following tonight's class, I will e-mail everyone the complete set of narratives, just in case you are intrigued with some of the voices you have heard this evening and want to read their narratives.

As we head to our respective groups, I invite you to consider this line from the Book of Job:

*Did not he who made me in the womb make them?  
Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?*  
(Job 31:15, New International Version).

As children of God, let's now go meet our sisters, brothers, and cousins.

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*Class members then moved into their assigned break-out groups. They reconvened for a short "debriefing" on the experience of sharing and hearing the narratives. Following a refreshment break, they participated in a plenary discussion of trauma, which led into the closing reflection.*

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### **Closing Reflection & Prayer Circle**

Now let's take our seats, close our eyes, and take a deep breath...

While you're getting centered, listen to what the Scriptures have to say about healing. This is Psalm 30, verses 1 through 5:

- I will exalt you, O Lord; for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
- O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me.
- O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.
- Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name.
- For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

- I invite you now to take the next five minutes to reflect on what you have heard this evening.
- You may wish to think what you might say to the person whose narrative you shared earlier.
- You may wish to compose a prayer for that person.
- Or you may wish to write in your journal or simply to meditate quietly.
- After five minutes, we'll rise and form a circle to end the evening in prayer.

*(Class participants and facilitators offered voluntary prayers during the closing prayer circle.)*