

Overcoming Community Violence Study Reflection Materials



Some general questions

What struck you positively in this story?

What did you find challenging, or difficult?

What can we learn from this story to apply to our own situation and journey towards peace?

Some further questions arising from the stories in the Community circle of peacemaking

Who are the seeds of peace in our community?

How could we demonstrate the servant lifestyle of Jesus more effectively in the ways we run our activities and relate to others?

What are power structures in our communities which need transforming?

Jesus teaches us how to cope with our frustrations – and interruptions (Dave Andrews)

How can we live so that interruptions are grasped as opportunities?

What is 'impossible' for us in our community?

Which plant pot do we need to break?

Which roots, water and food do we need to find?

What activities of our group, church or community could be carried out more intentionally for peace and reconciliation? What changes would we need to make?

Which groups in our community can we link with to overcome violence?

What opportunities are there for celebrating peace and reconciliation together?

Some further thoughts for reflection and discussion

'We each stand in need of healing, but in this ministry we recognise also the social dimension. The healing of divided communities and nations and the healing of the earth itself, have their place alongside the healing of broken bodies, hurt minds and wounded hearts, and of the hurts and divisions within ourselves. So too our prayers are complementary to the work of medicine and other forms of healing, which are also channels of God's loving and transforming purpose.' (Iona Abbey Worship Book p.68)

SEEDS OF PEACE

What is a safe community?

Can you come up with a definition of a 'safe community'?

What does/would it look/sound/smell/feel like?

- here is one definition from the **pt'chang** '*nonviolent community safety and peacebuilding handbook*' (<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ptchang/welcome.htm>)

'Safety is more than the absence of danger.

Safety is pro-active: the creation of space in which all people, women and men, gay, lesbian, bi or straight and of all colours and cultures, can experience and express their life to the fullest.

It is about overcoming fear, rebuilding communities and resisting from a place of strength.'

A few ideas for Week Without Violence activities (see www.ywca.org.au)

- Host a showing of a play that highlights the impact of gender-based violence and how women can overcome these challenges.
- Make a personal pledge never to condone any form of gender-based violence, whether directed at you or a woman you know.
- Organise a series of self-esteem building workshops for women of all ages that stresses the importance of having zero tolerance for any kind of abuse.
- Provide a space for women who have survived and triumphed over violence to share their stories.
- Start a campaign challenging your neighbours to refuse to turn a blind eye to abuse and report any domestic violence they witness.
- Design and sell t-shirts with the slogan 'Real men don't hit women'.
- Start a 'real men don't hit women' campaign that challenges men not to use violence and provides anger and conflict management training for men and boys.
- Lobby your government to improve gender-based violence laws and apply stricter implementation.
- Host a forum on violence against women. Likely speakers might be from the local police, a women's shelter or domestic violence service or a YWCA program.
- Conduct a safety audit of local public spaces perhaps a bus interchange, or railway station or local park. Take your findings to your local council and ask them what they can do to help.
- Write to territory/state/federal MPs and ask them what actions they are taking on safe public transport, safe housing and women's access to emergency accommodation, trauma services and reproductive and sexual health services.
- Mark White Ribbon day (November 25) – International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Ask your local Lions or Rotary club to help host a forum to talk about the role of men in combating violence against women and work with UNIFEM to distribute ribbons and materials
- Host a screening of '*Women Are.....*' the World YWCA documentary featuring the testimonies of women living with and fighting against HIV and AIDS for World Aids Day on December 1st.
- Write a letter to the editor highlighting your campaign activities and the ongoing problem of violence against women in your community.
- *Other ideas?...*