

Overcoming National 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 National circle of peacemaking

What people and stories do we find it difficult to listen to?

Which stories do we listen to but struggle really to hear properly?

What do the words 'Reconciliation', 'sorry' and 'going home' mean to you?

If there was to be a Treaty (or series of treaties) between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, what would you expect to see in it?

How would the process of establishing such a Treaty (or treaties) best be conducted?

If you were forced to become a refugee...

i) If you had to quickly flee Australia and live in a different country, what would you miss most about Australian culture?

ii) Imagine you have to quickly flee your house because of war or others wish to harm you because of your political opinions, religion or race. You can only take three things. What would you take?

iii) You escape to a new country for safety but you know no-one there? What would you most need and value in this new place?

iv) In a new country you are separated from close family members, eg your father or sister or brother? How do you feel? Can you think of ways to try to contact your family?

Some further thoughts for reflection and discussion

What Churches (and others) can do to continue the journey to Reconciliation

Many things can be done to assist the process of Reconciliation

* (above all) making deeper relationships with Indigenous people within and beyond the churches: listening to people's stories, learning about Indigenous culture, offering support and apologies where appropriate

* marking and celebrating the *Week of Prayer for Reconciliation* and remembering Indigenous issues in prayer and worship at other times

* discovering the story of the local land and community, and acknowledging prior ownership of church land by appropriate means

* supporting Indigenous claims for justice and recognition

* checking out examples of positive steps forward

...what ideas do you have?

SEEDS OF PEACE

Exploring Culture

Think about your own culture and possible loss of culture.

Discuss in pairs or small groups features of your own culture, including:

- a) Australian culture broadly
- b) your ethnic community or background and
- c) your own family

Culture involves assumptions about how people should behave and what is most valued by a group. Key aspects include language, clothing, food, religion, music, family relationships, special festivals or events, types of education, belief systems, literature, games, myths and laws.

ii) What parts of your culture do you most like? What parts do you find most difficult? Would you like to change some parts of your culture?

iii) If you, your parents or grandparents came to Australia from another country, explain what cultural changes happened for you or them? What was easiest and hardest to change?

iv) What changes have you seen in the broad Australian culture in the past 50 years?

Refugee Solutions

Imagine fleeing your country with virtually nothing and arriving in a makeshift refugee camp in a remote area in a neighbouring country:

- *Violence is rife in the camps, but you must stay because you are dependent on aid handouts.*
- *Heavy rains are leading to flooding and sewerage spills, causing cholera or typhoid outbreaks.*
- *You are restricted from getting health care, housing and education.*
- *Your new host country will not give you legal recognition as a refugee residing in the country and you live in fear of being harassed or detained by local police as an 'illegal'.*
- *You are not permitted to work and may be arrested or detained because you are forced to work illegally to support your family.*
- *You may live in fear of being rounded up and deported back to the country that you fled.*
- *You apply for resettlement to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but you are told you have to wait for years for a place (only 1% of refugees were resettled in 2003).*

(nb. These are common problems in refugee camps. They are also the reasons why many refugees try to leave and find safer countries in which to seek asylum)

Discussion starters:

- *Imagine you have lived in such a refugee camp for over 10 years.*

What might have happened to your family and friends in the camp and back home?

What dreams would you have and what solutions?

- *Imagine arriving in Australia after 10 years in a refugee camp.*

What difficulties might you face settling? What work could you do?

What kind of help would you like?

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