



Peace with Justice

ADULT DISCUSSION



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

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WE ARE FAMILY

Though congregations may observe Peace with Justice Sunday at any time, they are encouraged to celebrate with a special offering on the Sunday after Pentecost, May 30, 2021. These discussion questions can be used in a small group or Bible study before or after the Special Sunday is observed. Feel free to adapt them to fit the context of your congregation. Consider including the liturgy in a printed bulletin or handout to remind your congregation of this special day in the life of the church. Tie the fullness of this Special Sunday with a coordinated sermon starter, offering talk along with children's resources, and youth activities at ResourceUMC.org/PWJS.

This study guide offers several ways to explore peace with justice ministries through The United Methodist Church. Adjust the activities and questions to fit your context and integrate highlights of your church's specific ministries or those of the small group.

1. GATHERING

Invite people to share the joys and struggles of the week.

2. OPENING PRAYER

Holy Creator,
Thank you for this time together to explore peace with justice. In this gathering, as we explore your word, reveal to us those neighbors whom we too often choose not to see as siblings. Led by your Spirit, guide us to actions that connect us as one family. We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.



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3. PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY

On the Sunday after Pentecost (or whatever date it will be observed) our church will recognize Peace with Justice Sunday and receive a special offering. When we support Peace with Justice Sunday, our gifts become a voice for advocacy around the world.

For example, The United Methodist Board of Church and Society worked for nearly a decade in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, other faith groups, and over 135 nations to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As of January 22, 2021 it is illegal for nations to develop, produce, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or to store nuclear weapons on their lands. (For more information visit: <https://www.icanw.org/> and <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nuclearprohibition>)

Together we strengthen God's family with ministries that challenge structures of inequality while empowering people and communities through systemic change.

4. VIDEO

(select one or both of these videos to watch and discuss)

Matthew's Voices *(recorded before the pandemic)*

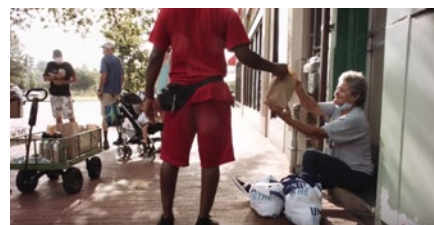
<https://youtu.be/ekCn8Qxd9Uw>



In Indiana, a Peace with Justice grant through the annual conference supports Matthew's Voices, a choir that offers access to, and addresses the need for, the arts in populations in Indianapolis that often go untouched, unloved and underserved. The ministry is hosted through Roberts Park United Methodist Church.

COVID-19 Micro Grants

<https://youtu.be/bKE6BifAjuQ>



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In the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference, more than 90 churches received grants to support community outreach to thousands of their most vulnerable neighbors.

As you watch the video write down where you see good news of God's love.

Where do you see connections in our humanity as children of God?

Spend a few minutes discussing the video.

5. SCRIPTURE READING

Ask someone to read Romans 8:12-17 and invite participants to write down words and phrases that resonate with them.

Go around and allow each person to say a word or phrase until all have had an opportunity to speak.

6. SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION

- A. During the pandemic, many of us have missed large family gatherings. Share a special memory of a family celebration or reunion.
- B. Have you ever felt a connection with someone whom you would describe as a sibling even though you are not related?

- C. What keeps us from caring with the same tenderness and support that we treat our immediate family those people who are experiencing injustice?
- D. Paul writes in verse 14 (NRSV), "all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God." How is our church being led by the Spirit to connect with other children of God?

7. FAITH AND FACTS

(If there is a Faith and Facts subject that fits with a specific ministry of your church, considering discussing that topic instead.):
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/faith-and-facts-cards>)

Paul uses the metaphor of slavery to describe being trapped by fear. United Methodist Peace with Justice ministries recognize that modern-day slavery literally is trapping people in distressing situations.



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A D U L T D I S C U S S I O N

Review this **Faith and Facts** card:

<https://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/human-trafficking-faith-and-facts-card-415>

and the corresponding **Social Principles**:

<https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/eradicating-modern-day-slavery-6032>

How can our church build peace with justice that addresses human trafficking?

8. CLOSING PRAYER

Holy One,

We pray for those who are enslaved by systems of injustice. Lead us by your spirit to be liberators. Show us how to support our siblings. Guide us to be peace builders who value every person who is precious in your sight. Give us humility to recognize when our actions are harming others and fill us with Christlike courage to speak truth to power.

Amen.



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