



War and Peace

OBJECTIVE

To help groups think about the phrase “What would Jesus do?” not as a cliché, but as the best simple phrase available for making Christly decisions in difficult times.

FOCUS THIS WEEK

What did Jesus teach about peace, justice and revenge? What was his reaction to personal violence? How do Christ’s words and actions contrast with the messages we will hear around us on a daily basis? The answers to these questions may be painful, prophetic and counter-cultural. They will certainly go against the crowd and may even go against common sense.

FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME



SHARE highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion. Pair group members up one-on-one to share the best and worst things that happened this week. After a short while, return to small group and invite each person to share their partner’s highs and lows. Encourage youth to write their personal highs and lows, those of their partner, and a short prayer on their FAITH5 Small Group Time Handout.



READ and highlight the theme verse, Romans 5:12, in your Bibles and circle key words. A musical version of this Scripture verse can be found at www.faithink.com, FINKlink HT06.



TALK about how the Bible reading might relate to today’s highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART

Take a look at the theme art and cartoons. What do you see in the art? Ask youth where they are in the art. How might the art and the theme verse apply to your group highs and lows today?

B. ROLE PLAY

Invite youth to act out these two situations. Switch roles after a couple of minutes and involve others.

1. A friend says, “The Bible teaches an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” How do you answer?
2. A teacher you respect says, “It is impractical, unrealistic, unhealthy and impossible to love like Jesus. Whether on a personal or national basis, you will invite more abuse by not defending yourself.” How do you respond?

C. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us there is a time for war and a time for peace. How does a follower of Christ determine the difference? Affirm all thoughtful answers.

2. Is war ever the answer? Under what conditions would you consider a war a “just war?” What would Jesus say? Affirm all thoughtful answers. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in the quotation included on the Thought-Time sheet, it is our duty to step in to save the innocent.

3. When someone hurts you, how do you balance your physical need for security and the emotional desire for revenge with Christ’s anti-violent words and example? Affirm all thoughtful answers. Turn to Psalm 18:2-3, Leviticus 19:18, Romans 12:17, 19.

D. QUOTATIONS Ask youth to choose a quotation and share their thoughts and questions about it.

E. TERMS OF THE WEEK Review these key terms and write definitions.

Death: The termination of life.

Genocide: The planned, systematic, large-scale extermination of a particular group of people.

Just War: The concept of warfare as being justified.

Vengeance: To inflict punishment in return for a wrong that has been committed; punishment.

War: Armed conflict between groups or nations.

F. GROUP BUSINESS

1. Servant Event Idea Go to a retirement home and talk to war veterans about their experiences. What have the veterans learned about war? Looking back now, what would they say to this young generation? Have the kids ask for the opinions of these wise elders on the state of the world today. How do they feel about our current military conflicts around the world?

2. FAITH5 Home Huddle: Encourage youth to take a few minutes for FAITH5 with their families each night at home, using the FAITH5 Journals or the Home Huddle Handout.

G. WRAP UP Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



PRAY for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend’s highs and lows in your prayers. Toss a newspaper into the center of the group or invite youth to think of something going on in the world that calls for prayer. **Tip:** Gather in a circle. Hold hands, lock arms or go shoulder-to-shoulder to bond your group!



BLESS one another by name. Trace a cross on each hand or forehead. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. As for their blessing as well!