



Discipleship of Nonviolence

Core Community Meeting

Aim

This meeting will accomplish three goals:

- to move Parish Core Community members into a deeper understanding of the call to nonviolence as beginning in their own hearts and homes
- to enable Parish Core Community members to see the call to nonviolence as integral to the call to mission
- to open possibilities for further reflection on nonviolence

Leader's Instructions:

Provide an atmosphere of hospitality and welcome, including refreshments and music. Select a meeting space that is comfortable and informal.

Set up a ritual table with a candle, a plant, and the Bible open to the Scripture reading.

If you want to choose a song, select a hymn with the theme of being sent or chosen, or one that involves embracing the challenge of gospel living.

Ask someone to read the Scripture passage; ask ahead of time so the reader has sufficient time to prepare.

Distribute the **PCC Handout**.

Opening Prayer

(PCC Handout)

Leader:

Let us take a moment to center ourselves and to know ourselves in the presence of the God of compassion, welcome, and nonviolence.

I invite you to reflect on and to name in silence the violence you are aware of in your world, your neighborhood, your own heart. (*Pause for a few moments.*)

As we come together as a Core Community, we will reflect on what is needed to follow the nonviolent Jesus, to create a culture of nonviolence in our own hearts and world. Please join me in praying the *RENEW Prayer for the New Millennium*:

All: Gracious God and Father,
We are your people embraced by your love.

We thank you for your presence with us
throughout all time.

Create us anew through Jesus Christ your Son.
Liberate us from all that keeps us from you.
Send your Holy Spirit, enabling us to recreate our
world and restore justice.

Heal us from every form of sin and violence.
Transform us to live your Word more profoundly.
Reconcile us so enemies become friends.
Awaken us to the sacred; nurture our relationships.
Enliven our parishes; reunite our families.

Fill us with joy to celebrate the fullness of life.
Empower us to be a community of love
Growing in your likeness
by the grace of Christ our Lord. Amen

Song (optional)

Reading Luke 4:16–21

Leader's Reflection

Teachers are accustomed to public speaking. They address classes of students of all ages, the student body, and parents. Teachers will often share, however, that the one group of people they would be a bit nervous to lecture would be a group of other teachers. The closer the connection or relationship, the deeper the level of knowing and being known, and the more there is to risk. There is something about addressing your peers, the people who know where you come from, that can be unsettling or intimidating.

In the gospel passage of Luke we have just listened to, Jesus was in that space of the familiar, among his peers. He “came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up...” (4:16). He was in the place where everyone knew his name, his story, his ancestry. And, in that context, he unrolled the scroll with Isaiah’s words about God’s Holy Spirit being upon him, about being missioned to bring the good news. And then Jesus, in this moment of homecoming to Nazareth, proclaims, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21).

In this place of the familiar, in this context of home and family, knowing and being known, we are reminded that we, too, have received the Spirit of God. We, too, are called to restore the right order of God’s reign to human relationships. We, too, are to struggle in that most challenging of arenas, the place of the familiar—at home.

We use the words of Isaiah proclaimed by Jesus. We ask to be liberated. We ask to be enabled to restore justice. We ask to be healed from sin and violence. We ask to be transformed, to be reconciled so that enemies become friends.

What we ask for, in other words, is a nonviolent heart. What we ask for is to begin the journey of nonviolence, and to begin it here at home—in our own hearts, in our families, in our relationships. Who is in need of glad tidings? Who is held captive? Who longs to see or to be set free? And what would it take for this to happen?

We will have just a brief time to reflect on this today, but I invite you to continue the journey into nonviolence. And as we all struggle to follow the example of the nonviolent Jesus and to create a

culture of life, a culture of nonviolence, let us remember that, like Jesus, we begin this journey at home, here and now.

Small Group Sharing

Leader: In the Scripture reading from Luke 4:16–21, Jesus reads from the scroll the words of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

I invite you now to spend some time in small groups reflecting on what the words of Isaiah, as proclaimed by Jesus, have to say to our world, our local community, our family, and our home.

Reflection Questions:

1. Think of a situation in the *world*. In what ways are Jesus’ prophetic words from Isaiah evidenced there? In what ways have I contributed or supported? In what ways is the message from Isaiah still awaiting fulfillment?
2. Think of a situation in my *city, town, or local community*. In what ways are Jesus’ prophetic words from Isaiah evidenced there? In what ways have I contributed or supported? In what ways is the message from Isaiah still awaiting fulfillment?
3. Think of a situation in my *family or community*. In what ways are Jesus’ prophetic words from Isaiah evidenced there? In what ways have I contributed or supported? In what ways is the message from Isaiah still awaiting fulfillment? ¹

Business Meeting Agenda

1. Review the previous meeting’s minutes and actions.
2. Spend some time discussing with the group how they might want to continue a reflection on nonviolence. Determine what seems most important to the Parish Core Community. Is this something of importance for this group only, or could it benefit sharing with the larger parish community?
3. Some possible actions to introduce the topic of *discipleship of nonviolence* to small Christian communities and the parish:
 - Plan on using the *IMPACT* publication, *Discipleship of Nonviolence*, by Betsy Clark, SSJ, as a group reflection piece (available online at <http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/discimp.html>).
 - Follow up by accessing the downloadable workshop, “Discipleship of Nonviolence” (RENEW International www.ParishLife.com).
 - Use a reflection piece, such as *Pax Christi USA’s Love Beyond Measure: A Spirituality of Nonviolence*, by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB (Erie, PA: Benet Press, 1993).
 - Provide spiritual friends (good listeners who are prayer companions) or spiritual directors (experienced persons who are trained and knowledgeable in leading people in their spiritual life) to others in your communities or parishes.
 - Make available a guest speaker at an evening of reflection on nonviolence for personal and social transformation.
 - Establish a parish library of books and tapes on the spirituality of nonviolence or increase the number of volumes in an existing library.
 - Consult with RENEW International regarding this topic. (Contact Michael Fabian: SCCServices@renewintl.org; 908-769-5400, ext. 144.)
 - Brainstorm a list of additional ways to assist the parish in the *discipleship of nonviolence*. Which of these ideas would be the best way to start?

4. Assign tasks to individual members or groups.
5. Address other action items to be discussed as part of normal business of the Parish Core Community.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us close our time together as we began, knowing ourselves in the presence of the God of compassion, welcome, and nonviolence.

Personal Reflection Questions:

I invite you now to take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions in silence:

How is our God asking me:

- to bring good news to the poor?
- to proclaim liberty to captives?
- to set free the oppressed?

(Allow a few minutes of quiet for reflection.)

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: I invite you now to share aloud with God your prayers of intercession for others.

(Allow time for the group to share their intentions, and then move into the Closing Prayer to be prayed aloud by everyone.)

Leader: Let us offer spontaneous prayers of praise and gratitude to God.

All: May my mind think no harm.
May my lips speak no harm.
May my hands do no harm.
May the children of tomorrow bless the work I offer. ²

¹ Reprinted from *Love Beyond Measure: A Spirituality of Nonviolence* by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, with permission of the publisher, Pax Christi USA (Erie, PA: Benet Press, 1993), pp. 39–40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.



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Prayer and Faith Sharing

Opening Prayer

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throughout all time.

Create us anew through Jesus Christ your Son.
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Send your Holy Spirit, enabling us to recreate our
world and restore justice.

Heal us from every form of sin and violence.
Transform us to live your Word more profoundly.
Reconcile us so enemies become friends.
Awaken us to the sacred; nurture our relationships.
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Leader's Reflection

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Closing Prayer

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