

# Bringing Peace to the Holy Land

## Leader's Guide

**Materials/Preparation:** Prepare a meditative area with dim lighting. On a central table, place one large lit candle. Prepare seating in a circular formation, creating multiple rows if necessary. Provide enough handouts, and taper, tea light or votive candles for all participants.

**Call to Prayer:** *Prayer Leader offers a few words of introduction and invites the group to greet one another with a sign of peace.*

## Opening Prayer

**Prayer Leader:** Let us pray. God of our longing, you do not ignore the cry of those who wait and hope for peace. Hear our prayers of sorrow for our brothers and sisters in Israel and Palestine. We share a common story, set in a common homeland. We share a desire for forgiveness and reconciliation, and a longing for unity and a just peace. Help us to be channels of that peace this day. Hear our prayers and open our ears, eyes and hearts to your Word and your Way as we make a place for your love to be born in our war-torn world. We pray...

**All:** Amen

**Prayer Leader:** Let us be attentive to the voice of God.

**Scripture Voices** (*Divide the group into three parts, or have three readers read the following*)

**Group 1:** If (your enemies) incline to peace, make peace with them, and put your trust in Allah. He hears and knows all. (*Sura 8, v. 61.*)

**Group 2:** If your enemies are hungry give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty give them water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads and the Lord will reward you. (Proverbs 25:21-22)

**Group 3:** Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:27.)

**Group 1:** O Humankind! We created you from a male and a female, and divided you into nations and tribes, that you may get to know one another. The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the one who fears him most. (*Sura XLIX, v. 13.*)

**Group 2:** The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (Isaiah 32:17-18)

**Group 3:** I therefore...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1a,c 2-3)

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- Group 1:** so says the Holy Koran
- Group 2:** so say the Hebrew Scriptures
- Group 3:** so say the Christian Scriptures
- All:** So say we. Amen.

**A Time for Reflection** (*Instrumental music can be playing softly in the background.*)

**Prayer Leader:** Let's take a few moments to silently reflect on the ways that the stories of conflict in Israel and Palestine have touched us. (*Pause for silent reflection. After a few moments, continue with the following invitation.*) I invite you to prayerfully share in a word or two the feeling these memories evoke, begin your statement with "I feel ...". After each statement, the group will respond: "Be with us, O God."

*Allow the group to share. After sharing, invite participants to come forward one at a time to the table with the candle. Ask participants to share one thing they can do on a regular basis that reflects a commitment to work for peace in the Holy Land or other parts of the world. Instruct them to light their candle while sharing, symbolic of the light each person can bring to those parts of the world torn apart by strife.*

*After all have lit their candles, close by praying ...*

**Prayer Leader:** Merciful God who dwells in human hearts, the Holy Land is wherever you make your home. Heal these broken places where you have met and fed your people, where you have lead us in fire and smoke and walked among us as brother and friend. Make our own hearts places of understanding, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. We pray to you:

**All:** Amen

**Closing Song or Group Prayer**

## Call to Prayer & Sign of Peace

### Opening Prayer

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**All:** Amen

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### Scripture Voices:

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**Group 3:** so say the Christian Scriptures

**All:** So say we. Amen.

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## **A Time for Reflection**

**Response:** Be with us, O God.

*Lighting of Candles as a Sign of Commitment to Strive for Peace*

## **Closing Prayer**

**Prayer Leader:** Merciful God who dwells in human hearts, the Holy Land is wherever you make your home. Heal these broken places where you have met and fed your people, where you have lead us in fire and smoke and walked among us as brother and friend. Make our own hearts places of understanding, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. We pray to you:

**All:** Amen

## **Closing Song or Group Prayer**