

Community Group Discussion Guide

Step 01: Recap what our current series is all about.

Note: Remind the group what series we're currently on (since not everyone will have been at church recently) and read through the series description provided below to refresh everyone on what it's all about.

Series Title: Source Code

Description: During a grueling, snow-covered hike with his friends, 13 year-old Bill Gates imagined a simple, *source code* for the one computer that was currently on loan to his middle school. The simplicity of the code allowed him to remember it for years until he was finally able to implement it, and the power of the code ended up creating a multi-billion dollar company known as Microsoft.

In this series, called Source Code, we are studying Jesus' most famous collection of teachings found in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. The Sermon on the Mount, in its own simplicity and power has shaped the life of every follower of Jesus for the last 2,000 years. Let's take a closer look and see what Jesus taught.

Step 02: Recap of this week's message.

Note: Read through the message outline with everyone briefly. You can stop and make comments as you see fit or read straight through it. Make sure you take time to read through the main text.

Message Title: Let's Be Peacemakers

Main Text: Matthew 5:9

Supporting Texts: 2 Cor. 5:17; Revelation 21:1-5

Message Outline:

In week three, we narrowed in on one single verse from the Sermon on the Mount (specifically, one of the Beatitudes).... *Blessed are the peacemakers.*

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Background:

God's *new creation* promised throughout scripture begins in the person of Jesus. Thus, when we put our faith in Him, and are indwelt by his Spirit, we become as Paul says in 2 Corinthians, a "new creation" too. Jesus then is teaching us that we are to live NOW in the present as though we were already in new creation.

Cultural context: In Jesus' day many Jews were taking different paths as they tried to navigate their faith and the changing cultural context in Rome. NT Wright suggests there were Quietists (ran away from culture/Roman authority), Compromisers (compromised with culture/Roman authority) and Zealots (fought, *literally*, against culture/Roman authority). But Jesus seemed to offer a 4th way...

Question 1: What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

"Peacemakers are those who work for right relationships at the expense of their comfort." — Rich Villodas

Question 2: How can we be peacemakers?

Jesus does *not* say, "peacekeepers".

Peacekeepers try not to rock the boat, try to avoid conflict and difficult conversations. This is not *real* peace.

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How to be a peacemaker:

1. Ask Anything
 - a. Journalist mindset (ask more questions, make less statements)
2. Listen Well
 - a. Be more interested than interesting.
3. Disagree Freely
4. Love Regardless
 - a. You don't have to agree with someone to serve them and love them.

Step 03: Lead group discussion.

Note: Do your best to keep the discussion going. Make sure you have read through the questions beforehand and are primed with thoughts of your own. Make everyone get specific with *how* they will apply this message in their own lives and in community—*no vague ideas allowed!*

Specific to this week's message:

1. What comes to mind when you hear Jesus urging his followers to be “peacemakers”?
2. If you had to identify with one of the 3 paths from the Jews of Jesus time (Quietists, Compromisers, Zealots), what would you say is your default inclination? i.e. Do you tend to run away from culture? Compromise to culture? Or fight aggressively against it?
3. How does Rich Villodas' definition of peacemaker sit with you? “...*those who work for right relationships at the expense of their comfort*”.
4. What opportunities do you have in your day-to-day life to be a peacemaker?

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5. Share your thoughts about the difference between peacemakers and peacekeepers.
6. How does being a peacemaker witness to nonbelievers about Christ?

General questions:

7. How did this message encourage you? How did it convict you?
8. What is your plan for applying this message to your personal/daily life?
9. What might it look like for us to live this out in community?
10. Was there anything about this message that stood out to you?