

## **Dec 7/25 – Leaders' Guide**

### **"The Way of Peace"**

1. What longings for peace do you experience most at this point in your life journey?

- Generate personal reflection and sharing.
- You could use the 5 layers of shalom as a framework: personal, communal/social, environmental, national/governance, peace with God.

2. How do you usually handle those longings when they surface?

- Generate reflection about our default responses to those longings (be they helpful or unhelpful). ie. do you name them, ignore them, pray about them, lament the gap, etc...

3. In Isaiah 5:3 the people say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord... that he may teach us his ways." What does this passage reveal about the relationship between God's instruction and our transformation?

- Here we're focusing on the fact that we are works-in-progress. Help your group discuss helpful ways we can progress in the direction of becoming people of shalom. Isaiah highlights God's teaching and instruction as a central aspect of our formation as people of peace.

4. Isaiah 5:4 depicts a world where weapons are turned into farming tools—swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks. How does this vision of peace inform (or transform) our approach to the realities of violence, conflict, or division in our own communities or world? Where and how can we participate in God's peacemaking work today?

- Here we want to think through practical habits/ways/practices we can adopt to participate now in the shalom that will come fully when Jesus returns. This gets to living now in ways that are consonant with the reign of King Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
- Reflections here may range from the global scale (ie. how we can participate when it comes to conflicts in the world) to the personal (ie. how can I participate in the peace of Christ in my relationships - perhaps a relevant area for family gatherings around Christmas time)

5. Discuss the relation between our participation in peacemaking and the presence of Christ Himself as King Emmanuel. How does the presence of the Prince of Peace with us and active in the world by the Holy Spirit posture us as we seek to walk in the way of peace?

- In the sermon on Sunday we talked about the source of Shalom - that ultimately it comes from Christ himself, not from us. Help your group discuss how this is good news in light of the lack of peace we often feel in ourselves. Draw their attention to Christ who is Emmanuel (God with us) and the presence of the Holy Spirit meeting us in our need and empowering our participation in His peace. You might recall the words of Ephesians 2:14 where Paul says, "He [Christ] himself is our peace."

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (which we sang as a community on Sunday) is a thoughtful prayer that postures us both to receive and participate the peace of Christ. Incorporate this prayer into your prayer time together as a group:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.