

THE RADIX PROJECT
small groups / deep roots

TOWARD A TRUE AND LASTING PEACE

The Shalom of God

FALL 2024



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL



THE RADIX PROJECT

www.saintmarks.org/radix

Since early 2020, Radix has offered the opportunity for small groups to meet over the course of six weeks to share stories, study scripture, and pray for one another.

A small group is a cohort of people who gather to get to know one another against the backdrop of shared stories, scripture, and prayer. This is not a working group; there is no task to be accomplished. It is about knowing one another, and being known, as we are known by God. And that is the root of spiritual transformation.

The name for this communal effort, *radix*, is the Latin word for “root.” Jesus modeled small group relationships in his life and ministry, and the early Church was structured on small groups who worshipped, prayed, and cared for one another. Those are our roots, and in our time, when so many pressures of modern life leave us feeling alone and isolated, Christian community offers us a tangible way of entering into relationships rooted in trust and mutuality.

The root word, *radix*, also gives rise to the oft-touted word we hear a lot these days—radical. A radical is not one who goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A radical is one who is so well-grounded with deep roots that they are able to stretch out to the fringes of existence and offer us all a different way of being in the world. We speak of radical hospitality or radical welcome because we claim our deep roots of this life in Christ, and we are willing to claim a radical vision for our lives and for the world.

We don’t always agree—politically, theologically, and we have different life experiences—but we care for one another, we pray for one another, and the blush of life is more full because of those relationships. It is our hope that as you reflect on these stories, you might discover how God’s graceful activity is revealed in your own life as well, and in those of your group members. ♦

THE RADIX PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Please feel free to contact radix@saintmarks.org if you have any questions or concerns along the way. Thank you for your participation.

OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing, and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other, and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus the Christ.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have created a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with a plenary gathering before the first session. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

OPENING PLENARY

Sunday, October 20, 2024
7–8 p.m., online via Zoom only

SESSION 1:

EPHESIANS 2:13–22.....week of October 27, 2024

SESSION 2:

ISAIAH 61:1–6.....week of November 3, 2024

SESSION 3:

LUKE 6:27–36.....week of November 10, 2024

SESSION 4:

GENESIS 45.....week of November 17, 2024

SESSION 5:

MATTHEW 5:1–11.....week of November 24, 2024

SESSION 6:

PSALM 122.....week of December 5, 2024

**Sunday groups begin October 27 and conclude
on December 1. Thursday groups will not meet on
Thanksgiving (November 28), and will have their
final meeting on December 5.*

RADIX 13:

TOWARD A TRUE AND LASTING PEACE: THE SHALOM OF GOD

We sometimes speak of God's mission in creation as the work of "salvation history"—that God is working along the trajectory of human history and within the cosmic framework of the universe to heal and make whole all that was, is, and will yet be. Our scriptures unfold along this plot line as well, and it is the reason we claim, as Christians, to be people of hope. Even amidst the tragic and terrible, we trust that God is dwelling with us, yearning for a better way. This is the reign of God for which we pray, the peaceable kingdom to which the prophets point, the shalom of God which is the consummate and multifaceted peace understood as both inner peace and world peace.

This peace is not the sort that is brokered as a treaty to end fighting but allows enmity to fester; it is not an armistice that pauses from violence until one can muster the strength to fight again. True peace (biblical peace, *shalom*) is not just the absence of conflict; it is predicated on the presence of justice. It signifies wholistic wellness, flourishing, dignity for all, especially for those historically oppressed. In this understanding, the work of restorative justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness are integral to peace, and God's long arc of salvation history is about the restoration of right relationships among every human being and all creation.

Importantly, as Christians who espouse a way of being informed by the person of Jesus and scriptural imperatives, we take seriously his teachings of loving one's neighbors as oneself, the act of turning one's cheek, and loving one's enemy. This is hard to do when the world teaches a much more egoic way of being. Ultimately, our work (cf. 2 Cor 5:11–21) is about

aligning ourselves with God's mission of reconciliation, of restoration of right relationships... with God, with self, with others, and with creation. Our vocation then takes shape within the interconnected reality of theological, psychological, spiritual, social, economic, and ecological dimensions of wholeness and flourishing, and always, always, requires us to approach peacemaking as praxis. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

—*Dean Steve Thomason*



ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

In order to grow in trust, it is important for groups to agree to norms for their time together and revisit them periodically as needed. It is important that everyone agree to abide by the same expectations for their time together. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all groups will want to discuss as they begin their work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- ◆ What may be shared on social media?

RESPECT AND MUTUALITY

- ◆ Let others finish without being interrupted.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- ◆ Mutual respect is essential.
- ◆ Give everyone a chance to speak.

LOGISTICS

- ◆ What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ◆ ...about informing others of an expected absence?

ATTENDANCE

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Commit to regular attendance and participation.

PREPARATION

- ◆ What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

- ◆ What are expectations that each group member commits to pray for the others daily during this time as a small group?

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking.

Take responsibility to practice using the technology ahead of the meeting, and ask for help as needed. Zoom resources are available at *support.zoom.us*

FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

A key to the flourishing of small groups is some consistency week to week so folks will know what to expect. A group facilitator will encourage the group to stay on track, but everyone has a part in making that happen. Here is the suggested format for all Radix groups, which are designed to meet for 90 minutes each week:

GATHERING	5 minutes
OPEN IN PRAYER	5 minutes
CHECK-IN QUESTION	10 minutes
SCRIPTURE REFLECTION	20 minutes
GROUP DISCUSSION	30 minutes
CHECK-OUT INCLUDING PRAYER REQUESTS	10 minutes
CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP	10 minutes

IDEAS FOR CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

Pick one for each week.

1. What image comes to mind when you hear the word “peace”?
2. What’s your best practice for resolving conflict among friends, family members or co-workers?
3. Where have you felt the most at peace?
4. What do you need to feel a personal sense of peace?
5. Who is a peacemaker you admire, and why?
6. What color is peace?
7. Passing the Peace at church: is it your favorite, or do you want to hide?
8. Name an essential quality of a peacemaker.
9. When have you experienced something like Shalom?
10. What does peace sound like?
11. What is a peaceful action you can take this week?
12. Why is peace so difficult to achieve?

OPENING PRAYER

Leading one another in prayer is a responsibility that is meant to be shared among the group—it's not just for the facilitator. Decide how your group will share taking turns with opening and closing prayers. Prayers may be extemporaneous, or sourced from the rich variety of resources, some of which are listed below:

- ◆ Thanksgivings, BCP, p. 836–841
- ◆ Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- ◆ Compline, BCP, p. 127
- ◆ A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- ◆ A poem that connects to a theme in the scripture selection
- ◆ Lectionary-based Prayers from Vanderbilt Divinity School
<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=154>
- ◆ The Book of Common Prayer Online
<https://www.bcponline.org/>
- ◆ The New Zealand Prayer Book Online
<https://anglicanprayerbook.nz/>
- ◆ The Work of the People
<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/visual-liturgy>
<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/be-still>

CLOSING PRAYERS & CHECK-OUT

- ◆ Closing prayer is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, articulating what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention. That intention may have arisen in the context of the meeting, or it could be that you are asking for prayers for some prevailing part of your life (e.g., my child has surgery next week, or I am retiring from work, etc.). The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather all those intentions up as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again.

In addition to including a prayer from one of the above resources, consider the following:

- ◆ The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- ◆ Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.

SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDES



WEEK 1

SCRIPTURE *Ephesians 2:13–22*

Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

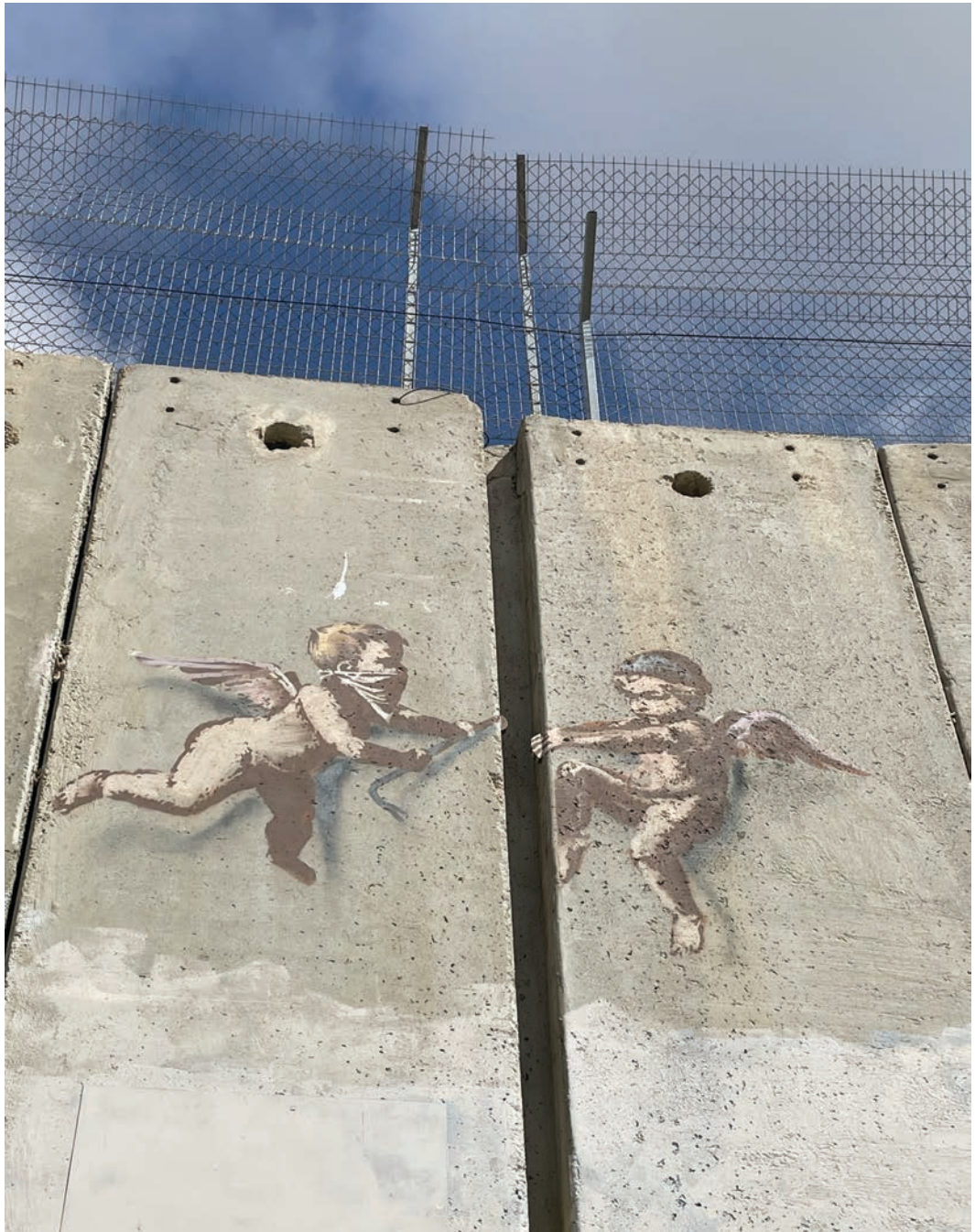
1. What word or phrase stands out to you, or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. How do you think this passage might have landed with the community to which it was written? Might Paul want to write a similar letter to your current church home, city, or nation? If you were to write such a letter, what would you say?
3. How does the metaphor of building and construction convey Paul's message?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Think about a time you have felt “far off” from God, or your faith, or a sense of community with others. Consider when you felt near to God, your faith, or your community. As followers of Jesus, how can we foster peace, unity, and community with those who may seem “far off” from us, whether it is caused by geographical distance, a difference in political beliefs, or other parameters?
2. A citizen is a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country. It also refers to a person who is granted full rights and responsibilities as a member of a nation or political community.

In Ephesians 2 17–19, we are assured that through Christ, we are no longer strangers and aliens, but citizens with the saints. What rights and protections does this holy citizenship give to us? What responsibilities does this citizenship ask of us?

3. Church life often brings together people who may not have encountered each other otherwise. Our faith is what connects us, as “members of the household of God” we are siblings, even. What experiences have you had that illustrate different people coming together in Christ? What challenges has this brought? What are the gifts?
4. How do you envision a dwelling place for God?



Banksy, revealed December 3, 2017
on the segregation wall in Bethlehem.

Banksy is a pseudonymous England-based street artist, political activist, and film director whose real name and identity remain unconfirmed and the subject of speculation. Active since the 1990s, his satirical street art and subversive epigrams combine dark humor with graffiti executed in a distinctive stenciling technique. His works of political and social commentary have appeared on streets, walls, and bridges throughout the world. In 2017, marking the 100th anniversary of the British control of Palestine, Banksy financed the creation of the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem. This hotel is open to the public and contains rooms designed by Banksy, Sami Musa, and Dominique Petrin, and each of the bedrooms faces the wall.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14)

In the current political climate and state of the world, it can be scary and hard to talk about bringing together groups of people who have traditionally been divided. Using loving and respectful language, discuss how this image makes you feel.

2. In what ways can you reach out to people from whom you are separated, or even estranged, to become “built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God”? (Ephesians 2:22)

WEEK 2

SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 61:1–6*

THE spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks;
foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines,
but you shall be called priests of the LORD;
you shall be named ministers of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. Isaiah's prophecy here references the Jubilee proclaimed in Leviticus 25 and is itself referenced by Jesus in his first public sermon in Luke 4. What do you make of this through line? Why would this kind of liberation be such "good news?"
3. This passage speaks of building and rebuilding ancient ruins and devastations. Why might this be important— in the time when this was written, and today? How does this relate to peacemaking?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Tell us about a time you have been deeply in need— for comfort, healing, liberation, or rebuilding. Who or what helped you?
2. When have you felt moved or called to offer comfort, healing, or liberation? How did you respond to that call?
3. What are some of the ways our community of Saint Mark's responds to the biblical call to peacemaking? How are we in need of peacemaking, and may be able to support each other within the community, or seek help from outside? How might we be able to give, and stretch ourselves into ministries in local, national, or international contexts?

If you are able, listen to a recording of this song:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7I77RcmHfA>

The lyrics are the same as the scripture passage, Isaiah 61:1–3:

Ruach Adonai Alai

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

Ya'an mashach Adonai oti

Because the Lord has anointed me

Levaser anavim

To preach good news to the poor

Sh'lachani lachvosh L'nishberei lev

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted

likro lishvuyim dror

To proclaim liberty to the captives

V'la' asurim p'kach ko'ach

and freedom to the prisoners

likro shnat ratzon la'Adonaito

proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

V'yom nakam le'Eloheinu

and the day of the vengeance of our God

L'nachem kol avelim

To comfort all who mourn

Lasum le'avelei Tzion

To grant to those who mourn in Zion

Latet lahem pe'er tachat efer

To give them glory instead of ashes

Shemen sasson tachat evel

Oil of Gladness instead of mourning

Ma'ateh t'hilah tachat ruach kehah

A garment of praise for a Spirit of despair.

Song: “*Ruach Adonai Alai*” (*The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me*)

Music: *Tony Sperandeo and Noam Waksman* ©1987 (*this video recorded February 2024 in Sderot, Israel*)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does experiencing the scripture passage in this way— as a song, in this particular language, time, and place— affect and/or change your experience of it?
2. Consider this in a holistic way, paying attention to how your body, mind, and spirit respond.

NOTES

WEEK 3

SCRIPTURE *Luke 6:27–36*

“**B**UT I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. In the Gospel according to Luke, the broader context for this text is sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain (because the setting here is “on a level place”). In Matthew’s version, the companion text is situated in the Sermon on the Mount. Read through Matthew 5:43–48: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be

children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” What do you notice when you compare and contrast the two passages?

3. Describe how you understand this teaching. In what ways is this an ideal? How might it also be a practical plan of action?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Think about a time when you experienced an adversarial relationship and whether you considered that person an enemy. What does “enemy” mean to you?
2. How have you practiced loving your enemy?
3. If the church were to offer a course in How to Love Your Enemies, what sorts of things would you expect to find included in the curriculum? What would persuade you to sign up for this?



Love Your Enemies
from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the
Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When you consider this photograph, how do these words and symbols—particularly as they appear on a walkway—evoke a pathway toward peace and reconciliation?
2. How do your associations color your response to this photograph?

NOTES

WEEK 4

SCRIPTURE *Genesis 45 (edited)*

Recommended, but not required: Read Genesis 37–50 for the full story of Joseph’s family conflict and its peaceful resolution.

THEN Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Send everyone away from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty. And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my

own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

When the report was heard in Pharaoh’s house, “Joseph’s brothers have come,” Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan. Take your father and your households and come to me, so that I may give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you may enjoy the fat of the land.’ ...Give no thought to your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’ ”

The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons according to the instruction of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey... Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Do not quarrel along the way.” ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. God’s purposes are often difficult for human beings to discern. How does Joseph make sense of his own journey and of his role as peacemaker within his family of origin?
3. What does the story of Joseph teach us about the connections between humility, generosity, and peacemaking?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe a time when you reached a peaceful resolution to a longstanding family conflict. What has been the long-term effect of that resolution?
2. Who has inspired you to reconcile with an estranged family member? What in their example gave you hope and provided a roadmap for reconciliation?
3. In the story of Joseph, the Egyptians are inspired to reach across ethnic and tribal boundaries to offer generous assistance to Joseph's extended family. When have you seen peacemaking within a family affect the greater community?



Joseph Recognized by his Brothers, 1883

Oil on canvas

Léon Pierre Urbain Bourgeois (1842–1911)

Musée unicipal Frédéric Blandin, Nevers, France

French painter, printmaker, and lithographer, Léon Pierre Urbain Bourgeois was born in Nevers, France, the only child of Paul Jérôme Bourgeois, also a painter. Leon trained at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, married Louise Anna Masson in 1876, and was named a knight of the Legion of Honor in 1896. He died at his home in Paris at the age of 58.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What feelings about family conflict does the painting evoke in you? Who has power in the painting and how do they use it?
2. Joseph and his brothers share the same father, Jacob. But only Joseph and Benjamin have the same mother: Jacob's beloved, Rachel. How does the artist use color to suggest family connections and divisions?
3. How does the artist bring the experience of reconciliation between siblings to life?

NOTES

WEEK 5

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 5:1–11*

WHEN Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. These are the “Beatitudes”, from the Latin *beatus* meaning both happy and blessed, and they begin Jesus’s “Sermon on the Mount.” In Matthew’s gospel the eight paradoxical Beatitudes stand on their own, while the set of four Beatitudes found in the Gospel of Luke’s parallel “Sermon on the Plain” is matched with four “woes.” Which set do you prefer, and why?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What comforts you in the Beatitudes' reversal of expectations? How do they challenge you? Which one of them seems to be for or about you, and why?
2. The Beatitudes are sometimes called "the gospel within the gospel" and offer us a template for following Jesus. What personal actions do they imply or suggest? How do they build upon each other?
3. Lutheran pastor and public theologian Nadia Bolz-Weber says that "[Jesus] was God's Beatitude—God's blessing to the weak in a world that admires only the strong." The Beatitudes are also descriptors of Jesus. What about being a peacemaker in particular is inherently countercultural?

NOTES



This fresco, inspired by the Beatitudes, can be found in the sanctuary of a small church in Asheville, North Carolina. Each of the thirty-one portraits in the mural are of real people in the congregation and the local community, people on the margins who are seldom depicted in art. Under the leadership of artist Christopher Holt, a team of five artists spent three years creating this work. The Haywood Street Congregation centers itself “on the ministry of ‘being with’ instead of ‘doing for.’ Today the core ministry includes weekly worship, a free community meal, a community garden, and Haywood Street Respite, which provides a safe healing place for people experiencing homelessness to stay after discharge from the hospital.”



Haywood Street Fresco

<https://haywoodstreet.org/haywood-street-fresco/>

Those viewing this document online should click the link to view the complete artwork.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you notice in the painting? What connections do you make to Jesus's words in the Beatitudes?
2. Asheville, North Carolina, and surrounding communities were devastated by Hurricane Helene just a few weeks ago. What might peace-making look like after a natural disaster? What role does art play in healing?

WEEK 6

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 122 (NRSV)*

I WAS glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
Now our feet are standing
 within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city
 that is at unity with itself;
To which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,
 the assembly of Israel, to praise the Name of the LORD.
For there are the thrones of judgment,
 the thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
 “May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls
 and quietness within your towers.
For my brethren and companions’ sake,
 I pray for your prosperity.
Because of the house of the LORD our God,
 I will seek to do you good.”

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 122 (St. Helena Psalter)*

I WAS glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of God.”
Now our feet are standing
 within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city
 that is at unity with itself;
To which the tribes go up,
 the tribes of the Holy One,
 the assembly of Israel,
 to praise the Name of God.

For there are the thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers.
For my kindred and companions’ sake,
I pray for your prosperity.
Because of the house of the Holy One our God,
I will seek to do you good.” ♦

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this psalm?
2. What imagery in this brief psalm surprises you or stops you short, and why?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. This is sometimes referred to as a pilgrimage psalm, likely prayed by pilgrims making their way to the Holy City. How might this psalm’s prayerful purpose be translated into our lives today, as we make our earthly pilgrimage?
2. Is the prayer for peace in Jerusalem aspirational, or affirming what is already known? Why would that make a difference in how we interpret it in light of today’s challenges to peace?
3. Jerusalem literally means “city of God’s peace” (*Jehu-shalom*), and yet we know from scriptures and history that lasting peace has remained elusive for the people who have called it home through the centuries. Why do you think this is so? How does Jerusalem represent something more universal for all humanity, and what might that portend for us?



Windows, Jerusalem 2022
by Rawan Anani

Rawan Anani is a Palestinian artist born in Jerusalem in 1978, and a member of the Palestinian Artists Union since 2015. In her paintings, Palestinian heritage is always present whether through folkloric dresses, calligraphy, the Palestinian landscape or traditional houses. She tends to focus on Palestinian women, symbolizing the land, productivity, and resilience. *Windows-Jerusalem 2022* depicts Palestinian women in traditional dress carrying decorative vases back from the well, framed by landmarks of Jerusalem in vivid colors.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you make of the fact that these Palestinian women are in the foreground featured prominently, going about daily life in the city, with the diverse landmarks of Jerusalem (Muslim, Christian, and Jewish) in the background?
2. What can be drawn in the symbol of water being centered in this scene?
3. Anani is part of a movement known as the Palestinian Feminist Future which seeks to embody the poetics of land, life, love and liberation for all. How is human dignity bound up in the cause of peace, in any setting, including the Land of the Holy One?

NOTES



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