



COMMUNITY CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION DIALOGUES

Series 3: Finding solutions

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the manual

The purpose of this manual is to equip community peacebuilding champions with the guidance and tools to facilitate the third of four series of dialogues. It is assumed that these champions will have completed either the five-day conflict transformation course or the ten-day training of conflict transformation trainers course. The manual should be read in conjunction with the [facilitation guide](#) which provides further detail on the principles and concepts behind the course and advice on organising and facilitating the dialogues.

The community conflict transformation dialogues

The ‘community conflict transformation dialogues’ are a tool for use by community peacebuilders to facilitate a series of community reflections and workshops designed to help the community think about the conflicts that affect them, while equipping them to transform those same conflicts. The tool is based on an experiential education model that draws on participants’ own experience, making use of the knowledge and experience that they possess rather than relying purely on the expertise of external ‘experts’.

The dialogues comprise four series of workshops with each series made up of four individual sessions, each of which takes about two hours to complete. A series could therefore be completed in one eight-hour day; be spread over a two-day workshop; or be completed over the course of four, weekly two-hour sessions.

The first series focused on the idea of conflict as holy ground, and explored our attitudes and responses to conflict before beginning to think about how change happens and the different roles that people can play in bringing about change. The second series looked at questions of identity and the issue of trauma, exploring the way in which we respond to shocks in our lives, and examined issues of justice, mercy and truth and their relationship to peace and the possibility of reconciliation. This third series looks at practical tools that can help us navigate our way to possible solutions. It focuses on issues of power, identity conflicts and problem-solving approaches that can help each side find solutions that meet both their needs.

The first of the two hour sessions uses a game to introduce the idea of win–win solutions and describes a process for getting to such solutions. The next session builds on this and looks at how the approach may need to be adapted to suit conflicts that are based on issues of identity. The third session draws on Matthew chapter 5 to look at the unique way that Jesus responded to conflict, introducing the idea of ‘transforming initiatives’. The final session uses the story of Esther to introduce the idea of advocacy and ways in which you can influence people such that they change their position on an issue.

The final series looks at taking action, building skills in advocacy and social action and helping the community to develop their own plans to transform the conflicts that they face.

Session structure

Each session is based around a common structure:

- an opener that gets people's attention in a fun way and which sets the scene for the session
- an experiential exercise that gets people to connect with the theme from their own personal experience and which engages them emotionally with the session
- a Bible study that enables people to reflect on their experiences and to seek God's wisdom on the issue
- conceptual input that brings in external knowledge and expertise, helping to generalise the insights gained from the experiential exercise
- application, which asks the participants what this might mean for them in their context and how they might apply the learning
- a closing activity that brings the group back together and leaves them looking forward to the next session.

Each session also has an aim and a key message that summarises the main learning points from the session.

SESSION DETAILS

Session 1: Red–blue

Aim: To introduce the idea of win–win solutions and to recognise that in real life (unlike in sport) the ‘game’ doesn’t stop and that an enduring peace can only be established through win–win solutions.

Key message: Win–lose solutions may contain conflict for a while but they will always re-emerge until the interests of all parties are addressed.

Session outline:

Time	Tool
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening liturgy
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village group check-in, introductions and group signs
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series introduction and structure
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opener: paperclip challenge
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential exercise: red–blue Conceptual input: negotiation table
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible study: Paul and Barnabus (Acts 15:36–41) / harvest by TV Interview
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positions, interests and needs win–win box steps towards win–win solutions
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application: apply steps to the Paul and Barnabas Bible study
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noticings and building toolbox
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing circle, look forward and

closing prayer

Session guidance:

Welcome individuals as they arrive and remind them of the **liturgy** from the first two series, saying the prayers together.

Check that people can remember which village group they were in for the previous series and ask them to meet together in the same groups. If there are new people, introduce them to one of the groups. If people are unable to remember or if there are many new people use the **transportation mixer** from Series 1 to form them into groups. Give the groups time to catch up with each other and to get to know any new members. Ask them to produce a new sign for their village group.

Remind everyone of the topics covered in the first two series and ask people to say one thing that struck them most from Series 2. Once done, you may wish to display the sheets from the end of the first two series that listed the things that they had identified as the main learning points. Go on to introduce the participants to Series 3 and the topics covered

in each of the four sessions. Stick up the sheets from Series 1 (or copies of them) that list how they can maximise or minimise the effectiveness of their time together, and remind them of what they said.

Continue the session with the **paperclip challenge** to encourage creative brainstorming and then get everyone into their village groups. Introduce and play the **red–blue** game. As part of the debrief of the exercise, explain the **negotiation table** concept.

Say that even the apostles had disagreements and conflicts with each other. In this session we will be looking at one of those conflicts and learning a way of addressing conflicts that can lead to a satisfactory outcome for all parties. Introduce the **Paul and Barnabas Bible study**, dividing the groups between those looking at it from Paul’s perspective and those looking at it from Barnabas’ perspective. (Depending on the number of groups you could also have a group looking at it from John/Mark’s perspective and another from a neutral outsider’s perspective). Use the TV interview technique to harvest responses from the groups.

Following the interview, introduce the **positions, interests, needs** concept and the **steps to win–win**. In their groups, get them to apply each of the four steps to win–win to the Paul/Barnabas situation, collecting feedback from the groups after each step. Emphasise the need to be creative and to think outside the box. (If time allows, you can introduce the **connect the dots** puzzle).

Spend a few minutes collecting any **noticings** from the group and start the list of tools for this series. (You can also show the list of tools from the previous two series as a reminder of what has been learnt so far.)

End with a **closing circle**. Congratulate them on completing the session and explain that the next session will continue to explore ways of finding a way through conflict situations to find lasting solutions that meet everyone’s needs. End, if appropriate, with a prayer.

Resource requirements:

● Liturgy sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Flipchart paper and marker pens	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Maximise/minimise sheets from Series 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
● A paperclip	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Pre-prepared flipchart sheets of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red–blue instructions ○ Red–blue scoring sheets ○ The negotiation table ○ Positions, interests and needs ○ Steps towards win–win solutions ○ Bible study passages and questions 	<input type="checkbox"/>
● A name tag (sheet of paper) for Paul, Barnabas and any other characters for use in the TV interview	<input type="checkbox"/>

Session 2: Getting to win–win solutions

Aim: To reinforce the idea of win–win solutions and to introduce the idea of how issues of identity can affect our ability to get to win–win solutions.

Key message: Conflicts are never black and white – we are all to some extent guilty – both victim and perpetrator. Finding enduring win–win solutions requires us to be honest and realistic about the parts that we have played in the conflict.

Session outline:

Time	Tool
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opening liturgy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Buddies: check in
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opener: thumb wrestling
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bible studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A daring mediator (1 Samuel 25:1–35) ○ Misunderstandings (Joshua 22:10–34) ○ Religious values (Acts 15:1–15) ○ Win–win solutions (Numbers 32:1–33)
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conceptual input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ revise the steps to win–win ○ ENDA conflict approach
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application: list and categorise conflicts
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noticings and building toolbox
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closing circle, look forward and closing prayer

Session guidance:

Welcome individuals as they arrive, and once everybody has arrived say the **liturgy** together before letting people join their buddies to catch up, checking in on how each other is feeling. As always, encourage genuine sharing rather than superficial.

Open the session with the participants (in buddy pairs) holding a **thumb wrestling** contest. Use this to remind them of the **red–blue game** from the previous week and of the importance of communicating with each other as a way of achieving a win–win solution.

Explain that we are now going to look at more examples from the Bible of different conflicts and how the parties concerned approached them and resolved the situation. Working in village groups, allocate a different passage from the **conflict transformation Bible studies** to each group (you can double up on some passages if necessary) and invite them to complete the studies. Although each group gets a different passage, they all get the same questions. Gather the responses from the groups.

Once the Bible studies are complete, revise the **steps to win–win** and the **win–win box** from the previous week before explaining the **ENDA conflict approach** tool.

Working in groups, ask them to brainstorm different conflicts that affect them and their community. Stress that we are not looking to apportion blame but are simply noticing the conflicts that exist around us. The conflicts that they list do not need to be violent conflicts (although they can be). It may also be sensible to revise the maximise/minimise table of behaviours from the first session. It may be helpful to get them to think in terms of conflicts that exist at the household level, the community level and beyond the community level (but that still affect the community).

Collect the list of conflicts from the groups, accepting all suggestions without judgement. (What one person sees as a conflict someone else may not; nevertheless the individual's perception still matters and is valid). Once you have a list, encourage a discussion about which conflicts may be issue-based conflicts and therefore liable to respond to the **steps to win-win** approach, and which may be identity-based conflicts that might be better addressed through the **ENDA conflict approach** tool.

Spend a few minutes collecting any **noticings** from the group and continue with the list of tools.

End with a **closing circle**. Congratulate them on completing the session. Say that we will come back to this list of conflicts in future sessions and begin to explore ways in which they, as a group, might begin to address them using the tools and skills that they are learning (make sure that you keep a copy of this list as you will need it later). Look forward to the next session, which will explore novel and creative ways of responding to conflict. End, if appropriate, with a prayer.

Resource requirements:

● Liturgy sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Flipchart paper and marker pens	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Pre-prepared flipchart sheets of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ENDA conflict approach ○ Bible study passages and questions 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Session 3: Going the extra mile

Aim: To offer an alternative way of thinking about how to respond to conflict.

Key message: There are alternatives to ‘fight’, ‘freeze’ or ‘flight’ when faced with conflict. Think about how you can use conflict as an opportunity to restate each other’s shared humanity and transform the relationship.

Session outline:

Time	Tool
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening liturgy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddies: check in
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opener: people sculptures – change
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible reading: transforming initiatives
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential exercise: transforming initiatives drama
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual input: responses to violence
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application: parallel lines role-play (dog beating)
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddies: check in
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noticings and building toolbox
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing circle, look forward and closing prayer

Session guidance:

Welcome individuals as they arrive and once everybody has arrived say the **liturgy** together

before letting people join their buddies to catch up, checking in on how each other is feeling.

Open the session by getting each group to create a **people sculpture** that represents change, gathering the ideas that people come up with about what change is and the emotions that it brings up. Use this to introduce the topic of change, and how we can be creative in bringing it about in ways that affirm our shared humanity and that build and strengthen relationships rather than damage them.

Invite people to read the Bible passage Matthew 5:38–48 and then say that we are going to dramatise this passage. Using the **Transforming initiatives** tool, act out the stories: turning the other cheek, giving them your shirt and going the extra mile. Stress that in each of these stories, the response is a way of reclaiming and restating your status as a fellow human being. It is about choosing not to be subservient and not to be the victim.

Having dramatised these three readings, describe the responses to violence listed in the **Responses to violence** tool and explain the principles of a transforming initiative as an alternative. Point out that these examples are from a particular context, a specific time and place, and they might look different in our own

contexts; the principles, however, should remain the same.

Get the participants to apply these principles in a **parallel lines role-play** based around a person beating a dog. Invite them to come up with a transforming initiative that uses these principles to prevent the dog from being beaten. Alternatively you can choose a different topic that may be more relevant to the context.

Invite the participants to rejoin their buddies and ask them to think of examples of transforming initiatives that they have witnessed or been part of. Alternatively, invite them to think of transforming initiatives that they could apply to any current situations that they are facing. They may like to draw on the list of conflicts that they created from the previous week. Collect these ideas from the buddy pairs and capture them on a sheet of paper.

Spend a few minutes collecting any **noticings** from the group and continue with the list of tools.

Congratulate them on completing the session and, bringing them together into a **closing circle**, do a closing activity. Look forward to next week, which will be based on the story of Esther in the Bible, and will look at what we can learn from her example of how to influence people to bring about change. End with a prayer.

Resource requirements:

• Liturgy sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Props for the dramatised reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Pre-prepared flipchart sheet with the responses to violence written out.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Session 4: Learning from Esther how to influence

Aim: To provide participants with a tool that will allow them to identify who they might need to influence to bring about a desired change and to think through how they might persuade people to change their position.

Key message: You don't need everyone to change their position to bring about the change you are looking for, you just need to persuade enough to alter the overall balance of opinion. Focus your activities and tune your arguments to the group that you are trying to influence.

Session outline:

Time	Tool
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening liturgy
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddies: check in
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opener: persuasion parallel lines role-play
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible study: Esther (Esther 4:1–17)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual input: social barometer
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential exercise: Esther and the social barometer
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application: social barometer analysis
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection with buddies
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noticings and building toolbox
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look forward, closing circle and closing prayer

Session guidance:

Before the session starts you need to have drawn out a large version of the **social**

barometer on the floor, big enough for 10 to 15 people to stand in.

Welcome individuals as they arrive, and once everybody has arrived say the **liturgy** together before letting people join their buddies to catch up, checking in on how each other is feeling.

Open the session with a **parallel lines role-play**, in which they have to persuade another person in the village to take part in a nonviolent action that they are organising to influence their local member of parliament. Use this to introduce the idea of persuasion and the need to persuade people to change their position on an issue if you want to bring about change. Say that we are going to explore this by looking at the story of Esther in the Bible.

Introduce the Esther Bible study: **Esther and the social barometer** and get someone to tell the story of Esther – as much as they can remember – before reading Esther 4:1–17. As a group, identify the key characters and their positions at the start of the story.

Break away from the Bible study to explain the social barometer drawn out on the floor and the different positions around it. Having done this, return to the Esther story and get the group to place the key individuals on the social barometer that you have marked out on the

floor, moving them from position to position as the story unfolds. Emphasise that through a combination of courage, good preparation, good information and creativity, Esther and Mordecai were able to persuade the most powerful people in the land to change their point of view and to reverse what at first seemed a hopeless situation.

Having completed the exercise, get the participants into their groups and ask them to think of an issue that is relevant to their context. They could use the list of conflicts from Session 2. Each group can address a different – or the same – issue. For the issue that they have chosen, get them to complete a **social barometer analysis**, identifying who the key people or groups of people are and what their positions are, plotting them on the social barometer. You can also draw their attention back to the mainstream and margin lists as a way of ensuring that the margins are considered. Having done this, they should then be asked to brainstorm activities or arguments that might persuade the people on the social barometer to change their position and move to a more favourable position. If time allows, one or more of the issues could be played out on the barometer on the floor in the same way as they did for the Esther story.

Conclude that they are now beginning to identify concrete actions that they can take to change their situation, and challenge them to think about taking this learning out of the sessions and applying it in their everyday life.

Spend a few minutes collecting any **noticings** from the group and continue with the list of tools.

Congratulate them on completing not only this session but also the third of the four series of dialogues. Invite them to meet with their buddies and discuss the main things that they learnt from each session. Collect these

thoughts from the buddy pairs, writing them on some paper.

Once complete, review the list that they have come up with and then revise the key messages from each session:

- Win–lose solutions may contain conflict for a while but they will always re-emerge until the interests of all parties are addressed.
- Conflicts are never black and white – we are all to some extent guilty – both victim and perpetrator. Finding enduring win–win solutions requires us to be honest and realistic about the parts that we have played in the conflict.
- There are alternatives to ‘fight’, ‘freeze’ or ‘flight’ when faced with conflict. Think about how you can use conflict as an opportunity to restate each other’s shared humanity and transform the relationship.
- You don’t need everyone to change their position to bring about the change you are looking for, you just need to persuade enough to alter the overall balance of opinion. Focus your activities and tune your arguments to the group that you are trying to influence.

Encourage them to put what they have learnt into practice and to share their knowledge with family, friends and neighbours.

Tell them that the final series will be looking at issues of power and will begin to come up with practical actions and approaches to addressing conflicts, through negotiation and mediation and ways of getting to win–win solutions. Tell them when the next series will take place and, if comfortable doing so, invite suggestions as to how the sessions could be improved.

End the series by bringing them together into a **closing circle**, do a closing activity and end with a prayer.

Resource requirements:

● Liturgy sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Flipchart paper and marker pens	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Bibles	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Scrap paper and bin or bucket	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Labels for Truth, Justice, Mercy and Peace	<input type="checkbox"/>

● Pre-prepared flipchart sheets of: ○ Psalm 85:10 questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TOOLS

Session 1

Liturgy

Morning Prayer

All to join in the words in **bold**

**In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
Three in one, One God, forever and ever
Amen**

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this is what I seek:

**That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life;
To behold the beauty of the Lord
And to seek God in God's Holy Temple**

Who is it you seek?

We seek the Lord our God

Do you seek God with all your heart?

Amen, Lord have mercy

Do you seek God with all your soul?

Amen, Lord have mercy

Do you seek God with all your strength?

Amen, Christ have mercy

To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

And we have believed and have come to know that you are the holy one of God

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory

Scripture Reading

Reflection – 5 minutes

Prayer

**May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us
against snares of evil
And the temptations of the world.**

Christ as a light

Illumine and guide me.

Christ as a shield

Overshadow me.

Christ under me;

Christ over me;

Christ beside me on my left and my right.

This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.

Be in the heart of every man who thinks of me, in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, in every eye that sees me and in every ear that hears me.

This day be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful.

Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.

Evening Prayer

All to join in the words in **bold**

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end

Confession

Most merciful God, we confess to you before the whole company of heaven and one another, that we have sinned in thought, word and deed and in what we have failed to do.

Forgive us our sins, heal us by your Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ.

Amen

Hymn

We say together:

**Before the ending of the day
Creator of the world we pray
That you with steadfast love would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep**

**From evil dreams defend our sight
From fears and terrors of the night
Tread underfoot our deadly foe
That we no sinful thought may know**

O Father that we ask be done

Blessing

May God bless us
That in us be found love and humility
Obedience and thanksgiving
Discipline, gentleness and peace.

**In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Amen

**Through Jesus Christ your only Son
And Holy Spirit by whose breath
Our souls are raised to life from death**

The Responses

Into your hands O Lord I commend my spirit
For you have redeemed me Lord God of truth
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

Into your hands O Lord I commend my spirit
Keep me as the apple of your eye
Hide me under the shadow of your wings

The Collect

Visit this place O Lord we pray
And drive far from it the snares of the enemy
May your holy angels dwell with us
And guard us in peace
And may your blessing be always upon us through
Jesus Christ our Lord

The Conclusion

In peace we will lie down and sleep
For you alone Lord make us dwell in safety

Abide with us Lord Jesus
For the night is at hand and the day is now past
 As the night watch looks for the morning
So do we look for you O Christ
 Come with the dawning of the day
And make yourself known in the breaking of the bread

The Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
 Wherever He may send you
 May He guide you through the wilderness

Protect you through the storm
 May He bring you home rejoicing
 At the wonders you have seen
 May He bring you home rejoicing
 Once again into our doors

**In the name of the Father,
 and of the Son,
 and of the Holy Spirit.**

Amen

The paperclip challenge

Participants may be new to the idea of brainstorming. This tool can be used to introduce the idea in a fun way.

Show the participants a paperclip and then give them one minute in their groups for each group to come up with as many different uses of a paperclip as they can think of. After one minute, ask each group how many different uses they came up with – don't ask what these are yet. Note down the numbers on a flipchart and then ask each group what uses they identified, writing these down on the flipchart. Only note the different uses – if groups have come up with the same one then only note it down once. When all the uses have been gathered together count them up; you will have more uses than any of the groups came up with by themselves.

Use this exercise to introduce the idea of brainstorming as a great way of quickly getting ideas from a group. There are four basic rules for brainstorming:

1. There are no silly ideas; encourage creativity and novelty.
2. Suspend judgement and do not comment on or criticise anyone's suggestion.
3. Build on other people's ideas – let their thoughts spark new ideas from you.
4. Go for quantity rather than quality.

Red–blue game facilitation notes

Two groups play with each other. Give each group ('village') an instruction sheet. The goal is for their group to end up with a positive point score. Each group chooses red or blue without knowing what the other group is choosing. The choices are noted and scored. This process goes through ten rounds. After Rounds 4 and 8, each group can send a negotiator to meet with the negotiator from the other side – if both agree to negotiate.

Prepare the points chart and the scoring charts before the game (see separate handouts). Use red, blue and green markers for noting the choices and scores. Use a black and another coloured marker to set up the charts. Make a clear line of separation after Rounds 4 and 8 to mark when the negotiations may take

place. Also, circle Rounds 9 and 10 as a reminder about doubling the point values of the scores for those rounds. Have small pieces of paper or index cards – ten for each group playing – for the groups to write down their decision of red or blue. Depending on how many parallel games you run, set up circles with teams separated from each other in the middle – ‘A’ teams on one side of the room, ‘B’ teams on the other.

After going through the instructions, give the groups three to five minutes to discuss and strategise. Collect their choices on cards or paper for each round. Then read them out, noting down the choices and scores on the score sheets. Then proceed with the next round. For negotiations, invite the negotiators to come to the front where the score sheets are to conduct their discussions. Allow only about two or three minutes. They don’t have to reach a conclusion. Call time when time needs to be called and move to the next round.

Good debriefing is vital. Debrief one game at a time. Depending on the dynamics that emerge, ask one group to speak first, then the next, then move on to the next game. Save the most interesting game until last. Then you can debrief about the dynamics that emerged together – issues of trust, difficulties in communication, how awareness of win–win possibilities emerged, etc.

Then you can move to generalisation, including drawing the win–lose versus win–win box (see **The win–win box**). Other topics might emerge that you would like to discuss. This also sets up the steps towards win–win solutions, utilising the Paul and Barnabas role-play (see **Paul and Barnabas Bible study**). As part of the debrief, ask whether their actions would have been different if at Round 8 they had been told that there would be more than the original ten rounds or if they hadn’t known in advance how many rounds there would be. In life the ‘game’ doesn’t end – there is always another round. Explore what that means for win–lose outcomes – will the ‘losers’ be happy with the outcome or will they look for an opportunity in the future to get even? You may wish to refer to ach’s ‘episodes of violence’ where the same conflict may go quiet – latent – for a while, only to re-emerge at a later date. The only way to stop this is to ensure that the needs of all parties are met: win–win.

Extra facilitation notes

This works best if you can conduct at least two games simultaneously. This allows for more than one dynamic to emerge, which enhances the educational value of the exercise and gives more material to discuss in the debrief. Four parallel games can be run, but this can become cumbersome and confusing and takes a longer time to debrief. Two or three parallel games are ideal.

If the group is too small or too large or you don’t have enough time, thumb wrestling can be used instead to set up win–lose versus win–win in a training. You need to have at least an hour to an hour-and-a-half to run ‘red–blue’ well.

Many people will feel confused at the beginning after you have gone through the instructions and rules. Acknowledge the confusion and say that they will be well into the game by the end of Round 2. In the debrief you can also discuss whether people experience confusion in conflict situations. Some groups will dither over the choices. Allow a bit of time, but if they are taking too long pressure them to decide. If they don’t, you can choose for them (to their detriment!). Support creativity and realism. Everything that happens can be fruitful for debriefing as it will mirror ways people handle conflict.

Red–blue game instruction sheet

Draw out or print off this instruction sheet and either give each team a copy or stick it on the wall where everybody can see it.

Village A plays	Village B plays		Village A scores	Village B scores
RED	RED	=	+3	+3
RED	BLUE	=	-6	+6
BLUE	RED	=	+6	-6
BLUE	BLUE	=	-3	-3

- There will be ten rounds.
- After the fourth round you may negotiate (if both villages agree).
- After the eighth round you may negotiate (if both villages agree).
- The scores in the ninth and tenth rounds will be doubled.
- The objective is for your village to end up with a positive score.

Red–blue scoring sheet

You will need to have drawn out this scoring sheet for each pair of teams, large enough for everyone to see the scores as the game proceeds.

Village A			Round	Village B		
Plays	Scores	Total		Plays	Scores	Total
			1			
			2			
			3			
			4			

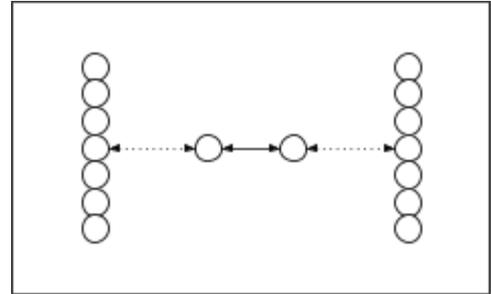
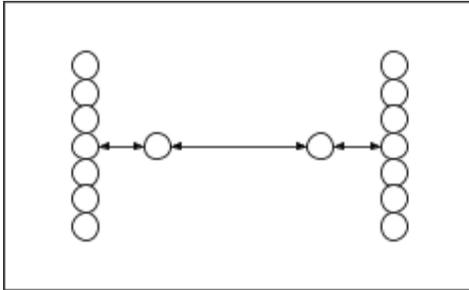
			5			
			6			
			7			
			8			

			9*			
			10*			

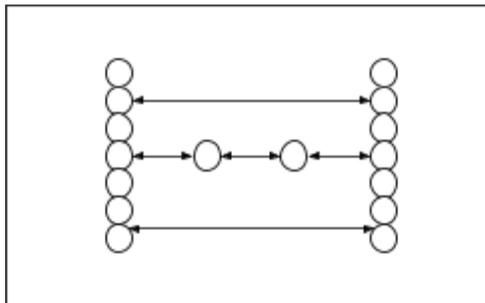
* Double points

The negotiation table

During negotiations, the two negotiators engage with each other and over time will begin to develop a level of trust – and a relationship may well grow that draws the negotiators together. As they do this, however, they can move away from their home constituencies and risk breaking the trust that exists between themselves and their constituents.



This risk can be reduced if, in parallel with the negotiations, efforts are made to establish wider contacts between people within each constituency. These contacts can strengthen the relationship between constituents and negotiator, and also build trust between the communities as a whole, and so increase the likelihood of an agreement.



Bible study: Paul and Barnabas

(Acts 15:36–41)

This Bible study is good to use after the game of 'red versus blue' as part of the theme of win-win solutions.

In the passage, Paul and Barnabas get into a conflict about whether to take John (Mark) on their next missionary journey. Mark had left the team early on the first missionary journey for a reason we are not told.

Divide the participants into two sides (there can be multiple groups on each side, with each group having between five and eight participants to foster good discussion). One side will be the Paul side, and the other the Barnabas side. Each side will study the passage from the perspective of Paul or Barnabas. They are to note the concerns that either Paul or Barnabus brings to the conflict, the needs they have and what makes these concerns so important to them. They can use what is in the text; things they might know from other parts of the Bible; and their own human empathy.

After ten minutes ask for two volunteers – one from the Paul side and one from the Barnabas side (male or female) – to role-play the conflict. Place two chairs at the front as if in a TV studio and interview them about their upcoming missionary journey, beginning with Paul and then asking for Barnabas' response. Go back and forth until the conflict is presented, often with some emotion and humour. Then stop the role-play to see if there is a win–win solution.

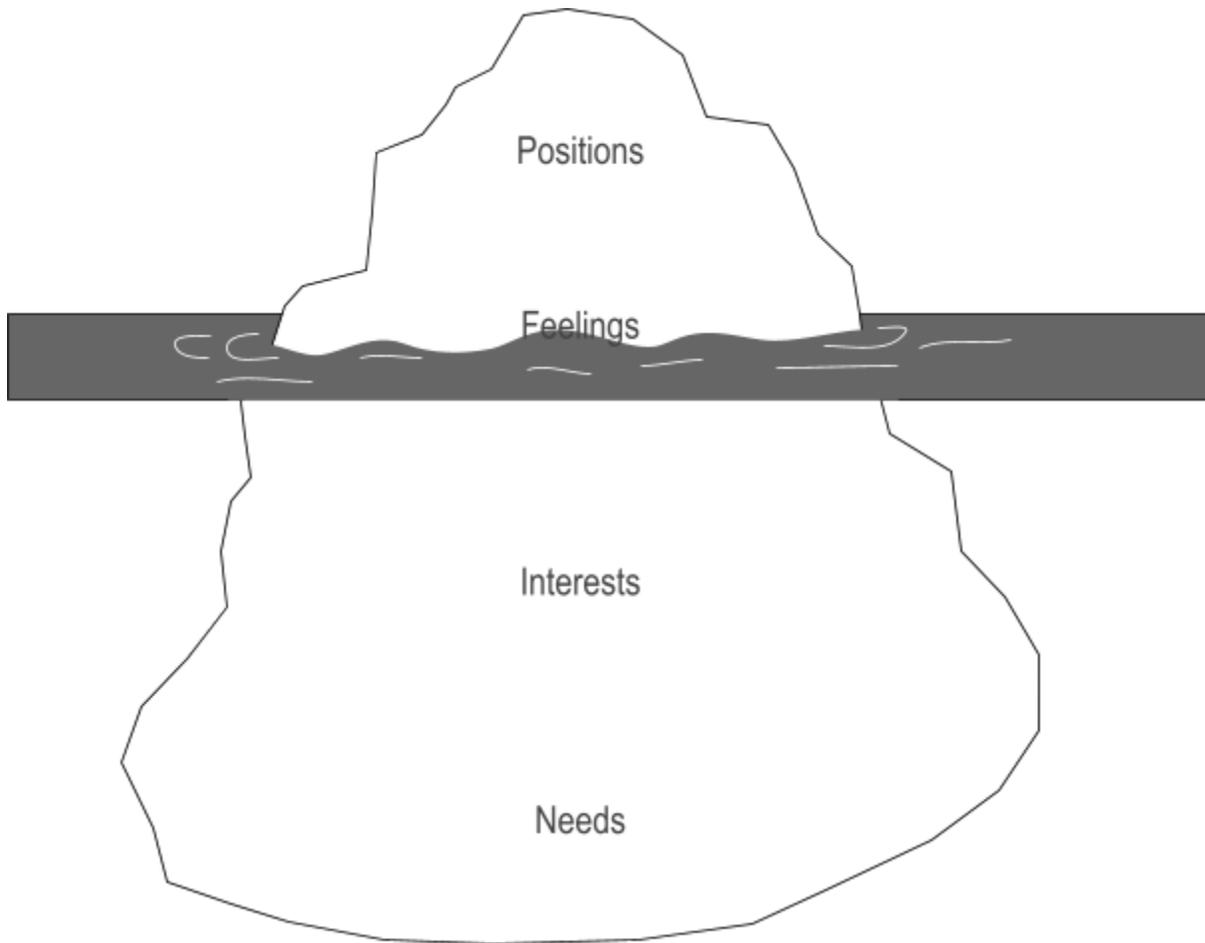
Pass out the **Steps towards win–win solutions** tool. This will be the template for trying to help Paul and Barnabas find a win–win solution.

1. **First**, start by identifying needs and interests. Too often in conflicts we start by staking out our positions, which leads to win–lose situations: if Mark goes, Barnabas wins and Paul loses; if Mark doesn't go, Paul wins and Barnabas loses. Elicit from the group what Paul's needs and interests are (doing the mission, having dependable help etc). What are Barnabas' needs and interests? (Also doing the mission, developing young leaders, not letting failure be the last word, helping a relative.)
2. **Second**, have a brainstorm to develop options to meet the identified needs and interests. Explain brainstorming, especially the rule 'never judge an idea' – all ideas are okay to include on the brainstorm list as even a seemingly 'bad' idea might spark someone else's creative 'outside the box' idea. Brainstorm possible options: praying, going to one city on a trial run then evaluating it, cancelling the mission, talking to Mark, taking a team of four (Paul, Barnabas, Mark and Silas), making job descriptions, having two teams of two (Paul and Silas one way, Barnabas and Mark another) etc.
3. **Third**, establish objective criteria for a solution. We have to judge the ideas at some point, and this is where we set the standard or measuring stick by which we judge. We do that by referring back to the needs and interests, remembering we want to find a win–win solution – where Paul can win and Barnabas can win. So we might come up with these criteria: that the mission goes forward, that the team has dependable help, and that young leaders are developed.
4. **Fourth**, work with the brainstorm list to develop the best solution. Combine ideas, and let further ideas emerge as you do this. You might come up with something like having a time of focused prayer and talking to Mark, then developing job solutions, setting up a trial in the first city followed by an evaluation, and adding another person to the team (Silas). You could have one team of four or two teams of two – both would meet the criteria with these other ideas included. Two teams of two would cover more ground in the same amount of time, so the solution might be to do exactly what they did in the text, but with a positive relationship and many other components to the solution added in. A win–win solution!

There is an interesting postscript to the story in 2 Timothy 4:11 where Paul tells Timothy, 'Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.' Both Mark and Paul evidently changed

along the way. Barnabas' mentoring of Mark worked, turning a failure into a useful Christian leader who eventually wrote one of our gospels.

Positions, interests and needs



This tool helps us to differentiate between the statements of each party and the emotions that are behind them, and so is a useful tool for opening communication channels. The theory of Positions, Interests and Needs is based on the idea that there are a few basic universal needs. On the basis of these needs, people pursue certain interests and create positions that they believe will satisfy their interests and needs.

Positions

Positions are the expression of the aim or goal of a conflict party. It is the stance taken on an issue by a conflict party, based on underlying interests rooted in core issues defined as needs. Positions are usually informed by an actor's perceived needs, but also by the actors' location in a particular conflict or negotiation setting: they are based on their understanding of the setting, and the opportunities it

presents for them as well as what constraints are present within the scope of the conflict or negotiation. Positions are always subjective.

Interests

The interests of a conflict party are what they need to achieve in order to meet their needs. For example, in the Philippine case discussed below, the interest of the land occupiers is to secure the income from the land they are using. This achieved, they would then be able to meet their own basic needs. This is also distinct from their position – that the land is theirs – as there are ways to gain income from the land without owning it. Here we can see how it can often be easier to reconcile interests than positions.

Needs

Needs are the goals pursued by an individual or a group in order to survive. They can have an objective nature if the lack of provision of these needs results in a physical threat to survival (basic needs). They can also be subjective (perceived needs) when they are not a direct factor in survival.

It can be difficult to distinguish between needs and interests, and this is where the subjective view of the conflict parties and conflict analyst can result in different views of the conflict and its possible resolution.

Feelings and emotions

While positions are perhaps the most obvious, as they are what conflict actors assert, feelings and emotions can also be seen – although some deeper emotions may not always be immediately obvious. These feelings and emotions are important, as people are rarely as rational or objective as we like to pretend and many decisions are made on the basis of emotion rather than pure logic. In transforming conflict it is important to take into account these emotions as well as positions, interests and needs.

An example

A fruit tree stands on the boundary between two landowners and there is a disagreement between them as to who owns the land. Both individuals take up seemingly incompatible positions that the tree belongs to them. Fortunately a wise neighbour has completed some peacebuilding training and asks them why they want the tree. One landowner says that he likes to sit in the shade provided by the tree to rest when he is working his fields as there is no other shade on his land. Her interest is in the shade provided by the tree. The second landowner says that she collects the fruit from the tree and sells it in the market so that she can pay for her children's school fees. Her interest is in the fruit from the tree. Although their positions were incompatible, once they understood each other's interests the disagreement no longer matters as much. At a deeper level, that of their needs, the first landowner had a need for shelter while the second had a need for a source of income. When you think at these deeper levels there are more options for finding a win-win solution.

With these kinds of differing interests and needs, the conflict transformation process should be geared towards understanding each party's positions, interests and needs in order to open up options that could be beneficial to all parties.

Steps towards win–win solutions¹

1. *Identify needs and interests*

- Get behind stated positions to the underlying needs and interests.
- What are the basic needs at stake for each party?

2. *Brainstorm options to meet the identified needs*

- Don't judge ideas – don't reject anything, however wild it may seem:
 - stimulate ideas rather than shut them down
 - evaluation comes later
 - a 'bad' idea may generate other ideas or become part of an eventual solution.
- Draw upon everyone's ideas.
- Go for quantity – the more ideas, the better the chance of a winner.
- Collaborate – build on other people's ideas.

3. *Establish objective criteria for a solution*

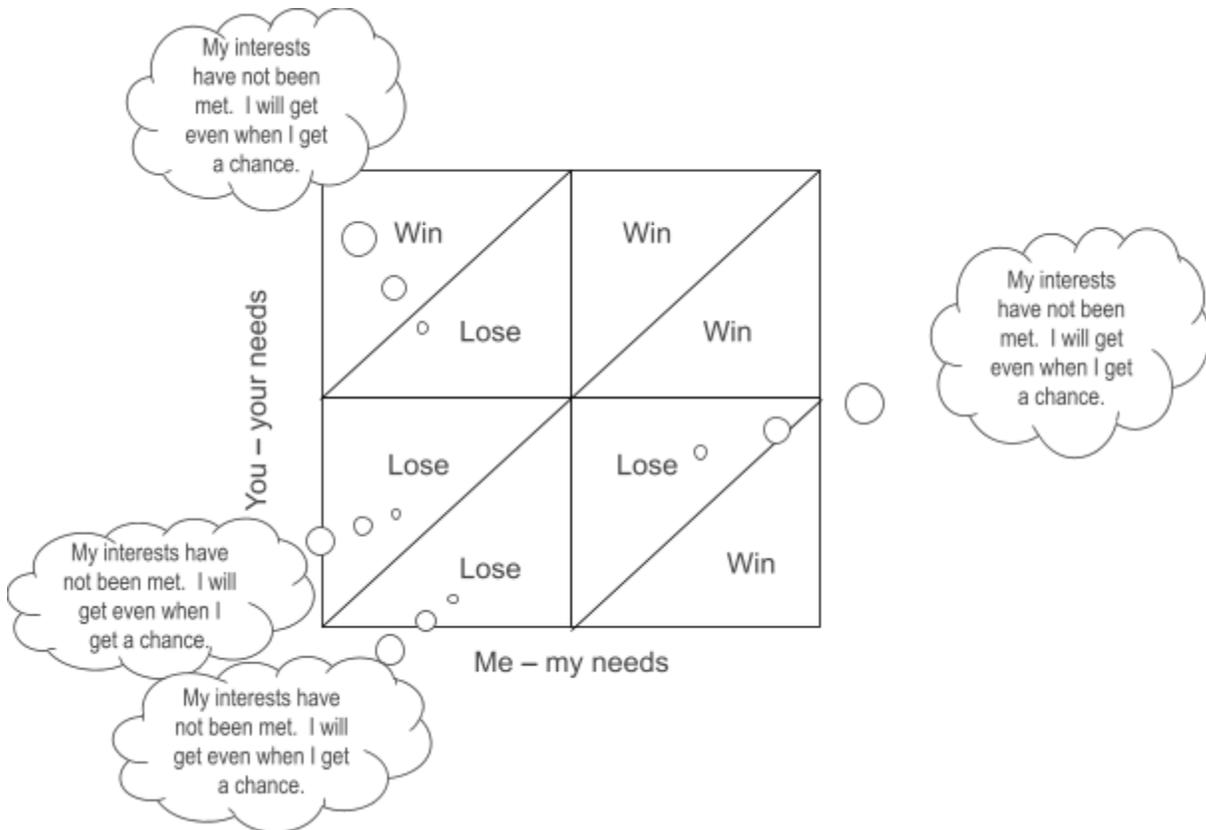
- What will a solution need to accomplish?
- How will we know we have a solution?
- List the things the solution should do.

4. *Broaden and refine options to develop the best solution*

- Which options show the best possibility of meeting the interests?
- Can some be combined?
- How can problems be minimised or offset in some of the options?
- Can some elements be strengthened so as to better meet some interests?
- All need to participate in shaping the solution – all parties share in the ownership of the solution.

¹ Adapted from the book *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury (1981).

The win-win box

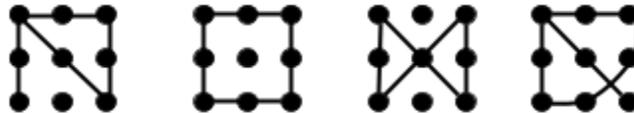


If one party loses then the conflict will simply 'go underground'. It will become a 'hidden conflict' only to re-emerge again when the opportunity arises. Life is not like a football match where there is a final whistle and the winner is declared. There is always 'extra time' and the losing party will always want to play on. The conflict will only end when the needs of both parties are met.

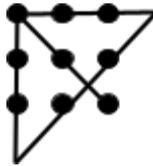
Connect the dots

This activity can be used at any time but is particularly useful when talking about the need to be creative and to think 'outside the box'. You may want to time its use just before a break so that people can try to solve the challenge over the break.

The initial challenge is to connect nine dots (three dots by three dots) with four straight lines without one's pencil or pen leaving the paper – the end of the first line is where the second line begins, and so on. Give people time to try. Most will attempt solutions like this:



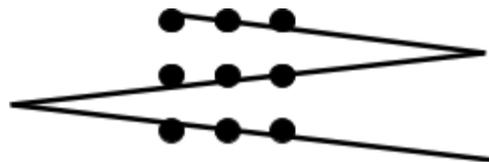
The solution is:



Many of us will create an 'invisible box' around the dots and assume the solution lies within it. As a result we get stuck and unable to meet the challenge. The solution lies 'outside the box'. We need to free our minds of the unconscious constraints that we tend to place on our thinking.

If someone in the group knows the solution, then invite them to come to the front and show it. But then you can push further – 'Can you connect all nine dots with three straight lines?!'

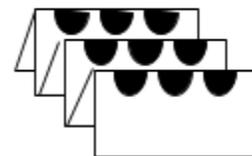
Here is the solution – again you need to think outside the box to solve the challenge:



Then ask, 'Can you connect all nine dots with one straight line?!'

Draw the dots smaller – put nine little dots close together – and connect them with one thick line: draw a heavy marker line through the dots.

Alternatively fold the paper like a concertina so that the three rows of dots are now next to each other at the top of each fold – then draw one line down the folds.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!!!

Noticings

'Noticing' is a way of examining something in an open and non-judgemental way. It can be an elicitive and democratic way of exposing issues, insights, questions or confusions, all of which enhances learning. It is different from commenting as there is no assessment, assumption or value judgement associated with it and so it leaves room for discussion without any sense of bias or constraint. While we are all fairly good at offering our thoughts and comments on something, we are less skilled at simply noticing and so it is a skill that requires practice.

Examples

- Evaluation: 'I really liked it when you asked Joe to speak up because the rest of us could then hear him more clearly.'
- Noticing: 'I noticed that you asked Joe to speak up – what was your intention in doing that?'
- Evaluation: 'Getting us all involved in the opening activity was a great way to start the session – it was great to have a laugh.'
- Noticing: 'I noticed that you started the session with a lighthearted opening activity. This caused a lot of interaction and noise but you then stopped it quite abruptly. Why did you choose that particular activity and why did you stop it the way that you did?'

Comments or evaluative statements usually tend to close off discussion as they can appear to be a final statement or summing up. Noticings are more open and by contrast tend to invite thinking and discussion.

When using noticings, facilitators should frame the question so that the noticings are focused: 'What did you notice about X?' where 'X' might be group dynamics, the behaviour of the facilitator or of participants, the process or impact of an activity, the design of a session etc.

Session 2

Thumb wrestling

For a quick activity (five minutes or so) to get into the topic of conflict resolution and getting to win–win solutions, thumb wrestling is hard to top. No equipment or preparation is needed, so it is a ready and accessible tool in the toolbox!

Call for a volunteer to join you in thumb wrestling. Demonstrate to the entire group how to link fingers and then what it looks like to pin the other's thumb. Say you will give everyone 20 seconds (get a volunteer timekeeper) to get as many points as they can. As soon as a thumb is pinned, register the point and start over. Have everyone pair up, then begin.

While everyone is wrestling, tell the person you are with to take turns with you, each pinning the other in turn as quickly and as many times as you can in 20 seconds – sometimes about 20 points each!

When time is called by the timekeeper, ask how many people got three points or more; for high scores ask the score of the other person. Then demonstrate with your partner how many points you got. (If another pair did something similar on their own, invite them to the front to demonstrate.)

Then you can get into a discussion about win–lose approaches to conflict (or lose–win: I let the other person win because it's a stupid game and they have a longer thumb than me!), but how in so many conflicts these become lose–lose. The alternative is win–win, where together we got far more points than those taking an adversarial approach.

Conflict transformation Bible studies

The four passages below (1 Samuel 25:1–35, Joshua 22:10–34, Acts 15:1–35 and Numbers 32:1–33) all look at different conflicts and how they were addressed. These passages can be shared between different groups but with each group being given the same questions. Allocate the passages to the groups and give them time to read through their passage before giving them the following questions for discussion:

1. List the principal characters in the story. What behaviours did each of these characters – or group of characters – show?
2. What is the conflict about? What is the immediate issue? What are the underlying or deeper concerns for both sides?
3. What factors make the conflict more severe? What do the different parties to the conflict say or do that is unhelpful?
4. Who acted to move the conflict towards a peaceful conclusion? How did their actions change the behaviour of others? Who yielded what in the negotiation? Who gained what in the resolution?
5. What did the parties to the conflict do to make their agreement formal?

Invite each group to feed back their findings. Keep the momentum up during this process. One way of doing this would be to take each question in turn, giving each group a maximum of one minute per

question and restricting them to new points that have not already been covered by previous groups. Note that this will still take at least 20 minutes!

Abigail: A daring mediator, 1 Samuel 25:1–35

Background

David was living the life of a fugitive in the wilderness, for King Saul was trying to kill him. David gathered a band of warriors and social outlaws together. They survived by what they could forage, beg or plunder.

Key points

The young servant in verses 14–17 played a small but very important role in resolving this conflict. He was personally not in a position to affect either of the major parties to the conflict, Nabal or David. But he knew Abigail as a person of wisdom and that she would have access to the people involved. Though he could do very little, he did what he was able to do.

Lesson insights:

- Do whatever you can that might move a conflict in a positive direction.
Abigail wisely put herself within David's perspective and interests to show him his own need for a peaceful solution to the conflict (see verses 30 and 31). She showed him that he would be better off in the future as king if he had no massacre as part of his political history.
- To come to a resolution it can be helpful to get into the perspective, needs and values of the other side in order to frame a solution that would work within the framework and interests of the other side.

A conflict over misunderstanding: Joshua 22:10–34

Background

During the conquest of Canaan by the people of Israel, all 12 of the tribes participated. But the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had decided to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan in the regions of Jazer and Gilead. Numbers 32 relates the story about how the tribes agreed under Moses for Reuben, Gad and Manasseh to participate in the conquest before settling in the eastern territories.

In Joshua 22:1–9, Joshua proclaims that the work of the conquest is over and releases the two-and-a-half tribes to go to the eastern side of the Jordan to establish their homes. Two earlier experiences of Israel are mentioned in this passage. Understanding those earlier events is important for understanding the concerns of the tribes from the western side of the Jordan. Verse 17 refers to the 'sin of Peor'. This is a reference to a story recorded in Numbers 25:1–9 in which the Israelites engaged in idolatrous practices related to the worship of Baal. Twenty-four thousand people died in the plague associated with God's judgement for this idolatry. Verse 20 refers to 'Achan son of Zerah'. Achan's story is told in Joshua 7.

Achan stole some of the spoils from the destruction of Jericho, keeping for himself what should have been offered to God. As a result, Israel suffered a military defeat in their next encounter at Ai. God revealed that the entire community was being judged for failure to faithfully offer up all the spoils of Jericho to God. Achan was exposed as the guilty one, and the treasure found buried in his tent. He was killed to cleanse the community from his wrongdoing.

Key points

It is very easy to project onto others what we fear, but those projections may have no basis in reality at all. The easterners projected their fear that the westerners would eventually exclude the easterners from the community of Israel because of the natural boundary of the Jordan river. The westerners projected their fear of God's judgement for behaviour against the covenant upon the easterners. Neither side checked out their projections by communicating with the other group before acting on their fears. The easterners built the altar without talking to the westerners about their fears or providing an interpretation for their actions. The westerners mobilised for war without first talking to the easterners about what their action of building the altar signified. Wisely, Phinehas began to talk before starting the war.

Lesson insight: Communicate first to see whether your projections and fears are accurate!

Some communication issues emerge in the story:

It is important to identify and share one's own fears or concerns, such as Phinehas did in sharing the concern about unfaithfulness to God bringing judgement upon the whole community. However, Phinehas began with very accusatory language (see verse 16). 'You' language that is accusatory can stimulate a defensive response. 'I' language, in which a person shares clearly their own fears, concerns or hurts, opens the opportunity for further communication between the sides. 'I' language invites clarification, honesty and a chance to look for solutions rather than stimulating defensiveness that keeps the parties apart. A specific proposal that offers something to the other side (such as that put forward by Phinehas in verse 19) can open up the discussion for a workable and mutually acceptable solution. Clarify motives (as the eastern tribes did in verses 24–27) so the other side can understand the thinking and feelings behind the actions taken. Take follow-up actions to make the agreement formal and widely understood (such as reporting to the rest of Israel what happened and naming the altar 'Witness' – see verses 32–34).

Lesson insights:

- Avoid accusatory 'you' language and instead use more open 'I' language, avoiding assumptions and clarifying motives.
- Offer constructive proposals and be sure to identify and implement follow-up actions.

In many conflicts, opposing parties think that one side must win and the other lose. This is called a ‘win–lose’ approach to conflict. Through the process of communication of the interests and needs of each side and finding common ground, a ‘win–win’ solution can often be found. Both groups can have the experience of ‘winning’, but not at the price of the other side losing.

In this story the eastern tribes were able to have a physical memorial to indicate their common bond with the Hebrew people on the western side of the Jordan. The western tribes were reassured as to the religious faithfulness of the entire community including those who settled on the eastern side of the Jordan.

Lesson insight: Look for the ‘win–win’ solution. It will leave everyone feeling much better about the resolution of the conflict than with a solution where one side loses.

A conflict over religious values: Acts 15:1–35

Background

The first Christians were all Jews or Gentile converts to Judaism who then became followers of Jesus. As the gospel spread, more and more Gentiles became followers of Christ, especially once the missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas was launched out of the multicultural congregation at Antioch. The question then arose: Does a Gentile have to become a religious Jew in order to become a Christian? Is Christianity a branch of Judaism or a new faith that transcends the division between Jews and Gentiles? What are the religious and ethical standards that define the new faith? Circumcision of males was the covenant ritual that marked entry into the religious community of Judaism, so the focal point of the discussion was whether to require this of new male Gentile converts or not. These were the questions that the early church leaders were pondering as they gathered for the council meeting recorded in Acts 15.

Pharisees are mentioned in verse 5, but they are specifically identified as ‘believers’. These were followers of the legal traditions of the Pharisees who had become followers of Jesus (see Nicodemus in John 3 as an example). They had a very high view of the Law of Moses and voiced the opinion that circumcision was necessary for all male converts.

In verses 7–11, Peter tells a story that is told more fully in Acts 10:1–11:18 in which the Gentile Cornelius and his household became Christians. They immediately received the Holy Spirit just as the apostles and other disciples had at Pentecost. Cornelius’ story was a foundational event for the early church and is retold many times within the book of Acts.

Key points

The turning point in the debate was Peter telling the story of Cornelius and then Paul and Barnabas telling the stories of their missionary journey. Prior to that there had been ‘much debate’ (see verse 7). In conflicts over values or theology it is very difficult for either side to convince the other by their own force of argument or scripture passages quoted. Rather the arguments go on and on, sometimes becoming very divisive. Personal stories can change the entire atmosphere of the discussion. Stories

move the discussion out of the theoretical realm into the complex realities of our lives. There is a different way that truth is seen and heard in stories, something that is easier to appreciate and respect even if the story comes from a very different place in life than where the hearer is. Stories create a common ground in our humanness, and in this case it was finding God acting in ways not expected in some of the theological frameworks people were holding.

Lesson insight: Use people's stories to help people in a conflict to understand each other, to grow in respect for each other even if they have deep differences, and to open up new ways of thinking that can embrace the truth revealed in the stories.

After the agreement was reached, the council formalised it in a letter that went with two delegates to the Gentile churches (vv 22–31). When a resolution to a conflict is achieved, it is important to find a way to formalise the agreement. A written agreement can be helpful so that everyone knows what was agreed.

Lesson insight: Formalise agreements.

Although circumcision was no longer required of Gentile male converts, the council did require converts to maintain standards of sexual morality, abstaining 'from blood' (most scholars believe this phrase refers to maintaining some of the kosher food laws, rather than not committing murder), and not participating in idolatry by eating meat offered in sacrifice to idols. If these are the key ethical standards set by the early church for showing the faith, even in the New Testament we find a discussion beginning about what those standards mean. In Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 the issue is explored by the apostle Paul in a way that shows some of the complexities of living out theological beliefs in a particular culture. In cultures where there are no physical religious idols, such a key issue has no relevance at all. Faithfulness to Christ would be seen in other ethical matters. The point to note here is that in many conflicts an agreement may work for a while, but further experiences and thinking might require a reworking of the understanding behind the agreement or even the agreement itself. A change in the cultural context or various historical developments might make old issues of no concern but raise important new issues to become topics of further discussion and debate.

Lesson insight: Solutions to many conflicts are steps along the way and may need to be reworked later in light of new developments.

Finding win–win solutions: Numbers 32:1–33

Background

The people of Israel had finished their 40 years of travel in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. They were approaching Canaan from the east, coming up to the Jordan river. In Numbers 21 the story is told about the defeat of the Amorite kings Sihon and Og, who ruled east of the Jordan. That region was under Israelite control as they stood ready to launch their invasion of Canaan.

Key points

Many conflicts become competitive: for one side to win, the other side must lose. Initially, the positions of the Reubenites and Gadites on the one hand and Moses on the other were opposed. By looking at the needs and interests of both groups (the Reubenites and Gadites to have good grazing land for their cattle and the rest of the tribes to have full military support for the invasion), a solution was found in which both sides achieved what they wanted. This is called a ‘win–win solution’. The solution was not present in either of the positions stated at the beginning, but it emerged once the needs and interests were clearly identified.

Lesson insight: Look for the win–win solution that meets the needs and interests of all parties to the conflict.

Moses stated a very harsh opinion about the Reubenites and Gadites in the beginning (v14). The Reubenites and Gadites responded with a specific proposal that took into account the concerns Moses raised.

Lesson insight: Acknowledging and affirming the valid interests of the other side can help in crafting an acceptable solution.

The ENDA conflict approach *for resolving identity-based conflicts*

1. ENEMIES: *Acknowledge that you are/have been enemies of one another*

- Focus on the tangible ‘what’ of the conflict.
- Define it in US versus THEM terms.
- Take an intentional look at the structure and process of the conflict.

- Create a safe place to look at what happened and the alienated/enemy relationship:
 - use a dialogue facilitator/referee.
- This can create the feeling about the negative nature of the conflict:
 - ‘This is hurting us both – we do not want to do that any more!’

2. NEIGHBOURS: *Change the way of seeing the relationship*

- Focus on the why and who of the conflict:
 - What are the identity needs?
 - Why does who want what?
 - What does each side most deeply care about in this conflict?
 - Why does it matter so much?
 - What are the motivations?
 - Where do the sides share responsibility for the conflict?
 - ‘We are both at fault – both victims and both perpetrators’
 - Which needs and values are threatened or frustrated in this conflict?
- Rework the understanding of the relationship from US and THEM to WE:
 - articulate common needs and motivations.

3. DEVELOP: *Imagine and explore various ideas and options.*

- Focus on the how of cooperatively resolving the conflict and its core causes through solutions that bring neighbours together to address common needs.
- Look for solutions that integrate the needs.

A. Differentiation. Different needs that can be accommodated in one solution.

B. Expansion. Use the energy invested in the conflict to expand the resources.

C. Compensation. Exchanges to cover for interests or issues valued differently.

- Momentum builds up towards positive solutions.

4. ACTION: *Plan your action, then act your plan*

- Plan a joint agenda.
- Don’t just leave it vague, but spell out the steps: who will do what, timelines, and evaluation points.
- Pick something big enough to matter, but small enough to work – quick wins build trust, confidence and momentum.
- Set up an institution/group/mechanism to oversee and maintain the process.

Session 3

People sculptures

This is a delightful tool to get people engaged in a topic and working together as a small group. Ask participants to form groups of five to seven. Give them seven minutes to create a sculpture on a topic related to your workshop, using their bodies and anything in the room.

People may feel that seven minutes isn't enough time, but it is perfect for this task. The time is short enough to focus the group yet long enough to allow them to successfully accomplish the task.

Invite each group to perform their sculpture in turn. First ask the other participants to comment on what they notice in the sculpture – what it says to them. Then ask the members of the group to talk about what they were expressing. Applaud each group.

Topics for sculptures can be peace, conflict, what happened in the conflict, what happened in the movement, a memorial, the concerns of your country etc.

Transforming initiatives

This tool dramatises the three examples Jesus gives in his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in the last section of Matthew 5, related to 'turn the other cheek' and 'love your enemies'. These examples show a different way of responding to violence; a way that has been called 'transforming initiatives'. But before talking about the three examples, use the **Responses to violence** tool to explore the different ways in which people respond to violence.

Violence begins with the 'violence of oppressive power', which is a power that can make others do what they don't want to do. In Jesus' day that oppressive power was Rome. In response you can have 'counter-violence' (the Zealots in Jesus' day as well as Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane), 'collaboration' (the Sadducees, Herod, tax collectors, and Judas in Jesus' day), 'withdrawal' (the Essenes and Mary and Joseph with the infant Jesus going to Egypt), 'unengaged piety' (the Pharisees), and 'transforming initiatives' (Jesus).

After this, using two actors, go through the examples Jesus gave of the kind of action he called people to take.

Turn the other cheek

Get one of the actors to mime slapping the other actor. They should use their right hand to slap the right cheek of the other person. The only way that they can do this is with a backhanded slap. In Jesus' day that was what social superiors did to social inferiors. When you act out turning the other cheek, you can no longer be given a backhanded slap but an open-handed slap instead. It is immediately apparent that the person slapped is not getting into an inferior posture but is still confronting the supposed superior, although not in a threatening way. No attack is made, but the person doesn't back down either. This is a nonviolent rejection of the superior/inferior status.

Give them your shirt

When acting out giving the garment, the key is that the setting is in court – a person is ‘sued’ for their garment. The background is the collateral legislation regarding loans taken out by the poor in Exodus 22:25–27 and Deuteronomy 24:10–13. A poor person is giving the cloak as collateral to a rich person, making a formal document that was kept in the courts. Giving a second garment, then, is stripping naked. Act this out with the poor person stripping off their shirt, usually invoking much laughter – sometimes out of embarrassment. The key to this is understanding where the shame of nakedness rests in Jewish society – not on the naked person, but rather on the one who causes the nakedness (Amos 2:7–8, Micah 2:8) and the one who witnesses the nakedness and does nothing (Genesis 9:20–25). This act actually exposes the evil of the economic exploitation going on, putting the shame on the rich landowner demanding the garment as a pledge and on the system watching this exploitation as ‘business as usual’. It is highlighting the truth of the unequal power structures that existed, through which the poorest were being exploited.

Go the extra mile

Going the second mile takes the enforced carrying of the Roman soldier’s luggage, which was limited under Roman legislation to one mile, and turns it from the act of an oppressor (an act of servitude) into an act of voluntary service – one of kindness. The one going the second mile is refusing the victim identity and instead choosing an identity of being a ‘gift giver’, while at the same time putting the Roman soldier outside the law. In doing this, the power relationship is transformed, with the soldier now becoming the one under obligation to the gift giver. When acting out the situation, be sure to have a selection of heavy bags or backpacks that the soldier can force the other person to carry.

Having dramatised these three readings, return to the **Responses to violence** tool and discuss the key principles of a transforming initiative. These examples are from a particular context and they might look different in our own contexts; however, the principles should remain the same.

Responses to violence

This can be used as part of a session on transforming initiatives (see the **Transforming initiatives** tool) to suggest the different ways that people can respond to violence and what these people looked like in Jesus’ time.

Types of response

- The violence of oppressive power (this was the Roman Empire)
- Counter-violence (the Zealots were a political movement that tried to incite the people of Judea to rebel against the Roman Empire and expel it from the Holy Land by force of arms)
- Accommodation (these are the people that worked with and supported the occupying power; such as King Herod, the Sadducees and the tax collectors)
- Withdrawal (the Essenes were a Jewish sect that lived in communities similar to Christian monasteries, and so did not engage fully with day-to-day political issues)
- Unengaged piety (Pharisees)
- Transforming initiatives (Jesus)

Transforming initiatives (as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount)

- Do not play out conflicts by the normal rules:
 - change the rules
 - do the unexpected
 - be creative in ways which open up new possibilities.
- Claim one's own humanity:
 - don't be the victim.
- Do not make a victim of the other:
 - affirm the humanity of the enemy.
- Expose the truth:
 - expose the evil of the situation.
- Leave the door open for repentance and reconciliation.

Session 4

Parallel lines role-play

Parallel lines is a quick and efficient way of leading a role-play. In this exercise, participants each have a partner. Each one of the pair has a role to play, given to them by the facilitator. Participants will be given a few minutes to try out different behaviours within those roles, and then the facilitator will debrief.

- **First**, get participants standing in two parallel lines facing each other. Every participant should have a 'partner' – one person standing in front of them (you can confirm this by getting people to shake hands with their partner).
- **Second**, explain that participants are going to get a chance to experiment with the current topic. If the scenario is very physical, you may want to tell them they cannot hit each other!
- **Third**, explain the roles for those people on one line (we can call it the 'A' line), then explain the roles for those on the 'B' line (see role explanations below). Give participants (an A and B pair) a moment or two to get into character, then tell them to begin!

Possible scenarios:

- An animal lover trying to intervene to stop someone from beating a dog.
- A facilitator trying to deal with an angry workshop participant who felt they'd been unfairly cut off in the group.
- An activist trying to persuade someone to take part in a nonviolent protest.
- A community member trying to persuade a young person not to respond violently to provocation or to seek revenge for an attack.
- A mediator trying to make first contact with a rebel leader to invite them to peace talks.

Running parallel lines

Immediately after telling the participants to begin, there may be an awkward moment while they get into their roles. Allow them some time. While the role-play is going on, watch to see the kinds of interventions/ behaviours various participants try out. Stop the role-play after a few minutes and begin the debrief (for very physical role-plays cut it off more quickly; for less physical role-plays give it more time). A sign that it's time to stop is when participants look like they have run out of ideas or when several of the role-plays have reached a natural conclusion (eg they agree to give money or the intervention is successful).

Debriefing parallel lines

Debriefing has three phases: feelings; behaviors in the role-play; and generalising lessons.

Role-plays can be lots of things: stressful, exhilarating, engaging, scary etc. Since people learn best when they are fully present, give the participants a chance to express their feelings immediately after stopping the role-play. Ask the line of participants who have been doing the most amount of work (eg those trying

to convince people to give money, those intervening with the dog beater, those explaining nonviolent protest) to share their feelings: give them a chance to really express feelings (no analysis yet!).

After listening to feelings from one line, with people still standing, ask the other line: ‘What things did your partner do that worked or helped the situation?’ Help participants clarify what behaviour it was that helped (enough so people could do it again). Balance that with also getting a wide range of different answers. You can write the things that people found ‘worked’ on newsprint (or have a co-facilitator or observer do that).

Next, ask participants to return to their seats. If you wrote a list on newsprint, review that list. You can add to that list with personal stories of other things that work from people’s personal experience. In essence, help the group move from the experience of the role-play to a more generalised sense of what the options are.

Optional: If the group has the time (and if you think they have the energy), you can run the role-play again – this time switching roles (those in A line take B’s role and those in B line take A’s role). This is great for skill development; helps groups think of more options; and is useful for everyone’s learning.

If you plan to do this, just do the first two phases of debriefing: feelings and listing what works, and then set up the role-play again, explaining that people will be switching roles this time. Then go through the complete debrief.

Esther and the social barometer

The story of Esther is an excellent way of dramatising the social barometer (see **The social barometer** and **Social barometer analysis** tools). Before the session starts, draw out the social barometer on the floor. Then get someone to tell the story of Esther – as much as they can remember. It is wise to give them a time limit (two minutes) so that they focus on the essential elements of the story rather than give a blow-by-blow account. Draw out from the group who the main characters are. As Mordecai reacts, place him on the diagram and then get the group to identify where they think the other main characters are on the social barometer at the start of the story. We suggest that Mordecai is the leading activist, Haman is the leading opponent, the Jews are passive allies, the king is an active opponent, and the Persian court are passive opponents. Esther is neutral, totally oblivious to the impending genocide. You may find the group disagrees and places them elsewhere on the diagram. This is okay, but do encourage a wider discussion across the group as to why they are placing people in different positions. The main aim is to show how people’s positions change from being mainly on the opponents’ side of the barometer to the allies’ side as the story unfolds.

As the story is told, move the individuals to their new positions on the barometer. Mordecai’s first action is a public nonviolent action that connects to Esther. Her first response – sending clothes to Mordecai – shows how oblivious she is. But now that Mordecai has built a relationship with her he educates her about the issue. Esther moves one slot, from neutral to a passive ally (she talks about how she can’t do anything at this time). Mordecai now changes his actions. He increases her identification with the at-risk community, gives her a big vision, and makes a direct challenge to her. Esther now shifts from a passive ally to a leading activist; she now takes the initiative for further action.

Esther first approaches the rest of the Jewish community, giving them a specific action they can take and moving them from passive allies to active allies. Using the relationships she has built with the Persian court, she enlists them to pray and fast for her, moving them from passive opponents to active allies.

Now the social pressure has shifted dramatically to Mordecai and Esther's side. After all that groundwork is laid, Esther approaches the king. She uses her relationship; is soft on the person but hard on the issue; exposes the motives of Haman; and causes the king to have doubts. When she gives the king an opportunity to act, he shifts from an active opponent to an active ally. Now the leading opponent, Haman, is completely alone. This movement of people around the model highlights how changes in the balance of power and influence can be achieved.

The Esther story gives us a wide cast of characters, and it shows us the different strategies employed to connect to people and encourage their movement. It shows us how a situation changed dramatically as a result of one person starting to take action from a position of extreme risk and marginality.

You can also refer back to the peacebuilding levels (see **Levels of peacebuilding** tool), showing how the story used the connections between levels to change the views of the elite leaders. Mordecai and the Jews as exiles would probably have been at the grassroots level, while Esther as a member of the king's harem would probably have been in the middle level but with a relationship with the king, who would have been at the top of the pyramid. Haman would also have been among this group of elite leaders. Mordecai uses his relationship to influence Esther in the mid level, then reaches into and influences the top level – so creating the desired change in policy.

Bible study questions

Depending on the time available, you can incorporate a Bible study into this process. First get the participants to read Esther 4:1–17, then pose the following questions, placing the individuals on the model as you go:

- What is the main issue in this story?
- Who is the leading activist?
- Who is the leading opponent?
- Where is Esther at the start of the story?
- Where would you plot the Jews in general, the Persian court in general, the king and Esther's maids and servants?
- What initial action does Mordecai take, and who is he trying to reach?
- In what ways does Esther respond and how do her responses progress? What does Mordecai do to support each stage of Esther's progress?
- Once Esther becomes a leading activist, who are the groups she mobilises or targets? What does she do to move each group towards her?
- How does the power shift during the course of this story?

Social barometer analysis

This activity can be used to get groups to begin to apply the social barometer tool to their own contexts.

In groups, get the participants to select a conflict that affects them and ask them to brainstorm the main people – supportive and opposing – who have the ability to influence the situation in one direction or

the other. This may lead to a long list, so once the brainstorming is finished get them to identify the top six or seven people or categories of people (it may be that you are able to group some of those from the brainstorm list into specific types or categories of people).

Once you have this shortened list, get the groups to identify the positions (and, if time allows, the interests and needs) of each of these people/categories of people. Use this to place them on the social barometer and to identify what your objective is for each of the people. Extend the analysis by tasking the groups to identify actions that they could take to begin to move people into more supportive positions on the barometer. If time allows, play out the proposed actions that the groups come up with to influence the people that they have identified on the barometer drawn out on the ground, in the same way that the Esther story was played out on the barometer (see **Esther and the social barometer** tool).

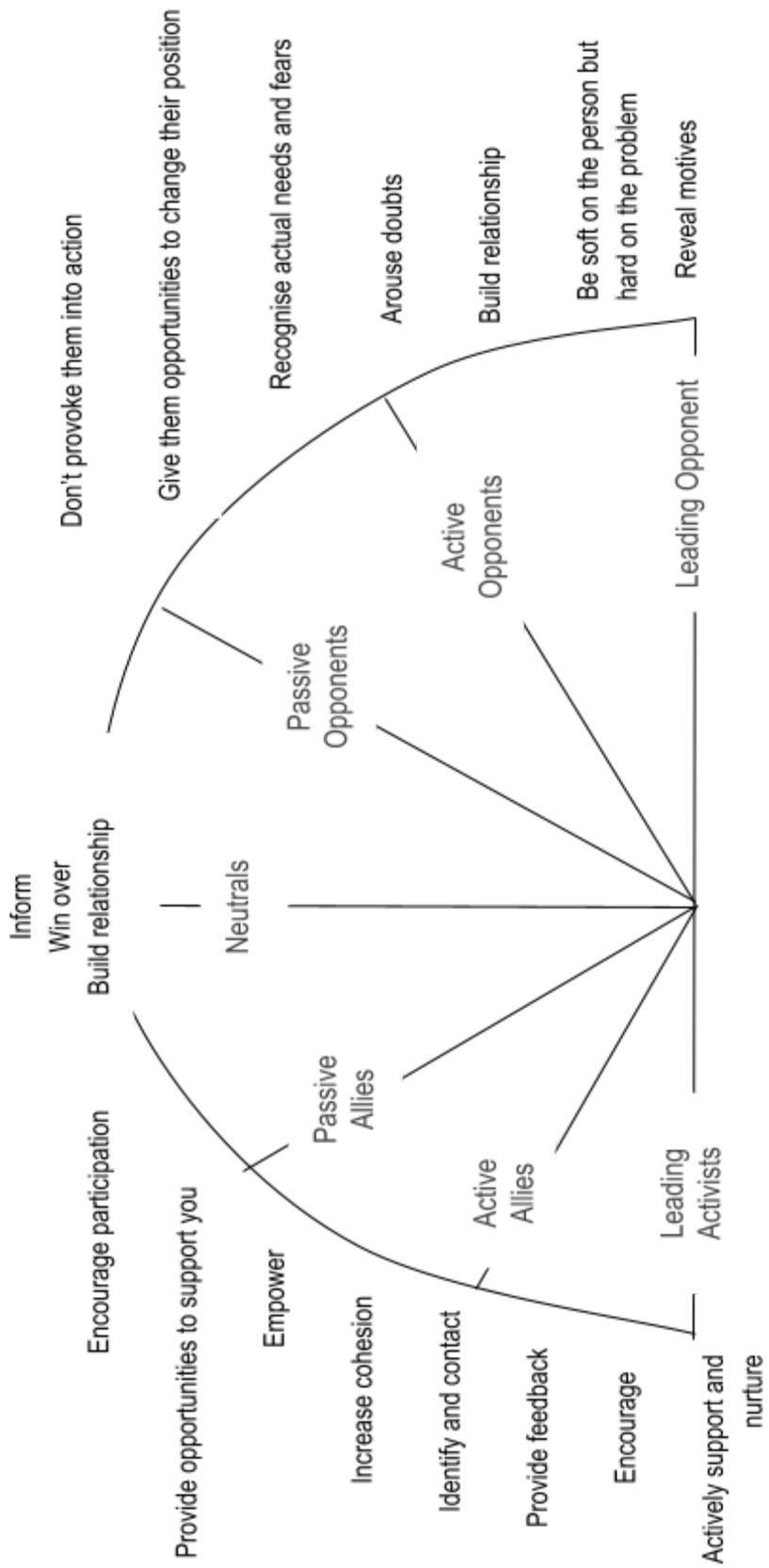
The social barometer

Where do others stand on your issue?

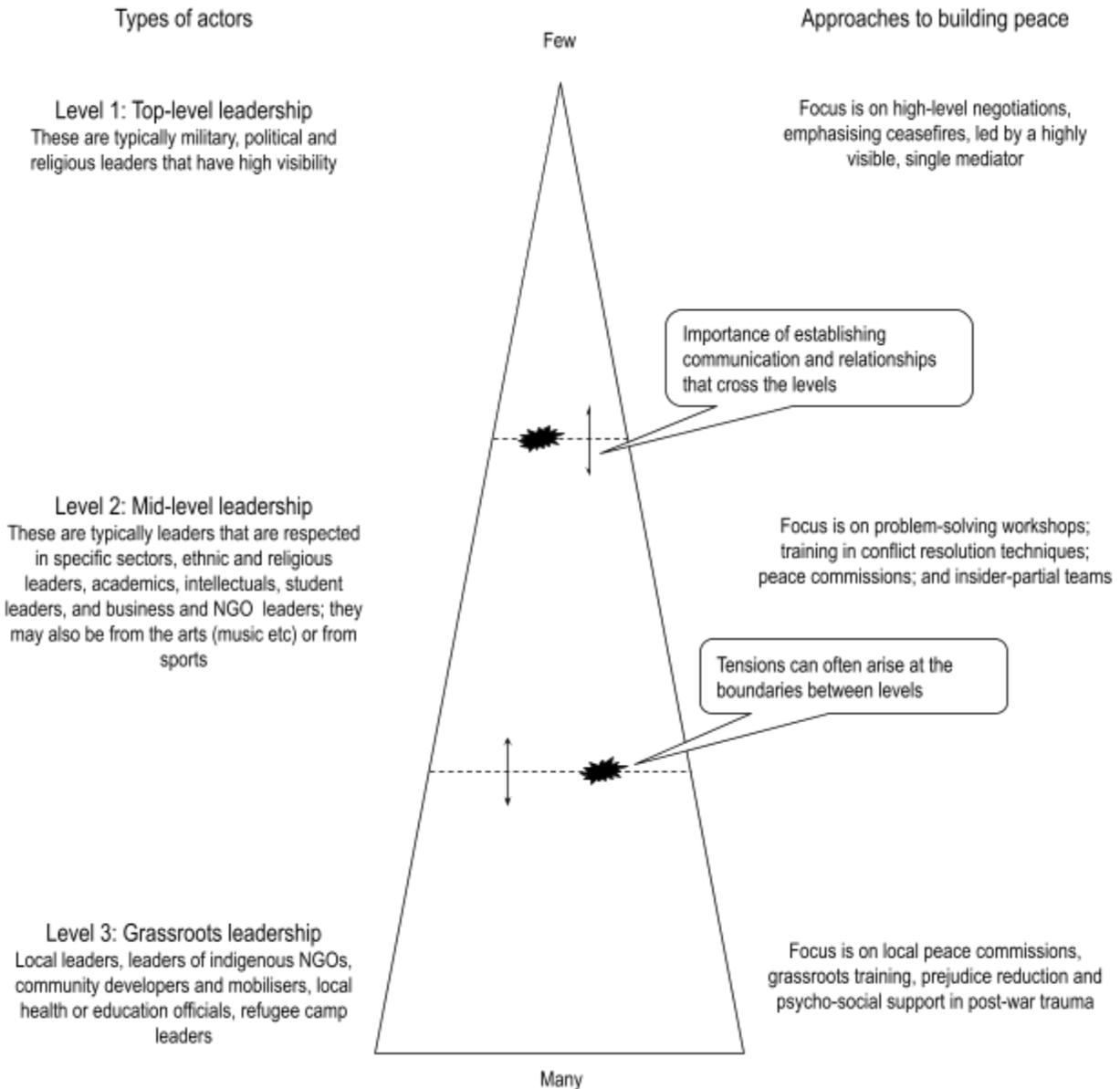
Identify groups and individuals

What are your aims with each of these individuals and groups?

Are your tactics consistent with these aims?



Levels of peacebuilding



Peacebuilding pyramid derived from Lederach J P (1997) *Building Peace*

Facilitator's notes

Use this tool to describe the three levels of actors, pointing out that conflict is often experienced in very different ways by each of them. Conflict is usually felt most keenly at the grassroots level. Grassroots actors may be the ones that are caught up in the violence, that may be compelled to take up arms or to

move from their homes for safety. Although they are often the ones that are most affected, they are also usually the ones that feel they have the least influence on the decisions that affect them.

Those at the mid level may also be caught up in the violence, but often have connections and influence that mean they can avoid some of the harshest effects of the conflict and remain somewhat distant from what is going on. Unlike the grassroots leaders, they may well be able to use their connections to gain influence at the higher levels but, relatively safe and isolated from the worst effects, they may need to be motivated to do so.

Those at the top level tend to be the individuals that have benefited most from the current status quo and so are most reluctant to change. For them, change may be threatening and may mean they lose power or influence. Change at this level may simply be about maintaining their own power, and so have little impact on the lived experience of those at the grassroots.

In peacebuilding you may find that although grassroots peacebuilding can achieve some local-level improvements, these rarely lead to sustainable or structural change and any improvements can rapidly be swept away by conflicts coming from the higher levels. Enduring change tends to come when the mid level and the grassroots begin to work together, combining the numbers and awareness of the lived experience of people at the grassroots with the capacity and influence of those at the mid level. Connecting these two levels can therefore be a vital step in effective peacebuilding.

This tool can be used effectively with the **Power sculpture** tool.

Closing circles

'Closing circles' are used to bring the sessions to an end, bringing everyone together for a final short closing activity. Some ideas are shown below. However, do use your own experience and imagination to create other exercises.

Affirmation circle

Stand in a circle. Each person gets a chance to share something they have appreciated about the person to their right. Then the person to their left affirms. (In this way, people give an affirmation and then get an affirmation, so they're not thinking of something to say while they're getting an affirmation.) Give people a minute to think of something and then, starting with the facilitator, go completely around the circle.

Closing word

Go around the circle with each person saying one word (or phrase) representing something they learned today; or the attitude they hope to bring tomorrow; or something they appreciated about themselves that day; or some way that they shined today; or something they hope to learn tomorrow.

Group stretch

Stand in a circle and get everyone to do the biggest stretch that they can, raising their arms in the air and ending by shaking all over in the same way that a dog shakes when it comes out of the water. You could get them to shout 'yes' loudly as they shake.

Lifting the world together

Stand in a circle. Announce: 'I have terrible news. The sky has fallen down! It lies before us: there is the sun, and the moon, and there are the clouds. We need to carefully lift the sky back into place. To do that, we need to lift it up from the ground all together – we cannot have pieces sliding off because we're uneven.' Demonstrate raising the sky from your knees, to up above your head, to tossing it into the air. Explain that the sky sticks better when you yell, so as you toss it into the air you all need to yell really loudly. (Note physical abilities and height, and be sensitive to those.)

Massage backs

Stand in a circle facing left. Everyone rubs the back of the person in front, then turns around and rubs the back of the person on the other side.

Pass the egg

Hold a raw egg in your hand, and comment on how fragile it is and yet how valuable with the life inside it. Comment how this can represent us/our community/our families/our health and well-being/peace etc as appropriate and then pass it carefully to the person next to you. Pass the egg all the way around the circle.

Pass the electrical pulse

Stand in a circle holding hands. The leader squeezes a hand on one side in a simple pattern. The person receiving the squeeze then squeezes the hand of the next person in the same pattern. The pattern (pulse) gets passed around the circle. Once it is well on its way, the first person sends a different pattern in the other direction. Try to make them cross, whenever they meet.

Passing the peace

Stand in a circle. The leader cups their hands as if they are holding something very valuable but fragile and elusive; something that might easily be lost or damaged if not handled with extreme care. The leader carefully passes this to the person next to them saying, 'I give you the peace of the world'(or something similar). The peace is passed around the whole group and at the end can be released by being thrown into the air as if it were a dove.

Peace forever chant

Get the group chanting '*amani milele*' (which means 'peace forever') and then get them to chant the phrase in as many other languages as are known to people in the room.

Postcard

Stand in a circle. Give one minute for everyone to come up with a picture that might appear on a postcard that they would send someone to describe their learning for that day. Go around and share the picture that would be on each person's postcard.

Snowball fight

Get each person to write a word or words on a piece of scrap paper that summarises either what they have learnt or how they are feeling (alternatively it can be a word of affirmation for someone in the group). Scrunch the paper up into a ball and then encourage the group to have a snowball fight, throwing the scrunched-up paper at each other. After a minute or two ensure everyone has a piece of paper and then encourage them to unfold it and read out the word or words on it.

Song

Close with a song you know and can easily teach. Call and response songs are great (where the facilitator calls out a line and the participants respond with the same line), since they take less time to learn and people tend not to get into the 'performance' of the song as much.

Web of peace

Stand in a circle with a large ball of coloured wool or string (preferably multicoloured). The leader throws the ball to a person roughly opposite them but holds on to the end of the wool or string. The person who catches the ball holds the string so that it is fairly taut between the leader and them and then throws the ball to another person approximately opposite them. This is repeated until everyone is holding a 'peace' of the string or wool and a criss-crossing web has been formed that joins all the participants together. Once complete, get people to lower the web gently to the floor and step away.

Bible passages

Paul and Barnabas Bible study

Acts 15:36–41

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had

such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

2 Timothy 4:9–11

⁹ Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰ for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to

Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Conflict transformation Bible studies

1 Samuel 25:1–35

Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Paran.

² A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. ³ His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite.

⁴ While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. ⁵ So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at

Carmel and greet him in my name. ⁶ Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!

⁷ “Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. ⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.”

⁹ When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited.

¹⁰ Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. ¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"

¹² David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. ¹³ David said to his men, "Each of you strap on your sword!" So they did, and David strapped his on as well. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷ Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him."

¹⁸ Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. ²¹ David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²² May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by

morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.

²⁵ Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent. ²⁶ And now, my lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. ²⁷ And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you.

²⁸ "Please forgive your servant's presumption. The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the Lord's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. ²⁹ Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰ When the Lord has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, ³¹ my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant."

³² David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³ May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to

meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I

Joshua 22:10–34

When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. ¹¹ And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, ¹² the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.

¹³ So the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ¹⁴ With him they sent ten of the chief men, one from each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans.

¹⁵ When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: ¹⁶ “The whole assembly of the Lord says: ‘How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? ¹⁷ Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the Lord! ¹⁸ And are you now turning away from the Lord?

“‘If you rebel against the Lord today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel. ¹⁹ If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the Lord’s land, where the Lord’s tabernacle stands, and share the land with us. But do not rebel against the Lord or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the Lord our God. ²⁰ When Achan son of Zerah was unfaithful in regard to the devoted things, did not wrath come on the

have heard your words and granted your request.”

whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.”

²¹ Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel: ²² “The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord, do not spare us this day. ²³ If we have built our own altar to turn away from the Lord and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the Lord himself call us to account.

²⁴ “No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? ²⁵ The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the Lord.’ So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord.

²⁶ “That is why we said, ‘Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.’ ²⁷ On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, ‘You have no share in the Lord.’

²⁸ “And we said, ‘If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord’s altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.’

²⁹ “Far be it from us to rebel against the Lord and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle.”

³⁰ When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of the Israelites—heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. ³¹ And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, “Today we know that the Lord is with us, because you have not been unfaithful to the Lord in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the Lord’s hand.”

Acts 15:1–35

The Council at Jerusalem

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you

³² Then Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites. ³³ They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived.

³⁴ And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us—that the Lord is God.

that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶ “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my

name, says the Lord, who does these things’—¹⁸ things known from long ago.

¹⁹ “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹ For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers

²² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. ²³ With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said.

²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and

send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

³⁰ So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. ³³ After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [³⁴] ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Numbers 32:1–33

The Transjordan Tribes

The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock. ² So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, and said, ³ “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon—⁴ the land the Lord subdued before the people of Israel—are suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock. ⁵ If we have found favor in your eyes,” they said,

“let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan.”

⁶ Moses said to the Gadites and Reubenites, “Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here? ⁷ Why do you discourage the Israelites from crossing over into the land the Lord has given them? ⁸ This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to look over the land. ⁹ After they went up to the Valley of Eshkol and viewed the land, they discouraged the Israelites from entering the

land the Lord had given them.¹⁰ The Lord's anger was aroused that day and he swore this oath:¹¹ 'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of those who were twenty years old or more when they came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—¹² not one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the Lord wholeheartedly.'¹³ The Lord's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.

¹⁴ "And here you are, a brood of sinners, standing in the place of your fathers and making the Lord even more angry with Israel.¹⁵ If you turn away from following him, he will again leave all this people in the wilderness, and you will be the cause of their destruction."

¹⁶ Then they came up to him and said, "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children.¹⁷ But we will arm ourselves for battle and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land.¹⁸ We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has received their inheritance.¹⁹ We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan."

²⁰ Then Moses said to them, "If you will do this—if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for battle²¹ and if all of you who are armed cross over the Jordan before the Lord until he has driven his enemies out before him—²² then when the land is subdued before the Lord, you may return and be free from your obligation to

the Lord and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the Lord.

²³ "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.²⁴ Build cities for your women and children, and pens for your flocks, but do what you have promised."

²⁵ The Gadites and Reubenites said to Moses, "We your servants will do as our lord commands.²⁶ Our children and wives, our flocks and herds will remain here in the cities of Gilead.²⁷ But your servants, every man who is armed for battle, will cross over to fight before the Lord, just as our lord says."

²⁸ Then Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun and to the family heads of the Israelite tribes.²⁹ He said to them, "If the Gadites and Reubenites, every man armed for battle, cross over the Jordan with you before the Lord, then when the land is subdued before you, you must give them the land of Gilead as their possession.³⁰ But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must accept their possession with you in Canaan."

³¹ The Gadites and Reubenites answered, "Your servants will do what the Lord has said.³² We will cross over before the Lord into Canaan armed, but the property we inherit will be on this side of the Jordan."

³³ Then Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan—the whole land with its cities and the territory around them.

Transforming initiatives

Matthew 5:38–42

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Exodus 22:25–27

²⁵ “If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest. ²⁶ If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, ²⁷ because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

Deuteronomy 24:10–13

¹⁰ When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into their house to get what is offered to you as a pledge. ¹¹ Stay outside and let the neighbor to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you. ¹² If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their

Esther 3:7–7:10

⁷ In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the pur (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

⁸ Then Haman said to King Xerxes, “There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep

pledge in your possession. ¹³ Return their cloak by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God.

Genesis 9:20–25

²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said,

“Cursed be Canaan!

The lowest of slaves

will he be to his brothers.”

themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king’s laws; it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king’s administrators for the royal treasury.”

¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ “Keep the money,” the king said to Haman, “and do with the people as you please.”

¹² Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman’s orders to the king’s satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. ¹³ Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴ A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

¹⁵ The couriers went out, spurred on by the king’s command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help

4 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. ² But he went only as far as the king’s gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. ³ In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ When Esther’s eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther summoned Hathak,

one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

⁶ So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king’s presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

⁹ Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹ “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.”

¹² When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³ he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴ For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther’s instructions.

Esther's Request to the King

5 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. ² When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

³ Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

⁴ "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

⁵ "Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. ⁶ As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

⁷ Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: ⁸ If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."

Haman's Rage Against Mordecai

⁹ Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. ¹⁰ Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, ¹¹ Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him

above the other nobles and officials. ¹² "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. ¹³ But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up.

Mordecai Honored

6 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. ² It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

³ "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

⁴ The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

⁵ His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

⁶ When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" ⁷ So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, ⁸ have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has

ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head.⁹ Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

¹⁰ "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

¹¹ So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

¹² Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief,¹³ and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!"¹⁴ While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Haman Impaled

7 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet,² and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request."⁴ For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been

sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king."

⁵ King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?"

⁶ Esther said, "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!"

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen.⁷ The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

⁸ Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.⁹ Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

The king said, "Impale him on it!"¹⁰ So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.