

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

To have emotionally healthy relationships, eliminate “dirty fighting” tactics, and fight cleanly for the sake of the relationship.

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 6:14, Matthew 10:34-39

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Jeremiah's passage is talking about future destruction and is rebuking priests and prophets for trying to be peacekeepers and not peacemakers. People might have questions about the context.
2. The Matthew passage is another difficult one. Jesus is usually seen as someone who brings unity, but here Jesus is talking about division. Allow the group to explore this difficult topic and shift the question to what it means to follow Jesus during conflict. Remembering that conflict in and of itself isn't bad, even Jesus had conflict.
3. Help people identify the difference between a peacekeeper and a peacemaker. Allow some vulnerability here. In one of his most famous teaching, Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” - Matthew 5:9

Jesus doesn't invite us to be peacekeepers, doing everything we can not to rock the boat or ruffle feathers. No, we are to be active peacemakers - proactively pursue peace, and that can mean staring down conflict and taking it on directly.

4. “True peacemakers love God, others, and themselves enough to disrupt false peace...You can't have the true peace of Christ's kingdom with lies and pretense. They must be exposed to the light and replaced with the truth. This is the mature, loving thing to do.” -Pete and Geri Scazzero
5. We are asking people to reveal their dirty fighting tactics, which will make them vulnerable. You can start by giving an example from your own life and how you tend to respond to conflict.
6. While all techniques here are part of the process, guide people to understand the importance of committing to clarity. It might be helpful to know that there are different ways to deal with conflict, some of these are: avoidance, compromise, win, resolve
7. Close in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal in each member of the group where growth is needed. Encourage everyone to pray for God's direction in the coming week, and to practice one or two “clean fighting” techniques.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES, QUOTATIONS, AND QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? <https://communitychristian.org/baptism/>
4. Who have you been able to use the BLESS practices with?
B - Begin with Prayer - Pray for those who are far from God that you might have the opportunity to influence.
L - Listen - God will tell you where he is at work - listen to those around you.
E - Eat - Share a meal with someone (socially distanced of course!)
S - Serve - Find ways to serve others
S - Story - Tell your story of how you found your way back to God.