

creative idea

for praying about building peace

These ideas came out of a morning worship session in July 2016, inspired by God being not just peace (Jehovah Shalom) but also the ultimate Peace-maker. Together we examined how peace is built – and the hard work and counter-cultural hearts that often go into achieving it and then prayed for peace to be built in our communities and the whole of the UK given the atmosphere surrounding the EU Referendum campaign, Brexit result, and environment following this. But you could use this resource to pray for peace-building in any place or context. (We think it works best used individually or corporately in a small group setting, but you could use it in a larger gathering too, or adapt it into prayer stations.)

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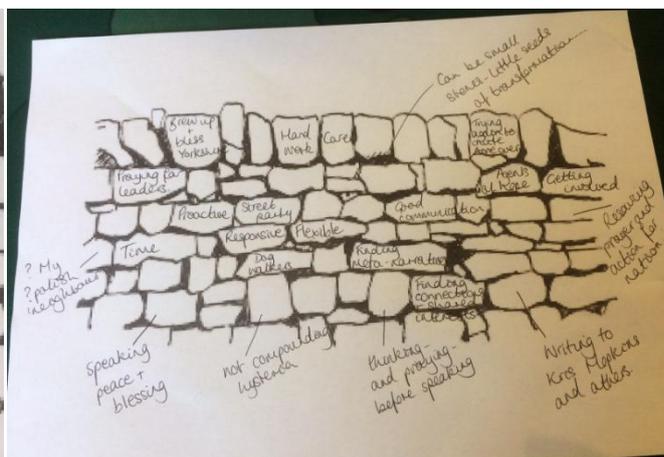
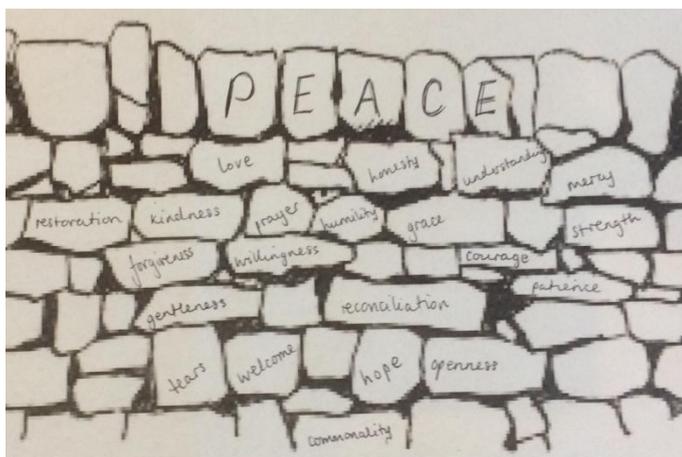


You will need: pens, print outs of outline drawings of dry stone walls (search google images for this) or paper on which to draw your own; access to online or printed information about peace builders (see below for more information); the following internet based film clip and the means to show it – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33819675> ; (optional) worship songs inspired by Isaiah 58 or 61 to play in the background during part of your prayer time such as Hillsong's *Only you*, *Glorious ruins* or Amanda Cook's *City of hope*; a pile large-ish stones or rocks of different shapes and (optional) a picture or map on which to build which represents the situation or place you are praying for peace to be built in.

1. Begin by reflecting on, or talking about, the Biblical understanding of peace. *Shalom* – the Hebrew word for peace which articulates Jewish understanding of the concept – is getting at much more than the absence of conflict. Instead it is talking about wholeness – as sense of everything being right. This is more than just a feeling, and often takes considerable courage, heart and hard work to build.
2. Take inspiration from peace-builders around the world working in challenging post-conflict settings. You will be

able to find stories about this kind of work by contacting some of the main Christian international development agencies – such as Christian Aid (www.christianaid.org.uk), Tearfund (www.tearfund.org) or World Vision (www.worldvisionuk.org) – or by gaining an overview of the kind of work peace-builders and peace-promoters do in different places from a website such as <http://www.peacedirect.org/uk/peacebuilders/> - think about some of the ways in which people work to proactively build or re-build peace – why do you think they are effective?

3. Watch this short clip about dry-stone walling - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33819675> Think or talk about this kind of building as a picture for constructing peace, what stands out to you from this film about effective ways to build?
4. Give each person participating a pen and a copy of the dry-stone wall picture outline or some paper to draw their own outline on. Explain that peace is built of many aspects and invite them to spend some time in thought and listening prayer, jotting down against different stones on their wall, any words, phrases or ideas that come to mind. These might be concepts or broad ideas (such as welcome, good communication, forgiveness) or specific ideas of activities that they would love to pray for to happen – or get involved with bringing to being – in the context you are praying for. The latter works especially well if you are talking about proactive peace-building in your own community context. *(Play some worship music in the background if you would like to.)*



5. Now invite people to come together to pray, inspired by what they have been praying/reflecting about on their own. Each time someone prays – whether this is simply by speaking out a word or concept from their wall drawing, or praying out loud – invite them to place a stone on the map or picture (or simply on a table/section of floor if you are not using a visual symbol for the place or situation you are praying for). As you pray together, one by one you will be building something together – a wall that is a picture of the peace you are seeking to build through prayer and action.
6. Close by blessing each person to be a living stone – building peace among people wherever they go, and especially in the situation or place you have been praying for if it is somewhere/something that you are all able to do this for in actions as well as through prayer.