



Seeking Peace

PARTICIPANT STUDY GUIDE: II



The Cost of War

Rationale

THIS STUDY GUIDE provides tools to discern how Christians can live out the call to love God, neighbor, and enemy in the midst of a violent world so often at war. War is viewed through the Christian traditions of just war and pacifism, with an emphasis on costs.

Objectives

- to use the imagination as a powerful resource to envision and evaluate alternatives to war
 - to place biblical texts about violence and healing in conversation with the contemporary costs of war, both in terms of human life and dollars
 - to engage in thoughtful discourse about the role of military action in confronting injustice and terrorism
 - to examine the ways in which the Christian traditions of just war and pacifism have informed the national dialogue about war and peace

Outcomes

- Participants will engage in discussion evaluating the efficacy of war and alternatives to war.
- Participants will assess the true cost of the Iraq war in terms of human life and dollars.
- Participants will evaluate the shortcomings of the just war and pacifist traditions, then consider alternatives that intersect both traditions.
- Participants will take action by authoring a letter to the editor of their local paper promoting common sense alternatives to war.

*Dear God
 Your will is that we may be one.
 We thank you that you call us
 into communion
 With you and with each other.
 Your generosity and mercy are always
 taking us by surprise.
 We bless you for the vision of
 Inclusion, solidarity, and compassion
 Which breaks us open, widens our
 sympathies,
 And enlarges our hearts.
 Amen.
 –Rev. Alan Jones¹*





Women
of Faith
in Action

Women of Faith in Action is a program of **WAND Education Fund** that seeks to reorder national priorities — away from militarism toward peace and real security. We do this by educating women of faith and engaging their voices and values in the political process.



This curriculum is endorsed by the Peacemaking Committee of the Atlanta Presbytery. It has been promoted by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, National Council of Churches, and Church Women United.

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EXERCISE 1

War: A Failure of Imagination

Introduction by Facilitator

Violence is a theme we will explore at length in this session. Personal experiences with violence may surface as we discuss the violence of war. Please be sensitive to this possibility and feel free to take a break any time you need one.

Catholic scholar Reina Neufeldt says “the imagination is a powerful resource for pushing the boundaries of what is possible.”² The purpose of this study session is to give each of us an opportunity to imagine creative alternatives to war. In the first exercise, we will read an excerpt from a book entitled *The Irresistible Revolution*, and then break up into pairs for discussion.

The Irresistible Revolution

“I remember visiting one of the hospitals in Iraq. The doctors walked us by bed after bed of children who had been injured or killed in the bombings. I saw a little girl shaking in her bed, asking over and over, ‘What did I do to America? What did I do to America?’ I saw a father hold his child, whose body was speckled with missile fragments, and heard him say, ‘What kind of liberation would do this to my child? If this is liberation, then we do not want it. If this is democracy, they can keep it.’ I could hear the echo of the words of Dr. King (speaking of Vietnam, of course): ‘They must see us as strange liberators.’ The doctors had tears in their eyes as they explained that they had not slept in days and had seen over a hundred casualties in the first three hours. Amid all of the horror, the manager of the hospital said something I will never forget: ‘Violence is for those who have lost their imagination. Has your country lost its imagination?’ I will never forget the tears in his eyes as he cried for imagination.”

—Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution*, 2006³



Mini Session

How can people of faith take seriously the goal of moving beyond war and put their imaginations to work for peace? What would happen if people of faith devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to peacemaking that armies devote to war?

EXERCISE 2

Violence and Healing

Luke 10:29-37

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.”

Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Discussion Questions

1. What might have motivated the robbers to strip and beat the man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho? How do these motives function in our world today? How do you personally relate to these motives?
2. Many scholars say that the priest may have passed by the half-dead traveler out of concern for impurity laws. How and why does the church turn its head from suffering today? What role do we play, as Christians, in ignoring and avoiding those who suffer from violence?
3. The Samaritan who demonstrated mercy and healing was a foreigner far from home, and Samaritans “were usually regarded with hostility by Jews,” according to Biblical scholar David Tiede.⁴ How might we, like the Samaritan, demonstrate mercy and healing in a foreign land, even to those who regard us with hostility?

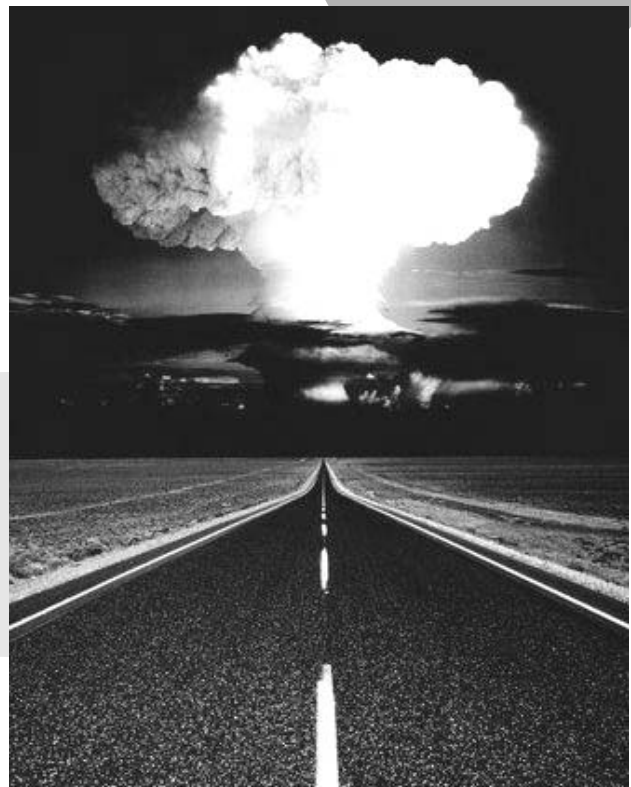
EXERCISE 3

War Perspectives

Instructions

Read a statement below and ask participants to position themselves along a continuum to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Ask participants in various places on the continuum to offer their perspective on why they agree or disagree with the statement. If all participants fall on one side of the continuum, discuss what the group believes those on the other side of the issue might believe.

1. Military action is a successful instrument of justice. Nonviolent action has its place, but is no substitute for war in confronting evil and injustice.
2. The United Nations’ peacekeeping operations play a critical role in preventing peace agreements from breaking down and in rebuilding war-shattered societies.
3. We should build democracy abroad, and we can best do it through regime change and military action.
4. U.S. response to terrorism has over-emphasized military action and under-emphasized diplomacy, advancing human rights, economic development, and the development of civil society in the Middle East.



EXERCISE 4

The Cost of the Iraq War

Instructions

As a class, view “The Cost of War” video at www.afsc.org/cost/ or look at “The Cost of War” brochure at <http://tinyurl.com/c6faer>.

Also visit www.iraqbodycount.org and www.icasualties.org to note the cost in human life. Read aloud the costs of war noted below, then discuss the questions that follow.

Dollar Costs

In 2003, the Bush administration estimated that the cost of the Iraq war would run between \$60 billion and \$100 billion. Five years later the actual cost exceeded that estimate more than ten-fold.⁵

Money to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are not part of the defense budget. The president currently gets war funding by going to Congress, apart from the regular budget process, and asking for extra, or “supplemental appropriations.” According to the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, total Iraq war funding, including 2009 estimates, equals \$711.1 billion. Total funding for Afghanistan is close to \$200 billion.⁶

Lives Lost

Iraq Body Count (IBC), www.iraqbodycount.org, records the violent civilian deaths that have resulted from the war in Iraq. Its public database includes deaths caused by US-led coalition forces and paramilitary or criminal attacks by others. Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, www.icasualties.org, records U.S. and coalition military deaths by month and year, and also accounts for the number of soldiers who have been wounded in action. As of February 24, 2009, civilian deaths range between 90,735 and 99,077, while 4,250 U.S. soldier fatalities and 318 coalition fatalities have been confirmed.

Military Costs

The war in Iraq has stretched our military and drained resources from other security fronts, such as Afghanistan and the tribal belt of Pakistan’s border region where Al Qaeda and the Taliban are resurgent.

The percentage of army recruits with high school diplomas (90% in 2004) dropped in 2007 to 71%.⁷ The military was forced to increase the number of waivers and raise enlistment bonuses to fill its ranks. The number of “high-quality” recruits (considered to be those with a HS diploma who score in the top half on the military’s qualification test) dropped from 61% in 2004 to 45% in 2007.⁸



Costs to Iraqi Society

The war has wreaked havoc on Iraqi society. Millions lack clean water and medical care. Thousands are jobless. 2.8 million Iraqis are internally displaced. Another two million have fled the country, mostly to Jordan and Syria, creating the world’s fastest growing refugee crisis.⁹

Environmental Costs

The environmental costs of war will be addressed in *Study Guide V*: “War’s Silent Casualty: The Eco-Footprint of War.”

Discussion Questions

1. Which costs resonate with you most deeply?
2. Who should foot the bill for the cost of war and reconstruction in Iraq?
3. The Iraq war is essentially deficit financed. What issues arise as a result?

EXERCISE 5

Ethics of Just War and Pacifism

Clip from “Fog of War”

Instructions

View scene 13 from “Fog of War,” a documentary of Robert McNamara reflecting on his life, including his service in WWII and seven years as Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War. This scene focuses on the U.S. firebombing of 67 Japanese cities during WWII. Discuss the Mini Session questions in pairs.

Mini Session

How do you respond to McNamara’s reflections on the U.S. firebombing of 67 Japanese cities during WWII?

Just War Criteria

A. Jus Ad Bellum (Just Resort to War)

- **Just Cause.** A decision for war must vindicate justice itself in response to some serious evil, such as an aggressive attack.
- **Just Intent.** The ends sought in a decision for war must include the restoration of peace with justice and must not seek self-aggrandizement or the total devastation of another nation.
- **Last Resort.** This tradition shares with pacifism a moral presumption against going to war, but is prepared to make exceptions. Every possibility of peaceful settlement of a conflict must be tried before war is begun.
- **Legitimate Authority.** A decision for war may be made and declared only by properly constituted governmental authority.
- **Reasonable Hope of Success.** A decision for war must be based on a prudent expectation that the ends sought can be achieved.

B. Jus In Bello (Just Conduct in War)

- **Discrimination.** Justice in the actual conduct of war requires respect for the rights of enemy peoples, especially for the immunity of noncombatants from direct attack. Such respect also rules out atrocities, reprisals, looting, and wanton violence.
- **Proportionality.** The amount of damage inflicted must be strictly proportionate to the ends sought. Small-scale injuries should not be avenged by massive suffering, death, and devastation. The war’s harm must not exceed the war’s good. Proportionality is also a criterion to be applied to jus ad bellum, the decision whether to resort to war in the first place.

Pacifism

Pacifism is the theological and ethical position that any form of violence is incompatible with the Christian faith. Christian pacifists believe that non-violent resistance was a central theme of Jesus’ message in the context of Roman oppression.

Discussion Questions

1. How might just war principles inform current U.S. military engagements?
2. Author Ivan Kauffman claims that “rather than limiting warfare to just cases fought by just means,” the just war theory “increasingly came to justify warfare under all circumstances.”¹⁰ Why do you agree or disagree with his statement?
3. Kauffman names the “essential defect” of the just war theory as “its assumption that violence can somehow achieve justice,”¹¹ a concept also known as “redemptive violence.” Can violence ever achieve justice? Is there such a thing as redemptive violence?
4. Has the church neglected our role in the spiritual formation of Christians in nonviolence and peacemaking?
5. Kauffman names the “essential defect” of pacifism as “its assumption that justice can somehow be achieved simply by opposing violence.” He states “to advocate peace in situations where injustice is taking place without some realistic action for dealing with that injustice is simply to ask those who are suffering to do so in silence so that others can have the benefits of peace.”¹² How might pacifists take justice seriously, restrain repressive regimes, and correct injustices?
6. The Methodist bishops of the U.S. affirmed that both the just war theory and pacifism offer “a partial but vital testimony to the requirements of justice and peace.”¹³ What value might be gained in a dialogue between these two traditions?

Recommendations for further study:

- “If War is Wrong, What is Right? The New Paradigm” by Ivan Kauffman as found in the book *Just Policing, Not War*
- The films “Fog of War” and “The Mission.”

EXERCISE 5

Alternatives to War

Brainstorming Alternatives

Instructions

Hand out a few post-it notes to each participant. Begin by reading the facilitator introduction below. As each participant comes forward, ask them to name their alternative to war and take a moment to explain why they believe we should invest in that alternative.

Introduction by Facilitator

Whether we are pacifists, political realists, or just war theorists, simply arguing no to war has been a failing strategy to prevent war. Rev. Jim Wallis says, “It is time to explore an alternative to war — not just because modern warfare fails to meet ethical standards, but also because it is failing to resolve the genuine threats of real evil in our time. We must find a better way.”¹⁴

Let’s begin exploring alternatives to war by pooling our common wisdom. Please take a moment to list on your post-it note an alternative to war in which you would like to see our nation invest. When you are done, please bring it up and post it on the flip chart.

An Alternative Model: Just Policing

One promising alternative to war is just policing, which considers terrorism, genocide, and failed states from a legal framework, rather than declaring war against these troubling realities.

Just policing would seek to:

1. Secure the public safety and common good of the community of nations, including:

- sustainable economic development
 - robust and fair trade
 - protecting human rights
 - maintaining peace and order
 - confronting terrorism
 - preserving natural resources
 - addressing climate change
 - controlling infectious diseases
 - eradicating hunger
 - providing natural disaster relief
2. attend to root causes of international criminal activity
 3. strengthen social fabric in areas with persistent conflict
 4. hold nations accountable to the rule of law
 5. enforce international law
 6. minimize recourse to violence

(For more information, see *Just Policing, Not War* edited by Gerald Schlabach, www.3Dsecurity.org, and www.fpif.org).

Take Action: Speak Out!

Instructions

Examine the daily newspaper (local or national) to find an article on war, weapons, national security, or federal budget priorities. Invite each participant to describe an alternative to war in a letter to the editor responding directly to the news article. Participants may prefer to work in pairs or small groups. Provide paper, writing utensils, envelopes, and stamps so the letters can be mailed the following morning. Or, better yet, encourage participants to email their letters to the paper.

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter to the Editor (LTE)

1. **Follow the newspaper’s directions:** The letters page should include a brief summary of how to submit your letter (how many words, contact information to include, etc.)
2. **Share your story:** Who are you, why does this issue matter to you as a mother, an educator, a Christian, or an American?
3. **Keep it short, focused, and interesting:** Your letter should have fewer than 150 words, state your main point concisely, and refer to the article to which you are responding.
4. **Include your contact information:** Often newspapers will verify your identity by emailing or calling you.
5. **Proofread the letter:** Or ask a friend to proofread it.
6. **Don’t worry if it doesn’t get published:** Each letter is read by someone, and the presence of a number of letters on the same issue encourages the newspaper to publish a letter with an opinion similar to yours. You are making a difference!

Facilitator Wrap-Up

As our globalized world becomes more interconnected across geopolitical boundaries, the U.S. role in the community of nations becomes increasingly important. Too often, modern warfare fails to meet ethical standards and resolve the root problems of conflict, particularly the ethnic conflicts, genocide, and terrorism in the 21st century.

Simply arguing no to war, however, is not sufficient. We must seek real alternatives, like just policing. Such alternatives attend to root causes of international criminal activity, repair and strengthen the social fabric of conflicted communities, enforce international law, and minimize recourse to violence. As children of God, each one of us is called to be advocates for peaceful systems and institutions wherever we live.

God of mercy,
 Together, let us pray for the people of
 this gathering.
 For those overwhelmed by a world raging with war
 And for those wrestling with the violence within
 themselves,
God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
 Together, let us pray for the concerns of this nation.
 For leaders embroiled in difficult decision making
 And for all those seeking to discern your will,
God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
 Together, let us pray for the nation of Iraq.
 For the soldiers scarred by violent combat
 And for the people of Iraq whose grasp on life has grown
 weary,
God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
 Together, let us pray for the world.
 For those stalked by violence,
 And for those confronting hatred with love,
God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
 Amen.

¹Elias Amadon and Elizabeth Roberts, Eds., *Prayers for a Thousand Years* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

²"Just Policing and International Order: Is it Possible?" *Just Policing, Not War*, Ed. Gerald Schlabach (Collegeville: Liturgical Press) 2007, p. 153.

³Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution* (Zondervan, 2006), p. 278-279.

⁴David L. Tiede, "Notes to the Gospel of Luke," HarperCollins Study Bible, Wayne A. Meeks, Gen. Ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 1980.

⁵"Estimates of Iraq War Cost Were Not Close to Ballpark," by David Herszenhorn, *The New York Times*, March 19, 2008.

⁶www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/iraq/articles/supplemental_war_funding/, July 23, 2008.

⁷"Army Off Target on Recruits," by Josh White, *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2008.

⁸Same as above.

⁹www.refugeesinternational.org, July 18, 2008.

¹⁰"If War is Wrong, What is Right? The New Paradigm," *Just Policing, Not War*, p. 32.

¹¹*Just Policing, Not War*, p. 41.

¹²*Just Policing, Not War*, p. 41.

¹³The United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, Foundation Document (Nashville: Graded Press, 1986), 33, 38.

¹⁴"Foreword," *Just Policing, Not War*, p. xvii.