



**OF FAITH**

*take action!*

## **FAITH SEEKING PEACE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

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### *Weapons and the World: III*

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**Rationale:** This study guide provides a Biblical and theological framework with which to think critically about war's destruction of God's creation. Participants discuss policies shaping weapons production and use from a Christian perspective, while exploring the Biblical emphasis on the inherent value of all living things.

#### **Objectives:**

- To educate participants about the environmental impact and human cost of the production and use of nuclear weapons.
- To practice ritual to remember victims and survivors of war and to celebrate the endurance of the human spirit and life.
- To place the Biblical valuing of creation and life in conversation with current policies regarding the development and use of nuclear weapons and weapons in space.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Participants will connect the death that resulted from the bombing of Hiroshima to the loss of life after the events of September 11, 2001.
- Participants will gain an understanding of current policies guiding the production and use of nuclear weapons and weapons in space.
- Participants will challenge weapons production in light of the Biblical emphasis on the value of creation.

#### **Materials Needed:**

1. flip chart and easel
2. markers
3. photograph of Hiroshima after the bombing: visit [www.nvccom.co.jp/abomb/giseie.html](http://www.nvccom.co.jp/abomb/giseie.html) , select a photograph of survivors just after the bombing and print one out for each participant, or use the photograph provided in the participant study guide
4. Weapons In Space faith-based action guide for each participant
5. half sheets of paper
6. small basket/ offering plate

**Room Arrangement:** Set up the room in a semi-circle with the flip chart and easel at the front of the room. Be sure to provide space in the room for participants to break-out into group work.

## **Exercise 1: Considering Creation** (10 minutes total)

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**Opening Prayer:** 1 minute

### **Facilitator Tips:**

- **Process:** This prayer can be read by the facilitator or a volunteer
- **Content:** The theme of **God as the Creator of all that lives** is one that encourages Christians to value life.

God who birthed creation,  
Whose works wield life,  
Whose faithfulness harvests good fruit,  
Grant us wisdom in the study of your Word and world that,  
overtaken by the beauty of all you have knit together,  
We might seek life.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
The one who died that we might live.  
Amen.

--Amanda Hendler-Voss

**Responding to Scripture:** 9 minutes

### **Facilitator Tips: Process**

- Post the following 3 texts around the room before the session begins.
- Supply each participant with a marker and ask them to walk around the room, reading each text. After reading a text, participants should write down the first word or phrase that comes to mind.<sup>1</sup> (If a participant is unable to walk around the room, they can write their responses on a sheet of paper wherever they are sitting.)
- After participants have finished, read each verse and the words or phrases written by participants in response.

*"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
The desert shall rejoice and blossom." --Isaiah 35:1*

*"Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
'Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.'" --Isaiah 35:4*

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<sup>1</sup> Exercise from Dee Koza, "Faithful Living in a time of Violence and Terrorism," Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. 2004 [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/pubs/rtvbook.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/pubs/rtvbook.pdf). August 23 2005, 7.

*“Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert.” –Isaiah 35:6*

## **Exercise 2: A Study in Contrast** (18 minutes total)

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### **Facilitator Introduction:** 2 minutes

Isaiah 35:1-7 reminds us that God created us to live abundantly, and the earth to bloom. According to the Bible, there is a relationship between the health of the land and the health of the people living in it. We know that there is also a correlation between the destruction of the earth and of the people living in it.

As American Christians, it is difficult to discuss the implications of our faith on the issue of nuclear weapons without beginning with a reflection on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. At 8:15am on August 6, 1945, the world’s first atomic bomb used in warfare exploded over Hiroshima. Instantly, the entire city burned and hundreds of thousands of people died. Many who survived suffered psychological, spiritual, and bodily trauma.

Some of us might remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when we heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, or the assassination of John F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King Jr. We remember where we were on September 11, 2001 when we first heard about the terrorist attack on the twin towers. Below are five translations of the memories that various children in Hiroshima had from the time of the bombing.

### **Remembering August 6, 1945:** 1 minute

#### **Facilitator Tips:**

- **Content:** The purpose of this exercise is to allow participants to consider the mindset of those who experienced the Hiroshima bombing, and to personalize the victims and survivors of the bombing. It attempts to explore the similarities and dissimilarities between the way Americans felt on 9/11 and the way the Japanese felt after the bombing of Hiroshima.
- **Process:** Please ask volunteers to read each quote, moving clockwise around the circle. The facilitator can read the above introduction.
- “A dragonfly flitted in front of me and stopped on a fence. I stood up, took my cap in my hands, and was about to catch the dragonfly when...”
- “Grandfather was tending the many trees and potted plants in his yard. I was riding my tricycle barefooted when...”
- “I left the house in high spirits, grasping the money mother had given me for ice candy, when...”
- “Mother was ironing father’s good shirts in the living room. I sat next to her. There was a big roar as an airplane flew right over our house. ‘It’s so low, it makes me nervous,’ she said. Just then...”

**Facilitator Introduction to Hiroshima Photograph:** 2 minutes

This is a photograph of survivors at 11:00am on August 6, 1945, less than three hours after the bombing.

**Facilitator Tips: Process**

- Allow for a complete moment of silence (60 seconds).

**Mini Session:** 5 minutes

How is your reaction to this photograph both similar to and different from your reaction to 9/11?

**Sharing with the Group:** 8 minutes**Exercise 3: Nuclear Weapons Overview:** (6 minutes total)**Facilitator Tips:**

- **Process:** As a group, read through the information below. Move around the circle and ask each participant to read a section or bullet point.
- **Content:** The purpose of this section is to connect the tragedy of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima with the recent trend toward U.S. development of new nuclear weapons and weapons in space.

**Recent Nuclear History:** 1 minute

On May 5, 2000 the U.S. attended the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held every five years. With international support, the U.S. agreed to 13 steps to end the nuclear arms race and move toward nuclear disarmament. For example, the U.S. agreed to strengthen the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. Five years later, at the May 2005 NPT Review Conference, Robert McNamara, former Defense Secretary from the Vietnam era, stated: “If I were to characterize U.S. and NATO nuclear policies in one sentence, I would say they are immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, very, very dangerous in terms of the risk of inadvertent or accidental launch and destructive of the non-proliferation regime that has served us so well.”<sup>2</sup> At the 2005 conference, there was no agreed outcome amongst the participating nations.

**Current Nuclear Policies:** 2 minutes

In the proposed budget for **fiscal year 2006**,

- Federal funding for nuclear weapons increases to a total of \$17.5 billion. (Go to [www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org) and click on “Trade Offs” to find out how much taxpayers in your state paid to fund nuclear weapons this year.) For the same amount of money, 10,289,766 children could receive healthcare.<sup>3</sup>
- Funding for **ballistic missile defense** in 2006 will total **\$9.6 billion**. For the same amount of

<sup>2</sup> Louis Charbonneau, “US, NATO Nuclear Policies ‘Immoral’—McNamara,” Reuters, May 24, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> National Priorities Project, “Federal Budget Trade-Offs,” 23 August 2005, <http://database.nationalpriorities.org>.

money, we could create 86,052 affordable housing units.<sup>4</sup>

In the Department of Energy's budget request for **fiscal year 2006**,

- Funding for **environmental cleanup** and waste (including radioactive waste) at 7 weapons sites is **cut by \$556 million to \$6.01 billion**.<sup>5</sup>
- Funding in 2006 for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, a **new nuclear weapon**, totals \$8.5 million.<sup>6</sup>
- Funding in 2006 for the Modern Pit Facility, a **new nuclear bomb plant**, totals \$7.7 million.<sup>7</sup>

### Facilitator Tips: Content

- The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, along with Economists Allied for Arms Reduction, released a report in January of 2003 estimating that the entire life-cycle cost of all the various missile defense programs being examined by the Bush administration may range from \$800 billion to \$1.2 trillion. What does this say about the values and priorities of our nation? What will make us safe? In what do we place our faith?

### Weapons in Space: 2 minutes

*Instructions: Read introduction to "Keep the Heavens Free of Weapons" action guide, also printed below:*

Space remains the last weapons free sanctuary—but it may not stay that way for long. Right now the Pentagon is seeking something it calls "space dominance,"<sup>8</sup> a call to weaponize the heavens. This has the potential to jeopardize commercial and civilian satellites, and to threaten national and international security. As people of faith, we are called to care for God's creation, including the cosmos.

### *Space Security vs. Space Weapons:*

- Before becoming Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld chaired a commission that called on the Pentagon to **project power "in, from, and through space."**<sup>9</sup>
- The U.S. Air Force seeks to implement a new doctrine calling for weapons in space. According to an August '04 document, the U.S. Air Force endorses a strategy to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> DISARM, "New Nuclear Weapons Programs Pushed; Cleanup Cut," 7 July 2005. [www.wilpf.org/campaigns/disarm/EYE/previous\\_alerts2005.htm](http://www.wilpf.org/campaigns/disarm/EYE/previous_alerts2005.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, "New Report Documents \$2 billion in 'Radioactive Pork.'" 16 August 2005. [www.ananuclear.org/reportrelease2005.html](http://www.ananuclear.org/reportrelease2005.html), August 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization, "Report of the Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization," 11 January 2001. [www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spaceintro.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spaceintro.pdf), August 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

**“dominate” space, including the use of weapons in space.<sup>10</sup>**

- Space warfare causes debris, which **indiscriminately kills** in space.
- Satellites save lives. The following life-saving services rely on satellites: police, fire, 911, search and rescue, natural disaster damage assessment, disease tracking, hurricane prediction, earthquake monitoring, and airplane navigation, to name a few.
- Satellites also serve as the eyes and ears of nations with nuclear weapons. An attack on such satellites could trigger a nuclear war.

**Facilitator Wrap-Up:** 1 minute

Theologian **Howard Thurman** notes that humanity “has learned a part of the secret of energy by unlocking the door of the atom, and yet continues to be moved by prejudice, greed and lust!” Humanity “has devised a machine that can keep pace with the speed of the earth through the heavens, and yet has not learned how to walk the earth...with simple reverence and grace. Today,” Thurman says, “we stand on the verge of a brave, startling era which can yield the end of poverty, of war, and of all the breeds of hate that have made the earth a hell for countless millions.” He asks, “Oh, for how many years, by our deeds, shall we curse God and die, when we could reflect [God] and live?”<sup>11</sup>

**Exercise 4: Biblical Priorities** (18 minutes total)

**Facilitator Tips: Process**

- Have the participants count off in fours, then break them up into four groups.
- Each group should read their Biblical text and answer the questions. They will be asked to share with the larger group. The facilitator can walk around to answer questions or listen to discussions.
- After 10 minutes in the groups, ask the groups to gather back together.
- Ask each group to offer a sentence or two about their text and discussion.

**Small Groups:** 10 minutes

**Group 1:** Read Isaiah 42:1-9

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
My chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
He will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
Or make it heard in the street;  
A bruised reed he will not break,*

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<sup>10</sup> “Counterspace Operations,” Air Force Doctrine Document 2-2.1 August 9, 2004. [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_14.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_14.pdf) August 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Howard Thurman, *Deep is the Hunger* (Richmond: Friends United Press, 2000) 34.

*And a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
 He will faithfully bring forth justice.  
 He will not be crushed  
 Until he has established justice in the earth;  
 And the coastlands wait for his teaching.  
 Thus says God, the Lord,  
 Who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
 Who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
 Who gives breath to the people upon it  
 And spirit to those who walk in it;  
 I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,  
 I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
 I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
 A light to the nations,  
 To open the eyes that are blind,  
 To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
 From the prison those who sit in darkness,  
 I am the Lord, that is my name;  
 My glory I give to no other, Nor my praise to idols.  
 See, the former things have come to pass,  
 And new things I now declare;  
 Before they spring forth, I tell you of them.*

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the role of the servant in this text, and how might it differ from the role of the king (or political leader)?

### Facilitator Tips: Content

- The role of the servant is to **bring forth justice to the nations without crushing the downtrodden**. The point of this question is to ask whether the servant's justice is something we value in our nation, whether it's something we value in our nation's leaders, or a role for those challenging existing leadership structures.
2. As Christian servants of God, how might we respond to the FY06 federal budget's funding of new nuclear weapons?

### Facilitator Tips: Content

- This question places the participants in the role of the servant (which they defined in the last question). Critics argue that the funding of new nuclear weapons creates waste, harms the earth, and wounds human victims/survivors of bombings. Proponents argue that new nuclear weapons will increase our military capabilities and deter violent enemies. Christians must wrestle with both of these perspectives.

**Group 2:** Read Ephesians 2:14-19

*For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death the hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does this passage suggest about the relationship between all of humanity?

**Facilitator Tips: Content**

- This passage suggests that all of humanity is interconnected, and that God, through Jesus, breaks down all barriers between us.

2. How does the “one body” presented in this passage compare and contrast with the assumptions behind a weapons-in-space policy?

**Facilitator Tips: Content**

- A weapons-in-space policy assumes that creation is to be dominated by human beings, and nations should use power to assert self-interest. The language of reconciliation, of one body in Christ (not separated by national boundaries or any other boundaries) contrasts such assumptions.

**Group 3:** In Job 38:19-27, God asks Job:

*Where is the way to the dwelling of light,  
and where is the place of darkness,  
that you may take it to its territory  
and that you may discern the paths to its home?  
Surely you know, for you were born then,  
and the number of your days is great!*

*Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,  
or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,  
which I have reserved for the time of trouble,  
for the day of battle and war?  
What is the way to the place where the light is distributed,  
or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?*

*Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain,  
and a way for the thunderbolt,  
to bring rain on a land where no one lives,  
on the desert, which is empty of human life,  
to satisfy the waste and desolate land,  
and to make the ground put forth grass?*

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the cosmology (or understanding of the origins, development, and nature of the universe) presented in this passage, and what is the **role of human beings** within this cosmology?

#### Facilitator Tips: Content

- The cosmology presented in the entire chapter of Job 38 is one which is not anthropocentric, or human-centered. It is a cosmology which asserts God's care for all of creation and attests to the vulnerability of humanity, at times, in the midst of such a mysterious world.

2. How does the Biblical cosmology presented in this passage compare and contrast with the assumptions being made about creation in a weapons-in-space policy? What links exist between violence against land and against women?

#### Facilitator Tips: Content

- A weapons-in-space policy assumes that creation is to be dominated by human beings, and this assumption directly contradicts the cosmology of this text.
- Encourage the group to stay within the text. Some might want to argue that in light of Genesis 1 and 2 humans are called by God to have dominion over the rest of creation. Regardless of one's interpretation of Gen 1 and 2, this text is very clear that humanity is not the center of all of creation.

**Group 4:** In Job 38:28-38, God asks Job:

*Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew?  
From whose womb did the ice come forth,  
and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?  
The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.*

*Can you bind the chain of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?  
Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season,  
or can you guide the Bear with its children?  
Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?  
Can you establish their rule on earth?*

*Can you lift up your voice to the clouds so that a flood of waters may cover you?*

*Can you send forth lightnings,  
so that they may go and say to you, "Here we are"?  
Who has put wisdom in the inward parts,  
or given understanding to the mind?  
Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?  
Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens,  
when the dust runs into a mass and the clods cling together?*

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How might you describe the use of “wisdom” in this passage? What does it imply about the relationship between those who are wise and creation?

### **Facilitator Tips: Content**

- In Job 38, wisdom is directly linked to an understanding of the ways in which the world was created to function. As with one who watches the seasons, wisdom can be gained from observing creation over a period of time. Yet ultimately, creation remains a mystery to humanity—perhaps such an acknowledgement is the beginning of wisdom.

2. This text uses both father and mother imagery to describe God’s relationship with creation. In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is characterized as a woman. How might women’s wisdom speak to the development of new nuclear weapons or weapons in space?

### **Facilitator Tips: Content**

- Women’s wisdom often concerns itself with life—how decisions made will affect children and grandchildren, the earth, and the creation in whose midst we live.
- The claim that it is wise to develop new nuclear weapons or weapons in space is human-centered, while the passage reflects a God who is creation-centered.

**Sharing with Larger Group:** 8 minutes

### **Facilitator Tips: Process**

Ask each group to share a few sentences to summarize the heart of their discussion.

**Exercise 5: Closing Ritual and Prayer** (8 minutes total)

**Ritual Closing:** 6 minutes

*Instructions:* Write down your offering of a thought or prayer for the victims and their families of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, by extension, all victims of violence and war.

### **Facilitator Tips: Content**

- The purpose of this exercise is to recognize the **power of ritual to heal**, and to acknowledge that all need healing from the violence that grips the world.
- The ritual asks participants to share a closing thought in the form of a prayer.

**Facilitator:** As Christians, what thoughts or prayers would we like to offer to the victims and their families of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, by extension, all victims of violence and war? I will hand out small slips of paper on which you can write out a thought or a prayer. I will offer a closing prayer and then we will go around the circle by placing our individual thoughts and prayers in this offering basket. You may read your offering to the group or simply put it in the basket and say “Amen.”

**Closing Prayer:** 2 minutes

**Facilitator Tips:**

- **Content:** This prayer connects the wellbeing of humanity with that of the earth. It confesses the violence of our world.
- **Process:** The facilitator may speak the closing prayer, then move around the circle with the basket. Participants may read their prayer or simply place it in the basket and say “Amen.” The facilitator can close the prayer by reading her or his own prayer.

God of all  
 You knit us together in our mother’s womb,  
 Just as you wove the breaking of the dawn.  
 Your love unfolds from the east to the west,  
 And your mercy is our comforting cover.

Yet we have not always loved one another  
 Or the beauty of the earth that you have created.  
 We find ourselves confused in  
 the midst of a world that is torn by violence

Remind us today that we were formed in your image,  
 That we might love one another as you have loved us.

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
 Who did not break the bent reed  
 Who refused to quench the flickering flame,  
 Amen.

--Amanda Hendler-Voss, Job 31:15; Isaiah 42:3