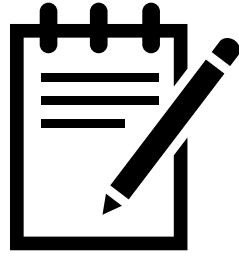


Practicing Peace



OPEN UP A RED BADARAK BOOK AND SPEND THREE MINUTES SEEING HOW MANY TIMES YOU CAN FIND THE WORD "PEACE." SHARE AND DISCUSS YOUR FINDINGS.

In just thirty seconds of watching the news on television or scrolling through your Facebook feed, you can see how much destruction and pain there is all over the world. In forging paths of economic, social, and geographical gains, some humans choose violent methods to achieve their goals. This is often at the cost of the emotional and physical well-being of their victims. With school violence and car bombs occurring across the globe, it can be hard to believe in peace in the wake of such inhumane acts.

1. What is your first reaction when you hear about an act of terrorism?
2. How has violence in the media changed your personal life? How has it changed your global perspective?
3. Have you ever worked for your goals at the cost of someone else's peace? How did this affect them? How did this affect you?
4. Read Isaiah 9: 6-7. Do you think Christ, the Prince of Peace, has authority on earth? Why or why not?

Violence is not just about the terrorism we see splashed across the TV screen— it is also about bullying, about self-harm, and about betrayal. It is about anything that violently rips us away from our divine image. It is less about the instruments of destruction than it is about the intentions of destruction. At the heart of violence is one individual's disregard of another person's humanity, the very humanity that Jesus Christ came to restore. Christ made it his ministry to promote peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. From him we are called to lead a life of love, even in the face of constant persecution. Instead of fighting violence with violence, we must be the ones who actively bring the kingdom of God to Earth. We can start by taking daily steps that allow us to recognize the divine image in each person with whom we cross paths.

5. Read Matthew 5:1-12. In whom do you see these qualities?
6. What negative aspects of humanity do the Beatitudes address? How do the Beatitudes call us to respond to negativity and overcome it in our daily lives?
7. What are some tangible ways you can be a peacemaker at home, at school, or at work?

In closing, reflect on Colossians 3:14-15: **"14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful."**

