

How to use the Peacemaker Registration Form:

Suggestions for youth pastors, youth sponsors, and Sunday School teachers

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General Guidelines

- 1. Connect conscientious objection to other aspects of peacemaking:** Peacemaking is as broad and deep as the gospel, and as complex and simple as our lives. Conscientious objection to war is simply one aspect of the peace which Christ brings to our world. You may find that conscience against killing in war is the path you can walk with youth to the many other aspects of peacemaking. Or you may find that discussions about nurturing Christ's peace in the home, school or church is the path which will bring you to conscientious objection. In either case, make connections between conscientious objection to war and peacemaking in the rest of life.
- 2. Connect conscientious objection to the nature of God, the way of Christ, and the biblical story:** We are committed to loving our enemies, not because it is politically correct, or because it is an important part of our tradition. We believe it is a deeply spiritual calling rooted in the nature of God and the way of Christ. Through Bible study or personal faith stories, root conscientious objection in its spiritual ground.
- 3. Present conscientious objection as a life-long journey:** Conscientious objection to war is not only a calling for youth, but a life-long commitment. It is very important for youth to see adults expressing this commitment in their own lives. Issues such as war taxes, military exports, or responses to community pressure to support military actions are just a few examples of how these issues affect adults. Adults can be helpful by sharing current experiences, and questions.
- 4. Expose youth to new conscientious objectors:** Conscientious objection is not ancient history. It is current. Through video or personal encounter, allow youth to meet other young people who were drawn to Christ's way of peace from other understandings of life and the gospel. Give youth opportunity to meet people who received conscientious objector discharges from the military.
- 5. Share your congregation's history with peace/war:** While new, fresh voices are important, so is a congregation's history. Invite adults in the congregation to talk about their past experiences related to war, peace and conscientious objection. Share honestly the stories of alternate service, military service, and protest that are in your congregation. Do it with respect and sensitivity, so that everyone is valued and able to learn from one another.
- 6. Act together for peace:** Plan an action or activity with your youth group related to peace which will have some public expression or impact outside the group. Letters to the editor or government officials and public vigils are possibilities, but you should decide together what is appropriate. By acting together, you will create an atmosphere where questions, assumptions, disagreements, and vision will flow... a space where all can grow and learn.

Practical Suggestions

For most people, filling out forms does not rank very high on the list of fascinating things to do in life! So why not stimulate some good thinking about conscientious objection before the forms are introduced? Filling out the forms may seem easier after doing some of the activities below:

- 1.** View the video *Change of Command*, available from MCC. View it in segments over a period of several weeks. Take time for discussion, using exercises in the study guide.
- 2.** Organize an inter-generational evening of story-telling within your congregation. Invite children, youth, and adults to tell current stories of peacemaking, including but not limited to conscientious objection to war.
- 3.** Read and study II Kings 6: 8-23 and/or Luke 9: 51-56. Assemble an inter-generational group to present one of these stories as a dramatic skit during a Sunday morning worship.
- 4.** Visit the Ask-a-Vet website at MCC Invite youth to explore the site and take the ask-a-vet quiz (available October, 2001).
- 5.** Invite someone who has lived or worked in a country which has experienced war to tell about how war affects people's lives. For help, you may want to contact Christian Peacemaker Teams (312-455-1199), Mennonite Central Committee (717 859-1151), or your denominational missions agency.
- 6.** Assign someone the task of requesting a handful of military recruitment brochures from your local recruiting station. As a group, analyze the images and messages, then view the video *It's Not Just a Job*", available from MCC.
- 7.** Watch segment four of the *Change of Command* video, in which Dennis Boyer discusses the realities of combat. Compare this to the messages in military brochures and ads.
- 8.** Watch and discuss the videos, *What Jesus Really Meant*, and *How to Fight Without Hitting*, in which theologian Walter Wink, and pastors James Forbes and Janet Wolf discuss Jesus' teaching about peace in the Sermon on the Mount. Available from MCC.
- 9.** Invite members of the congregation to talk with youth about the experiences, tensions, and pressures of WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War, including CPS and other alternate service experiences. What can the adults affirm, and what would they wish to change about their own voice for peace during those times? Give youth plenty of time to ask questions.
- 10.** Studying the following resources may also be helpful: *Mennonite Confession of Faith: Article 22, Peace, Justice and Non-resistance*; *And No One Shall Make Them Afraid*, a Mennonite statement on violence.