

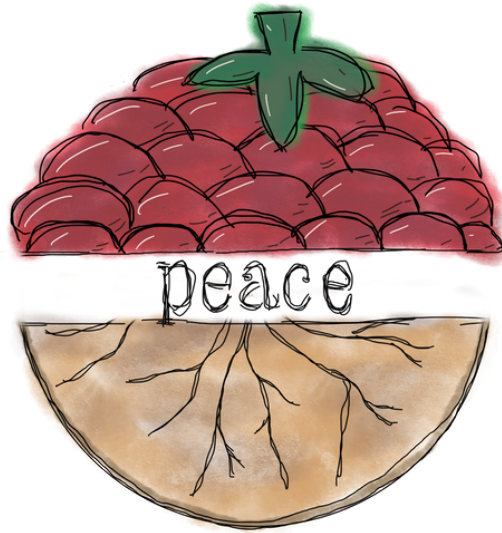


Introduction

At District Assembly this year, our DS invited us to consider how vital it could be to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit. What would our witness look like in the world if we were people who were following Jesus, allowing God's grace to help us, and being filled with the Spirit so we bear fruit? To accomplish this we need to partner with God. She said, "While we don't believe in works righteousness, we also don't believe in passive discipleship. We get our hands dirty in the soil with our God who is the gardener." This document is a way for us to partner with God in our own transformation! Each month you will be provided with a variety of tools to help cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit. You can use these personally or with a group.

The format is a shared spiritual practice and then a three-fold invitation to go deeper--deeper in Scripture, deeper with others, and going deeper with self. You will also find a variety of book recommendations to help you to explore the fruit that is being studied each month.

The truth is Galatians 5 says the "fruit" of the Spirit, not the "fruits." This matters because we are to allow God to help us cultivate all of them, not just the easy ones, not just the ones we like, but we are to be people who bear all the fruit of the Spirit. Join us on this adventure with God as we seek to go deeper together.



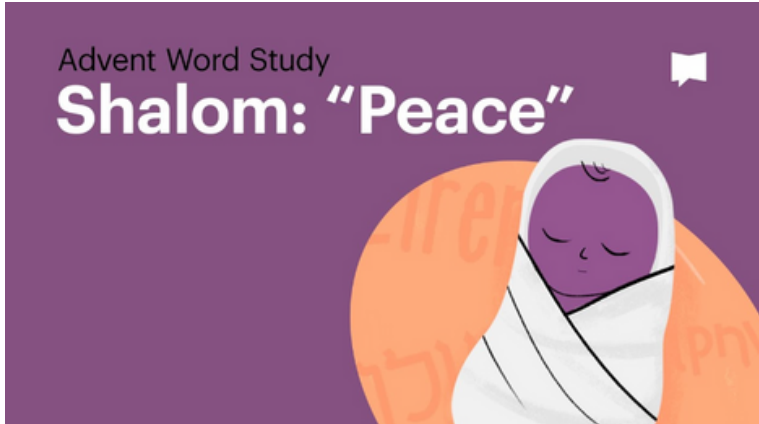
Shared practice:

Light a candle and play this song, "Instruments of Peace." This prayer is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi and is a good reminder to disciples of what it means to live like Christ. Ask God to bring to mind any person in your life that you are in conflict with. Ask God to remind you of any situation where **you** are causing tension or a lack of well-being for the other. How can you act on those Holy Spirit prompts?



Going Deeper with Scripture & Prayer:

The Fruit of the Spirit of Peace



The Bible Project has another good video to consider:

- In what ways are you embodying the truth of peace?
Take some time to thank God for these areas of peace in your life.
- In what ways are you struggling with peace?
Consider inviting the Holy Spirit into these painful or uncomfortable areas of your life.

Consider memorizing a passage of Scripture that helps you live into the peace Christ is calling you to practice.

Consider Romans 12:9-18. Too much? Then memorize verse 18 only. When conflict or tension comes to you, recite your memorized passage slowly and invite the Holy Spirit to help you bear the fruit of peace.

With Prayer:

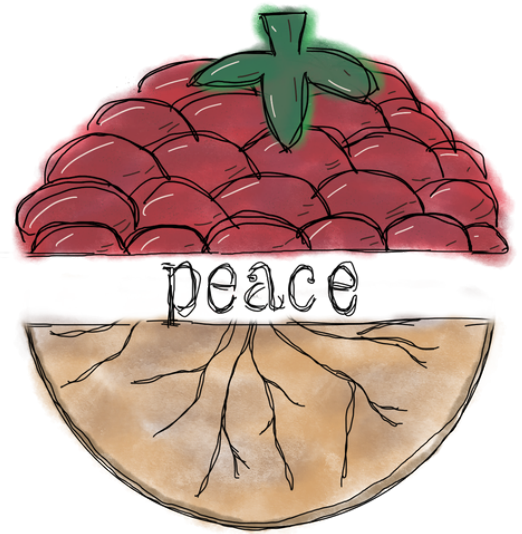
Consider writing prayers of peace that you can incorporate into your prayer practices. Here are a few examples:

“O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen” (Book of Common Prayer)

“Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. Amen” (Book of Common Prayer)

Going Deeper with Others and Self:

The Fruit of the Spirit of Peace



With Others:

In our families, at our churches, and in our communities we have an opportunity to practice peace. Instead of perpetuating the dividing and separating that happens so often in our society, what could you, your family, your church, or your friends do to break down walls of division that may exist? Consider what you might do to bridge relational divides, ideological or political divides, economic divides, and any other divide. Practicing this will help us as we interact with others.

With Self:

Inner peace is challenging! Many are adept at presenting “false selves” to others and even to themselves. What would it require for you to be true to yourself? Need to get right with God... “Search me and known me...” (see Psalm 139)? Need to have an honest conversation with a pastor or counselor? Or a friend? It will be hard for the fruit of peace to be shared with others in your life if you have an inner sense of conflict. If this is you, then make a plan this month to begin to address this need.

Resources to Help Make Peace

From the Church of the Nazarene--A Webinar on Peace-Making with Pastor Eric Paul from the Hawaii Pacific District Church of the Nazarene. Register [here](#) for this September 27, 2023 event! Cost is \$5. Pastors, church leaders, and friends who care about peace-making are invited to register. We are looking at working on expanding this to in-person peace training for our churches and communities in 2024!

Other Resources:

Fight Like Jesus: How Jesus Waged Peace Throughout Holy Week, by Jason Porterfield. Throughout Holy Week, two competing approaches to peacemaking collide. What if we've embraced the wrong one? At the start of Holy Week, tears streamed down Jesus' face as he cried out, "If only you knew the things that make for peace." From that moment, until a week later when he triumphantly declared, "Peace be with you," Jesus spent each day confronting injustice, calling out oppressors and contending for peace. But what if—despite all our familiarity with the events of Holy Week—we still don't know how Jesus makes peace? And what if—despite clinging to the cross of Christ for our salvation—we've actually embraced a different approach to peacemaking? One that justifies killing enemies. One whose methods include nailing criminals to crosses. We desperately need to recover the radical vision of peacemaking that Jesus embodied throughout Holy Week. And we urgently need to be trained in his way of making peace. So, come. Let's journey together day-by-day through Jesus' final week and discover anew why he is called the Prince of Peace.

Check out General Superintendent, Rev. Dr. T. Scott Daniels' conversation with the author [here](#).