

“Called to be Peacemakers”

(An original play by the Just Peace Players)

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by the Just Peace Players, a ministry of the Metropolitan Boston Association,
Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

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An Introduction to liturgical drama

Throughout history the arts have called and invited us to perceive our lives and world in new ways. Drama has been used since the dawn of time to share our deepest longings and joys, dreams and nightmares, awe and wonder with the sacred and with our communities. Storytellers, dancers, mimes, actors, singers, musicians, painters, sculptors, and so many others have told and retold the stories of faith in wonderful, creative ways.

During the Middle Ages traveling drama troupes performed biblical stories and miracle plays to outdoor congregations. Their legacy remains in the passion plays that are performed around the world today recall the events leading up to the crucifixion. While the Just Peace Players walk in ancient footsteps, our plays are designed to bring contemporary social justice issues alive. We place these critical concerns in dialogue with biblical ideas and themes to encourage congregations to move into a deeper understanding our faith and God's call to do justice in our world.

We hope that our contemporary liturgical dramas:

- A. Offer opportunities for spiritual growth and transformation.
- B. Enable people to encounter Biblical stories in new ways.
- C. Connect contemporary social justice issues and faith and spirituality.
- D. Invite, motivate and challenge people to live out their faith in the world.

We are excited that you are planning to perform "Called to be Peacemakers." We trust you will discover that preparing and performing is a truly sacred experience.

An Introduction to the Just Peace Players

The Just Peace Players is a liturgical drama troupe committed to sharing our many visions of peace and justice in innovative ways. The troupe was formed in the early 1990's when five ordained ministers in the Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ came together to do bible study. They were inspired to try drama as a way to share God's liberating word with their congregations.

These gifted women began to create liturgical dramas on critical social justice issues for use in churches and at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. With the help of a gifted lay musician, the Just Peace Players was born. After several years the original Players moved on to other ministries.

Their dream lives on in the current Just Peace Players. Every Player is a minister who volunteers his or her time. Some are ordained and some are not. We are pursuing God's

call working as a lawyer, teaching at a seminary, designing fiber arts, attending seminary, teaching ESL, directing IT services, ministering in churches, with the homeless, as hospital chaplains and interim pastors. New members join the group as the Spirit moves them, and from time to time members leave to pursue other ministries. None of us are trained actors, although we are fortunate to have several gifted musicians in the group. Everyone who will make the time and energy commitments necessary to be in the Players is welcome.

We write plays collaboratively after a time of prayer, reflection, bible study and group discussion. We have a passion for social justice and peace, and a deep commitment to challenge people to work daily to create an inclusive, justice-centered world. In addition to our plays we create bible studies with a focus on liturgical drama and other drama-centered peace and justice resources. We hope our ministry enables people to encounter God's word in new ways, encouraging and calling us to do justice wherever we find ourselves.

We have been performing across New England at churches, conferences and national events for over a decade. In 2000 we were given the Haystack Award by the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ for outstanding contributions to peace and justice. During 2003 and 2006 we traveled to China, meeting with Christians, leading discussions and performing at seminaries and universities in Beijing, Xian, Harbin, Wuhan, Qingdao, Lijiang, Kuming, Shanghai and Nanjing.

Producing the Play

“Called to Be Peacemakers” can be used in many ways. It contains all of the components of a Sunday morning worship service, and has a break for the pastoral prayer and offering. It runs about 50 minutes, and is suitable for older children, youth and adults. We suggest that you decide whom you will invite to the performance based on the needs and interests of your congregation.

The play can also be performed as an afternoon or evening event, and goes well with a potluck supper or dessert. You may charge a minimal fee to cover costs or ask for a donation and use it to support a mission project. Some churches ask people to bring gifts of non-perishable items for a food bank or local shelter in lieu of a cash donation.

We strongly suggest that the actors remain after the performance for a conversation with the congregation. Sharing about the contents of the play and experiencing it (as an actor or a viewer) gives everyone a chance to discuss scenes that have moved them deeply and scenes that have troubled them. You may want to designate a facilitator for the conversation, and then ask performers to jump in with their own ideas and feelings. Be prepared! Everyone will have different ideas and experiences and all are valid.

We provide literature table with information related to the major themes in the play and appropriate denominational resources. We also provide a book table with samples of books related to the topics of the play. We encourage you to provide similar resources. Be sure to include resources for projects that can be done locally. Part of our goal is to help people incorporate the themes of the play into their every day lives.

As you begin to plan for the performance you will need to gather a committed group of people who are interested in helping with the play. You can have as many performers as you choose. We encourage you to include everyone who is interested and will make a commitment to attend rehearsals and learn their lines. We do not encourage you to hold auditions because a part of the joy of each production is to experience people with so many different gifts and talents working together to share God’s word.

We work collaboratively as we block the play, because we perform in so many different venues that it is impossible to say what will work in each place. You will have to adapt the play to your performance space. Stage directions are included in the body of the play and should be used as appropriate. We have a coordinator who keeps things moving, and serves as the informal director of the play. You may choose to have a director who is more directive.

Appropriate musical accompaniment is very important. Consider asking your church musician to play for you. It will be necessary to have this person attend some of the rehearsals. Hymn sources are cited in the play. You will also need a bulletin for the congregation. A sample copy has been provided. Many people include an insert with relevant congregational information and announcements.

Costumes and props have been kept simple. Feel free to make additions and substitutions to match your interpretation of the play. You may wish to edit some skits slightly to make the conversation germane to your context. If you remove significant portions of the script please note this in the bulletin, so that people are aware that the original work of the Just Peace Players has been changed.

It may feel risky to raise some of the issues in the play, and once in a while someone is upset that we are discussing issues “that we don’t usually talk about in church.” Needless to say that’s why we want to discuss them. We have come to believe that we aren’t truly prophetic if we don’t occasionally make someone mad. Overall the response to this play has been very positive, and people frequently thank us for raising such important issues in church. We trust you will experience this too.

Remember, have fun! This is sacred work and God is laughing, crying, praying and singing with you. Many blessings as you engage in this historic and prophetic ministry.

Casting Requirements

Three Characters, the Guide, Pat and Jo, appear through out the Play. A minimum of six characters including the Guide, Pat and Jo are needed.

Costumes

Costumes need to be easily put on and removed. The Just Peace Players wear black pants and shoes with different colored polo shirts.

Liturgical Drama Resources Created by the Just Peace Players

All plays were created by the Just Peace Players and can be performed for Sunday morning worship services and for evening events. When we perform we provide literature table with information related to the major themes in the play and appropriate denominational resources. We remain after the performance for a discussion with the congregation, and encourage other performing groups to do so.

We are members of the United Church of Christ, and write with our denomination in mind. All of these works can be adapted for other denominations. We ask that you credit the Just Peace Players with the original work.

“Called to be Peacemakers”

Scene 1

[At the beginning of the scene the entire cast with the exception of Pat, Jo, and the pianist are on stage seated, The song can be sung by one person near the piano or by any number of the Cast. . Three members of the cast speak between verses. Props: nothing.]

Song: Tune of the Beverly Hillbillies

Come and listen to a story bout some folks like you and me
A banker and a lawyer, they lived quite comfortably.
Then one day they heard a funny call,
From a sacred voice, they barely knew at all!

VOICE 1: Called by God!

VOICE 2: To be peacemakers!

Soon they began to wonder if this call was really true
People said when asked “Church is the place for you!”
They said “You need a place where you can think and pray,
To figure out why God, is calling you today!”

VOICE 1: To do justice!

VOICE 2: To love kindness!

VOICE 3: To walk humbly with God!

THREE VOICES: To be peacemakers!

Scene 2

[Three actors and one or more singers. The Guide is dressed as an explorer, in traveling vest and tropical hat over the standard costume of all the actors. Pat and Jo are seated some distance apart in the audience. Piano plays the melody of "What Does Our God..." while the Guide reads Micah 6:8. Props: cell phone, beeper]

GUIDE: “And what does our God require of you, to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with God”

PAT: *[from the audience, stands and says]* I hear someone calling me... *[Checks cell phone]* It isn't my cell phone.

ONE ACTOR: *[sings with piano accompaniment]* "What does our God require of You,
What does our God require of You?"

[Pat starts to move toward the stage with back towards Jo.]

JO: *[from the audience, stands and says]* I hear someone calling me! *[checks beeper]*
But my beeper hasn't gone off.

THE SAME OR A DIFFERENT ACTOR: *[sings with piano accompaniment]* "Justice,
kindness, walk humbly with our God

[Both Pat and Jo move toward the stage but do not see each other.]

JO: I am being called, I know I am.

PAT: Hello, Hello? Is anyone there?

[Pat turns and notices Jo.]

PAT: Hi, what brings you here?

JO: Well, I usually just come here on Sunday morning, but I feel like I'm being called to
do something more.

PAT: I have the same feeling.

THE SAME OR A DIFFERENT ACTOR: *[sings with piano accompaniment]* "To Do
Justice, love kindness, to walk humbly with God."]

PAT: Well, if God is calling us, what should we do?

JO: Maybe we should just listen.

ONE OR MORE ACTORS: *[sing with piano accompaniment]*

"What does our God require of you?

Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice and love kindness and walk humbly with your God."

PAT: That was great. Whatever it means?

[The Guide gets up and moves behind Pat and Jo, who do not notice.]

JO: I'm not sure what it means! *[Pause, notices the new person]* Hello, who are you?

GUIDE: Who do you say that I am?

PAT: We don't know that's why we're asking!

GUIDE: I know you're called to be peacemakers and I'm here to help you understand and explore your calls.

JO: Kind of like an interpreter?

PAT: Or a tour guide?

GUIDE: You could think of me as a guide or as a companion on your journey.

PAT: Fascinating!

JO: *[Concerned]* Journey...wait a minute, where are we going?

GUIDE: You're going to see your neighborhood as you've never seen it before. *[Turning toward the audience and announcing.]* Join us as we sing "Come Heed the Saviors Call". It's found in your bulletin. *[Guide motions people to stand]*

"COME HEED THE SAVIOR' CALL" tune to Cabaret *[All sing]*

What good is sitting alone in your room? Come heed the Savior's call.
People need help they're all around. Come heed the Savior's call.
Yes, you have skills and they're needed today. Come heed the Savior's call.
You'll know just what they're needed for. Come heed the Savior's call.

Come fix some food, for those who starve,
Support your local shelter and you'll help a life begin all over.
Check at your clubs and your workplace my friends; do they treat all folks fair?
People need help- need you to care-come heed the Savior's call.

Befriend a child, just like your own.
Take time to sit and listen to them; what they say's important to all.
Talk to the mayor and congress my friends, tell them you really care.
You'll know just what you're needed for; come heed the Savior's call.

[Guide motions people to be seated.]

PAT: *[Sounds relieved and excited]* So God is calling us to do something in the world.

JO: We were right!

PAT: *[Questioning]* But what's God calling us to do?

GUIDE: You'll have to discover that for yourself. But first you need to discover the world.

JO: Oh, I know all about the world...I have cable TV!

Scene 3

RELAXING AT HOME

[Five or six actors as Opie could be the Interviewed Witness. Two chairs are set facing across the stage to a TV set on a TV tray. In one chair sits the Reader holding a book, in the other chair sits the Watcher holding a TV remote. The first announcer stands to the front on one side of the stage holding a clip board. As the scene opens the Watcher uses the remote to turn on the TV. Props: two chairs, TV, book, remote control, clip board, fishing pole]

FIRST ANNOUNCER: . . .and the top story of the hour – a woman's body has been found in the suburbs. Let's go to Jill at the scene -

JILL: Ken, you are correct, a woman's body has been found lying in the driveway you can see behind me. No details yet, but neighbors are saying she's the girlfriend of the man who lives at this house . . .

READER: Ugh – that's awful, could we listen to something else?

WATCHER: Sure. *[Clicks to new channel]*

FIRST ANNOUNCER: . . . and reaction is coming in to the bombing. A crowded bus was bombed on its way into town yesterday killing 3 and seriously injuring 12. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but experts say it has the earmarks of a terrorist organization called . . .

READER: *[Becoming agitated]* That's even worse.

WATCHER: OK, ok... *[Changes channel again]*

INTERVIEWED WITNESS: ...we heard shots being fired. Some of the people from the lab came running by shouting to get out fast – a guy was firing an automatic and he didn't care who he hit. We ran and didn't look back. I don't know who's left inside. . .

READER: Is the whole world going crazy? I can't read thru this. I wish they'd just start the news with the weather forecast, then we could go to bed.

WATCHER: I want to hear how the teams are doing. It should be time for sports now. (Switch channel again) Ahh, here it is.

FIRST ANNOUNCER: The Swisher's star center has been taken into custody after neighbors complained about screams coming from his home. His wife told police he had hit her several times. She is seeking a restraining order issued. The arraignment will be held in district court tomorrow morning.

On the hockey front, the Blades and Icers are wondering how their teams will survive without the players suspended after the biggest fight of the season during the second period of last night's game. Here's another replay in case you missed it.

READER: Augggh! Give me that *[Grabs the remote & changes station.]* There! This is more like it! !

OPIE: *[With fishing pole oh his shoulder, whistling the theme from the Andy Griffith Show, begins to walk either across the front of the stage or into the audience.]*

WATCHER: What's that?

READER: The Andy Griffith Show. Don't you recognize Opie with his fishing pole?

Dialogue between Scenes 3 and 4

PAT: So what's the big deal? TV is full of violence these days.

GUIDE: Because there's so much violence in the world.

JO: You're right. But I don't participate in it so why should I watch it?

Scene 4

PILATE RETURNS

[Four actors. Pat and Joe are standing apart from the Speaker and each has a red hand towel over one arm. The Guide is seated with the rest of the actors at the beginning of the Scene. Props: 3 red hand towels includes one for Guide.]

SPEAKER: *[Looking at the audience]* Around the world 55, 000 children die every day from diseases, which could be eliminated if, they had clean drinking water.

PAT: *[Looking at the audience]* My kids did trick-or-treat for UNICEF last year. *[Pantomimes washing hands and dries them on the towel.]*

SPEAKER: Our government spends more on a single bomber than we give to help combat the AIDS epidemic. 10,000,000 people will die in Africa alone if we don't stop it.

JO: *[Looking at the audience]* I pay my taxes on time. I'm not responsible for how they spend it. *[Pantomimes washing hands and dries them on the towel.]*

SPEAKER: In the United States millions of migrant workers, adults and children, live in substandard housing, have no access to healthcare, and work fifteen hour days picking fruits and vegetables covered with pesticides so that we can have cheap food.

PAT: I boycotted grapes a few years ago. I buy organic fruit whenever it is on sale.
[Again washes hands]

SPEAKER: In Massachusetts, 1 in 5 children goes to bed hungry.

JO: I gave tuna and peanut butter to our food cupboard last year. (Washes hands)

SPEAKER: In Boston, at least 5000 people are homeless. 387 families live in welfare motels.

PAT: I gave fifteen dollars to Pine Street Inn last year. (Washes hands)

SPEAKER: *[Angry raises voice, turns toward Pat and Jo.]* Have you heard anything I said? People are suffering and dying all around us.

JO: Well, what can we do?

SPEAKER: You have the power and resources to make a difference.

PAT: Those people aren't my problem. I do the best I can. I give a lot to my church.

SPEAKER: Do you give so much to your church that you miss it?

PAT: No, (pauses) not really.

SPEAKER: Could you volunteer somewhere 8 hours a month and bring your kids or your friends along?

JO: *[Shrugs]* It would be hard with my busy schedule... What would my friends think if we missed a soccer game or a tennis match?

SPEAKER: Are you willing to do something different from many of your friends and neighbors? If so, you can make a difference in the world.

JO: Sure *[pauses]* maybe...

PAT: But it's not really my responsibility to change the world, is it? *[Washes hands]*

GUIDE: *[Gets up and goes to lectern or podium]* Pilate said to the crowd “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said “Let him be crucified.” Then he asked “What evil has this man done?” but they shouted more “Let him be crucified!” So Pilate, when he saw that he could do nothing and feared that a riot was beginning, *[Pantomimes washing hands with the red towel]* took some water and washed his hands before the crowd saying “I am innocent of this man’s blood.”

Scene 5

STANDING TOGETHER

[Two actors, PAST and Today, standing back to back in the center front of the stage looking straight ahead and not at the audience. Guide is seated at beginning of the scene.]

PAST: In Nazi Germany, they first came for the Communists, and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist.

TODAY: I stayed silent during the McCarthy years because I was afraid they would investigate me.

PAST: Then they came for the Jews, and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew.

TODAY: I didn’t say anything during the struggle for civil rights because I didn’t want to make waves or alienate my friends.

PAST: Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist.

TODAY: I didn’t protest against big business polluting the environment because it wasn’t happening in my neighborhood...yet.

PAST: Then they came for the Catholics and I didn’t speak up because I was a Protestant.

TODAY: I didn’t go to the vigil against hate crimes when a swastika was painted on a neighborhood churches rainbow flag because that wasn’t my church.

PAST: Then they came for the lesbians and gay men, and I didn’t speak up because I was neither one of those.

TODAY: And I didn’t want people to wonder if I was one, either .

PAST: *[Stepping on step forward]* Then they come for me-and by that time there was no one left to speak up.

TODAY: *[Stepping one step forward]* O God, What sort of world has my silence helped to create?

[Guide rises and walks between PAST and TODAY from behind.]

GUIDE: Solidarity means standing together or dying alone.
Without community, everyone is vulnerable.

[Guide turns Past to face the audience] To love your neighbor is to know his(her) name
[Guide turns Today to face the audience] To recognize his(her) face
To share their loves and fears
To care enough to stand together
United in the face of difference.

People who seek to control us
First separate us
Then teach us to fear each other, and destroy us one by one!

Dialogue between Scenes 5 and 6

JO: I never thought about it that way. But, I can't believe our government will act that way today! We're safe, aren't we?

PAT: We have social programs to help people and some laws left to protect our civil liberties.

GUIDE: Did you know that over 1000 people arrested after Sept.11, 2001 are still being held in prison without being charged? Did you know that in some cases the police and federal officials can listen in on conversations between attorney's and their clients? The so called "Patriots Act" is using our fear to take away our civil liberties and most of us aren't even aware of it!

JO: I have a big house in the suburbs! I don't think anyone in my neighborhood is being silenced about anything.

GUIDE: Listen to this.

Song

GOD OF THE NASDQ [solo]

God of the NASDQ,
NYSE
God of my pension plan
How do your people spell greed?
Who is my neighbor in need?

Not in my back—yard!
Don't put it here
We can't have them in our...town
How do your people spell greed?
Who is my neighbor in need?

Called to love deep—ly
All of God's folk,
Status and race a-side
How can I help achieve,
Helping my neighbors in need?

Scene 6

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

[Three actors F-WOMAN, CHILD, S-WOMAN her arm in a sling are in a semi-circle facing the audience with the NARRATOR standing to one side. Props: scarf to use as sling.]

NARRATOR: If you choose to look, you will see the survivors of domestic violence everywhere you go. Sisters, brothers neighbors, friends. Young and old alike. People like you and me in clean, designer clothes. You will see them, if you choose to look.

F-WOMEN: My eye was black and blue, almost swollen shut.

S-WOMEN: My arm was in a sling, again.

CHILD: My back hurt so much I couldn't lean back in my chair during class.

NARRATOR: If you choose to listen, you will hear them crying out.

F-WOMEN: I went to the garden club meeting and told everyone I got this black eye walking into the bathroom door in the middle of the night. We all laughed at how clumsy we can be. They think I need a new nightlight.

S-WOMEN: Went to church with my arm in a sling, again, and told them I fell in a hole while jogging. Everyone agrees, we need to repair the sidewalks around here.

CHILD: I went to school with bruises on my back, and changed into my gym clothes really quick so no one would notice. When they asked, I told them I fell off my skateboard.

NARRATOR: If you have the courage, keep asking till you uncover the truth.

F-WOMEN: Dinner was late...but only by 5 or 10 minutes. I always have to have it on the table on time or he hits me.

S-WOMEN: I was changing the baby and not really listening to him. He grabbed my arm to get my attention. At least he didn't hurt the baby.

CHILD: I was too slow bringing Daddy his beer. He likes a cold, fresh one during the commercials. I hate it when he hits me with his belt.

NARRATOR: If you care enough, you can intervene.

F-WOMEN: You'll let me stay at your vacation house for a week? Really? I could sure use the time alone to decide what I need to do next.

S-WOMEN: You know about a safe house that will take women and their children? You'll drive me there? I'll go, anything to keep the baby safe.

CHILD: Thanks for helping Mom get a restraining order. We feel a lot safer now.

NARRATOR: If we do not choose to look and listen, to ask and intervene, we will meet our friends and neighbors (pause as the voices jump in)

F-WOMEN: in the hospital

S-WOMEN: In the pediatric intensive care unit

CHILD: in the morgue.

ALL: Crucified with our silent consent. What will you choose?

Dialogue between Scenes 6 and 7

JO: That was creepy. (Turns to the guide) You're saying that if I don't care about my neighbors and try to make a difference, my indifference will kill people. I don't like that!

GUIDE: Yes, that's right. It is hard to hear...

JO: So what can I do to make a difference?

GUIDE: Do you know basic information about domestic violence? Could you help a friend or neighbor find a safe house?

Scene 7

SAFE HOUSE

[Three women, DONNA, SUSAN and KIM standing together center front of the stage. COMMENTATOR seated at beginning of the scene.]

DONNA: Welcome to Mary's Place, Kim. I'm Donna. I came here five years ago when I needed a safe house. Now I'm a volunteer. You're safe here. Just don't tell anyone where we're located. If you do, we could all be in danger again.

SUSAN: Hi, I'm Susan. Glad you're here with us. I've been here two weeks. I'm still having nightmares and my son is acting out. Don't be surprised if in a couple of days you feel like you want to go back home. Being on your own can be frightening.

KIM: Hi. I'm glad to be here. I've been in America for two years. I clean houses. People couldn't understand my husband's English and I made more money than my husband did. When he hit me I didn't have anyone to talk to.

SUSAN: My Dad was a drunk. He screamed at us. Sometimes he hit my Mom and us kids too. Then my boyfriend started treating me the same way. I didn't know what a good relationship was. For a long time I just accepted the way he treated me as normal.

DONNA: You can't imagine what it's like when your husband is a respected member of the community and the church. If I had tried to tell anyone what was going on they wouldn't have believed me.

SUSAN: My Mom thought Joe was wonderful. He was so attentive when we started to date. He would call me every day at work and drive me home. Before I knew it I never saw my family or friends.

DONNA: My husband was always right. Everything I did or said was wrong. He said I was stupid. We entertained a lot and he wanted everything perfect for his guests! When I finally got up the courage to tell him that I was leaving him he flew into a rage. No wife of his was going to disgrace him. I was terrified. I waited to leave until he was on a business trip. Thanks goodness I saw a flyer for this place in the ladies room at our church. How did you find us, Kim?

KIM: When I came home from work yesterday, my baby was hurt. My husband was angry. He told me to say she fell out of her crib. The social worker at the hospital gave me a card with your number on it. She said to call if I was afraid for myself or my other children. This morning when he left for work, I took the children and called from a neighbors.

SUSAN: I left Joe because our son started to imitate him! It was no use going to my Mother's, she won't hear a word of criticism about Joe and anyway he would know where to find us. I finally called the police. They arrested him and helped me find this place. Making that call was really scary.

DONNA: It took a lot of courage for each of us to leave, and it takes courage to stay. I'm just glad we are alive and can begin to rebuild our lives. *[The Three women freeze.]*

COMMENTATOR: Every year between 40 and 50 women are murdered in Massachusetts by their husbands or boy friends. No one knows the number of beatings that occur. We need more safe houses and programs for batterers. Please ask the legislature to fund these programs using some of our tax surplus. The life you save could be your neighbors or your own.

Music between Scenes 7 and 8

MICAH REFRAIN

Scene 8

INFOMERCIAL ON VIOLENCE

[GUIDE, Pat and Jo are standing together to the side or above the area where three people with signs will appear. Props: five hand painted signs and places to put the signs such as traffic cones so that they are visible to the audience after the person has finished speaking.]

PAT: Domestic violence is a serious issue in all communities. It affects people in every kind of relationship. Anyone can be abused, women, men, children, people who are elderly or disabled, and both men and women can be abusers...and we don't hear much about it in our church.

JO: Yeah, I imagine there are lots of issues that need to be raised! What can we do to help?

GUIDE: Here are five things you can do that will make a difference!

[People jumping up one at a time with big hand painted signs shouting out the statements in a staccato fashion as each finishes their lines they place their sign where it will be visible and leave the stage. The signs carry the phrases in bold.]

VOICE 1: **Teach Peace!** Teach children and adults creative ways to solve problems without violence. Practice and teach what you believe everywhere you go!

VOICE 2: Speak up in your community. Ask your school to sponsor forums on important issues. Talk about the ways these issues affect everyone, rich and poor alike. Share your opinions with your legislators.

VOICE 3: Break the silence in your church. Sponsor forums and bible studies about domestic, economic and political violence. Reinterpret biblical passages that have been used to support violence against women and children. Ask your pastor to preach peacemaking, and teach peacemaking skills in church.

VOICE 1: Put your money where your mouth is. Do more than talk, walk the walk. Give money to programs you believe in. Support these programs through your churches mission budget. Advocate for safe houses and programs for batterers in your neighborhood.

VOICE 2: Put your body on the line!! Practice Restorative Justice! Give your time! Volunteer at a shelter, work on a hotline, and teach about domestic violence at your workplace. Give 8 hours a month to a program you care about...It will help save lives and its sacred work.

JO: Wow, I never realized one person could do so much.

PAT: Yeah...but that feels like a lot for one person to do...

GUIDE: Oh, you won't be doing this work alone. Lots of people will be around to help you, and you can bring your friends and family along with you. *[Turns to the audience]*

Join us as we sing verses one and two of "Will You Come and Follow Me?" It's found in your bulletin.

Song

"Will You Come and Follow Me?" Tune: Kelvingrove *[all sing]*

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you care for all who need and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare, Will your life show that you care?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you help the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris'ners free and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape our world around?
Thru my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Scene 9

VOICES FROM THE SIDELINES

[Four actors at a soccer game, two adults, ADULT 1 and ADULT 2, on one side of the stage wearing visors or sun glasses and two players KID 1 and KID 2 on the other. One holding a soccer ball. Props: hats, visors, caps for the kids and a soccer ball.]

ADULT 1: Hey, why is that fat kid playing so much?

ADULT 2: That's Jimmy. He is on the team, you know.

ADULT 1: Yeah, but my kid is much faster. He's the best player on the team and should be in there all the time.

ADULT 2: Jimmy plays hard and does come to all the practices.

ADULT 1: What's your problem-don't you want to win? I might just have to slap that coach up side of the head to knock some sense into him.

KID 1: Hey!! How come Jimmy is playing so much?

KID 2: He IS on our team.

KID 1: Yeah but he can't run fast at all.

KID 2: Jimmy works hard and comes to all the practices.....more than you do.

KID 1: Yeah but I'm still the best player. And don't you forget it or I'll bust your face!

ADULT1: Thank goodness we passed the zoning ordinance to keep them from moving in here.

ADULT 2: Yes, we wouldn't want them in school with our kids or on their teams.

ADULT 1: Who knows what bad habits our kids would pick up from them...

ADULT 2: Hey, did you hear about the kids that painted a swastika on the church sign in our town?

ADULT 1: Yes! It's sad isn't it?

ADULT 2: It is. I wonder where they learned to be so full of hate.

GUIDE *[from the lectern]*: “God requires us to be role models for our children. We are called to create loving, justice-centered communities in which each person is valued and honored. But just as you and I forget what God asks of us, we have to remember that sometimes our church and governments have taught us things that are different from God’s call...”

Scene 10

THE INQUISITION IS ALIVE AND WELL

[Two actors, CITIZEN and INQUISITOR. The CITIZEN standing in front of and below the INQUISITOR who is wearing a black robe and holding a bible.]

CITIZEN:

O God, the things we have done in your name.

Minds polluted
Souls corrupted
Bodies broken

Smell the heretics burning
Listen to the bones cracking on the rack
Hear the anguished cries of women raped
See friends and neighbors hanging on crosses

INQUISITOR:

Confess, repent, accept the one true faith
You will be saved.

We, the men of the church, fear you
Women of power,
men who defy us
Foreigners who are not like us
Thinkers, dreamers
Anyone who defies the status quo
Or whose call threatens the lords temporal and spiritual

Conform to our theological reality or
You can expect a knock on the door
From a black robed Inquisitor
Death and dismemberment in a dungeon.

CITIZEN:

In our modern age the Inquisitor arrives
In khaki army fatigues
The blue of the police
The black of the Gestapo

INQUISITOR:

We don't care about your soul.

We want your body
In the fields and in the factories
In the barrios and ghettos
On the reservation
Clinging to life in the inner city
Working as slave labor
So we get rich.

We want your allegiance to the government who owns and sells you.
We want your silence in the face of tyranny.
We want you to conform to the political reality that keeps us in control.

If you dare to speak truth to power
A the uniformed Inquisitor
Will knock on your door and you will disappear
Death and dismemberment in a prison cell.

CITIZEN:

Today, we think we're safe,
Gay men and lesbians march with pride
A million strong on the mall in Washington, DC

Back at home, when people ask what I did on the weekend
Can I tell the truth and keep my job?
Adopt my child, not get bashed?

Did someone take my picture kissing my lover beneath the rainbow flag?

INQUISITOR:

If you don't get married
If you defy social norms
If you dare to live and love boldly
If you fail to conform to our expectations for an ordained minister

Then Presbyters, Elders, Bishops
Inquisitors from ordination committees in plastic collars and tailored suits

Will come knocking on your door.

And you will disappear from membership rolls.
Your call will be denied
You will not be ordained.
Your dreams will be dead and dismembered
In clean church offices.

BOTH: The Inquisition lives on.

Dialog between scene 10 and 11

JO: The church has caused pain to millions of God's children through time but there's one new thing that our church is doing! *[they look at each other and nod]* We're an Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered people to full participation in the life our church.

PAT: Some people didn't like the idea at first, but after a time of study and prayer the vote to become ONA was unanimous.

JO: Too bad there are only about 400 ONA churches out of the 6000 our denomination!

GUIDE: That's why it important for every church to begin an ONA study process!
[speaking to the audience] Join us as we sing verses three and four of "Will You Come and Follow Me?"

Song

"Will You Come and Follow Me?" The New Century Hymnal *[all sing]*

Will you reveal the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will your hand be my love shown? Will your lips make my name known?
Will you open to my life in you and you in me?

God, your summons echoes true when You but call my name.
Let me turn and follow You and never be the same.
In your company I'll go Make your love and footsteps show,
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Scene 11

DAD'S GUN

[Four young people, voices 1,2,3 and 4. Props: caps, backpack, large comb.]

- 1: I wish I could have found Dad's gun when they made fun of me at my new school
- 2: when the called me a fag in the locker room
- 3: when the boys tried to jump on me at the playground
- 4: when they drove by and shot my three year old brother.

[Staccato fashion]

- 1: Left Out
- 2: Harassed
- 3: Threatened
- 4: Grief stricken...I would have shot them all if I could have found Daddy's gun.
- 1: Went to peer counseling instead. Now I have at least one new friend.
- 2: Joined the Gay/Straight Alliance. Now I am proud of who I am.
- 3: Two new programs started at my school. One teaches the boys to respect us, and the other helps us feel good about ourselves.
- 4: Still cry for my baby brother, but I joined the Boston Youth Organizing Project to make a difference in my community. Now I'm glad I couldn't find Dad's gun.

Scene 12

DORCHESTER GUN

[One actor in a dressing gown with a flash light concealed in a pocket.]

The other day I almost bought a gun.
Cold, glittering its deadly eye winked at me
from behind the counter at K-Mart.

For Only \$49.95 plus bullets
I could have power in my pocket, a big bang to protect me.

I was frightened in my neighborhood.
Tires slashed, purses snatched, windshields smashed
all for no apparent reason...

Then, in the middle of the night...I awoke to tapping...
While Sassy the cat was hissed on the landing the persistent tapping went on and on...
Someone was trying to break in, to rape, to rob, to murder us!

We called 911 and flashed the lights.
By the time the cops arrived the tappers were gone,
holes in the plastic window frame all they left behind.

Except a legacy of fear!

If they had chopped their way in we would have been defenseless.
I felt powerless.

In my heart I know I would have done whatever was necessary
to protect us.

If I heard footsteps on the stairs I would have shot them in a minute....
If I only had a gun.

The gun kept winking at me.
Maybe it would go on sale.
I didn't buy it, but planned where it would go, and put a flashlight there for practice.

A few nights later, I heard footsteps on the stairs.
I grabbed my flashlight and pulled the trigger... *[As the Actor speaks this line he/she pulls the flashlight out of the pocket, turning it on and pointing it at the audience.]*

Sassy the cat was bathed in light
Debbie was right behind.
Both dead if my flashlight had been a gun.

Dialog between scenes 12 and 13

PAT: Wouldn't it be nice if we lived in a world where no one ever felt the need for a gun?

JO: Lots of people have encouraged us to create this kind of a world!

Micah Refrain

Scene 13

A MOTHERS STORY

[A NARRATOR and four mothers, a Palestinian mother(PM) , the mother of Oscar Romero(OR), the mother of Corrie and Meip Ten Boom(CM) and MARY the mother of Jesus. PM is wearing a Moslem head scarf, OR a black shawl over her head, CM a bright kerchief and MARY a blue head covering. They are arranged in a staggered line with the NARRATOR to the side at a podium,]

NARRATOR: *[Mtt. 22:37-40]* You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

PM: My son was tired of living in poverty. He studied hard so that he could help free our people. He angered the people in power who want to “keep us in our place.”

CM: My daughters were good girls. They loved their neighbors and tried to help them. The Nazi’s didn’t like the things they did.

OR: My son was a pastor and teacher. He believed he could help the poor people in our country by speaking for political and economic reform, by preaching about God’s love for everyone, and about God’s call for justice for all of God’s people. He threatened the rulers of our country.

MARY: My son was a teacher, a rabbi. He was a gentle man who shared the good news of God’s love for all of God’s people wherever he went. For some reason his message made the king and religious leaders angry.

NARRATOR: *[Mtt. 26:3-5]* Then the chief priest and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the chief priest who was called Caiaphas in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

PM: The Israeli’s put him on a hit list.

CM: The Gestapo watched them day and night.

OR: The men in the Army decided he should die.

MARY: The religious leaders arranged for him to be killed.

NARRATOR: *[Mtt. 26:26-28]* Now as they were eating Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the disciples saying, “Take, eat this is my body.” And he took

the cup, and when he had given thanks said “Drink of it all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

PM: We had lunch together before he went to the demonstration. He told me it was important, that everyone should stand up for what they believe.

CM: The night they were arrested, my daughters ate a simple supper, sharing most of it with the friends they were hiding in the attic.

OR: His last meal was the Eucharist, shared with the faithful at the cathedral.

MARY: On his last night of freedom he shared a meal with his friends and disciples. He helped them understand that his love and God’s love would always be with them.

NARRATOR: [*John 19:1-3*] Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him saying “Hail, King of the Jews!” and they hit him with their hands. Later, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

PM: He saw people throwing rocks and tried to hide. Then he heard guns firing.

CM: They were arrested, imprisoned and sent to a concentration camp.

OR: He heard the soldiers burst in the door and turned from the altar to face them.

MARY: He was taken away, given a false trial and sentenced to death.

NARRATOR: [*Luke 23:46*] Now Jesus, crying with a loud voice said, “Father into your hands I commend my spirit” and having said this he breathed his last.

PM: Shot in the streets.

CM: Sent to hell on earth where one sister died in the other’s arms.

OR: Assassinated in his church.

MARY: Killed on a cross.

NARRATOR: “On the third day he rose from the dead”

PM: My son lives wherever people stand for freedom. Abdul, I love you.

CM: My daughters live wherever people love each other enough to give up their lives for their neighbors. Corrie and Meip Ten Boom, I love you.

OR: My son lives as he is remembered, as people of faith work for peace and justice.
Oscar Romero, I love you.

MARY: My son lives so that all may live. Jesus, I love you.

NARRATOR: We remember you. We love you. We seek to work for peace and justice
with your grace, courage, love and faith. Help us to be like you, faithful sons and
daughters of God. Amen.

VOICE: Let's sing together "Diverse in Culture, Nation and Race." It's in your bulletin.

"Diverse in Culture, Nation and Race" (tune: Tallis' Canon) *[all sing]*

Diverse in culture, nation, race, we come together by your grace.
God, let us be a meeting ground where hope and healing love are found.

God, let us be a bridge of care connecting people ev'rywhere.
Help us confront all fear and hate and lust for pow'r that separate.

God, let us be a table spread with gifts of love and broken bread,
Where all find welcome grace attends and enemies arise as friends.

Scene 14

THE GIANT, THE WOLF AND THE TROLL COME TO JUSTICE

*[GUIDE, GIANT, WOLF, TROLL and VOICE. Props: GIANT call stave (pole) and possibly
stand on a low stool, WOLF and TROLL face masks.]*

GUIDE: We are a diverse society and we need to be peacemakers out of the richness of
our differences. Perhaps we can take lessons from these familiar stories.

VOICE: Outside the Casting Room.

GIANT: Violence! Their play is about violence! How could they not want me for a major
part? Listen to this.

Fee, fi, fo, fum
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.

How's that? Pretty scary?

WOLF: Scary, but a little loud. I use subtler methods. Red Riding Hood says, Grannie, what big eyes you have! And I say, all the better to see you with, my dear. Then she says, Grannie, what big teeth you have! And I say, All the better to eat you with, my dear. Then I spring out of bed to gobble her up. Now that is scary because she trusts me, she thinks I am her grandmother.

TROLL: Plenty scary and plenty violent. But so obvious. I hide under the bridge and when the first billy goat gruff comes along -- trip, trap, trip, trap – I suddenly appear from nowhere to eat him up. Why, the fright alone would kill him! And then I do it again, trip, trap, trip, trap, Who's that crossing my bridge? I'm going to eat you up!

I may not be a Just Peace Player, but I know they'll want ME in their new play.

Voice: Later the Same Day

WOLF: What's the matter, giant, you look pretty discouraged? Didn't you get a part?

GIANT: *[looking very dejected]* Worse than that. They tried to clean up my act. This smarty-pants social worker kept talking to me about restorative justice – whatever that is. She said I could release all the prisoners from my dungeon, build affordable housing for them and let that upstart Jack – the one with the overgrown beanstalk – become the executive director of the housing corporation, all to make amends for my abusive behavior. Being a bloodthirsty giant wouldn't be any fun any more. But how about you?

WOLF: I think I met the same person – not very big, but very tough. She told me there was going to be a life-care facility in the new play and that I could audition for the role of personal care attendant. She said it would be just the right way for me to atone – whatever that means – for my violence and deception toward Red Riding Hood, her grandmother and others. Together my victims and I could work out a new, mutually dependent relationship. Pretty heavy, but I do want to be in the play.

TROLL: At least you two have a chance for the new play. They told me I could be in a revival of The Good News Garage. But only if I gave up springing out from under the bridge and accosting travelers. That social worker told me I could become a tollgiver on the Mass Pike. I would have to give back tolls and smile and say have a nice day until I had made up to everyone I had threatened and robbed in the past. Wouldn't I rather be a mean, old troll?

GIANT: Well, what are we going to do?

TROLL: Looks like its back into the books of fairy tales where I can frighten children to my hearts content. *[walks away alone and sad]*

WOLF: Or maybe it's time for restorative justice!

Dialog between scenes 14 and 15

GUIDE: Restorative justice is one way that we can change in the world. Would you be willing to try it?

JO: You mean like keeping people out of prison if they promised to make restitution to people they had hurt... like paying someone back they had robbed or working in a rehab hospital instead of going to jail for driving drunk?

GUIDE: That's one kind of restorative justice. Taking care of the planet and using resources wisely is another. What would restorative justice look like in your life?

JO: Um...I could waste less water ...or sell my SUV and drive a smaller car...I guess I could work for Habitat for Humanity instead of hiking in the Rockies...and when I do go hiking, I could carry a litter bag with me and pick up trash from along the trail. I know those are little things...

GUIDE: But they're a start...

PAT: It's hard for me to admit that I need to change, but we do have lots of resources to share...

GUIDE : and if everyone pools their resources and acts together, change will happen!

Scene 15

CHANGE HAPPENS

[Up to seven actors, Actors start in a semi-circle at back of the stage and step forward as they say their lines so that the line fills in from to sides to the middle as each actor comes forward they join hands with the others.]

1 Change happens when we:
pause to listen to each other,
dare to hear each other into speech
walk humbly with our God
and look for Christ's face in everyone we meet.

2 Loving begins when we:
share the nitty-gritty stories of our lives
full of pain and brokenness and laughter
without fear of judgment or rejection.

3 The work of justice starts when we:
drop our defenses, open our eyes and are willing to admit we are deeply alike...
however different we may seem.

4 Change happens when we:
become aware of the dynamic connection
between hearts and minds and souls
which links us to each other forever.

5 Loving begins
even though the pain isn't always gone, and the world is still imperfect

6 The work of justice starts when our lives touch and we are transformed through love,

7 recognizing Christ's presence in our midst.

- 1 Changing, loving,
- 2 working for justice,
- 3 walking humbly with God is a process
- 4 A power
- 5 A presence
- 6 A hope and a reality
- 7

Guide: Change happens as we risk being transformed through love

All: And dare to transform the world. [*Cast takes hands, raises arms and bows at the end.*]

[If the play is used for worship, break here for the offering and Pastoral Prayer.]

Last dialog

PAT: [*enthusastic*] So God is calling us!

JO: Yes. God is calling us to love our neighbors, to listen to their stories and to share our stories!

PAT: And God is calling us to recognize our strengths and gifts, to work together to make the world a place of peace and justice.

JO: Each of us will respond differently... and that's the beauty of it! God's needs every one of us!

GUIDE: And God will be with us as we journey together.

LITANY

[Two actors, VOICE 1 and VOICE 2 either at podiums or center stage with the other actors behind them. Audience and other actors are ALL.]

1: God's call rings out...to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with God,

2: To be peacemakers in our violent, battered world.

ALL: O God, help us respond to your call with open hearts and minds.

1: Wherever we look violence and injustice abound.

2: Wherever we choose to remain silent in the face of injustice, we participate in it.

All: Forgive us. Give us the courage to speak the truth as we perceive it, even if it makes friends, neighbors and the people in power uncomfortable.

1: God call us to change our lives and restore the world.

2: God call us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

ALL: We accept your call and dedicate our lives to you.

1: O God, We follow you with fear and trembling.

2: We follow you with love and hope.

ALL: We choose to follow you all the days of our lives!

1: Join us now as we sing our final hymn "Our Loving God Calls Us!"

“OUR LOVING GOD CALLS US” Tune-Battle Hymn of the Republic

[If the play is being used for worship, on the last verse the actors can progress through the congregation to the back for the Benediction.]

God’s call rings out to us just as it did so long ago
Isaiah, Micah, Jesus, in your footsteps we will go.
You’ll walk with us and guide us
Showing us your holy way
Beside us every day!

Loving, loving friends and neighbors
Loving, loving even strangers
Loving, loving with your whole heart
God’s love sustains us all.

Our gracious God has called us all to be God’s living Word
To act for peace and justice it’s a call we can’t ignore
To put our bodies on the line
Responding to God’s call
Disciples one and all.

Seeking justice with our neighbors
Seeing justice far and nearby
Seeking justice for God’s people
God’s love sustains us all.

Come on, stand up and join us in this holy escapade!
Come and share your gifts and skills with neighbors near and far away.
Come and join the cloud of witnesses like Mary, James and John
The saints of God march on!

Loving, loving friends and neighbors
Calling, calling saints and strangers
Seeking justice for God’s people
God’s love sustains us all.

[BENEDICTION, if a Church service or actors can remain on the stage for a talk back time.]