

2010

Forgiveness

**Project of Interfaith
in the Middle East.**



Unification Theology
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Forgiveness

A Project of Interfaith in the Middle East

Miri Kamar

Introduction

I was born and raised in Israel, a land marked by continuous conflicts stemming from political, religious, and cultural differences. The Israeli - Palestinian conflict, the main political conflict in the region, is yet unresolved. In addition, there is a complicated clash between the three major religions that has been marking the land and its peoples.

There is a conflict between Judaism and Islam. Both religions seek to understand their own scriptures in a way that legitimize their right to the land and to fight violently for this right.

There is a conflict between Judaism and Christianity. A long historical struggle has built up a fear of being converted; therefore, Christians are not allowed by law to evangelize in Israel.

There is also a conflict between Islam and Christianity. This is quite a historical conflict as well. It has a global manifestation today where Islam sees America as a threat to Islam as a religion.

But it also has a noted influence in the local communities, such as in mixed Arab villages where there are both Muslims and Christians living in hatred and isolation.

Judaism and Islam refer to forgiveness in their holy scriptures, yet the reality of the Middle East shows that in practice, at all levels and areas of human life: individuals, organizations, political, and national, they are not likely to forgive one another even within their own communities. To the contrary, it seems that the spirit in the Middle East is trustless, promoting revenge, hatred and self defense. The fundamentalists from all faiths justify their violence by quoting the scripture verses that give them legitimacy for war and revenge. In my prayers for peace in Middle East I have felt that forgiveness is the key solution.

There are few historical events to give me hope that the bloody conflict in the Middle East can be resolved. The first was to see the Berlin Wall and communism fall down without bloodshed. Second, was the Reconciliation and Truth Committee in South Africa and Rwanda where people could share their pain, received penalty and some could even forgive. Third, during the second Lebanon War, I visited a small village in Italy and walked into a church that had been destroyed during the World War II. The pictures from the war looked exactly like the streets of Beirut of 2006. The church was restored, renovated and renamed as the Peace Plaza. I could not stop thinking that 60 years earlier no one had thought about the possibility of peace and one European Union. The final and most inspiring for me are the teachings and projects of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, who dedicated his life for world peace. To educate leaders from all over the world for interfaith, mutual understanding and peace, Rev. Moon established The Unification Theology Seminary in New York, where this project was born. My heart wishes for peace to prevail in the Middle East.

While living in Middle East and being involved in many programs promoting interfaith for youth and religious leaders, I came to realize that having discussion groups with each other is important but not sufficient. Both sides wish to share their pain with the other side, but have no

room to listen for long and contain the pain, anger, accusation and horror that the people of the other side have in their wounded hearts. Moreover, both sides find it difficult to trust each other. I realized that the most important thing to achieve reconciliation is to be able to forgive. Many organizations have held interfaith peace programs where youth and young adults engage in dialogue, either in a onetime event or in an ongoing program. Usually the young adults enjoy the meetings, and the Palestinians are mainly happy to receive a special visa and have a short vacation. Many cynical people are skeptic and think that these “peace talks” cannot bring real peace, yet many people, who participated in such programs, remember those meetings where they received some education that can help them create a concept of peace. When looking at the small dry seed, it is hard to believe that a tall living tree can grow from it. And yet, with the right care the seed can become a strong tree that stands for many years producing more and more seeds for future trees. Let us plant seeds of hope and peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East.

Young Adults

This project is for young adults, ages 21-32 (after completing the Israeli army service). According to Dr. Kathy Winings, one of the characteristics of young adults is that they try to find the link between theory and life. This project is aiming at allowing young adults to go through the process of forgiveness in a vivid way, offering the participants an emotional experience, as they watch films showing the teachings of the Holy Scriptures being practiced, and thus the concept of forgiveness becomes the common base for the interfaith dialogue. Winings shows that young adults deal with three main issues: their identity, their capacity for intimacy, and meaningful relationships. They need to create a meaningful life. Winings defines intimacy as “The formation of profound friendship in which they are willing to invest themselves and can

genuinely take the perspective of the other.” Winings further explains that young adults are going through challenging processes in their internal development to “love, care, and recognize justice and injustice”.¹ Experiencing forgiveness is meaningful in developing young minds and hearts. Listening to each other’s pain, cultivating a forgiving heart, and experiencing being forgiven will give them tools, by which they can create true intimacy.

During the project, I would suggest movies and activities for young adults that deal with people who experienced hurt and injustice and could forgive their worst enemy. Many of those people talk about forgiving but not forgetting, worrying that absentmindedness will open the way for the injustice to happen again. I would like to create a curriculum that will give young adults the opportunity to change their hearts through movies, Holy Scriptures, and dialogue, so that they remember their original nature they received from God, and are able to truly forgive and be liberated.

The project shall include 6 meetings of 4 hours each with young adults from the three major faiths in Israel: Jewish, Muslims, and Christians. For the first three meetings members of each religion will meet separately to prepare the ground before meeting with members of other religions for three more meetings. The first few workshops target young adult that are already involved in peace organizations, hoping to enlarge the number of people who are willing to join the forgiveness journey as the project progresses.

The Rational of Using Films

Movies are a good media for bringing forth deep feelings. While watching a movie, people can go through a personal experience and touch upon emotions they do not allow

¹ Winings, Kathy. Building character through service learning, International Educational Foundation, 2002. p. 74-79

themselves to touch upon in their daily lives. While the process of forgiveness is emotional and personal, watching other people who went through the forgiveness process can challenge the audience and open a new door for them: the door of the possibility to forgive and be forgiven. When I watched these movies, every time I witnessed forgiveness, I experienced grace. It was an emotional experience of gratitude that gave an added dimension to the meaning of grace. Moreover, I had a spiritual religious experience, feeling God's grace and even his joy as he sees his children overcoming their resentment and reunite. More than just a good stimulator, these movies can provide for an internal personal experience of going through the process of forgiveness. When people are sharing a strong emotional experience, they are more likely to become friends and whenever they meet again they feel happy and close to each other. With this project, I hope to give the Israeli and Palestinian participants the opportunity to gain new genuine friends and see the people they would have called their "enemies" as their "brothers and sisters".

Objectives:

- a. Participants will gain knowledge by learning their own faith and other faiths' Holy Scripture regarding forgiveness.
- b. Participants will receive tools for listening to the other's pain and anger.
- c. Participants will believe they can be forgiven and God wants to forgive them.
- d. Participants will forgive one person in their lives.
- e. Participants will be able to forgive one from another faith
- f. Participants will establish and execute a service project to support their "enemy" community based on their learning of their new friends' communities' needs.

The First Three Meetings - each group meets within their own religion

I. Memories of people that forgave you in the past.

Objectives:

1. Participants will break the ice and get closer to each other.
2. Participants will inherit listening and reflection tools.
3. Participants will believe that God forgives us.
4. Participants will understand the importance of reflection.
5. Participants will be willing to pray for others.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick (it can be any item such as: a heart, a stone, peace symbol, etc.; the item can change every meeting and the participants can bring their own “talking sticks”).
2. Timer.
3. Paper with chosen quotes from the Holy Scriptures.
4. Soft music for Meditation.
5. Shirts (please ask each participant to bring a shirt).
6. Special paint for shirts, brushes, tuner, glass for water.
7. Students list of each group.

8. Notebooks for writing a journal.

9. Papers for reflection, pens.

A. Opening – A Short Presentation of the Project – from the introduction of this paper

Short prayer

B. Ice breaking game - Our Common Base - sitting in a circle, one chair is missing, and the person in the center shares one simple thing about himself, for example: “I like summer”. All the people that find common base with this statement stand up and look for a different seat. The person who is left without a chair is the next to share something with the group. Through this game the participants start to learn about each other in a very light way.

C. Contract - participants are asked to sign that they:

- Shall not interrupt when someone else is talking.
- Shall not Judge others - respect and understand that other people have different points of view.
- Shall avoid sexual harassment.
- Shall keep confidentiality of the other participants and their sharing.
- Shall report the staff of any difficulty internal or external.

D. Teaching listening tools and experiencing reflection:

- i. **Opening circle** – with talking stick - one can talk only when he or she has the stick in their hand. Everyone introduces themselves and their dream.

ii. **Short lecture – The Principle of Listening** – In our society many people do not find the time and the space to truly listen to each other. Often, during conversations, we are busy organizing our thoughts and preparing in our mind what we want to say once the other finishes his speech, rather than giving full attention to that speech. Listening is an art and a very important gift we can offer to each other. Lisa Schirch, in her book “Strategic Peace-building”, says that to achieve the goal of peace we need to develop the following skills: self-reflection, active listening, diplomatic and assertive speaking skills, appreciative inquiry skills, creative problem solving skills, and dialogue, negotiation and mediation skills.² I would add to this list: empathy, understanding, containing and loving skills, as these skills can create the right atmosphere for a deeper process and self realization.

The Principles:

- Look at each other’s eyes and try to find something you like about the person talking.
- Try not to allow room for your own thoughts and associations; concentrate on what the other person is saying.
- Reflect back to him what you understand, for example: “I understood you said that your dream was to be a medical doctor and to work in Africa because you care about their suffering...”

² Schirch, Lisa. *The little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding*, Good Books, Intercourse, PA, 2004, p. 18-20.

- The person, who spoke earlier, indicates whether he feels understood. If not, he repeats what he said, and the listener tries to reflect back his understanding again. This should continue until both sides understand what the other had said.
- Do not speak until the other person finishes speaking. (Use the talking stick in the pair exercises as well).
- Each person can speak for 5 minutes. (In pairs: they switch after 5 minutes, the pair can choose their own “talking stick”)

iii. Listening and reflecting:

a. **Demonstration** of listening and reflection:

- Between two members of the staff.
- With one of the participants.

b. Sitting **in pairs**: each one speaks for 5 minutes. Talk, reflect back, and then change. Topic for sharing – “what are things that people like about me”.

c. Sitting in **the circle**: people share how they felt in the pairs, if they feel the other person understood them.

d. Again **in pairs**: in turn, each one speaks for 5 minutes to share what things he or she feels they would like to change about themselves. (This is the first time the group is meeting, so the sharing will probably not be deep and revealing, but it is the start of building a trust relationship with each other.)

- e. In **the circle** – people may share what they felt during the last round in pairs, especially if they could feel the other person was accepting of the shortcomings they were sharing.

E. **Painting a shirt:** on the topic of “Who am I?” Participants explain to the group what they decided to draw, and why.

F. **Memory of someone who forgave me:**

1. Sharing in pairs: a memory of a mistake I made, who forgave me for it, and how did I feel?
2. Sharing this memory with the circle.

G. **God forgives us:**

a. **Reading.**

Islam

“If you efface and overlook and forgive, then lo! God is forgiving, merciful.” Qur’an 64.14

Judaism

“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” Isaiah 43.25

“The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.”

Daniel 9:9

Christianity

“[God] comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3–7

Teaching of Rev. Moon

“God has already forgiven us our sins. Do you think it would be possible for God to forgive us if He still thought that we were sinners? He forgives us because He looks at us with endless compassion. You should know that through forgiveness, all can be united as one.”

(February 18, 1972)

“Great forgiveness is possible only when one understands the other person’s situation one hundred percent. Because God knows our situation, He forgives us.” (May 26, 1957)³

b. Meditation: After reading the verses with soft music:

“Breathe softly and imagine you are in nature, a place where you feel safe and loved. You are walking on a field and the sky is blue, only one white cloud is covering the sun. Slowly by your breathing, the cloud is floating away and the sun is revealed, the sky becomes even more blue and shining. Keep breathing and think about something for which you cannot forgive yourself. Are you sorry for what you did? Breathe in and see a note “I am sorry for...” and see light surrounding it. Do you feel shame and guilt? Do not judge it, just breathe and put the word “guilt” on a cloud and watch the cloud floating away. Think of other negative feelings you may have, shame, fear, punishment, etc.; do not think about the words too much, just write them on the cloud and let it flow away. You can hear a soft voice telling you: “I love you my dear one”; breathe and try to feel that love in you. Try to feel as if a white light surrounds you and pink words of love are sparkling at you.

³ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.320

The teacher is reading softly the Bible verses about how God loves and forgives you. Please believe that God wants to forgive you. The music continues and then the group proceeds with another 5 minutes of silent breathing and reflection.

- c. **In Pairs** - sharing for 5 minutes with each other how they felt during the meditation.
- d. **Reflection** within the group - the teacher asks who felt that it was possible to be forgiven, and that person shares that experience with the group.

H. The Power of Prayer

As religious educators we are aware of the importance of prayer. We would like to ask the participants to pray for each other every day before the groups are meeting.

a. Reading about prayers in different faiths:

Islam

“Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: for those things that are good remove those that are evil. This is a word of remembrance to those who remember.” Qur’an 11.114

Judaism

“The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth”. Psalm 145.18

Christianity

“Pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.” James 5.13-18

Teaching of Rev. Moon

“Test the power of your prayer. Pray every day for one person [without telling him]. Pray tearfully for his well-being, and see what happens. Amazingly, he will feel a magnetic attraction to you. He will feel drawn to you, but he won’t know why.” (April 15, 1979)⁴

1. Each group receives the name lists of all the participants in their group and in the other groups. They are asked to pray every day for each other’s health and wellbeing. The teacher will match names from each group into pairs. It is recommended to pair within the same gender; pairs of young women and pairs of young men. Each person receives the name and picture of the person from the other group who is their partner in prayer, and will pray for that person every day. Participants are encouraged to think about who is the person they are praying for.
2. It is recommended that the teachers and facilitators pray for each person in the group. The prayer will go deeper when you get to know the participants and their hopes and struggles in life. It is suggested to pray before each meeting.
3. **Journal** - each person is asked to keep a journal of thoughts, insights and reflections that they might have between sessions.

⁴ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.796

4. **Written reflection at the end of each meeting** - what are your insights or inspirations? Do you feel safe in here, and what will help you to feel safe?
5. **Closing circle** – participants share with the group the insights they received during the meeting.
6. **Prayer.**

II. Forgiveness and Repentance

Objectives:

1. Participants will understand of the importance of repentance.
2. Participants will forgive the killer in the movie that repented.
3. Participants will ask forgiveness from someone they have hurt.
4. Participants will come to believe it is possible to be forgiven.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick.
 2. Timer.
 3. The Movies: “The Power of Forgiveness” and “A Meeting with a Killer”.
 4. The printed questions.
 5. Papers with quotes from the Holy Scriptures.
 6. Computer, projector, speakers and screen.
- A. **Opening Circle** - sharing some realization or something good that happened to them the previous week.
- B. **Prayer**
- C. **Lecture about forgiveness:**

What is Forgiveness?

Geiko Muller, in his book “The Art of Forgiveness”, asks whether forgiveness is a synonym to peace, harmony, and a good neighborly relation. He suggests that reconciliation encompasses all these concepts and refers to the process involved, though without explaining the various steps it takes to achieve that reconciliation. He regards reconciliation as more than just negotiation, but as “profound changes in consciousness.” One example is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa at 1995, which offered a “process of acknowledgment and healing.” There is a process when someone repents and the other forgives.⁵ The term “Truth” was added to help deal with the bitter memories of apartheid. Muller continues to say that through the Bible we realize that forgiveness is not automatic and acknowledge the suffering of the victims and the guilt of the offender. When Cain kills Able not only the blood from the earth is crying; Heaven and earth are also resonant with this cry.⁶

We need forgiveness in order to make it possible for life to continue; both sides are going through a process of realization that eventually liberates them both.⁷

The process of forgiveness is more difficult the more painful the hurt and the heavier the guilt. Muller says: “An act of forgiveness must be understood as a complex process of unlocking painful bondage of mutual liberation.”

The Jewish writer David Grossman described his feeling regarding the holocaust while visiting Auschwitz as “not anger or revenge; it was hatred, bitter

⁵ Muller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. *The Art of Forgiveness, Theological reflection on Healing and Reconciliation*, World Councils of Churches Publication, Geneva, Switzerland, 1997, P. 3

⁶ Muller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. *The Art of Forgiveness, Theological reflection on Healing and Reconciliation*, World Councils of Churches Publication, Geneva, Switzerland, 1997. P. 5

⁷ Arendt, Hannah. *The Human condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, P. 240

inconsolable hurt.” According to Muller, in the moment you achieve forgiveness there is recognition that the pain of the other is also my own pain, and that the other needs help. Therefore, “forgiveness is an exchange of pain and a deeper understanding of each other and oneself; when we can feel the other’s pain we can experience liberation.” In the Bible we read about the reconciliation between Esau and Jacob, and about Joseph forgiving his brothers, and how they wept; that shows that the forgiveness moment involves turmoil of emotions that are shaking up bitterness and shame; nevertheless, the experience brings joy and liberation.⁸

Jim Consedine writes about Restorative Justice. Among human virtues, practicing forgiveness is the most difficult to achieve, and yet, it is crucial for the process of restoration on both the personal and collective levels. Unfortunately, the importance of forgiveness is often being ignored. On the surface, it sometimes seems an unfair thing to attempt given the pain caused by an injustice. But, practicing forgiveness is a foundation stone for healthy living. It is the step we need to take in order to be free of the ongoing negative effects of past injustice. It has transformative qualities not found elsewhere. The decision to forgive is the decision to create a different future, free from the control of the past. It doesn’t mean forgetting the past, “It means remembering the past in a different way, leaving one free to develop the future.”⁹

⁸ Muller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. *The Art of Forgiveness, Theological reflection on Healing and Reconciliation*, World Councils of Churches Publication, Geneva, Switzerland, 1997. P. 24-27

⁹ Consedine, Jim, *Is there a Place for Forgiveness in Restorative Justice?* 2004. <http://www.peterpullar.com>, 4/10/2010

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, says: “Of course you have an acknowledgment by the wrong doer that they have done something that was very wrong, that they owe to us confession so that the victim, the survivor be enabled to forgive. But I have come to believe fervently that forgiveness is not just a spiritual and ethereal thing unrelated to the real world, the harsh world out there. I have come to believe very fervently that without forgiveness, there is no future”. He emphasized that to forgive is not only altruistic; it also serves self interest.

Forgiveness is also a process that cannot ignore self-hatred and anger. These are emotions of human beings. As AB. Tutu says, when I talk of forgiveness, I mean the belief that you can come out the other side a better person – a better person than the one being consumed by anger and hatred. Remaining in that state locks you into a state of victimhood, making you almost dependent on the perpetrator. When you forgive you are free from the perpetrator and your own suffering. Moreover, you can even cause the sinner to change and even become good. When we do not forgive it leads to bitterness and hatred loosing the vitals of life. Whether hatred is projected out or projected in, it always darkens the human spirit.¹⁰

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela is a South African psychologist who works with the longest serving prisoners sentenced for apartheid brutality. She points out that “people who have lived with a gross violation of human rights for a lengthy time

¹⁰ Consedine, Jim, *Is there a Place for Forgiveness in Restorative Justice?* 2004. <http://www.peterpullar.com>, 4/10/2010

will not move quickly to forgiveness.” The sense of pain remains a symbol. Often people are not ready to close this pain and let it go. Their whole identity has been affected by the trauma and they are not ready to move on. That is partly why forgiveness is not always an attractive option for people.

Forgiveness usually begins when the person needing to be forgiven shows signs of pangs of conscience. A true apology inspires empathy and forgiveness. This is done best without justification of the actions causing the hurt. A genuine apology is focusing on the feelings of the other and not on how the one apologizing is going to benefit in the end. It seeks to acknowledge full responsibility for an act. It does not seek to erase what was done.¹¹

Showing part of the film: “The Power of Forgiveness” (from 25:00- 31:00)

In the documentary film “The Power of Forgiveness”, Thomas Moore, a psychotherapist, says that you cannot ask people to forgive; the best thing is to lead them to recognize that they received forgiveness from God through their lives. A broad research about forgiveness was conducted in the years 1995-2005. People talked more about justice and not about forgiveness and mercy. The psychologist Everett Worthington tells us in his lecture that when we embark on revenge there is a chemical process starting in our brain that gives us similar satisfaction as when we have a particular food craving. Our body is seeking revenge, but our soul is looking for forgiveness. Thomas Moore emphasizes that we can create the conditions to help us forgive, yet we cannot control when we actually succeed to

¹¹ Consedine, Jim, *Is there a Place for Forgiveness in Restorative Justice?* 2004. <http://www.peterpullar.com>, 4/10/2010

forgive. When we succeed and able to forgive we will feel good. In East Carolina University, Kathleen Lawler-Row, a psychology professor, found that even though women tend to think they forgive faster than men, men actually have the tendency to forgive quicker. The researchers checked the body signals; they noticed that when people start to talk about their resentment, their blood pressure and their pulse go up immediately, and when they forgive, it calms down. People who have a forgiving personality show that their blood pressure goes up, but then immediately balances itself. Moreover, people with forgiving personality are less inclined to notice when someone tries to hurt them. In my opinion, it is a good personal goal to set for one, for sake of self growth, to become a person that doesn't get hurt easily, and yet is sensitive enough not to hurt others and is able to support them to overcome their pain.

Thomas Moore says that throughout his 30 years of practice he saw that it is very difficult to achieve forgiveness; however, he found that when a person can forgive himself than that person can start to change.¹²

Written Reflection:

Questions:

- a. The psychologist Wothington said that when we decide to be angry there is a chemical process that gives us satisfaction. Do you know that feeling? How do you feel after the chemical slows down?
- b. How fast do you calm down or forgive?

¹² Doblmeier, Martin (Director), (2007). The movie "The Power of Forgiveness".

- c. Research found that people who have a forgiving personality do not easily notice when someone tries to hurt them. Do you know any person that has such a personality?
Describe that person's character and how he or she is reacting to different situations.
- d. **Circle** - reflection about a forgiving personality.
- e. In what situations you are more likely to forgive?
- f. When it is difficult for you to forgive?
- g. Are there any conditions that you can forgive?

D. In pairs - memory of someone that made a mistake, hurt you and then came to you to apologize. Did you accept the apology? Did you feel he or she had repented? Was it difficult to forgive them? Why?

E. Readings about Repentance from Holy Scriptures.

Repentance is the first step to restore our relationship with God and realize our original mind. Repentance is a condition for God to forgive our sin.

It begins with words of contrition uttered through sincere and heart-felt prayer, and tears. Genuine repentance may lead to forgiveness, new insights, wish to make amends, and perhaps even willingness to change the direction of life.¹³

Christianity - "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3.2

¹³ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.884

Islam - “Truly, God loves those who repent, and He loves those who cleanse themselves.” Qur’an 2.222

Judaism - in the story of Jonah: “Neither man nor beast, neither cattle nor sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man and beast shall be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; every man shall turn from his evil way and from the violence he has in hand. Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath, so that we shall not perish. When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.” (Jonah 3:7-10)

Teaching of Rev. Moon

“We should repent. Our first assignment is to repent. Before a criminal is released from prison, he must pay the price for his crime. Likewise, under whatever name, unless we make a condition to liquidate our crimes, we cannot be released. All people today are faced with this situation. (September 1, 1978)

“When you repent you have to shed tears. You should feel much pain in those tears. Your repentance is not genuine unless you feel more pain over your mistakes and sins than if someone were giving you a beating as punishment.” (September 1, 1978)¹⁴

¹⁴ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.886

- F. a. Why do the Holy Scriptures mention repentance? Why is it important?
- b. Does the Holy Scripture show us what must we do in order to repent for our mistakes? How?

A. Watching the documentary movie “A Meeting with a Killer - One Family`s Journey”, 2001, (44:04 min.) produced and directed by Lisa F. Jackson.

In 1986, in Wichita Falls, Texas, Gary Brown at the age of 15, together with a friend, and under the influence of alcohol and drugs, raped, locked up, disfigured the face, and murdered Cathy, a 26 years old pregnant women. 15 years later, Cathy`s mother, Linda White, and Cathy`s daughter Amy, who was five years old at the time of the murder, applied to “Victim Offender Dialogue” to meet Gary Brown. This is a process offered to victims who wish to meet the offenders. The offender in this process does not get any special benefits. Both sides are going through a preparation period of six months before they can meet. Many memories and oppressed feelings are coming up during this period. They also write letters to each other. Gary showed regret, he expressed a will to do something good for them, and promised that he would never do such a thing again. In the meeting Linda and Amy learn that prior to Cathy being locked up, she told Gary: “I forgive you and God forgives you.” In the end, they could laugh together and even hug each other and take pictures. Gary felt good about himself; Amy, the daughter, felt she overcame a lot of fears and she can now face anything in her life; and Linda, the mother, felt relieved knowing her daughter could forgive, since it showed her Cathy was not under terror in her last moments. Even Ellen Halbert, who provided them with support during this

process, was going through a process as the audience of the film, noting that Gary truly repented and seemed like a confused little boy, it was difficult to hate him. This is a good film that shows the process of forgiveness and the emotions that arise from it. Even the audience can go through the process of forgiving Gary, though he had committed a horrible crime. This movie is used in many educational programs working with prisoners. This documentary was nominated for an Emmy award in 2002.

B. Questions (some of the answers are in brackets to help the teacher):

- a. **What information do you know about the people in the movie, and what is their pain?** (when we can see that each of them has pain, we can see that even a killer is a human being)
 - i. Gary the offender (Age, physical health, mental health, history of abuse, his pain - that he did not have a family). What do you think are his dreams after 15 years in jail? What positive things can you see in him?
 - ii. Cathy, the woman that was raped and murdered.
 - iii. Amy, Cathy's daughter. What is her struggle in life? What is her situation? (She is a single mother) What is her pain?
 - iv. Linda, Cathy's mother. What is her work in prisons? What is her pain?
- b. **They are going through process of six months before meeting.** They have meetings with Ellen, they are writing a journal and answering

many questions that are not shown in the movie and they wrote letters to each other.

- i. What is the purpose of the process according to the movie? (To bring back the power to the victims, to heal the pain).
- ii. Why does the process take so long?
- iii. What kind of questions can be asked?
- iv. What do you think needs to be done so that both sides feel safe to meet each other?

c. What is the motivation of each of them to meet?

- i. Gary (he wants to say he is sorry)
- ii. Linda (working in prison showed her that criminals are human beings, and she sees it as a way to honor Cathy)
- iii. Amy (feels her mother would not want her to live in hatred and anger)
- iv. Ellen

d. Meetings with the Killer:

- i. First meeting with Ellen - this is the first time after 15 years he is talking about the past. What do you think helped him to talk all of a sudden? What is Gary's pain? What does he think about himself? What is his

attitude? Is he happy? Do you think he is truly repenting? Ellen says she feels empathy to the man, do you feel that too?

- ii. Gary's letter to Linda and Amy. He writes: "my actions will show that I am sorry". What does he do and say to express his repentance? What touches your heart in his words? When he cries, do you think these are true tears? Do you think he is genuine?
- iii. Gary received a letter from Amy. What surprised him? What touched his heart? How did he react when he saw she wasn't angry with him? Did Amy share her pain? What is her pain? Does he understand her pain?
- e. **The narrator says before the meeting:** "Grief, guilt, soul searching - all come to this moment." What are their expectations from the meeting?
 - i. Amy – (wants to know every detail; she has some questions about circumstances, such as: if he had known Cathy was pregnant or had a child, would it have save her?)
 - ii. Linda
 - iii. Gary

f. **Meeting in the family.**

Cathy's brother and father have difficulties to touch the pain they have repressed for 15 years. Do you think it is dangerous to open those wounds or maybe it can help the therapeutic process? Amy thinks it can bring them together, what do you think?

g. **The Mediation - the Grand Meeting.**

- i. Do you think they feel safe to start talking? What makes it safe for them?
- ii. Do you think they were ready to meet each other?
- iii. What statements help them to meet? (Amy told Gary she was scared just like him, Gary starts with tears saying he is sorry)
- iv. Do you think Gary truly repented? Is he sorry? What kind of reaction do Amy and Linda show him?
- v. Do they have any common base, something they both like to do?
- vi. Gary, Linda and Amy are sharing their pain in life. Do they share it with anger and blame? What in the process could have helped them share such deep pain without anger? Is it easier to listen to someone who claims you hurt him, when he shares his pain without accusation?
- vii. Do they show affection to each other? (They hugged and take a picture together)

- viii. Are there signs of reconciliation? (Linda tells Gary that she would not mind if he gets free as long as he receives education and does something positive in his life)
- ix. Gary told them that Cathy’s last words to him were: “I forgive you and God forgives you too.” How does this effect Amy and Linda? What is your reaction to hear that a woman, who was just raped twice and locked up knowing she was going to die, had said such a statement?
- h. **Interview after the meeting.** How did their lives change after the meeting? Do you think they were liberated? Do you think they forgave?
- i. Gary says he feels well because he finally did something good in his life. He promised that he would never again do something that would give him pangs of conscience. Do you believe him? What is the role of our conscience?

C. Do you think Amy and Linda forgave Gary? Do you think God can forgive him? Do you think God can forgive such a horrible crime when the person truly repents?

D. Self Reflection - please write about 2 events in your life:

- a. You made a mistake and you want to restore that mistake. Write a letter to the person you hurt. First, thank him for things he has done for you, tell him

what do you appreciate about him. Then, write that you are sorry and explain for what. Do you feel ready to send it?

- b. Someone hurt you. Write about that person and what are his pain and struggle in life. Share your pain in writing without accusing him. Bring it for the next meeting.

G. **Closing Circle** - sharing about a friend you would like to ask his forgiveness.

H. **Writing reflection of the day.**

III. Forgiveness.

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn about forgiveness from God's point of view.
2. Participants will gain the tools to forgive from the movie and the Holy Scriptures.
3. Participants will forgive one person who hurt them.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick.
2. Timer.
3. The Movie: "Amish Grace".
4. The questions and Holy Scriptures.
5. Computer, projector, speakers and screen.

A. Prayer.

B. Opening Circle - what were some of your realizations from last meeting? Did you send your letter to the friend or call him? What was the other person's reaction? Each person that shares a story that he approached a friend, receives a heart that symbolizes a loving heart. (Throughout the workshop, whenever the teacher feels a participant went through a change toward a forgiving heart, he or she can give the participant a "loving heart")

1. Reading from Holy Scriptures: God told us to forgive

Islam

“It may be that God will ordain love between you and those whom you hold as enemies. For God has power over all things; and God is often forgiving Most Merciful.” Qur’an 60.7

Christianity

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6.14-15

Judaism

Praising to the man that will confess in public and announce his sin and tell them: Indeed I harmed so and so, and today I return and repent. And the one that covers his sins his repents in not completed as it says in probes 28:13: “ He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.” Mishna Torah, The book of Science, Tshuva, chapter b.

2. Exercise - Memories (not to share now)

A. A memory of something you could forgive.

- a. What was the anger about?
- b. What helped you to forgive?

B. A memory of something that you cannot forgive.

- a. What is your memory of feeling hurt?

- b. Who is the person that hurt you? What was the relationship between both of you?
- c. What did he or she do? Why it was so painful?
- d. Did you want to forgive him or her in the past?
- e. Did you try to forgive him or her?
- f. Why it is difficult to forgive?
- g. What can help you forgive?

C. The Grace of Forgiveness: Watching the movie “Amish Grace”, 2010 (1:29 min.)

This movie is based on a true story that was described in the book: “Amish Grace - How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy”, by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher, 2007. It was filmed in Los Angeles by the Larry A. Thompson Organization. It can be viewed online at: <http://www.mylifetime.com/watch-full-movies-online/amish-grace>.

Narrative

On October 2, 2006, Charles Carl Roberts, a married man with 3 children, was the milkman that everyone knew; he went into a School of the Amish in Pennsylvania and shot ten girls; five died, and five were seriously wounded. And then he committed suicide. The Amish leaders went to Amy, his wife, and told her that they had forgiven her husband and they offered support and help for her and her children. They quoted Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Charlie was full of resentment against God because his baby daughter had died.

Ida, the mother of Marry-Beth who was killed, is tormented by the standard of her faith that sees forgiving as a high value, and her husband that struggles with his own grief. Amy deals with guilt and anger toward her husband that chose “to be in hell” rather than with her and their children.¹⁵

Information about the movie

The Fetzer Institute provided research funds for “Amish Grace” as part of The Campaign for Love and Forgiveness.¹⁶ Tammy Blanchard in the role of Amy Roberts won the Emmy prize.

Most of the reviews of the book and movie emphasize how astonished were the news media at the immediate response of the Amish community. Some doubted that it was genuine; some writers challenged their readers - why not more Christians see forgiveness as a major practice in their lives; and others thought that this act of “hatred of evil” required a more “stern and judgmental reaction.”¹⁷

The rational of watching this movie

The Movie “Amish Grace” shows the process of forgiveness in its many levels. The initial shock, the anger, the struggle of dealing with strong emotions of grief, anger, resentment, love, and pain, and the process that different people are going through in order to forgive. The movie questions the religion that asks its followers to forgive; likewise, the relationship with God and his will. This movie puts the audience in a place of questioning its own anger, grief and

¹⁵ Brian Lowry <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117942472.html?categoryid=32&cs=1>, 4/10/2010

¹⁶ <http://www.fetzer.org/4/10/2010>

¹⁷ BRIAN LOWRY <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117942472.html?categoryid=32&cs=1>, 4/10/2010

forgiveness. These elements can contribute to the workshop of understanding the dynamics of forgiveness.

3. **Questions will be in small groups.**

4. **The Characters:**

A. The Murderer - Charles Carl Roberts

- a. What information do we know about him and his family? Does he seem normal?
- b. What was his motivation to kill? (Anger at God that took his baby daughter)
- c. Did he think about his own family when he planned the killing?
- d. Can we predict who is more likely to kill?

B. The Murderer's wife - Amy Roberts

- a. Who is she? How many children does she have?
- b. Describe the emotions she is going through?
- c. What is her attitude toward the Amish that came to speak with her?
- d. Can she forgive her husband?
- e. What are the questions she is dealing with in her faith?
- f. What is her relationship with the Amish through the film?

C. Ida Graber - the mother of Marry-Beth that was killed

- a. Before the event - what is her relationship with her husband and daughters?

- b. Is she happy?
- c. What is her daily life like?
- d. Who is her sister? Why did she leave the community? What is the community's attitude toward her sister?

D. Gideon Graber - the father of Marry-Beth.

- a. What is his work?
- b. What is his relationship with his daughters? And with his wife?
- c. What is his relationship with the leadership of the Amish?

5. The attitude toward forgiveness:

I. The Reporters:

- a. Why are they skeptical that the Amish really forgave?
- b. What kind of personal questions they start asking themselves?
- c. Did their attitude change through the movie?

II. The Leadership of the Amish:

- a. What do they tell Amy when they meet her?
- b. What do they tell the media?
- c. How does the leader express his faith with the reporter?

III. The Other Mothers in the Community:

- a. How do they try to forgive?
- b. What are they telling Ida?
- c. Are they supportive of Ida even though she is struggling?
- d. Do they judge Ida?

IV. Ida, the Mother of Marry-Beth

A. She is going through stages, what are the stages?

B. The process that Ida is going through:

- i. Shock.
- ii. Anger at her husband and her community.
- iii. She feels they do not understand her.
- iv. She hates the murderer and feels her husband is disappointed with her.
- v. She wants to leave because she cannot bear to be there.
- vi. She doesn't feel she belongs there.
- vii. She thinks her husband is more faithful to the faith than to her.
- viii. She feels they sacrificed her daughter for the faith by having an easy forgiveness.
- ix. She finally forgives:

- a. What events change the stages of her forgiveness process?
- b. What makes her change her mind and try to forgive?

V. The Father's Process of Forgiveness

- a. What is his first reaction?
- b. Why did he forgive? Do you think it is genuine?
- c. Does he think it is easy to forgive?

VI. Marry-Beth's Younger Sister

- a. How did she feel after running away from the school?
- b. What feelings did she express?
- c. What did her father tell her about how to deal with her anger?

6. The Meetings of the Women - Ida Graber and Amy Roberts - what are their reactions:

- a. In the memorial home.
- b. Offering a ride - Amy wants to help.
- c. Meeting in the Fire House, when Amy says she is sorry she cannot understand him. She cannot forgive him. She does not think God can forgive Charlie.
- d. In the funeral of Charlie.
- e. Amy comes to the opening of the school.

7. **Ida Doubts her Faith** - she has doubts about her faith and has a conflict with her husband.

- a. What do we know from the movie about the Christian Amish?
- b. What are her doubts and how does her husband deal with her questions?
- c. What is their concept about God and his will?
- d. What is their relationship? Do they have a strong foundation to have such a discussion?
- e. Do they respect each other? Do they love each other? How do you see it from their behavior?
- f. Do you think it is good that they challenge each other?

8. **Statements about Forgiveness from the Movie** (in the group)

- a. *“Forgiven is not forgotten, and Charley will stand in judgment but we do not want to have anger in us.”* When the Amish say that God will judge Charlie, are they happy or concerned?
- b. *The woman share how she deals with her anger: every hour she has to turn her anger to God. It sounds like this keeps her sanity.*
- c. How do you turn thing over to God? What actions do you need to take?
- d. *The Father is not letting hatred into his heart because this is what God asks of him.*
- e. *Her friend says: “To forgive them makes it easier.”* Did you ever have the experience of forgiving making life easier? Is that the purpose of forgiveness?

- f. *“If we forgive, God promises that peace will follow”*. If we look at the situation of our world, we find there are many places that have been in a state of war for many years, do you think it is a result of not forgiving?
- g. *The turnings point in the movie “Charlie said: you should pray for me” Marry-Beth told Charlie: “ I will pray for you”, even though she knows he will shoot her with the gun.* What do you think about Marry-Beth that when facing her death had said that? Do you think she really forgave or was she merely reciting what she had learned at home.
- h. *Ida tells Amy at her husband’s funeral: “My daughter had forgiveness in her heart, so I could not do less”*. Does it help you forgive if you hear that another could forgive?
- i. *In the meeting in the Fire House, Amy says she is sorry she cannot understand him. She cannot forgive him. She does not think God can forgive Charley.* Do you think God can forgive such a crime? In your own faith, if we make a mistake, what do we need to do to redeem our mistake? Give examples.
- j. *Ida’s friend, who also lost her daughter, does not want to have an inner battle between hate and love.* Can you describe in your own words the experience of having this internal battle of love and hate? What can help to resolve such battle?
- k. *We do not seek to avenge the pain and we open our hearts for forgiveness, the darkness is vanished and evil is no more.* According to your faith, is it difficult to achieve?
- l. *The reporter asked: “How can you forgive someone who cannot repent?” He answered that forgiveness comes from an open heart or it does not come at all.* Should we forgive someone who did not repent? Why?

m. *Before Charlie killed the girls he had asked them to pray for him. Was his conscience working at that moment? Do murderers have any conscience that can bring them back to God? Before we commit any kind of mistake, what can help us stop before actually committing it, and know God's will for us?*

9. **Self Reflection** - each of the participants answers in his notebook. (If one of the young adult cannot write by himself, let one of the facilitators sit with him and listen to his pain.)

Let us look at the way scriptures and religious leaders try to show us how to forgive, and revisit a few scenes from the movie that deal with forgiveness as we read from different scriptures and teachings of religious leaders.

Think of the person that you had difficulty to forgive (the one you wrote about in the beginning of the day):

a. Ida expresses her anger about Charlie and even God. Write why you are angry, and why it was so difficult to forgive until now.

b. **From Judaism:** *“Who takes vengeance or bears a grudge acts like one who, having cut one hand while handling a knife, avenges himself by stabbing the other hand.”*

Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9.4 (Judaism)

How does it feel to revenge? What does it do to yourself?

c. *The father deals with his daughter's pain. He told her that he did not blame her for hating; he admitted it was an evil thing. He asks his daughter: how does it feel to hate? “Not so good”. Hate has sharp teeth that eat all your heart and do not leave room for love. We do not need to worry about the punishment of the killer, God will*

take care of that, we do not have to carry the hate. The daughter asks to hate just a little bit before she can forgive.

We do not blame you for hating, please write about your own experience:

How does it feel to hate? Does it feel good? Does it eat all your heart?

Do you have room for love?

Do you need to hate for a little longer?

- d.** *“ Charlie said: you should pray for me” Marry-Beth said to Charlie: “I will pray for you”, even though she knew he was going to shoot her with the gun*

Can you pray for someone that you hate? Write your prayer for him.

- e.** *Forgiveness comes from an open heart or it does not come at all.*

What actions can we take to open our hearts?

- f. **Martin Luther King, a Christian minister:** *“When we look beneath the surface, beneath the impulsive evil deed, we see within our enemy neighbor a measure of goodness and know that the viciousness and evilness of his acts are not quite representative of all that he is. We see him in a new light. We recognize that his hate grows out of fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, but in spite of this, we know God’s image is ineffably etched in his being. Then we love our enemies by realizing that they are not totally bad and that they are not beyond the reach of God’s redemptive love.” Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love (Christianity)***

Can you think of the person toward whom you have resentment, and see his fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding? Write it. Look at your friend, can you see something good about him?

g. Teachings of Sun Myung Moon

“Great forgiveness is possible when you have understood the other person’s situation one hundred percent. Because God knows our situations, He forgives us.” (May 26, 1957)

What is your friend’s situation? Do you feel God understands you? Can you offer the same understanding to your friend?

“Joseph forgave his brothers, though they were his enemies who had sold him into slavery. Yet Joseph forgave them for his father’s sake, because they were all his father’s sons. Put yourself in Joseph’s position. Like Joseph, we have many enemies, yet we have no choice but to forgive them because they are all the children of our Father, God. We forgive them for God’s sake, because we believe in God.” (June 8, 1986)¹⁸

What does it mean to forgive for God’s sake? Write a prayer or a conversation with God, in which you try to forgive someone that hurt you a lot; imagine what would God answer you.

10. In pairs - participants share their realizations.

11. In circle participants share what is their realizations about forgiveness.

12. Writing reflection of the day

¹⁸ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007. P.683- 684

Joint Meetings of both Groups

IV. Listen to the Pain and Restorative Justice.

Objectives:

1. Participants will have new friends.
2. Participants will learn that all faiths see forgiveness as a high value.
3. Participants will learn the concept of Restorative Justice.
4. Participants will consider the possibility of collective responsibility.
5. Participants will believe forgiveness is possible on a national level.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick.
 2. Timer.
 3. The Movie: "In my country"
 4. The printed questions.
 5. Papers and pens.
 6. Computer, projector, speakers and screen.
- a. Prayer.**
- b. Participants wear the shirt they had painted at the first meeting - who am I.

- c. **Ice-breaking game:** people walking around and introducing themselves to each other. Then everyone is writing what they remember about the other people. Then they check if they were right and what details they were likely to notice. This is done in group sharing about first impressions.
- d. **First Opening Circle:** using the talking stick, each participant tells the group something internal about himself that he wants them to know.
- e. Reminder of the **contract** and the importance of respecting each other's different points of view.
- f. **In pairs:** sitting the people near the person they have been praying for during the recent 3 weeks. They tell each other what they thought about the person they were praying for, and start to get to know that person in reality.
- g. **Dealing with faith, forgiveness, the relationship with God, and their understanding of his will.** This activity can help young adults to challenge their own faith and to have an opportunity to learn about other faiths.

The activity will start with sharing in pairs, listening to each other, and then they will share about their faith with the entire group.

Based on the movie "Amish Grace" that both groups watched at the last meeting:

Let us examine the statements along the movie in pairs:

- a. *The Father says: "in this difficult moment, faith is the only value we have."*

What is that value? And how does it strengthen his faith?

- b. *Ida says to him that he thinks her daughter is more important than faith. Is it true? Are there priorities in your faith?*
- c. *The father says that it is a false faith when you have what you want. Only when life is falling apart, you make your faith real. He says that God is testing us. According to your faith, is God testing us? Why does he test us? Have you ever felt that God was testing you? Is it necessary to have “bad” moments to test our faith?*
- d. *The father says he is not letting hatred into his heart because God asked for it. Do you sometimes do things just because God asked you to do them? Do you need to understand the reason or the source of his law? Do you find yourself doing things that you know God is not approving but you do it anyway? Do you have tolerance toward people, who do not do things according to God’s will?*
- e. *He felt he was doing his duty since “God sent her to us and He has the right to call her home.” Do they believe that this is God’s will when they die? In your faith, why does God decide to take one and not the other? Do you have the term “God is calling us” in your faith? If so, where does he call us and for what reason?*
- f. *Ida is asking: “Why does God want a beautiful girl to die?” The father does not know; all he knows is that when we forgive, God promises that peace will follow. Is it a blind faith following God without understanding or is it pure belief? What is your belief regarding what God asks us to do?*

g. *The reporter challenges the head of the community, whether it is God's work that a catastrophe like that can happen and little girls die in school. It is not our place to decide who will die. The leader answers: we should forgive Charlie more because he is angry at God. She asks him: "are you saying words of forgiveness because you are supposed to say so?" And he feels insulted when she tells him that he is a puppet of his faith.*

She asks: "How can you forgive someone who cannot repent?" He answers that forgiveness come from an open heart or it does not come at all.

What do you think about God's will? Is it his will that little girls should die at school? Charlie was angry at God, so he went and destroyed families, including his own. Ida was angry at God, but she kept expressing it aloud, and finally she could change. Psychologists often encourage people, who went through trauma, to express their anger and frustration. According to your faith, is it OK to express your anger toward God? Is it OK to be angry at God? What do you do if you feel angry at God? If God is forgiving, can he forgive your anger toward him?

h. *The pastor in Charlie's funeral says: "We cannot ignore that evil exists. The Amish showed us that we should not seek to avenge the pain and that we should open our hearts for forgiveness, so the darkness is vanished and evil is no more." Do you think forgiveness can cause evil and darkness to vanish from this world?*

h. Lecture about Restorative Justice:

The idea of **Restorative Justice** grew as a response to how society handled wrong doings of its members, as well as to the needs of the victims of crimes and the necessity of dealing with the offenders as well. The point of view of criminal justice is different than that of restorative justice. Criminal justice sees crime as a violation of law that creates guilt and merits punishment of the offender by the state. Thus, the main focus is that criminal offenders receive what they deserve. Restorative justice, however, regards the crime as a violation of human relations that creates an obligation between the victims, the offenders, and the members of that community, to make an effort to restore the situation, and the focus is the victims' needs and the offenders' responsibility for repairing the harm caused.¹⁹

The Pillars of Restorative Justice:

- i. Restorative justice focuses on the harm caused to people and communities. Focusing on the victim's needs, it plays a different role from the legal system that focuses on punishing the offender. The goal of restorative justice is for the victim and the offender to go through a healing process together.
- ii. Emphasis on the responsibility and accountability of the offender who realizes the consequences of his actions. The responsibility does not lie upon the offender alone, but is also borne by the community and the society.

¹⁹ Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books, Intercourse, PA, 2002, p. 21.

- iii. Engagement and participating – both sides need to listen to each other, either directly or indirectly.²⁰

The Principles of Restorative Justice:

- i. Focus on the harm caused by the crime rather than the crime itself.
- ii. Show equal concern and commitment to both sides.
- iii. Work toward the restoration of victims, empowering them and responding to their needs as they see it.
- iv. Support the offenders, while encouraging them to understand, accept and carry out their obligations.
- v. Recognize that while the obligations might be complicated for the offender, they are not intended to inflict any harm, they must be achieved.
- vi. Provide opportunities for dialogue, direct or indirect, between victim and offender.
- vii. Find meaningful ways to involve the community and respond to the community's bases of crime.
- viii. Encourage collaboration and reintegration of both rather than correction and isolation.
- ix. Think of the consequences of actions before committing them.
- x. Show respect to all parties - victims, offenders, justice colleagues.

²⁰ Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books, Intercourse, PA, 2002, p. 22-24.

The questions that criminal justice asks:

1. What laws have been broken?
2. Who did it?
3. What do they deserve?

The questions that restorative justice asks:²¹

4. Who has hurt and how?
5. What are their needs?
6. Whose obligation is this?
7. Who has a stake (risk) in this situation?
8. What is the appropriate process to involve the various stakeholders in the effort to put things right?

i. Role Play of Restorative Justice with the Story of Joseph:

- i. Read Genesis 37- the story of Joseph. His brothers are envious and angry at him, so they put him in a hole in the ground, and eventually he becomes a slave.
 1. Make a restorative justice process (answer the questions above for both sides)
 2. The meeting between Joseph, his brothers, their father and mother - each shares his or her pain without accusation and takes responsibility for his or her mistakes.
 3. Read Genesis 42 - how did they actually reconcile?

²¹ Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books, Intercourse, PA, 2002. p. 38.

“In My Country”

Historical background: (from Wikipedia)

“The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** (TRC) was a court-like body assembled in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid. Witnesses who were identified as victims of gross human rights violations were invited to give statements about their experiences, and some were selected for public hearings. Perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from both civil and criminal prosecution.

The TRC, the first of the nineteen held internationally to stage public hearings, was seen by many as a crucial component of the transition to full and free democracy in South Africa. Despite some flaws, it is generally (although not universally) thought to have been successful.

The work of the TRC was accomplished through three committees:

- The Human Rights Violations Committee investigated human rights abuses that occurred between 1960 and 1994.
- The Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee was charged with restoring victims' dignity and formulating proposals to assist with rehabilitation.
- The Amnesty Committee considered applications from individuals who applied for amnesty in accordance with the provisions of the Act [establishing the TRC].

The commission was empowered to grant amnesty to those who committed abuses during the apartheid era, as long as the crimes were politically motivated, proportionate, and there was full disclosure by the person seeking amnesty.

To avoid victors' justice, no side was exempt from appearing before the commission. The commission heard reports of human rights violations and considered amnesty applications from all sides, from the apartheid state to the liberation forces, including the African National Congress. A total of 5,392 people were refused amnesty and 849 were granted amnesty, out of 7,112 petitioners (there were a number of additional categories, such as withdrawn)."²²

Watching the film: "In My Country" (103 min.)

"In My Country" was directed by John Boorman in 2004, starring Samuel L. Jackson and Juliette Binoche. The screenplay, written by Ann Peacock, was based on Antjie Krog's memoir "Country of My Skull". The filming took place in and around Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula. The film was released on March 11, 2005, for 15 weeks, in the Drama genre. Its worldwide profit was \$1,491,434; 89% of the profit was from out of the US, while the US screenings only brought in \$163,893. The movie received the winner of Diamond Cinema for Peace award at the Berlin Festival, 2004.²³

Narrative

Anna is an Afrikaans poet and a journalist from a wealthy white family that covers the testimonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; she is convinced that it is important, while her family members feel very much judged by her actions, especially her father. She is a mother of 3 children, and it seems that she has a happy family life. When she covers the commission she is working with Dumi, a **young black man**, and with Langston, an African American reporter, sent from the US to cover the hearings. She has a very strong emotional

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_reconciliation 3/3/2010

²³ <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=inmycountry.htm> 5/5/2010

reaction to the testimonies she is hearing, and she is being challenged by Langston who is skeptical. She is confronted with the question, to what extent the people, who were not directly involved with the killings and tortures, are responsible for the injustice that had taken place. Finally, at a turning point, she is willing to accept responsibility for it. The strong experience they were going through, faced with the strong emotions that came up, and their attempt to deal with it by drinking, smoking and laughing a lot, lead to the creation of intimacy between Anna and Langston, and even though they were both married, they eventually fell in love with each other.

Langston interviewed Col. De Jager, the most vicious torturer in the South African Police, and tried to penetrate this mind of a human monster. When he shared how much he enjoyed raping the black women, Langston wanted to kill him and he told him that what had stopped him from doing it, was a white woman who took responsibility on herself.

When Anna ran after Col. De Jager asking him how he could have done such things, he told her to ask her brother Boetie who was also torturing people. Anna then asked her brother: “why Boetie? Why?” He just tried to justify himself that it was to protect their family, and then committed suicide.

Anna is also confronted by her mother, who had betrayed her husband in the past and never shared it with him, pushing Anna not to hide this love affair from her husband because truth is more important. Anna finally decided to ask for “amnesty” from her husband and to end her relationship with Langston.

In the end of the movie, Dumi, the young black man, who was also working with Anna, was shot by other black men that accused him of being an informer that betrayed his black brothers who were then executed. In his last moments he asked Langston to forgive him.

I. Study the personalities of the characters in the movie

Anna, the Afrikaans Poet -

- a. What is her background?
- b. What does she represent in the movie?
- c. What is her character?
- d. How does she see her mission?
- e. How do her other family members view her?
- f. What is her reaction to the testimonies?
- g. How does her character develop through the movie? She is being challenged several times by Langston, the testimonies, her mother, her brother, her husband, and mainly by her conscience, what is her reaction to it?
- h. What do you think about her love affair? Was it necessary for the story?

Langston, the American Reporter -

1. What does he represent?
2. What is his character?

3. What is his reaction to the testimonies?
4. Which point of view is he bringing to the movie?
5. Why is he so skeptical?
6. How is he challenged by Anna?
7. How is he challenged by Col. De Jager?

Dumi, the Young Black Man that Works with Anna –

Though he is black, he creates a working relationship with Anna.

- a. What kind of a relationship do they have? Is it a unique situation in the South Africa of those days?
- b. What is his character?
- c. How does he relate with the relationship of Anna and Langston?
- d. Why do you think he did not attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission when other black people accused him of informing the whites about his black brothers?

II. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

1. Describe the testimonies of both the blacks and the whites?
2. Which scene touched you the most? Why?
3. Describe your feelings when you were listening to the stories?

4. How did the whites react to the stories of the black people, what were their emotions?
What was their body language and tone when they spoke about their own mistakes?
5. Did you feel the white people were truly sorry for their sins?
6. Is there a way to measure the level of depth and truthfulness of repentance?
7. Langston was critical. He said the whites were like the Nazis after the World War II saying they were just following orders, but really, they weren't sorry for anything.
What do you think?
8. Did you feel the black people truly forgave the whites? Did the little boy who gave his testimony really forgive the killing of his parents his front of his eyes?
9. Which of the testimonies touched your heart the most?
10. Which of the confessions by the white offenders touched your heart the most?

III. Taking Collective Responsibility

1. Langston said "As the Nazis claimed that they were just following orders, so did the Afrikaans." Is this characteristic of human nature?
2. Anna's reaction was anger: "how is it possible that everyone is as responsible as the perpetrators themselves?" She says: "I did not know." But later she admitted herself and others did know some things, though not in details. Langston was angry at her for telling him that the fact that she came from that oppressive society didn't make her responsible. Is she responsible? How? If she isn't responsible, who is? If she is

- responsible, what is the way for her to take responsibility so she can restore the injustice?
3. Anna is looking for justice, while she also feels loyalty toward her family and blood lineage: “the language of my heart, Afrikaans, speaks of love and tenderness, what does it makes me?” Does she need to deny her family because they are supporting the oppressors? Is there a way for her to harmonize the two worlds?
 4. Choosing one side over the other can obstruct your judgment. After Anna took responsibility, she could not listen to the testimony of a white person whose wife was murdered by blacks. Anna joked about him. Is there a way to remain objective?
 5. Do you think there is such a thing as a collective sin, for which everyone needs to take responsibility, even if they did not commit the sin themselves?

IV. The Forgiveness Process:

1. Anna give a report on the radio: “in telling the story, the victims find some measure of relief.” Is that enough? Have you ever had the experience where you could express your anger and frustration to the person who hurt you? Did you feel liberated?
2. The victims can ask questions. For example, one person asked his offender: “why did you break my trees? Tell me and maybe I can forgive you.” He shows that the understanding of the motivations of the perpetrators may influence the ability to forgive them. What do you think?
3. In total, only 7,112 people sought relief through the commission. Is this enough to create a change in society? On the other hand, Langston, the most skeptic person,

seems to have changed his mind. He asked Col. De Jager: “don’t you have any shame?” in response to De Jager’s telling him that he felt he was protecting his country and how he enjoyed the rapes. Langston felt he wanted to kill him, and yet he didn’t do it, and explained why: “I will not kill you thanks to a white woman who took the shame on herself.” Do you think one person can make a difference and create a change?

4. Would you like to be that person who can make a difference? What is the change you would like to create in your neighborhood and in your country?
5. When do you think will be the right time to have a similar commission in the Middle East? What do we need to prepare to make it happen?

V. Simulation: Divide into small groups and create dialogues between the characters of the movie. Think of some questions you would like to ask the character in front of you. The other group, that represents that character, will give the answer they think that character would have answered.

1. Dialogue between you and Anna.
2. Dialogue between a victim and Con. De Jager. Use the restorative justice process.
3. Dialogue between a victim that testified in front of the commission and one that refused to do it.

Closing circle - what are your realizations from today’s meeting?

Writing reflection.

Prayer.

V. Dealing with the Anger and compassion.

Objectives:

1. The participants will deal with anger through few tools:
 - Listening.
 - Meditation and compassion.
 - Restorative Justice.
2. The participants will listen emphatic to each other reality.
3. The participants will not judge the other feelings.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick.
2. Timer.
3. The Movies: “The power of forgiveness”, “Journey Toward Forgiveness”, “A bigger victim than myself”, and “To die in Jerusalem”.
4. The printed questions.
5. Computer, projector, speakers and screen.
6. CD player and soft music.
7. Papers for reflection.
8. For drawing: papers, colors, brushes, glasses for water.

A. Joint Activity – Israelis and Palestinians together

Prayer

- a. **Opening circle** - something I would like to share with the group.

- b. **Lecture:** In the book “Cultivating Heart and Character” the qualities of true love are defined as: ethical, constant, serving and sacrificial, unconditional, living for others, and forgiving. People forgive because of true love. In the family, for example, after a siblings’ fight, they reconcile and grudges are usually forgotten. Friends often tolerate each other’s mistakes and shortcomings.²⁴ Very often people express their anger within the family circle, because they feel safe. Even in problematic families, most parents do not abandon their children just because the child was angry at them. In many families, when one of the members is angry, the others tolerate it, but don’t really listen to him or understand his heart. God created us in his image; therefore, we have the same emotions that he has. In the bible, God expressed his anger many times when we betrayed him. Even though he was angry, he never neglected us.

You are invited to listen to each other’s anger. Look beyond the loud voice and see the pain in the other’s heart. See his frustration and embrace him with your heart, giving him the grace of telling him with your eyes: “I love you and accept you as you are”. At the same time, we should be aware that when we are angry and just accuse the other side, the person being accused finds it difficult to listen. Therefore, it is recommended to reflect back to each other to show them that you understand what they are saying.

²⁴ Devine, Tony, Seul, Joon Ho, Wilson, Andrew. *Cultivating heart and Character*, International Education Foundation, 2001, p. 49

c. **In pairs** – share a memory of something that made you angry.

d. Reflection

i. How does it feel to listen to anger?

ii. Do you feel that you are being heard?

e. How do people express their anger and frustration in your culture? Is there a difference between men and women, and between adults and children?

f. How do people deal with their own anger and other people's anger? Can they contain it?

g. **Showing the film: “The Power of Forgiveness”** (59:16-1:05), focusing on the interview with Nhat Hanh, who won the Nobel Peace Prize. During the interview, he says that one can be tolerant for a while, but in order to forgive one needs to cultivate compassion in their heart. When you forgive, the memory does not disappear, it just does not control you anymore. Nhat Hanh says: “the enemy is not other men; it is our misunderstanding, discrimination, violence, hate and anger.” He recommends seeing the other as a victim of hate and violence, transmitted by society and environment. The way he cultivated and achieved compassion was by way of meditation.²⁵ The dictionary defines compassion as “a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.”²⁶

h. **Mediation on compassion**, based on meditations taught by Nhat Hanh and Hyung Jin Moon. Put on soft music: breathe in and breathe out; listen to your breathing; try to let your thoughts flow away and concentrate on your breathing. Breathe in and say “I am

²⁵ The movie: “The Power of Forgiveness”(59:16-1:05)

²⁶ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/compassion> 5/9/2010

alive”; breathe out and say “thank you”; repeat it 3 times. See yourself in a nice forest with green trees, green grass, and a water fall. Take a deep breath of the fresh air. Breathe in and see yourself as a 5 year old child; breathe out and embrace this little child.

Breathe in and see a person at whom you are angry as a child of 5 years. See his pain and fear, see that he is a victim, that he suffers. Breathe out and embrace that child and tell him that God loves him and that he does not need to fear any more. Continue to breathe. Breathe like that for few more minutes.

- i. **Written reflection** – How do you feel? Is your “enemy” pain and fear?

B. Group Activity - Israelis and Palestinians Separately

Terror touches the terrorist, the victim, their families, and the nations.

When we touch upon the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we cannot ignore the pain, hatred, revenge and fear that people are feeling toward each other. I thoroughly searched for a movie featuring an Israeli-Palestinian aspect that deals with forgiveness, but as of yet, March, 2010, I could not find even one such movie. One Israeli script writer, who was helping this search, was amazed to discover that no one had thought about this idea for a film. We found a documentary film about an Israeli mother of a victim of a terror attack trying to contact the Palestinian mother of the terrorist girl that had killed her daughter. They tried to reconcile while expressing their strong grief, hatred and mistrust, but couldn't. I decided to show this movie in order to allow room for the difficult feelings. Before we show this film, we will show a short film about two fathers, of a terrorist and his victim, that could forgive and reconcile with each other. Other people in

this world could reach the stage of forgiveness; therefore, we can learn from their course how to forgive ourselves.

I would like to draw a comparison between these two documentaries to show the difference when forgiveness is actually achieved. We can expect that both the Israeli and Palestinian audiences will find it very difficult to watch the conflict of their own land. The pictures and scenes from this small place, called by many religions the “Holy Land”, are the participants’ daily sights; the conflict is close to their hearts and part of their lives; therefore, it brings a strong vivid pain to them. I predict that very intense feelings will arise from the film about the Israeli and Palestinian mothers. Therefore, this activity will be in separate groups of Israelis and Palestinians. They will meet again only after the process ends.

I. Watch the film: “A Bigger Victim than Myself” (a short movie), (47:44-56:57)

Narrative

One story from “A Journey toward Forgiveness” was produced as a documentary for ABC-TV, by Mennonite Media for the National Council of Churches, and released to ABC stations through the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission’s “Vision and Values” series.²⁷

Bud Welch lost his daughter Julie in the Oklahoma City bombing. The building was destroyed and she died. He is sharing about his relationships with her. After the loss he became a heavy smoker and a heavy drinker. He was in a living hell, he defined it as a physical and spiritual illness, like being temporary insane. He used to go to the bombing site where she died every day.

²⁷ Hartzler, Sheri. Study Guide for the Video: *Journey Toward Forgiveness, From rage to reconciliation* the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission’s “Vision and Values” series

He felt he needed to stop this insanity and asked himself what should he do to stop it; was it a trial, or a conviction? He was full of anger and revenge, but thought that if he could reconcile he could heal himself back to good health and even stop smoking after 40 years.

Bill McVeigh, the father of the bomber, was interviewed on TV. When Bud looked at the screen, he saw a man in grief and saw the deep pain in his eyes that most people couldn't recognize. He felt a need to forgive for the sake of his own sanity. He visited to the terrorist's home, and told his father that he had no resentment for what his son did to his daughter. When they first met, Bud asked Bill about his garden and thus they created a common base with each other. He could even acknowledge that the son was a handsome man in the picture of his graduation. Bud shook the hands of the terrorist's father and hugged his sister Jennifer, and they all cried. He said that they are together for the rest of their lives, and that he would work for their son so he would not be executed. He kept in touch with them and tried to prevent the execution of the terrorist, but did not succeed. After the meeting and the process of forgiveness, he felt a huge relief.

Questions about the movie from the curriculum of “A Journey toward Forgiveness”:

1. What do you think triggers the initial steps of a journey toward forgiveness? (In Bud's case, realizing that rage and revenge were the reason for Timothy McVeigh and Nichol's actions helped him decide to move beyond his own rage and revenge.)
2. Bud talks about being stuck on the day of the tragedy when his daughter was killed. What are some ways that can help us move forward toward a resolution, rather than remaining “stuck”?
3. Why did Bud feel it was necessary to talk with Timothy McVeigh's father?

4. Why does Bud say that Bill McVeigh is a bigger victim of the Oklahoma City Bombing than he is?
5. How can people be supportive when someone is going through the rage stage? How can you know when to intervene and when to let it run its course?
6. Is it right to forgive someone who had killed large numbers of people? At what point are there too many victims for the perpetrator to be forgiven? Is it ever right not to forgive?²⁸

Watching the movie: “To Die in Jerusalem” (2007) (76 min.)

1. A documentary film about the families of 17 year-old Palestinian female suicide bomber, Ayat al-Akhras and of the victim, 17 year-old Israeli Rachel Levy. They both died in the bombing that took place in Jerusalem on March 29th, 2002. Both were the only victims in the same age, and shared similarities in hair, height, body structure, skin color, excellence in school, and the same end - death. The mothers tell their stories, their pain and their grief. Avigail Levi, the Israeli, want to understand the motives of the suicide bomber and her mother. She meets a Palestinian girl who was caught before she could succeed in her mission to explode. Avigail also wishes to meet Um Samir, the mother of the female suicide bomber. Her motivation is to know why Um Samir’s daughter had so much hatred in her that she killed Avigail’s daughter. She tells her friends that she wants to tell Um Samir that she does not love her. After many attempts the mothers finally meet through the internet. Avigail keeps asking why Ayat committed this crime, and Um Samir accuses the Israeli occupation. Unfortunately, they could not listen to each other

²⁸ *Journey Toward Forgiveness*, the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission’s “Vision and Values” series

and Avigail pushed away Um Samir's attempt to call for peace. During their conversation there were moments that could lead to reconciliation, such as when the Palestinian tells the Israeli they are both victims, or when she tells her that she invites her to create peace. Yet the emotions were so strong that they could not use these openings toward the direction of reconciliation. The movie ends with the Palestinian not having hope that they can influence the politicians and the Israeli not able to accept the accusation against the Israelis for the occupation. Even though they did not succeed, it can help this project's participants to listen to each other's pain and try to find ways toward reconciliation and forgiveness. This film was nominated for 3 Emmy awards, for best documentary, music and research. The movie won the Peabody Prize in Paris for documentaries dealing with human rights. It was shown in many places around the world.

Before watching the movie, I ask the participants to think and notice what is each person's pain and difficult in life.

After watching the film in the separate groups of Jews and Arabs, as it is too emotional to watch it together, each group should listen to both mothers and reflect upon it before continuing.

2. **Drawing up the emotions:** the emotions while watching this film and afterwards can be intense. The participants need to release a lot of tension in their own groups, before meeting the other group.
 - a. Before any talking begins, the participants will draw what they feel after watching the movie.
 - b. In pairs they will share what they drew.

- c. In the groups the teacher will ask them to share their feelings.

Think about the mothers of the Israeli and Palestinian girls: (the answers in brackets are for the teacher, the participants will explore their answers through their understanding and point of view)

1. What motivates a young girl to become a suicide bomber and kill other people?

A. The meeting with Thawra Hamur the 27th female suicide bomber in Jail.

- a. What is her motivation? (the Israelis will feel the Palestinians' pain and suffering under the occupation).
- b. Listen carefully, what is her pain? (Why she is living in a refugee camp and cannot pray in El-Aqsa Mosque.)
- c. What is her accusation? (Israel committed many crimes against Palestinians and oppressed them)
- d. She says: "when you lose a child you will understand our pain of losing a child." Do you think this act can create understanding?
- e. Does she regret her action? (no, she did it for Palestine)
- f. Do you think she is happy?
- g. Do you think she has strong faith?
- h. Does she have any hope in life?
- i. Do you think she is stuck like Bud was when he had strong resentment?

- j. Was Avigail, the Israeli mother, empathetic to the Palestinian girl? Did she understand her pain of living under occupation? (unfortunately, no)
- k. What is Avigail's pain?
- l. Avigail wanted to know why Palestinians hated the Israelis so much that they wanted to kill them even losing their own lives. What was the girl's answer to that? Did Avigail understand the reason she was given? Did she show any empathy to the Palestinian pain?
- m. What was Hamur's reaction to the picture of Rachel? ("She is pretty"). Did it soften her heart? (no)
- n. What do you feel about this meeting? What would you like to say to the girl and the mother?
- o. Is there anything to be said that might soften their hearts?

B. The motivation of Ayat al-Akhras, the 17 year old suicide bomber who died:

- a. What did her sister think? (she loses control and yells that her sister did what other people didn't have the guts to do)
- b. How can we ease the pain of her sister? Is there a way to do it?
- c. What does her mother think about her daughter's motivation?
 - i. In the beginning of the film.

- ii. At the meeting with Avigail. (she did it to be honored, and she could not bear the suffering she saw when her cousin died)

2. The motivation of both mothers to meet with each other:

- a. Why is Avigail so eager to meet the mother of the terrorist? What is her motivation?
She expresses it in different ways in the beginning of the movie with her friends, and in front of Um Samir.
- b. What happens when Avigail shares her wish to meet Um Samir with her friends?
(They have a strong reaction and they express common hate and mistrust)
- c. What is Um Samir's reaction to the invitation to meet?
- d. Remember, what was Bud's motivation to meet with Timothy McVeigh's father?
- e. Do you think Avigail and Um Samir's motivations to meet each other can lead to reconciliation and forgiveness?

3. The meeting between the mothers:

- a. What are the feelings of the Jewish mother? What are her accusations?
- b. What are the feelings of the Palestinian mother? What are her accusations?
- c. What does the Palestinian mother think about her daughter's action?
Does she accept it?
- d. Could they listen to each other's pain?
- e. Did they express empathy to each other's pain?

- f. What were their frustrations?
- g. Could they contain each other's pain and anger?
- h. In the first movie Bud was saying that his life got stuck after the tragedy; do you think the mothers are also stuck in a way?
- i. What was Bud's attitude when he went to meet the father of the man who had killed his daughter? Did Avigail have a similar attitude?
- j. Which attitude can lead to forgiveness and reconciliation?
- k. Bud sees Bill McVeigh as a bigger victim than himself. In this movie, who are the victims and why are they the victims?
- l. Bud went through stages of rage, revenge, wishing to change, and finally forgiveness. Where would you place these women on the scale of stages? Is there anything they can do that can help them move on this scale to the next level?
- m. What did you learn about the Palestinian and the Israeli points of view?

4. The two groups of Israelis and Palestinians meet together:

I. Simulation.

- a. A conversation between Avigail and Um Samir: In the movie there are a few statements that could lead to reconciliation, Avigail says: "I want to meet her; maybe I will change my mind?" Um Samir says: "we are both victims, we are both mothers, we are both suffering", "Our daughters met in death". Start the conversation with these sentences and try to bring the two to reconciliation.

- b. Racheli, played by a Palestinian girl, and Ayat, played by an Israeli girl, meet in the next world, where they tell each other about their dreams and hopes. Sharing with each other their feelings and life after death, do you think they could reconcile?
- c. A Palestinian young man plays Amos, Racheli's father, and an Israeli young man plays Abu Samir, Ayat's father. Play out this imagined meeting.
- d. A conversation between Bud and Avigail sharing their pain and journey in life after their loss.
- e. Playing the roles of Ayat, the girl that died, and Thawra Hamur, the girl that wanted to become a suicide bomber but did not succeed.

II. Restorative justice between Avigail and Um Samir.

Read the principles of restorative justice and guide both mothers in their dialogue:²⁹

1. Focus on the harm caused by the crime rather than on the crime itself.
2. Show equal concern and commitment to both sides.
3. Work toward the restoration of victims, empowering them and responding to their needs as they see them.
4. Support the offenders, while encouraging them to understand, accept and carry out their obligations.

²⁹ Howard Zehr, 2002, *The little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books, Intercourse, PA. p.40-41

5. Recognize that though the obligations might be complicated for the offender, they are not intended to inflict him with any harm, and they must be achieved.
6. Provide opportunities for dialogue, direct or indirect, between victim and offender.
7. Find meaningful ways to involve the community and the agencies within the community who usually respond to its bases of crime.
8. Encourage collaboration and reintegration of both victims and offenders rather than correction and isolation.
9. Think of the consequences of your actions before taking them.
10. Show respect to all parties - victims, offenders, justice colleagues.

III. Understanding each other's reality: Um Samir keeps saying that they are living in different realities.

- a. Draw what is your reality and what do you think is the other's reality.
- b. **Pairs of an** Israeli and a Palestinian - each shares what he or she thinks is their own reality and what is the other's reality; the other then reflects on it and says whether it is correct from his or her point of view.
- c. **Testimonies** - what is our reality? Representatives from the participants tell their story about their experiences of terror in our region.
- d. Writing reflections about what they just heard.

- e. **Drawing about hope** - compare the first drawing that was made right after watching the movie and the one after the discussion.
- f. Writing letters - participants write letters to Avigail and Um Samir. The letters will be sent to the mothers.
- g. **Closing Circle** - what did you hear today about your neighbor' pain?
- h. **Prayer.**

VI. Living for the sake of others - What does the other need?

Objectives:

- Participants will reflect and evaluate the process they went through.
- Participants will be able to value the process that they went through.
- Participants will cherish their newly created friendships.
- Participants will be able to listen to their friends' communities' needs.
- Participants will value serving others as a way to promote reconciliation.

Materials needed:

1. Talking stick.
2. Timer.
3. The Movie: "Service with RYS"
4. The printed questions and quotes from the Holy Scriptures.
5. Computer, projector, speakers and screen.
6. CD player and the suggested song "We are one family under God".
7. Papers for reflection.
8. For group drawing - large paper, colors, brushes, glasses for water.

A. Prayer.

B. Opening circle - reflection and sharing of how they felt since the last meeting.

C. Short lecture - We have met together on six occasions now, and we got to know each other as individuals. Each of us is a member of a larger community that has needs. Listening to each other's needs is important and helps deepen our relationship. You might think that forgiveness is the purpose of our course; however, forgiveness is a tool to build a loving, supporting community. When we serve others, we see them from a viewpoint that makes it easier to forgive them. If we cannot forgive each other, the communication between us is blocked. Therefore, we want to take some action to support our friends' families and communities, to show them we care. When we work for sake of others, we naturally see them as friends and not enemies. While we serve them, we might feel emotions such as anger or resentment. When that happens, we want to apply the tools we've learned in this program to overcome these feelings and remain friends. Furthermore, we would like to meet the communities and families of the other side and treat them as well as we do our friends

D. Regarding from the Holy Scriptures about living for the sake of others:

Judaism

“All men are responsible for one another.” *Talmud, Sanhedrin 27b*

Islam

“The best of men are those who are useful to others”. Hadith of Bukhari

“Be kind to parents, and the near kinsman, and to orphans, and to the needy, and to the neighbor

who is of kin, and to the neighbor who is a stranger, and to the companion at your side, and to the traveler, and to [slaves] that your right hands own. Surely God loves not the proud and boastful such as are niggardly, and bid other men to be niggardly, and themselves conceal the bounty that God has given them.” *Qur’an 4.36-47*

Christianity

“Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.” *1 Corinthians 10.24*

Teaching of Rev. Moon

Live a broad and grand life on earth to be on the track to heaven. Live for others. Invest repeatedly and forget what you have invested. Love and forget, and continue to love infinitely because you were born to live for others. (September 23, 1998)³⁰

- a. **In circle -**
 - i. What does it mean to live for the sake of others?
 - ii. Why do all religions tell of God who asks us to live for the sake of others?
- b. **In pairs – sharing** memories of a service that each had performed to someone else, how did it feel?
- c. **In circle -** sharing about how does it feel to help others.

E. Reading from the Holy Scriptures about Service:

³⁰ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.663

Judaism

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.” Isaiah 58.12

Islam

“Among the actions and good deeds for which a believer will continue to receive reward after his death are knowledge which he taught and spread, a good son whom he left behind, or a copy of the Qur’an which he left as a legacy, or a mosque which he built, or a house which he built for the traveler, or a stream which he caused to flow, or a contribution which he gave from his property when he was alive and well, for which he will continue to receive reward after his death.” Hadith of Ibn Majah (Islam)

Teaching of Rev. Moon

Be ready to do the most painful, unpleasant work. When you see the filthiest place in your neighborhood, think, “I should be cleaning it up.” (284:154, August 1, 1993)³¹

What should you do to others if you want them to serve you? [Serve them.] Should you serve them first, or let them serve you first? [I’ll serve others after they serve me.] That won’t do. Isn’t there a saying that if you want others to serve you, you should first serve them? [Yes.] The basic rule is that you should be the first to serve. What about me? Do I, Father Moon, seek to serve you, or do I seek to have you serve me? I never have the slightest thought of wanting you to serve me. It is not good to be indebted to others. (50:339, November 8, 1971)³²

³¹ Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p. 986

³² Wilson, Andrew. *World scripture and the teaching of Sun Myung Moon*, Universal Peace Federation, 2007, p.68

Watching the movie about RYS (Religious Youth Service) (20:26 min.)

http://www.religiousyouthservice.org/media/RYS_intro2006.wmv 5/9/2010

The movie shows how the service work of young people from different faiths working together in service projects for other communities, is a model for peace building. Working together for a higher cause is an interfaith activity that has power to change people's lives. They are participating in this activity while respecting each other's faith and tradition. All faiths refer to serving humanity as of great value, and the service projects give the youth the opportunity to fulfill it and put such teaching to practice. The movie shows how this activity develops the participants' listening skills and ability to acknowledge the other.

- F.** In circle: how can service work build a culture of peace?
- G.** In pairs: what are my community's needs? Each person writes what he understood were the needs of his friend's community.
- H.** On the board, people write these needs on one side of a chart; on the other side they write what they think they can do as a group for each such need.
- I.** The writing of these suggestions will become the goals and the expected outcome of a service project they want to do.
- J.** The participants will choose 2 service projects, one for an Israeli community and one for a Palestinian community, which they will do together. Their next meeting will be at the service project site.

K. The groups will choose 4 people (2 Palestinians and 2 Israelis) who will form a planning committee to prepare the service projects together with the teacher.

L. Closing

1. People write their reflection to each other - what they came to appreciate about each other. On a paper each person writes his or her name, then they pass this paper to others. Every person then writes what he appreciates about the person, whose name is on the top, folds the part with his words, and pass it on (this way nobody can see what was written before them). In the end each of them receives a reflection by all the participants.

2. People answer the questions:
 - a. What is the most meaningful experience you had with the group?

 - b. Did you feel safe?

 - c. Did you feel that people heard you, and saw your needs?

 - d. How was it for you to write a journal? Did you discover new things or insights about yourself?

 - e. Do you have some new friends now?

 - f. What do you know about other faiths and communities that you did not know before?

 - g. Did this course help you to forgive yourself?

- h. What can help you to forgive in the future if someone hurts you?
 - i. Did this course help you to forgive someone you felt difficult to forgive before?
 - j. Is there anyone you still feel difficult to forgive?
 - k. What is your relationship with God? Do you feel he wants to forgive you?
 - l. Which of the movies did you like? Was it meaningful to you? How?
 - m. Which of the movies did you feel were irrelevant or not connected to the course? Why?
 - n. What did you think of the lectures?
 - o. Did you like the games? Did you have fun?
 - p. Do you have any suggestions to improve the course? How can we improve?
 - q. Would you recommend to your friends to participate in this project in the future?
 - r. Did you discover any new things about yourself?
 - s. Would you like to be a facilitator in the next course?
3. **Drawing together** – on big papers. In the background play the song “We are one family under God.”

M. Party

- a. Participants bring their favorite food.
- b. **They share their testimonies** of the experiences they had.

Closing Prayer

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