

Declaration of Peace Nonviolent Action Training
Sample Agenda -- Suggested Schedule: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Outline

- Opening Gathering and Introductions -- 15 min.
 - Introduction of the Facilitators and This Training --- 5 min.
 - Agenda Review -- 5 min.
- Shared Agreements -- 10 min.
 - Small Group Reflection: Why Are You Participating in This Training? -- 25 min.
 - Focus: Profile of the US War in Iraq and the Declaration of Peace -- 20 min.
 - The Community Responds . -- 15 min.
 - Beginning to Explore Nonviolence: Stereotypes and Qualities -- 15 min.
 - Break -- 15 min.
 - The Two Hands of Nonviolence -- "I oppose your violence, but I am open to you as a human being" -- 15 min
 - The Power of Creative Nonviolence -- 10 min.
 - Four Steps of Nonviolence -- 10 min.
- Nonviolence Role-Play -- 20 min.
 - Lunch -- 60 min. to 1:00 pm
 - Brainstorming the History of Nonviolent Action -- 10 min.
 - One Way Nonviolent People-Power Works: The Eight Stages of a Nonviolent Social Movement -- 20 min.
 - Nonviolent Action, Including Public Witness and Civil Disobedience: Why and How -- 20 min.
 - Nonviolence Guidelines Review -- 15 min. (Declaration of Peace)
 - Nonviolent Action Scenario Plans -- 20 min.
 - Nonviolent Action Legal Briefing -- 30 min.
 - Break -- 15 mins
 - Consensus Process: Why and How -- 10 min. (Engage Book, pp. 184-185)
 - Consensus Process Role-Play/ Quick Decision-Making -- 10 min.
 - Hopes and Fears -- 15 min.
 - Nonviolent Action Role Play -- 25 min.
 - Debriefing the Role-Play -- 10 min.
 - Being Part of an Action Support Group -- 10 min.
 - Action Support Group Formation -- 15 min.
 - Evaluation -- 10 min.
 - Closing Circle -- 5 min.

Nonviolent Action Training

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Opening Gathering and Introductions -- 15 min.

Introduction of the Facilitators and This Training --- 5 min.

Agenda Review -- 5 min.

Shared Agreements -- 10 min.

Explain that we are seeking to make the space we are sharing as safe as possible. In

this spirit, ask for agreement on the following guidelines [photocopy the agreements so that people can read them silently as you read them aloud]:

1. I agree to share at whatever level I feel safe and comfortable.
2. I agree to honor confidentiality in my small group and in the large group.
3. I agree to make our time together as safe, comfortable, and participatory as possible. I will do my best to: Use "I" statements; support everyone's right to speak; listen actively; be conscious of non-verbal communication; show respect to others; practice cultural sensitivity; honor agreements about time; demonstrate patience; not interrupt others; maintain honesty; model openness; and show compassion. *Take a few minutes to discuss these agreements. (If there is a question about the meaning of specific agreements, ask the large group to reflect on what they mean.) Then ask the group for consensus to these agreements.*

Small Group Reflection: Why Are You Participating in This Training? -- 25 min.

Form participants into groups of three and ask them to reflect one at a time on the following questions: Why are you considering taking nonviolent action? What experience in your own life history helped you move in this direction? After 15 minutes, call people back to the large group for 10 minutes of large group sharing.

Focus: Profile of the US War in Iraq and the Declaration of Peace -- 20 min.

The Community Responds . -- 15 min.

The specific community for whom the training is being held and why

Beginning to Explore Nonviolence: Stereotypes and Qualities -- 15 min. (Engage Book, p. 9-10.)

Ask the group to brainstorm stereotypes or assumptions that people in our current society might have about "nonviolence." Write these on flip-chart paper. These may include "passivity," "too idealistic," "isn't effective," "troublemakers," etc. Next asks the group to brainstorm a new list (also written down): the qualities or characteristics of people they know who try to be nonviolent. These may include "courageous," "creative," "faithful," "active," "persistent," etc. Underscore the contrast between the two lists. You can stress how, while there might be some truth to some of the stereotypes because of the way nonviolence has been used or misused in the past (e.g., some nonviolence practitioners may have thought "being nonviolent meant being passive or being a doormat"), in fact nonviolence is characterized by many powerful spiritual and practical realities.

Break -- 15 min. to 11:05

The Two Hands of Nonviolence -- "I oppose your violence, but I am open to you as a human being" -- 15 min. (FVTW Book, p. 65.)

The Power of Creative Nonviolence -- 10 min.

Ask people to break into dyads (couples) and ask each dyad to discuss one of the following principles of creative nonviolence. Come back in the large group and report back.

Creative nonviolence is an ongoing process of personal, community and social transformation that is a way of being and acting rooted in the power of love, in the desire for the well-being of all, and in the longing to end the cycle of personal, interpersonal, and social-structural violence. Creative nonviolence includes:

- Making contact with the woundedness and sacredness in our lives and the lives of others;
- Creatively and courageously opening safe space for active listening and for acknowledging that each of us has a piece of the truth;
- Transforming Us vs. Them thinking and doing;

- Seeking to recognize and actively transform coercive and dominative differences of power;
- Mobilizing nonviolent person-power and people-power as creative alternatives to patterns of domination, to passive acceptance of those patterns, or to counter-violence as a way of challenging those patterns; and
- Taking initiatives to change the dynamics of violence by creating solutions that are just and compassionate and that genuinely address the causes of conflict.

Four Steps of Nonviolence -- 10 min. (Engage, pp. 90-96, reading 80-84)

1. Center ourselves. 2. Disclose our true selves to ourselves and our opponent. 3. Receive the piece of the truth of the opponent. 4. Make agreements, not assumptions.

Nonviolence Role-Play – 20 min. (Engage, p. 81)

This exercise is designed to experiment with the Four Steps. Ask people to form two parallel lines facing each other. One line represents people opposing US war with Iraq at a demonstration; the other represents people favoring it. Ask people in each line to turn around, close their eyes, and really get into their role. Then invite them to turn around and engage with one another. After approximately three minutes, ask people to stop. Reflect with people on their feelings and experiences. After a few minutes of group reflection, repeat the role-play, but with people taking the opposite position (i.e., the line in favor now becomes opposed, and vice versa). Again, ask people to regard their "opponent" as the dearest, most important person in their life. Then return to sitting in the large group and debrief this exercise, including a reflection on assumptions at work and whether there were any agreements.

Lunch -- 60 min. to 1:00 pm

Brainstorming the History of Nonviolent Action -- 10 min. (Engage, p. 181-182)

One Way Nonviolent People-Power Works: The Eight Stages of a Nonviolent Social Movement -- 20 min. Engage (pp. 193-199)

Ask people to form groups of two or three and to act out one of the eight stages. (For more background, see Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2001).

Nonviolent Action, Including Public Witness and Civil Disobedience: Why and How -- 20 min.

Action as a way of responding to the emergency of war and injustice, of raising the visibility of the moral and political dangers of such policies, and of honoring the "higher law" of preserving dignity, justice, and survival of all beings.

Nonviolence Guidelines Review -- 15 min. (Declaration of Peace)

Nonviolent Action Scenario Plans -- 20 min.

Presentation of plans for local public witness, vigil, interfaith service, nonviolent civil disobedience, etc.

Nonviolent Action Legal Briefing -- 30 min.

Presentation of the legal consequences of public witness, especially if nonviolent civil disobedience is considered. A lawyer or someone familiar with the relevant legal process should present the steps and choices participants will face.

Break – 15 mins

Consensus Process: Why and How -- 10 min. (Engage Book, pp. 184-185)

To create a group activity, we need a decision-making process. The consensus process is a method of group decision-making by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust. It is also a process which invests everyone in the outcome, and in the responsibility to carry it out. The steps of the consensus process include:

- Someone puts forward a proposal
- The facilitator asks if there are any qualifying question
- Then the facilitator asks if there are any reservations
- If there are strong reservations, the facilitator asks for any amendments
- After the proposal is amended, the facilitator asks for consensus
- If no one blocks, then consensus is reached.
- **Often it is helpful to restate the proposal so everyone is clear on its content.**

Consensus Process Role-Play/ Quick Decision-Making -- 10 min. (Engage, p. 184-185)

Ask the participants to use the consensus process to role-play ordering a pizza.

Hopes and Fears -- 15 min.

Ask people to form dyads and share their hopes and fears concerning the prospect of taking nonviolent action, including facing its consequences. If civil disobedience is contemplated, there should be a presentation on the philosophy of going to jail for the sake of peace and justice, the practicalities of going to jail, and the possible negative and positive aspects of such action.

Nonviolent Action Role Play -- 25 min.

This role-play gives us an opportunity to see how we might react to possible stressful incidents during a nonviolent civil disobedience action.

Debriefing the Role-Play -- 10 min.

Reassemble in the large group and ask the participants to reflect on their feelings, thoughts, and insights from engaging in this exercise.

Being Part of an Action Support Group -- 10 min.

Presentation/group brainstorm on the importance of being in a group while engaging in nonviolent action.

Action Support Group Formation -- 15 min.

For those not already in a support group, time is taken to form such groups. Each group is encouraged to set its first meeting to plan in more detail its participation in upcoming activities.

Evaluation -- 10 min.

Ask people to share, first, things that were positive and that worked for them. Then ask for a list of things that could be improved.

Closing Circle -- 5 min.