

Chapter 8: Justice and Peace

Getting Started

Introduce teens to the concept of peace by summarizing, in your own words, the material on page 151 of the Teacher’s Manual, “Introducing the Chapter.” Optionally, you may also have them read the chapter summary on pages 216–217 of the Student Text; or ask them to read about Christians and peace on pages 190–194, nonviolence on pages 197–202, and the just war theory on pages 203–206 of the Student Text. Then have them read the following story.

The Story

The Catholic Church played a major role in what became known as the “People Power” revolution in the Philippines in 1986. The Church in the Philippines spent years before the revolution training people in nonviolent resistance, and the Church-sponsored radio station helped to direct protesters during the revolution.

PEOPLE POWER IN THE PHILIPPINES

By James VanHise

In the mid-1980s a popular movement sprang up to oust the corrupt Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. As the resistance gained momentum, two key military officers defected from the government and sequestered themselves inside a Manila military base. What followed was an amazing example of nonviolent struggle as hundreds of thousands of ordinary Filipinos took to the streets to protect the rebel officers from troops still loyal to Marcos. . . .

Access the rest of the story at www.fragmentsweb.org/TXT2/philip.tx.html

Discussion

Lead the teens in a discussion of the following questions:

1. What resources were available to Ferdinand Marcos in this conflict?

Possible answers might include the military, including tanks, guns, and helicopters supplied by the United States; the state-controlled media; control of the Filipino government; the support of the U.S. government.

What resources were available to his opponents?

Possible answers might include Radio Veritas; the authority of the Church; good organization; prayer; large numbers of supporters; virtues such as faith, love, fortitude, and prudence.

2. Jesus told his followers to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). What are some specific examples of how the Filipino people followed this teaching?
For example, the people who gave flowers, food, and cigarettes to the soldiers; the woman who used humor with one of the soldiers; the priests and nuns who prayed in front of the tanks; the people’s refusal to use violence in response to the threat of violence.
3. Why do you think the military didn’t use violence against the people who were blocking the streets?
4. What do you think was the key to the success of this nonviolent revolution?
If necessary, direct the teens’ attention to the author’s statement: “Unfortunately for Marcos, force is not the same as power, and although he still has plenty of force at his disposal, the sources of his power are drying up.” Marcos derived his power from the consent of the people, who effectively stripped him of power by refusing to cooperate with him.
5. If the defecting soldiers (Juan Ponce Enrile, Fidel Ramos, and their supporters) had decided to wage a violent revolution against the unjust Marcos regime, how might the situation have turned out differently?
6. The People Power revolution successfully removed Marcos from power, but many unjust structures were left standing in Filipino society. What lessons from the People Power revolution might be applied to working for justice in other areas?

Take Action

Non-violent conflict skits

- Explain to the teens that the story about the nonviolent “People Power” revolution in the Philippines is just one of many historical instances where nonviolent actions were successfully employed to overcome injustice. Tell the teens that people who study alternatives to violent conflict have developed various methods of nonviolent action, and that the teens will have an opportunity to imagine some of these methods in action by developing their own skits.
- Before the session, select and print out several of the case studies at the *A Force More Powerful* website, www.pbs.org/weta/forcemorepowerful/. Alternatively, rent the video of the same name and show excerpts.
- Divide the teens into small groups of 3–6 people each. Provide each group with one of the case studies of nonviolent conflict.
- Instruct the teens to read the case study together and to develop a short skit dramatizing one aspect of the nonviolent conflict. The skits should have three parts: An introduction, in which a narrator summarizes the background for the events dramatized in the skit; the dramatic action; and an epilogue, in which a narrator summarizes how the conflict was resolved. Advise teens that they should probably avoid trying to tell the whole story in the action of their skits; rather, they will probably be more successful dramatizing a scene illustrating the sorts of personal interactions that might have occurred during the nonviolent conflict. For example, a skit about the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins might illustrate the interaction between several student protesters, a store clerk, and white shoppers.
- After the teens have presented their skits, discuss the common elements of the various nonviolent conflicts. Ask the teens to imagine how nonviolence might be used to achieve justice or as an alternative to violent conflicts in the world today.
- *Note:* When first introduced to the concept of nonviolence, most people are initially skeptical, often offering many “exceptions” in which nonviolence would likely fail. One way to respond to such skepticism is to point out that violent conflict also carries the potential for failure, along with the likelihood of death and destruction. Point out that our Christian faith calls us to creatively imagine alternatives to violence, rather than dismissing nonviolent approaches to conflict out of hand.
- Additional activities may be found at the *A Force More Powerful* website.

Additional Activities

- Have teens complete the “Are You a Peacemaker?” exercise on page 190 of the Student Text.
- Have teens complete the “Extending the Session” activity “b” (analyzing a current conflict according to just war principles) on page 159 of the Teacher’s Manual.
- Conduct a debate on the concept of a just war as outlined on page 159 of the Teacher’s Manual.

Additional Resources

For additional books, videos, and websites related to this topic, see pages 151–152 of the Teacher’s Manual.