

Building Peace

A Youth Journey through Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c

Trip Planning

Sometimes in traveling it is necessary to change the desired route we wish to take. This decision is sometimes based on faulty information that we glean from the map or from individuals who have a different perceptions of the route. This information may divert us from appropriate travels and causes us to miss sites and experiences that may be life changing. So too the map of scripture, if used incorrectly, can cause us to engage in behaviors and exercise beliefs that may cause us to respond in ways that may be contrary to our Christian walk of faith. These behaviors can diminish, oppress, or marginalize people. These behaviors are in a sense taking us in directions that prevent us from being whole and also prevent others from being whole. During this portion of our class journey we will focus on

- identifying the obstacles to including all in building the peaceable kingdom
- how we can tear down walls that separate us

Packing List

- Bible
- Blocks or rocks
- Permanent markers or paint

Navigational Aids

For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

—Galatians 3:26–29 adapted

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and broken down the wall of separation.

—Ephesians 2:14

“It is not pleasing to God when any passage of scripture is used to diminish or oppress races, genders, or classes of human beings. Much physical and emotional violence has been done to some of God's beloved children through the misuse of scripture. The church is called to confess and repent of such attitudes and practices.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c

Unpacking the Scripture

Ask the youth to read Galatians 3:26–29 adapted. The scripture passage provides an image that as children of God there are issues that may be defined in human terms that separate us, but in Christ Jesus we are all one. While this passage tends to equate baptism with having a special qualification or quality of knowing Christ and being free, the passage further goes on to clarify that Christ accepts all and is unconditional in his response. In D&C 163:7c there is further counsel that serves to amplify this scripture. It provides guidance to us in using scriptures to build community and to steer clear of those obstacles that cause us to exclude, oppress, or diminish the worth of others. The following activities provide opportunities to identify those that may be excluded and ways to explore the possibilities to tear down these walls of exclusion.

Building Walls

Using the blocks or rocks identify those groups or individuals that we exclude from fellowship and community. Scriptures suggest that some of these are or were at one time such issues as women in ministry, those that may adorn themselves with piercings, jewelry, or tattoos. On the rocks or blocks write those items or issues that may be used as methods of exclusion. After everyone has had the opportunity to write and share their observation build a wall with the blocks or rocks.

Tearing Down Walls

The activity just experienced focused on the identification of issues and items that may cause exclusion. Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c focuses on the responsible use of scripture and its use as a tool of liberation, not oppression and exclusion. Ephesians 2:14 explains that Christ is our peace and helps us to break down walls of separation. Disassemble the wall and while doing so identify ways that may be used to abolish or confront those issues that may separate us. When doing so write the alternative that may be exercised in order to abolish or reduce the oppression, minimization, and exclusion that others may experience. Provide adequate time to allow for the explanation and exploration of each issue and item.

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Repacking the Scripture

New Pathways

Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c focuses on the responsible use of scripture and the appropriate treatment of all God's children regardless of race, religion, gender, or other issues. The following activity is an exploration of how the teens could continue to not only break down walls but also create pathways that affirm the worth of all people. Using the rocks or blocks once more ask the teens to construct a road that will assist all God's children to be included and valued. This road will express how the teens will take actions in the following week to tear down walls that exclude and construct pathway to include all. The inclusion of all may be as simple as making sure the kid who is often viewed as the loner feels included. It may be as extreme as taking on the challenge of assisting the homeless and neglected of society. Allow sufficient time for the teens to construct the road and explain how they will help to build pathways to peace that assure that the worth of all is expressed.

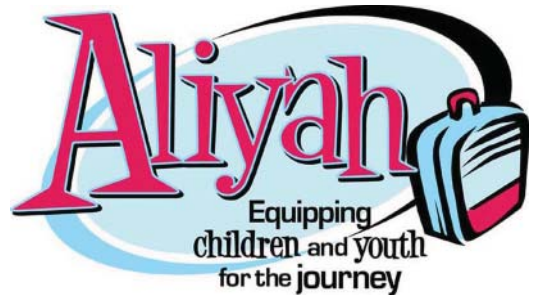
All Are One

The focus of this class has explored the necessity to be responsible in scripture study and how we may be responsible in expressing ways that all individuals, groups, and cultures can rest in the assurance that they are all children of God. Galatians 3:28–29 adapted states “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

This passage expresses that the faith journey of Christians provides the opportunity to look to the example of Christ, who tried to break down walls. He did so by reaching out to not only the marginalized but also those who had positions of authority and power. His message was that God is no respecter of persons and thus as the Galatian's scripture explains all are in Christ Jesus.

We're Not There Yet; The Journey Continues

The importance of responsible use of scripture as a tool to include rather than exclude was the focus of Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c. Read Galatians 3:26–29 adapted again. As a final activity pick up the rocks or blocks and ask the youth to share in prayer the concerns that are stated and also pray that they be instruments of God's peace that may help to build the peaceable kingdom and include all. If practical allow the teens to take a block or rock with them.



Legend

ALIYAH Doctrine and Covenants 163:7c lesson for Youth
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