

Beginning to explore nonviolence

Purpose: to open up the subject of nonviolence by exploring typical beliefs and stereotypes.

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation: Flip chart paper, pens, and blue tack. Either divide one flip sheet into two columns or use two sheets. Label one, 'beliefs/stereotypes/concerns about nonviolence' and the other 'qualities/attributes of nonviolent activists'. NOTE: keep the second category hidden until you address that topic.

Description:

1. Using a flipchart, idea shower typical beliefs/stereotypes/own concerns about nonviolence (left column or first sheet).
2. Briefly reflect with group on the list they have produced. Clarify/open the issues where necessary in preparation for group inquiry into them, eg what does "passivity" mean?
3. Now idea shower actual qualities/attributes of people who practice nonviolence (right column or second sheet). If the group is only drawing from famous, historical figures, like Gandhi or Mother Teresa encourage them to think about local and more contemporary examples, such as 'climate campers' or local well known organisations/people who draw inspiration from nonviolence.
4. Reflect with group. When we compare lists what do we see?
5. For a deeper discussion, divide into small groups and consider the following:
 - Where do these typical beliefs about nv come from? Explore reasoning behind the views and attitudes.
 - Why do they think people draw this conclusion?
 - Do we hold some of these beliefs? What impact do these beliefs have on our practice of nonviolence?
6. Plenary sharing of responses.