

Study Guide Outline

Learning Module ~ Theme and Learning Goals

Reflection Options

Acts of Contrition and Reparative Justice Case Studies

Handouts

Module 1:

Introduction

1. Participants will get to know one another through circle process of introductions to their reasons for being present.
2. Through a mapping activity, participants will connect to the stories of how they came to the land where they now live, and will dedicate their learning to an ancestor.
3. Participants will watch the 43 min. documentary film and share initial responses. Alternate approach: watch the film separately, or in short segments before each learning module.

Watch film together (optional): *The Doctrine of Discovery: In the Name of Christ*

Return to the Earth

Lawrence Hart initiated the Return to the Earth project with MCC. Through this project of reconciliation and reparation, congregations provide burial boxes and cloths for the repatriation of ancestral remains of Indigenous Americans.

1) Circle Process Handout

(2) Common Circle Guidelines

Module 2:

What is the Doctrine of Discovery?

1. Participants will look at how the Doctrine of Discovery shaped their family stories through a timeline activity comparing Indigenous and settler histories.
2. Participants will discuss the practices of the Doctrine of Discovery as described in the film.
3. Resources and handouts will provide further information to answer the question, "what is the Doctrine of Discovery?"

Bible Reflection 1: "The Rich Man and Lazarus."

Text: Luke 16:19-31

Iris de León-Hartshorn looks at the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus as a story about wealth gained through exploitation, drawing parallels to the foundations of unjustly gained wealth in the U.S. under the Doctrine of Discovery. She invites us to acknowledge this truth and embrace God's kingdom that turns our world upside-down.

Bible Reflection 2: "The Gospel of Vulnerability."

Text: Luke 15

Randy Woodley reads Luke 15 as three connected stories about the stranger, widow and orphan: the most vulnerable members of society in Jesus' day. He compares the Pharisees with the white, European Christian explorers and rulers convinced of their religious superiority, and calls beneficiaries of their atrocities to "radical humility and vulnerability through repentance."

Stoney Knoll Gathering

Leonard Doell describes a pivotal healing gathering in 2006 at Stoney Knoll, Saskatchewan. The gathering brought together Mennonites, Lutherans, and Young Chippewayans whose land had been stolen by the Canadian government in the 1890s and given to Mennonite and German Lutheran settlers.

(3) Doctrine of Discovery fact sheet

(4) Ten Elements of the Doctrine of Discovery
(5) Image of Columbus landing

Module 3:

In the Name of Christ

1. Participants will reflect on ways the cross was distorted by conquest through a learning activity that shows the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous Peoples.
2. Participants will discuss how Christianity and the Bible have been misused by the powerful, and how that has impacted their faith. They will imagine ways of disentangling their faith from the Religion of Empire.

Bible Reflection 3: "Trail of Death, Trail of Life"

Text: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 14:25-33

Katerina Friesen describes how the Promised Land narrative, which drew from Biblical stories such as those in Deuteronomy, defines the identity of the U.S. and those who benefited from the conquest of Indigenous peoples and lands. She then shares about the Trail of Death pilgrimage that traced the forced removal of the Potawatomi from northern Indiana. She calls readers to costly discipleship in the way of Jesus, who walked the Trail of Death to make a way for the Trail of Life.

Bible Reflection 4: "Ancestral Narratives: An Alternative to Conquest"

Text: Genesis 26:1-33

Safwat Marzouk looks at an ancestral story about the relationship between Isaac and the Philistines as an alternative to the Exodus-Conquest narratives. Isaac's identity as a sojourner and migrant puts him and his family in the hands of the Philistines to show hospitality or hostility. Initial peaceful relations are broken by fear and mistrust, but the groups overcome conflict to share resources and create a covenant together.

Triking for Dakota Land Return

John Stoesz received inheritance money from his family's farm, which was on land taken from the Dakota. Listening to the counsel of Indigenous Peoples, he decided to give half toward Indigenous land justice. He then took a bike tour through former Dakota territory to call others to reparative justice.

(6) "Oppression Tree," from Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa

Study Guide Outline *Continued*

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Module 4:

Living the Doctrine of Discovery

1. Participants will reveal their relationships with Indigenous peoples around the world through a mapping activity aimed to show how neocolonial resource extraction connects them.
2. Participants will reflect on the difference land title has for Indigenous communities, what the Bible has to say about ownership of land and resources, and how to address systemic injustices.

Bible Reflection 5: “*Tabula rasa* and *terra nullius*: Biblical Misinterpretations that Justified Colonization.”

Text: Deuteronomy 1:8; 1:25

Mziwandile Nkutha examines how these texts and others have been reenacted to justify colonization, civilization and Christianization in Africa. The colonial understandings of Africans and Africa in terms of tabula rasa (empty slate of the mind) and terra nullius (empty space) came out of a fragmented reading of the Bible and its Jewish roots. This has resulted in Western Christianity being associated strongly with colonialism in Africa.

Bible Reflection 6: “Collateral Damage.”

Text: Judges 11

Regina Shands Stolfus looks at the story of Jephthah’s daughter, who becomes “collateral damage” in the midst of war and crisis for the tribal confederation of Israel. She reads this account to say that nothing good can come from warfare; it disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable. Reading these texts, we can name and lament the layers of violence against Native women and other women of color.

Bible Reflection 7: “I am a Canaanite Woman”

Text: Matthew 15:21-28

Sarah Augustine identifies with the Canaanite woman in the text, who, like Indigenous peoples around the world, has been cast as an outsider from the “chosen people.” She shows how the woman persists in finding healing for her daughter despite Jesus’ resistance.

Christian Peacemaker Team Solidarity at Grassy Narrows

CPT’s Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Project accompanies the people of Grassy Narrows in Northwestern Ontario in their struggle against ongoing colonization in the form of extractive industry.

(7) Rich Meyer’s Resources: useful for research on land titles, treaties, and the peoples who lived where you now live before settlement

Module 5:

Undoing the Doctrine of Discovery

1. Participants will seek hope through an activity that transforms the cross of conquest by naming how they see resurrection and resistance to the Doctrine of Discovery happening today.
2. Participants will imagine and commit to ways they can be part of the movement to undo the Doctrine of Discovery as individuals, congregations, and the broader Church.

Bible Reflection 8: “Market Culture and the Image of God”

Text: Genesis 47:13-22

Wati Longchar offers a subversive reading of the Joseph story to show how Joseph contributed to Pharaoh’s unjust economic system. This enslaving economy, which continues under global capitalism, degrades the image of God in Indigenous Peoples and is opposed to the values of the Kingdom of God.

Bible Reflection 9: “Lessons from Deuteronomy in Communal Justice and Solidarity.”

Text: Various texts from Deuteronomy

Elaine Enns and Ched Myers look to Deuteronomy to uncover an ethos of compassion and justice rooted in God’s liberation of Israel after the people’s experience of injustice as slaves in Egypt. Enns and Myers explore the consequences of intergenerational trauma for Russian Mennonites who settled in Canada, and the silences in their stories when it comes to Indigenous Peoples. They entreat settler Mennonites to remember the lessons of Deuteronomy, so that communal memory of oppression animates compassionate solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

Bible Reflection 10: “Justice is the Fast that God Requires”

Text: Isaiah 58:1-12

Jennifer Henry shares from the journey of truth-telling and reconciliation with the land and original peoples in the Canadian context. She draws on the prophetic words of Isaiah to challenge settlers to turn from false religion toward justice, which is the precursor to the hope-filled promises of restoration in Isaiah 58.

Suriname Indigenous Health Fund

SIHF works with Indigenous communities around the world to document human rights abuses and address the structures that cause displacement, resource extraction, and grave health challenges for Indigenous Peoples.