

Road to Shalom

Road to Shalom was originally produced through the Book of Faith Initiative for the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2012. The purpose of the Road to Shalom is to engage small groups in a journey where they grow deeper in their understanding of the concept of biblical shalom. Road to Shalom has seven stops – or stations. Through walking these seven stations of shalom, small groups will experience the depth and true meaning of the word ‘Shalom’. It is an experience that will not be forgotten!

The Seven Stations:

1. Go in Peace Street
2. Promise Ally
3. Justice Way
4. Exile Place
5. Promise Mountain
6. Wholeness Path
7. Blessings Highway

The Road to Shalom resource can be used in various formats ranging from a couple of people up to groups of 30 or more.

Below is the script and set up instructions for this event. Please feel free to adjust and improvise as needed for your unique setting and for the number of Pilgrims taking this journey.

Set Up Materials

Please print the **Master Supply list that is found in the Set-up folder**. This list will tell you which folders to find printed supplies previously created. Please note that you can make these Stations as elaborate or simple as you want. The Master Supply List will provide you with the items needed as well as all pdf's of the supplies we created. You may choose to use or leave out more elaborate decorative supplies, but we recommend that you keep the script and station supplies as printed below the same so as not to lose the meaning intended for this experience.

MASTER SCRIPT Please note: Regular type is what should be said. *Italics are directions.*

Leader 1=L1

Leader 2=L2

*NOTE: If you do not have 2 people who can lead the journey then have one person do both parts or ask someone in the group to read from a script with you. As stated improvise as much as you need.

Gathering/Welcoming Spot:

1. Gathering / Welcoming Spot: “Go In Peace Street”

Supplies/Set-Up:

- Find a suitable spot to experience *Road to Shalom*.
- Music can be played as people gather to experience *Road to Shalom*.
- Two tables with plain foam board covering them. One will have a map of the world and the other will be covered with pictures of home-town places in their lives, such as school, house, sports field, mall, fast food store, computers and iPhones etc. These same images will be encountered later at the Station 6: Wholeness Path. So you will need two sets of these per room.
- Three baskets/containers needed: Two smaller baskets/containers have strips of paper, push pins and they sit on the two tables, along with pens scattered about. The third basket/container holds the passports. A stamp and pad/or nice marking pen, or Sheets of Labels can be made to mark their passport. “Blessed for the Journey.”
- Three signs that in brief bullet points tell the youth what to do with the strips of paper and pins, as well as the passports.

Activity:

- The Leader welcomes them, greets the pilgrims and shares names, etc.
- The Small group is invited to think about places either in the world or in their communities where peace is either being experienced or lacking.
- Take several strips of paper and pins and write on them examples where they have seen peace or where they believe there is no peace
- Pin the strips of paper on the world map or pin the pictures of places in their home town that matches.
- Then all gather to get their passport, the Leader stamps it writes on it or places a prepared label with the words “Blessed for the Journey”

L1: *Invite pilgrims into this setting.*

L2: *Standing by the tables in gathering/welcome area. Share who you are and welcome pilgrims. Instruct each pilgrim to take passport from the basket and invite them to fill in the first page.*

Invite pilgrims to do one or both of the following activities:

Option #1: Pilgrims take strips of paper and pins from baskets. Instruct them to write examples of where they have seen peace or where they believe there is no peace. Pilgrims pin the strips of paper on the world map.

Option #2: Pilgrims look at the pictures on the second table. Instruct them to find a picture that makes them feel at peace and/or a picture where they feel stress or no peace. Ask them to write their brief thoughts on the strip of paper and pin to the border of the pictures they choose.

1A: Welcome to the Journey

L1: *Gather all pilgrims together away from activities with the maps and pictures.*

Welcome, pilgrims all, to the Road to Shalom. We are going on an active journey together, a pilgrimage, if you will. As we journey this road today, we will hear about shalom and peace in the Bible, and we will experience shalom in different ways. In fact, we will pause at seven stations along the way. At each of these stations you will be invited to enter into a different passage from the Bible. Your passport lists the biblical texts for each stop, so you can follow along.

As we walk this biblical road to shalom, we will learn through listening and doing. We will learn that the wholeness of shalom is experienced when we pay attention to what is happening all around us. It's about who we meet along the way and how we interact with them. You will hear about the nature of peace, of well-being and wholeness that take us deep into the life that God would have us lead, the road God would have us travel.

L1 to L2: Name of L2? will you start us out with a prayer?

L2: *prays*

1B. "Go in Peace Street"

Verses: Ex. 4:18 & 1 Samuel 1:17

L1: As I said, we will be stopping at seven pilgrimage stations. Our first station is “Go in Peace Street,” where Shalom is God’s gift that goes with us into our life’s calling.

L2: We will hear two passages for this station. First, *listen* to the words of Exodus 4:18 -- “Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, ‘Please let me go back to my kindred in Egypt and see whether they are still living.’ And Jethro said to Moses, ‘Go in peace.’”

Listen as well to the words of 1 Samuel 1:17 –

“Then Eli answered, ‘Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.’”

L1: At “Go in Peace Street” we are blessed for the journey. Here we find the shalom of personal strength for the tough road ahead. Moses needed courage to face Pharaoh; to issue the call – Let My People Go! So, his father-in-law, Jethro, sends him on his way: “Go with Shalom; go in Peace.” At the beginning of First Samuel, Hannah also had need of blessing. Hannah had not been able to get pregnant, so she prayed fervently to God on the steps of the temple, to be blessed with a child. The priest Eli at first thought she was drunk, and then, realizing his mistake, he sent her on her way with these words -- “Go with Shalom; go in Peace.”

When people in the Bible sent each other off, they often did so in much the same way as we do each Sunday with the words, “Go in peace.” These words calm our fears and give us courage to do what we must do to fulfill our callings in the world. We experience shalom, true peace, knowing that God promises to go with us as we are sent on our way.

L1: Invite the pilgrims to the next station.

2. “Promise Alley”

Psalm 85:10

Supplies/Set-Up:

Four Signs: *having the words: STEADFAST LOVE, FAITHFULNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE.*

L1: *Move group to next station. Ask for four volunteers to hold the signs having the words: STEADFAST LOVE, FAITHFULNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE. Ask the sign holders to stand in pairs (SL + F, R + P) in front of the group and next to L2 who reads the text.*

L1: Welcome to Promise Alley, where Shalom is God's promise to us, personally and communally.

L2: *Stand next to signs as you read text.*

Listen to the words of Psalm 85:10 –

“Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.”

L1: Shalom is filled with many meanings in the Bible. In this passage shalom is linked intimately to three big ideas: Shalom is first linked to Divine Love which is always steadfast, always there. Steadfast love happens when God is there for us, and when we are there for each other. Shalom is linked second to faithfulness, both dependable presence and true speech. And shalom, here translated as peace, is linked most intimately to righteousness, to doing the right thing for others. Let's listen to the verse again and have the sign holders act out what we hear. Sign holders: Listen carefully and act out the words as you feel comfortable.

L2: *Reading slowly each part so pairs can act out words.*

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; *(pause for action such as shaking hands)*
righteousness and peace (shalom) will kiss each other.” *(pause for kiss or hug)*

L1: *Depending on how the pantomime actions go, be prepared to comment briefly.*

L1: God's shalom is a gift for us, a promise of real love from God that we spread to others.

3. “Justice Way”

Jeremiah 8:11

Supplies/Set-Up:

- Laminated 12” X 12” letters for spelling PEACE and JUSTICE

Activity: **Gather group in circle surrounding the letters.**

Cut out 12” X 12” letters for spelling PEACE and JUSTICE are scattered on the floor.
There is only one “C”.

L1: *Move pilgrims to next station and have them stand in a circle around the letters laid out randomly on the floor. (The letters will spell JUSTICE and PEACE, but there is only one “C,” so they will need to be connected to work.)*

L1: Welcome to “Justice Way” where Shalom comes when we remember and serve those in need.

L2: Listen to the words of Jeremiah 8:11 –

“They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.”

L1: Sometimes we can say words that are not backed by actions, so the words become empty. Jeremiah reminds the people that even though they think they have God’s peace because of God’s promises, peace without justice is not possible. When Jeremiah accuses the people of “Saying ‘peace, peace’ when there is no peace” it is the prophet’s way of letting the people know that genuine peace comes from doing justice and treating the wounds of God’s people. Shalom means bringing peace and justice together.

L1: *Ask two or three volunteers to quickly spell the words JUSTICE and PEACE on the floor. They will need to connect the words at C to make the spelling work. Only give this clue if they cannot seem to figure it out.*

When the words are connected, ask a volunteer or the whole group to read the following prayer, which is printed and taped on or by the road sign:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is injustice, peace. Amen

4. “Exile Place”

Jeremiah 29:7

Supplies/Set Up:

- Polarity signs on popsicle sticks. They can be laminated so they hold up. They will be color coded so that the sets match.
If you have 10 Pilgrims use 5 of the polarity signs listed below etc., If you have more than 30 Pilgrims you will need to make more signs.
 - 1) Popular / Unpopular
 - 2) US Citizen / Immigrant
 - 3) Gay / Straight
 - 4) Democrat / Republican
 - 5) Athletic / Non-Athletic
 - 6) Religious Affiliation / Non-Believer
 - 7) Rich/Poor
 - 8) Dark Skin / Light Skin
 - 9) Mac User/Microsoft Lover

- 10) Vegetarian / Meat Eater
- 11) In Shape / Out of Shape
- 12) College Bound / Work Force Bound
- 13) Saver / Big Spender
- 14) Rural Life Rules / Cities are Cool
- 15) Pre War / Anti War

L1: *Move group to next station.*

L1: Welcome to “Exile Place” where Shalom comes concretely as we work for the welfare of the places where we live, even in the midst of our enemies.

L2: Listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah who says in 29:7 –
“Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.”

L1: We need to seek shalom not just out “there” -- some place else. We need to seek peace concretely in the place where we live, where we are rooted. The people of Israel were used to praying for the peace of Jerusalem, their hometown and the city of God. But Jeremiah stuns them while they are living amongst their enemies in exile in Babylon, saying: “seek the welfare (the shalom) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” In other words, we must seek the peace, the well-being, even of one’s enemies -- for in their shalom we find our own shalom.

L1&L2: *Hand out sign pairs randomly. When signs passed out, say:*

L1: We live in divided “us vs. them” world. Signs of division are all around us. Think about politics or religious beliefs or lifestyle or even personal likes and dislikes. How do we walk together in spite of our differences? How do we break down the walls that divide us? We have to imagine what it is like to walk in another’s shoes.

L1: *Ask pilgrims to find a person who has a word that is the opposite of theirs. When the opposite pairs are together, ask the pairs to place their hands on the other person’s shoulder and pray for that person. This can be a silent prayer or spoken out loud. After the prayer is done, ask the pairs to exchange the signs, so they are now carrying the sign of their opposition.*

Instruct the pilgrims to hang on to their words as they move on to the next station.

5. “Proclamation Mountain”

Isaiah 52:7

Supplies/Set Up:

- Several pictures of Nobel Peace Prize winners, (make sure the current winner is included) with their name and one short statement summarizing why they won. These are placed in a circle on the floor, against the wall or taped on the wall, whatever works in your location.

L1: Move group to next station and invite each traveler to stand by one of the Peace Prize winners. Host should stand by this year's Peace Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee. Note: It is important to always have the Current Nobel Peace Prize Winner Displayed.

L1: Welcome to "Proclamation Mountain," where Shalom is to be proclaimed.

L2: Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah who says in 52:7 –

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'"

L1: Isaiah reminds us that shalom is to be shared and proclaimed because peace is good news. Peace is rooted in the good news that God is bringing the peaceable kingdom to and for the world. Peace is good news, but such peace, though beautiful, is never sentimentalized. The message of peace often comes in the midst of exile or on the road. Leymah Gbowee (*point to her picture*) is this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner. **NOTE: Use the name of the Nobel Peace Prize winner for the year you are in. The information below will change to describe the work of the current winner.** She won the prize for work in the midst of national strife, for leading a woman's peace movement that brought an end to the civil war in Liberia. You are standing next to pictures of others who have won this honor. All of them are ordinary people – like you and me – who were extraordinary messengers of peace and shalom. How beautiful are the feet and hands and faces and tears of those who proclaim peace. They made a difference in the world. You can, too.

L2: Let's walk to the next station and continue to carry your Polarity Sings. If you know this song, sing along:

(Sing through song once and then begin to walk, chanting the song till all are in place at the next station.)

*Shalom my friends, Shalom my friends, Shalom, Shalom,
God's peace be with you; God's peace be with you, Shalom, Shalom.*

OR

*Shalom chaverim, shalom chaverim, shalom, shalom.
Le-hit-ra-ot, le-hit-ra-ot, shalom, shalom.*

6. "Wholeness Path"

Isaiah: 53:5

Supplies/Set Up:

- Two tables, set together, to form a T Shape covered with white newsprint paper
- A large cross will be drawn in advance on the paper
- Several images that match the gathering spot images, are sitting on the edges of the table, not touching the cross. These should be no larger than a half sheet of paper. Make sure you have enough images for all in your group. **This images are found in the Gathering Welcoming Spot Folder and in the Life Pictures folder.**

L1: *Gather group at next station and invite participants to set down their polarity signs on the cross and say, "Shalom, my friend" to the person who was their opposite.*

L1: Welcome to "Wholeness Path," where Shalom is married not only to justice, but also to suffering. God's shalom is ours once and for all through the cross of Christ.

L2: Listen to other words of the prophet Isaiah who says in 53:5 --

*"But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed."*

L1: Isaiah speaks about a suffering servant who took punishment on himself to make others "whole." The word translated "whole" is our word "shalom."

As Christians, we hear these words describing our savior Jesus, who suffered for us, who suffered to make us whole. True peace from God does not bypass or ignore suffering. Rather, suffering for the sake of the other becomes the way to wholeness, the way to shalom. God's deepest shalom comes to us in the cross. The cross of Christ calls us and frees us to be instruments of shalom for others. Remember the pictures you saw at the place where we began our pilgrimage? We have more here. Choose a picture and put it on the cross. As you put your picture there, say "shalom" for it. Feel free to add a comment about it if you want. L2 will start.

L2: *Choose a picture and place it on the cross, saying, "Shalom at home" or Shalom on the Web," or "Shalom at school," etc. When done once again, start humming "Shalom, My Friends" and walk to next station.*

L1: *Instruct pilgrims to follow L2's lead all at once; no need to go one at time. When done, they follow L2 to the next station. Encourage them to hum or sing the Shalom song as they go.*

7. "Blessing Highway"

Philippians 4:7

Supplies/Set Up:

- Plastic bowl with water in a pitcher
- Small stand or table to put the bowl on.
- One pitcher of water. L1 would use this to pour water into the bowl while the L2 talks.
- Stones or memento of the journey – perhaps with sign of the cross on them
- Stamp or pen to use in passport to end the Journey. It Could be signed, "Go in Peace, Serve the Lord"

L1: *Invite pilgrims to stand on one side of the "baptismal font." In the font will be stones or memento of the journey*

L2: *Stand opposite the pilgrims on the side of the font, which is closest to the exit.*

L1: Welcome to "Blessing Highway," where Shalom is God's blessing to us.

L2: Listen to the words of Philippians 4:7 in which Paul writes –
"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

L1: Paul sealed his message of promise to the Philippians with these words. We often hear these words as a blessing near the end of worship. Our hearts and minds are guarded by God's shalom.

L2: *Share in just a few sentences why this blessing has been crucial to your ministry or your life. If there is any extra time, feel free to have the pilgrims ask questions. Finish by rereading Philippians 4:7, now as a blessing, making the sign of the cross.*

Now may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

L1: *While the L2 is talking, very slowly pour water from the pitcher into the bowl, as an auditory reminder of what the youth hear/see during a baptism in their own congregations.*

L2: *When done reading Philippians 4:7, invite pilgrims to come forward one at a time to the baptismal bowl where they will choose a stone from the water and receive a blessing from you.*

Make the sign of the cross on each forehead and say: "You are blessed to be a blessing. Shalom."

L1: *Be stationed at the exit door to stamp, write in, or use the Pre-made labels to put in each traveler's passport, the message "Go in Peace, Serve the Lord" You may need to motion the first person to come to the exit, so others will follow.*