

# 2

## How Is Social Action Spiritual?

### Materials

Nametags

Markers

Copy of Group

Agreement from first week

The open chair symbolizes the group's willingness to welcome new participants.

Encourage participants to feel free to invite a friend, co-worker or neighbor to participate in the group whether or not they attend the church.

Give new participants copy of signed Group Agreement.

**Intention:** To explore the spiritual nature of social activism.

**Create Sacred Space:** Set up chairs in a circle for the number of participants plus one. Eliminate as many potential interruptions as possible by turning off phones and making certain that pets and children are in places where they can be themselves without disturbing the meeting. Soft meditative music may be playing and a candle burning if appropriate and permitted. Wherever you are meeting, the idea is to make the meeting as comfortable as possible and conducive to sharing.

### The Gathering

**Welcome (3-5 minutes):** Greet participants at the door and invite them to make a nametag. This might also be a good time to show them where the restrooms are, where they can hang their coats, etc. Promptly at the starting time, invite group members into an opening circle for welcome, check-in and centering prayer.

**Facilitator:** “Welcome, everyone, to our Small Group Exploration on *Spiritual Social Action*. Thank you for honoring your commitment to this small group and for honoring our agreement to begin on time. Today we will be considering in what ways social action might be spiritual. Before we continue with our exploration, let’s center ourselves with prayer.”

Colleen Zuck (ed.),  
*The Best of Daily Word*, Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, MO, p. 46. Reprinted with permission of Unity®, publisher of *Daily Word*®.

**Centering Prayer (3 minutes):** “I invite you to close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so, and to take three slow deep breaths in and out. (*Pause.*) Relax into your chairs as you listen these words from the *Daily Word* on ‘Serving God.’ ”

Here am I, God; use me. Express Your life and love through me. Use me to bring Your good into the lives of all I meet. For the things that I acquire or achieve for myself alone are empty compared with the things that I share with others. Let my hands be Your hands, and let them work to bless others. Use my feet so that I may walk, in Your light, a path so sure that others will see and follow. Use my ears to hear only the truth. Use my eyes to look beyond what seems to be and see only the good. Use my heart so that I may love others as I am loved by You. Use my mouth to speak words of blessing and praise.

I am ready, God, for You to express Your loving presence through me. I am ready to let You use my life in any way that You will, for I know that Your will is only good. I am ready to be Your channel because I know that I am richly blessed as I bless others. I am ready, God, to let You do Your will through me.  
(*Pause.*)

Isaiah 6:8

“From Isaiah: ‘I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I; send me.” ’ (*Pause.*)

“Dear God, thank you for always being available to us, to allow us to be blessed and to be a blessing. We follow your guidance in all we do, to enrich our lives and the lives of others. Thank you for allowing us to join with each other to do so. In the name and through the power of our Teacher and Wayshower, Jesus the Christ. Amen.”

**Materials**

Copies of “Talking With My Hero” handouts from Appendix, 1 per person  
Pens

**Introductions/Check-in (8-10 minutes): Introductions/Check-in (8-10 minutes):** “A special welcome to all of you who are here for the first time. Thank you in advance for sharing yourselves with us. Thank you all for honoring the group commitment we signed last week.

“Let’s go around our circle and introduce ourselves to one another again. If this is your first time here, please share what led you to join this group. For those who were here last week, please tell us in one or two sentences one idea about social action that has intrigued you since our meeting last week.”  
*(Begin with yourself, modeling the instructions you have just given.)*

**Community Building: Talking With My Hero (15-20 minutes):**

“Let’s each take a few moments now to think about someone who has been a hero to you personally in the realm of social action. Choose someone in your family or circle of friends—anyone who has made a difference in our world in ways that are meaningful to you personally. I will give each of you a handout to fill out about your hero. We will have a few minutes to complete it, and then we can each share responses to the two questions that have the most significance to us. *(Proceed as indicated.)*

## Discovery and Exploration

### Materials

Copies of Social Action definition, Bible passage, and Prayer Request handout from Appendix, 1 per person

**Facilitator:** “We have seen how other people have been led by their own inner guidance to be a force for good in the world, just as Jesus was. Last week we looked at ways that Jesus might be considered a ‘social activist.’ This week we are going to take a deeper look at how that might look in our own day-to-day world, and in what ways these actions are spiritual ones.

“Let’s read together the passage from Jesus’ teachings included on your handout. Also included on your handout is the definition of ‘social activism’ we used last week and will be using today also. As we go around the circle to my left, the first person can read the definition. Then the people following can each read one paragraph of the Bible passage. You may pass if you wish.” (*Proceed as indicated.*)

### A Definition of Social Action

Social action is an intentional action in support of bringing about change for the better in some aspect of life connected with human society in general. Its intention is to afford fair treatment and benefits to all.

### Doing It for the Least of These (Matthew 25:34-40, New Century Version)

[One day Jesus was speaking with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. He talked with them about many things, including the following.]

Son of man: That in us which discerns the difference between Truth and error.  
(Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p. 181)

"The King [the Son of Man] will say to the people on his right, ‘Come, my Father has given you his blessing. Receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I

was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

"Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?'

"Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' "

**Ask:**

- According to Jesus in this passage, when did God offer us the blessing of the kingdom? What does that mean to you?
- What does this passage say to you?
- What actions does Jesus mention in this passage that might be considered social activism?
- Since this was a part of Jesus' teachings, we may consider this to be spiritual instruction. In what ways might each of these be a *spiritual* action?
- How is the Christ within us speaking to us in this passage?
- How do we serve the Christ when we do these actions?
- How do we serve the Christ *within ourselves* when we do these actions?
- What are some ways you have served others?
- How have you benefited?

**Materials**

Copies backpack  
handout from  
Appendix, 1 per person  
Pens

**In My Backpack activity (20-25 minutes):** “We have considered ways that we listen to the Christ within us in regard to spiritual social action. We have also given some thought to what our heroes in spiritual social action offer.

“Think of a time when some action of yours made a difference in the world around you. What did you need for that activity, in both inner and outer ways? Which things were tangible (such as a good pair of walking shoes), and which were intangible (such as optimism)? Take 3 minutes to draw the items or write the words in your backpack on this handout.

“After that, we will form into pairs, and each briefly tell your partner about the way you made a difference. Each partner will think of what they personally might have that might also be of help to the other person in such an activity. Draw the item or write the word in your partner’s backpack. (*Proceed as indicated, then rejoin in the larger group and ask the following questions.*)

**After sharing, ask the following questions:**

- Which of the items in the backpack would you consider spiritual? Why?
- How are you enriched spiritually by these? How might others be?
- What did it feel like to offer help to others in pursuing their vision of service?
- In what ways do you feel empowered after this activity?

**Facilitator:** “We can see that we have each already made a difference in our own world, using items we carry around with us in our ‘backpack’ all the time. Our inner resources enrich ourselves and others, and can be a blessing to others in helping them achieve their own dreams. We make a difference!”

## Caring and Closing

### Materials

Slips of paper  
Pens  
Basket

**Note:** Facilitator places prayer requests in prayer box at church.

**Further Exploration (1-2 minutes):** “In the coming week, be aware of ways you make a difference in the world around you, and be aware of the ways in which others make a difference for you. Reflect on the spiritual nature of these types of interactions.

“If you feel moved to share your experiences, you are welcome to do that during our check-in at the beginning of our next session.”

**Prayer Requests (8-10 minutes):** “This is the time in our circle when we share our prayer requests with one another and support each other with affirmative prayer. Praying affirmatively, we focus on the Truth of who we are, knowing that the truth of our good is activated in our lives as we affirm and believe it.

“Prayer is one way we seek to make a difference in the world. As I pass around these paper and pens, think about the prayer requests you might have for yourself or others. Reflect on the inner qualities that we have considered today, both within ourselves and within our heroes—including Jesus. Choose an inner quality that you would like to experience in a deeper way, or that you would like another to experience for themselves.

“We can quicken that quality by claiming it for ourselves, or for the one for whom we are praying. Write down your prayer request on your paper in the form of an affirmation: ‘I am [or Chris, etc. is] (peaceful, whole, forgiving, etc.)’ When you are finished, fold your paper over and place in this basket.

“I will be taking these prayer requests to church and placing them in our prayer box.”

**After all prayer requests are in the basket, say:** “I will pass around the basket with our prayer requests. We can each take a moment while holding the basket to acknowledge the deep desires of everyone in our group to make a positive difference. Acknowledge the power within each person to manifest our God-self in all the ways we desire. After affirming right outcome for everyone’s requests, I invite you to say, either silently or aloud, ‘It is so,’ and pass the basket to the next person.”

**After receiving the basket back, conclude:** “As we move into this week, let us remember the sacred trust we have taken on for each other, to believe in the power of Spirit to accomplish what we each seek.

“Let us also remember the example set for us by our Teacher and Wayshower, Jesus the Christ, who reminded us, ‘Anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.’

“I will close by reading a statement from Unity’s co-founder Myrtle Fillmore who reminded us how much we receive when we give: ‘A rich consciousness and loving service go hand in hand and are the foundation stones of plenty.’

“Thank you, Spirit, for allowing us to come together today to join with each other to do your work. Amen.”

## Talking With My Hero

**Think of someone in your life whom you admire in the realm of social action.**

- Pretend you have invited your hero to go to dinner. Where would you go?
- What questions would you ask your hero?
- What are her/his characteristics/actions that you most admire? Which ones would you call spiritual? Why?
- In what ways are you most like your hero?
- What gift would you give your hero?

*Adapted from Eye Openers and Breath Catchers, Sandra Schmulback and Bert Hagemann, Pieces of Learning, [piecesoflearning.com](http://piecesoflearning.com), 1998, pp. 10-11.*

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[Son of man: That in us which discerns the difference between truth and error. (Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p. 181)]

#### Affirmative Prayer Request

I am [or Chris, etc. is] (peaceful, whole, forgiving, etc.).

## In My Backpack

Think of what you have used, both tangible and intangible, in accomplishing a social action in the past. Draw or write the words in the backpack below.

