

*Preparing for a*

# **pilgrimage of justice and peace**

*A Guide for Parishes, Missions and Ministries*



**World Council  
of Churches**  
Publications

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is inviting member churches to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. As local members of this global fellowship, we are encouraged to explore the meaning of pilgrimage in our context and in light of our faith. This three-part study series is designed as a guide to that initial process of exploration.

### What better time to engage in spiritual reflection than now!

Pilgrimage is embedded in the Christian faith tradition and in the traditions of our neighbours of other faiths. It is a form of faith development that involves both spiritual discernment and action.

### Exploring the idea of pilgrimage

This series offers the opportunity to explore what “pilgrimage” means to us today; expand our knowledge of our community; and gather spiritual resources to sustain us.

### Resources

In addition to resources suggested for each of the sessions, you will find prayers, hymns, Bible readings and background material in the “Pilgrimage Road Kit” at the end of this resource, and additional information about the WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace at [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org).

You are invited to share any new resources you produce for your group on WCC’s Pilgrimage Facebook site and on Twitter at #whatisapilgrimage

Enjoy the trip! May it enrich your reflection and your experience of Christian discipleship.

# SESSION 1

## Exploring the idea of pilgrimage

*What does it mean for me and my faith community?*



### Opening prayer

*God is with us in every pass, Jesus is with us on every hill  
Spirit is with us on every stream, headland and ridge  
and lawn;*

*Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,  
Each lying down, each rising up,  
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,  
Each step of the journey we take.  
(Adapted from Carmina Gadelica)*

### Bible readings

*Genesis 12:1-6 Hebrews 11:8-12*

1. What is your idea of pilgrimage? In what ways is it similar to the two passages we just read? How does it differ?
2. How were Abraham and Sarah transformed by their travels?

### Thinking about pilgrimage in your life

A pilgrimage is a journey of moral or spiritual significance that can strengthen our faith.

3. If you have made an intentional pilgrimage, share that story.
4. Sometimes we are inadvertent pilgrims. Think about an experience you have had while on a trip that changed you or your way of seeing things.
5. What words or images would you use to describe that experience?

Transformative spirituality is what you experience when your faith is challenged and enriched by being in a new place or meeting new people.

6. Based on the idea of transformative spirituality and the stories you have just heard, what does the word pilgrimage mean to you now?
7. Does a pilgrimage that might lead to spiritual transformation excite or frighten you? What are your hopes? What are your fears?



# SESSION **2** OPTION ONE

*Meeting our neighbours*

## Exploring our neighbourhood

*What can we discover that is new to us?*



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### Greeting

*We come together conscious of our hopes for our families, our community, and ourselves. We come together conscious of how much there is to learn about each other and the community we share. We come together in the hope of building new connections and strengthening those that already exist. In this, we are somewhat like modern day pilgrims. May we enjoy walking together!*

*(Kristine Greenaway)*

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### Reading

*The point of travelling is not to arrive but to return home laden with pollen you shall work up into honey the mind feeds on. (R.S. Thomas)*

1. How does this quotation reflect our hopes for our time together today?

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### Getting to know each other

2. Where is home to you?
3. How did you travel to get here?

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### Seeing our neighbourhood through new eyes

4. What do you like about our shared neighbourhood and what worries you?
5. What are you doing in response to those worries or what would you hope to do?
6. What is new to you?
7. What concerns do we share? Are there any that we would like to explore further together?
8. What resources do we have that could help us respond to these concerns?

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### Closing

Read the R.S. Thomas quote again. What word or image will you take home to illustrate the phrase “pollen for honey”?

# SESSION **2** OPTION TWO

*Exploring through the media*

## Exploring our neighbourhood

*What can we discover that is new to us?*



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### Opening prayer

*Dear God, as we gather we bring with us our hopes for our families, our community, and ourselves. We come together conscious of how much there is to learn about our community. We are pilgrims in your world. May we be guided to follow you in the way Jesus showed us. Amen*  
(Kristine Greenaway)

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### First Bible reading

*Exodus 3: 1-5*

1. What places are sacred to you? Are any of them in this community?
2. What makes them sacred?

*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*  
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

3. How do these lines add to your understanding of the Exodus passage? What do they say to you about pilgrimage in sacred places?

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### Sharing images and stories about our neighbourhood

Tell the group about the story or issue covered in the material you brought.

4. Are any of the places described sacred to you? Why?
5. What do you like about these stories and what worries you?
6. What images and key phrases emerge as we share our reactions to these stories and images of our community?

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### Second Bible reading

*Exodus 3: 16-18*

Reflect in silence about the Bible reading and the concerns identified in our community. Are there any concerns that our faith calls us to address together?



# SESSION 3

## Preparing for pilgrimage

*What does our faith say?*



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### Opening prayer

*O God, as we gather in this place,  
open our hearts and teach us how  
to view our life here on earth  
as a pilgrim's path to heaven.*

*Give us grace to tread it courageously  
in the company of your faithful people.*

*Help us to set our affections*

*on things above,*

*not on the passing vanities of this world,*

*and grant that as we journey on*

*in the way of holiness*

*we may bear a good witness to our Lord,*

*and serve all who need our help*

*along the way,*

*for the glory of your name. Amen*

*(Adaptation of prayer from Hereford Cathedral)*

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### Bible readings

*Hebrews 11:8-16 Micah 4: 1-4*

1. What were Sarah and Abraham leaving behind? What did they know of the places to which they were to travel?

2. How would our community be different if transformed to be like the description in Micah of God's city?

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### Answering the call to follow in Jesus' way

3. What does following in Jesus' Way mean to you?

4. Are there examples in our community of people who seek to follow the Way? What are they doing?

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## Exploring what “justice” and “peace” mean to people of faith

5. Describe a situation in our community that is unjust. What it would be like if it were transformed into a just situation?
6. Name a situation in our community that is not peaceful and what peace would look like.
7. Some say there can be no peace without justice. Others say there can be no justice without peace. What do you think?

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## Imagining a pilgrimage for justice and peace in our community

8. How might a pilgrimage of justice and peace benefit others and enrich your faith? This might be a pilgrimage of personal spiritual development or spirituality-in-action as part of a group pilgrimage.
9. Who in the wider community might want to join in planning a pilgrimage?

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## Looking back over the road we have traveled together

Sit in silence to pray and meditate on what steps you feel called to take next with your faith community or in your personal spiritual practice. Note these steps in your pilgrimage journal.

Or write a word or phrase or draw an image that indicates where you see such a pilgrimage leading our community. Share what you have produced with the group.

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## Next steps

**Keep adding to your pilgrimage journal.** Write notes, make sketches, or take photos as you think about plans for a pilgrimage.

**Reflect.** Choose a prayer or song from these sessions to repeat each day.

**Read.** Remember these words from Psalm 84: 5.

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. [New International Version]*

**Outreach.** Contact someone you met in these sessions who you feel may be a “fellow traveler.” Arrange to meet and talk about your next steps.

**Share the news.** Post to Facebook or Twitter #whatisapilgrimage

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## Prayer of blessing “Benedictus”

*In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
(Luke 1: 76-79[ICEL])*

# Pilgrimage Road Kit

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you,  
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*

*(Psalm 84:5)*

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Pilgrims travel with few possessions, packing only what is most essential. As a spiritual pilgrim, you will want to carry resources to feed your soul. Here then is a basic Pilgrimage Road Kit. Along the way, you will receive gifts that will nourish your spirit. Add them to your kit. They will make the Way easier and your burdens lighter.

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## PRAYERS OF GATHERING

*O God, as we gather in this place,  
open our hearts and teach us how  
to view our life here on earth  
as a pilgrim's path to heaven.  
Give us grace to tread it courageously  
in the company of your faithful people.  
Help us to set our affections  
on things above,  
not on the passing vanities of this world,  
and grant that as we journey on  
in the way of holiness  
we may bear a good witness to our Lord,  
and serve all who need our help  
along the way,  
for the glory of your name. Amen  
(Adaptation of prayer from Hereford Cathedral)*

*Creator, we come together conscious of our hopes for our families, our community, and ourselves. We come together conscious of how much there is to learn about each other and the community we share. We come together in the hope of building new connections and strengthening those that already exist. In this, we are somewhat like modern day pilgrims. May we enjoy walking together!  
(Kristine Greenaway)*

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## PRAYERS OF GUIDANCE

*Creator God, grant that by your tender mercy, the dawn from on high will break upon us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Guide our feet into the way of peace. Amen.  
(Based on Luke 1:78-79)*

*God is with us in every pass, Jesus is with us on every hill  
Spirit is with us on every stream, headland and ridge  
and lawn;  
Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,  
Each lying down, each rising up,  
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,  
Each step of the journey we take.  
(Adapted from Carmina Gadelica)*

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## PRAYERS OF BLESSING

*Bless to me, O God, the earth beneath my feet,  
Bless to me, O God, the path whereon I go,  
Bless to me, O God, the people whom I meet,  
Today, tonight and tomorrow. Amen  
(A prayer used by the Iona Community in Scotland)*

*May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind always be at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
and rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May you be held in the palm of God's hand.  
(Traditional gaelic blessing)*

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## BENEDICTUS

*In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow  
of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
(Luke 1: 76-79[ICEL])*

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## PRAYER OF SAINT BASIL

*We bless you, O God, most high and Lord of mercy. You are always doing great and inscrutable things with us, glorious and wonderful, and without number. You grant us sleep for rest from our infirmities, and repose from the burdens of our much toiling flesh. We thank you, for you have not destroyed us with our sins, but have continued to love us; and though we were sunk in despair, you have raised us up to glorify your power. Therefore, we implore your incomparable goodness. Enlighten the eyes of our understanding and raise up our minds from the heavy sleep of indolence. Open our mouth and fill it with your praise, that we may be able without distraction to sing and confess that you are God, glorified in all and by all, the eternal Father, with your only begotten Son, and your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.*

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## A PRAYER FOR ADULTS

*At all times and in every hour, you are worshiped and glorified in heaven and on earth, Christ our God. Long in patience, great in mercy and compassion, you love the righteous and show mercy to sinners. You call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. Lord, receive our prayers at the present time. Direct our lives according to your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil, and distress. Surround us with your holy angels that, guarded and guided by their host, we may arrive at the unity of the faith and the understanding of your ineffable glory. For you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.*

*[Daily Prayers for Orthodox Christians:  
The Synekdemos]*

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## EL CAMINO PRAYERS

See the pilgrimage prayer resources offered at <http://www.206tours.com/info/elcamino/prayers.htm>

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## BIBLE TEXTS

*Compelled to leave for new places*  
Genesis 12: 1-9  
Exodus 2:11-15 See also Acts 7: 23-29  
Exodus 3: 1-12

*Sources of strength*  
Exodus 13:19-22  
Exodus 18: 5-7; 14-27  
Exodus 20: 9-11 See also Exodus 34:21

*Call to follow Jesus*  
Matthew 4:18-20  
Mark 1:19-20  
Matthew 9:9  
John 1:43

*Jesus' Way*  
Matthew 25: 31-40

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## REFLECTIONS

“Transformative Spirituality: a spirituality of encounter” (Greenaway) [PDF]

“Reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” by Dagmar Heller. *Ecumenical Review* (July 2014) World Council of Churches

“Fear and Joy on the Pilgrimage” by Clare Amos. *Ecumenical Review* (July 2014) World Council of Churches

“The Future We Want – Life, not Destruction” (also known as the Message from Mainz) German Ecumenical Assembly 2014

“A Trinitarian Perspective on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” by Martin Robra. *Ecumenical Review* (July 2014) World Council of Churches

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## POEMS

**Poems on Pilgrimage**  
<http://www.spiritual-pilgrimage.com/2012/02/poems-on-pilgrimage/>

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## WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

### Message of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC): Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

<http://wccpilgrimage.org/pilgrimage-steps/what-is-a-pilgrimage/resources>

### WCC Central Committee 2014: An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2014/an-invitation-to-the-pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace>

### WCC News release: Transformative spirituality is a breath of fresh air.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/transformative-spirituality-is-a-breath-of-fire>

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## BOOKS

**The Way of the Pilgrim** also known as *The Pilgrim's Tale* (attributed to Archimandrite Mikhail Kozlov and Arsenii Troepolskii)

### Carmina Gadelica

<http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/carminagadelicah04carm.pdf>

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## VIDEO AND AUDIO

### A Pilgrim's Way (8-part video documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhQ98qolWTE&index=8&list=PLE38CBC60B094C0CA>

### Interview with Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald (audio)

<https://soundcloud.com/wccradio01/bishop-mark-macdonald>

### WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (video)

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/videos/pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace/>

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## GRAPHIC

### Infographic : Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

[http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/files/Pilgrimage\\_JusticePeace\\_web.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/files/Pilgrimage_JusticePeace_web.pdf)

PREPARING FOR A PILGRIMAGE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE: A Guide for Parishes, Missions and Ministries

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Photos: Peter Williams/WCC, Melissa Engle Hess/WCC, Paul Jeffrey/Action by Churches Together, EAPPI/WCC

Design and typesetting: Julie Kauffman

ISBN: 978-2-8254-1662-4

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