

## Quiet Music

### Opening Reflection:

Margaret Anna Cusack Reading:

We have considered the great importance of our thoughts. But thoughts are chiefly of importance as the sources of our actions, as the motives for our actions and in their immediate effect thoughts have only an influence upon ourselves. We defile or purify ourselves by our thoughts, but we defile or purify others by our words. Have we ever thought about this seriously? Have we ever considered the importance of our words? Have we ever calculated the good or the harm that we may do by our words? Gentle words serve us best.

*The Book of the Blessed Ones*

Thich Nat Hanh Reading:

In Buddhist psychology, we speak of consciousness in terms of seeds, like a seed of corn. There are many kinds of seeds that lie deep in consciousness: seeds of anger, violence, fear, jealousy, despair, discrimination and hate. They are all there. When they sleep they are okay. But if someone comes along and waters these seeds they will manifest as energy and they will make us suffer. We also have wholesome seeds in us, namely seeds of understanding, awakening, compassion, nonviolence, nondiscrimination, joy and forgiveness. If you do not live in a good environment, these wholesome seeds will have no chance to be watered. That is why it is very important to select an environment where the wholesome seeds in us can be watered every day, and the negative seeds will rarely be watered.

*Keeping the Peace*

**All Pray: Creator God, we ask you to be with us to help us today and everyday to speak gentle words and to water the wholesome life-giving seeds within us and all creation. Amen**

### Exercise One:

Listen to the first scenario and record words on chart as directed by the convener.

Listen to the second scenario and record words on chart.

### Discussion Questions:

**How can the power of language affect us and our cosmos in positive and negative ways?**

**How does violent language lead to violent behavior?**

**If we are committed to nonviolent action, how does our use of language reflect this value?**

### Exercise Two:

Finding more examples of violent language/images/phrases we hear in our culture.

Sharing of examples.

## Closing Wisdom Words:

“In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.” Marianne Williamson

### Even You

Be a chalice  
a channel a flow  
a river an outlet a sea  
be a tunnel a course a lotus a song  
a journey a road a traveling word  
open your hands your eyes your mouth  
your very being  
let the universe roar through you  
not embarrassed  
to be beautiful in an ugly place  
beauty changes everything  
to its rightful state of being...  
even you.

By Ruth Forman

### Prayer:

**Creator God, continue the good work you have begun in us today and always. Amen**

### Song:

#### ***Seeds of Peace***

(Old Scottish melody, *Marie's Wedding* with new words by Annie Welch)



## *The Power of Language*

*April 2010 CSG  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace*

### Exercise One:

Hand out the charts provided and then read the following instructions about the power of language.

Today we are invited to participate in exercises designed to help us become more aware and conscious of how our language can be violent. For the first exercise we will listen to two scenarios. As I read the first scenario, listen for violent words, phrases and images. In the chart provided you can list the words you have identified.

Have members listen to the scenario which is not printed in their booklets. The words to be identified are highlighted for your convenience.

#### Scenario 1:

At an early morning office meeting an executive in charge of sales, uses this speech to motivate her team of employees. "I am here this morning to get you **fired up** to do some strategic planning. The bottom line is, we need to **crush our competitors** and not let up until we have made an impact. **Shoot me** an email this afternoon with **bulleted ideas** for consideration and your thoughts for a possible **plan of attack**. Any questions? Remember our mission is to **hammer the competition** and increase our sales figures!"

After members have heard the scenario, ask them to recall and make a note on Chart One of words, phrases and images that express violence. The reading can be repeated until the members have identified all the violent expressive words.

In the same way the members listen to the second scenario, only this time, they list the more life-giving words and phrases on the chart.

#### Scenario 2:

At an early morning office meeting an executive uses this speech to motivate her team of employees. "**Good morning. Thanks** for coming to help get some **positive ideas** flowing again. We have some hard work ahead of us and we need to **put our brains together** to accomplish our task. Please send me your ideas this afternoon and **highlight** what you feel can be our most **effective overall plan**. Are there any questions for me at this time? We do so **appreciate all** that you do to **help** this company be **successful**. Thanks!"

After completing the chart, suggest a brief time of quiet. Then invite sharing about language.

Some questions in their booklets might help the discussion.

How can the power of language affect us and our cosmos in life-giving or destructive ways?

How does violent language lead to violent behavior?

If we are committed to nonviolent action, how do our words reflect this value?

Exercise Two: Read directly from the booklet for instructions to members about this exercise.

After they have had sufficient time to add examples, have the members share them with one another. It is suggested that members keep these charts and materials in a binder or folder for further reflection as we continue to deepen our focus on seeds of nonviolence.

Follow the booklet for the Closing Wisdom Words, Prayer and Seeds of Peace Song.

## Chart One

### Reflection on Violent/Nonviolent Language

(for use with the two scenarios)

Violent word or phrases	Nonviolent/life giving words or phrases

