

A Place for Hope Resources

1. Ask people to take up an arm-wrestling position, offering them an imaginary reward each time they overcome their opponent: by default, people will go into an aggressive, competitive mode – not realising that a more positive outcome is possible when people negotiate a collaborative solution.
2. Stand face-to-face with someone, demonstrating the *impasse* which is reached when we invade each other's space. Then stand side-by-side, showing that we are closer to one another and create a space for dialogue. Then, walk together side by side - this further enhances the possibility of discussing our differences. In this illustration, it is also helpful to ask people to consider what the presence of a third party (mediator) might make when people with different viewpoints journey together.
3. A reminder to people that conflict is not a bad thing in itself, but that – through conflict properly handled – we grow and mature. The slides on *Levels of Conflict* at the beginning of the presentation on Conflict are particularly useful in illustrating the behaviour that belongs to those who are dealing creatively with conflict as opposed to those who are dealing with conflict in unhealthy ways.

Biblical Resources for Worship or Use in Presentations

1. I often use the example of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) as an ancient way of resolving disputes, illustrating the point that resort to violence (physical or verbal) is still a common solution in human behaviour. I then refer to the variety of New Testament examples where Jesus presses home the Gospel imperative to work for peace and reconciliation, eg, in turning the other cheek or reaching out to the enemy in the parable of the Good Samaritan, or in his description of the children of God as peacemakers in the Beatitudes
2. Reference to our theological understanding of Jesus as our mediator before God. Paul's *Second Letter to Corinthians, Chapter 5 Verse 19* – God in Christ restoring his relationship with humanity and giving to us the ministry of restored relationships to tell others. This point can be developed in many different ways and can be used to encourage people to see the role of the local church as mediating the love of God as a power for restoring relationships in our communities.

3. Bearing in mind the theme for the Guild projects, Micah 6, Verse 8 – *What does the Lord require of you, to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God* – these injunctions can neatly be woven into one of the themes for this project which is the transformation of our congregations into communities of peace and reconciliation, where the love of kindness and the need to see justice prevail are fundamental *A Place for Hope*.