



PWOC
LDP

*Leadership Development
Program*

Supply List:

- EQUIPMENT FOR VIEWING VIDEOS
- DRY ERASE BOARD & MARKERS
- COPIES OF PARTICIPANT GUIDE, PENS
- TIMER

*Fall Board Training—***WORKSHOP 3: Conflict Resolution**

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Conflict in life and among a ministry team is not a matter of *if* conflict will happen, but *when* it will happen. Wise leaders will recognize this reality and provide ongoing training on conflict resolution. Scripture provides principles and examples for leaders to follow when conflict arises. This training module follows the trajectory of the power of a leader's words (Proverbs), to the biblical model for dealing with conflict (Matthew 18), to viewing conflict as an opportunity for growth (Acts 6).

CONTEXT: This workshop is number 3 of 4 that comprise the Annual Core Training, one-day event in the PWOC LDP. Workshops 3 and 4 are meant to be presented back-to-back for the PWOC board. The PWOC Chaplain Sponsor should be invited, but attendance is optional. For a single day of training, Workshops 3 and 4 would make up the afternoon block following lunch (about 3 ½ hours, including a break in the middle), or they can be their own half-day of training.

Note: "Local Leader" in the Leader's Guide refers to the PWOC President or anyone else on the board that will facilitate the workshop. Note that the video script written below is only for the facilitator's reference or in case of equipment failure (the Participant's Guide does not contain the script). If you prefer to present this workshop yourself, rather than using the videos, familiarize yourself with the content so that you will not have to read it. Make it natural. Use your own stories and illustrations.

TIME: 90 minutes

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Local Leader: *Welcome everyone to the workshop. Read the following paragraph to the board or say something similar in your own words.*



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

Conflict in life and among a PWOC board is not a matter of *if* conflict will happen, but *when* conflict will happen. We want to be wise leaders who recognize this reality and live out the PWOC motto, "We are workers together for Christ." As leaders, we have the power to encourage or to discourage, to promote peace or to promote conflict. We can make the choice to take offense, or we can choose to overlook offense. As part of a PWOC leadership team, we wield influence, and our words are the currency of that influence.

➤ **Discuss:** In a small group of 3 or 4 people, share an example of a time when a positive word from someone made a difference in your life and leadership. **Local Leader:** *After they are in groups, set a timer for 4 minutes.*

Local Leader: Your examples are proof of the positive and healthy impact words can have on a life. Words can come down like a weight and feel like a punch in the face or the gut. Or they can be as described in Proverbs 25:11 (CEB), "Words spoken at the right time are like gold apples in a silver setting."

1. THE POWER OF A LEADER'S WORDS (10 minutes)

Focus: Words have power to encourage or discourage. A leader's words are her currency for influence.

Scripture Foundation: Proverbs 18:21

Local Leader: *Play Conflict Resolution Video #1. Instruct your board to jot down anything that resonates with them.*

Conflict Resolution: Video #1 (8:33)

On a windswept hill in an English country churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. The quaint stone bears an epitaph not easily seen unless you stoop over and look closely. The faint etchings read:

Beneath this stone, a lump of clay,
Lies Arabella Young,
Who on the twenty-fourth of May,
Began to hold her tongue.¹

Consider these questions:

What will you communicate today?

What will you say?

How will you say it?

What kind of words will you use?

¹ Source: Unknown <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/holding-her-tongue>, (accessed July 3, 2021).



Warm words?
Cool words?
Hot words?
Cold words?
Restrictive words?
Inspiring words?
Productive words?
Corrosive words?
Words to heal?
Words to help?
Words of hope?
Words of wisdom?
Words of joy?
Words of love?
Words of peace?
Words of purpose?
What will be your tone?
What will be your intention?
What power will you exercise with your words today?

Did you even think about the words that would tumble out of your mouth this morning when you awoke? Words are important. Words are powerful. The average person speaks between 16,000 and 20,000 words per day.² That is a lot of words to not be intentional about how they are used!

Have you ever thought about words being like living **organisms**? Think about it—words are capable of growing, changing, spreading, and influencing the world in many ways. The influence may be direct or indirect through others as they carry emotional weight and meaning. This is especially true for someone in leadership. As humans, God set us apart by speech and language. God entrusted us with great power through language.

Can you recall moments when words took on their own life? Perhaps it was a time when someone called you a negative name, or when that boy dumped you for no reason, or when you heard “I’m disappointed in you” from a parent, or when you received a letter of rejection.

The Old Testament book of Proverbs has much to say about the power of words. These Scriptures let us know that we can exhibit both wisdom and foolishness through words. Yes, words have power! When used wisely, words can bring healing and hope. When used foolishly, words can bring death and heartache. Let’s face it, we’ve all met those people who should use a glue stick instead of lipstick!

² <https://ubrp.arizona.edu/study-finds-no-difference-in-the-amount-men-and-women-talk/#:~:text=On%20average%2C%20women%20speak%2016%2C215,speak%2015%2C669%20words%20per%20day> (accessed June 2, 2021).



This power is downplayed when we say that a large part of communication is body language. I don't know about you, but a large part of the trouble I get myself into is usually not because of my body language. Yes, body language is an important element of communication, but most of my troubles come because of words. Think about the drama you experience in relationships. Words, right? Author Jodi Picoult, in her book *Salem Falls* wrote, "Words are like eggs dropped from great heights; you can no more call them back than ignore the mess they leave when they fall."³

In another book *Words Can Change Your Brain* authors Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman propose that words and the way we use language have an impact on the brain. Newberg and Waldman state that negative language will foster a negative mindset, while positive words will have the opposite effect.⁴ Yes, words can change things.

We glimpse the power of words and the way they can bring change in the story of creation. The book of Genesis describes God creating the world with words. We read, "God said..." all through Genesis 1 as the story of creation unfolds. In Isaiah 55:11 we read that God's Word accomplishes His purpose; in Hebrews 4:12 His Word is alive and active; in Psalm 119:105 His Word guides us; and Matthew 4:4—His words are like bread to our soul. God's Word is a powerful change agent for good.

His Word also teaches us about the power of our words. Our words can be reckless like swords, as Proverbs 12:18 describes, but then the Word of God goes on to tell us that the tongue of the wise brings healing. We are told in Proverbs 15:1, a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

In 1 Peter 3:15-16, we are encouraged to "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." In the same way, Luke 6:45 tells us that the things stored up in our hearts will come out of our mouths.

I encourage you as leaders to take some time to evaluate the power of words as you consider your upcoming leadership tenure. Sister, it bears repeating—words are the currency of relationship and as such, we need to spend our words wisely. The way we choose to string words together has an impact. Words are the primary means in which we relate to each other. In any relationship they can be good and life-giving, or they can be evil and destructive. As leaders in PWOC, may our constant prayer be that of Psalm 19:14: "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." (*End of Video #1*)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV)

³ Jodi Picoult, *Salem Falls* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 112.

⁴ Andrew Newburg and Mark Waldman, *Words Can Change Your Brain: 12 Conversations to Build Trust, Resolve Conflict, and Increase Intimacy* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2012), 25.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

ACTIVITY 1: THE POWER OF WORDS—PROVERBS (10 minutes)

Local Leader: Have the board work in their same small groups. Discussion groups will read the Old Testament Proverbs in their Participant's Guide and make a list of Positive and Negative things they learn about the power of words from these sayings.

- *The wise in heart accepts commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin (Proverbs 10:8, NIV).*
- *Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue (Proverbs 11:12).*
- *The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing (Proverbs 12:18).*
- *Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin (Proverbs 13:3).*
- *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1).*
- *The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4).*
- *Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones (Proverbs 16:24).*
- *Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity (Proverbs 21:23).*

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

II. CAN WE TALK? (30 minutes)

Focus: Conflict is unavoidable in team ministry. An effective leader will not neglect crucial conversations but will address conflict quickly and face to face in order to promote unity.

Scripture Foundation: Matthew 18:15-17

Local Leader: *Facilitate a whole-group discussion.* We've addressed the power of words and the importance of using them wisely. **Conflict** is an important word we need to discuss, understand, and be prepared to address. As much as we want to believe and hope this will not be an issue in our leadership tenure, we would be fooling ourselves.

➤ **Discuss:** What words do you think of when you hear the word *conflict*? List popcorn responses on a whiteboard.

Local Leader: Give your board this definition of conflict to write in their Participant's Guide. **Conflict is: "A struggle of opposing ideas or values."**⁵ Using this as a working definition, release your board to take a five-minute walk, in groups of 2 or 3 (working with a new partner/group), to brainstorm the primary issues that can cause conflict on a team. When everyone returns from the walk, allow brief and succinct reports from the groups. Key words and phrases can be added to the whiteboard. After the discussion, play Video #2.

Conflict Resolution: Video #2 (10:26)

The issues that cause conflict on a leadership team will vary. Most likely they will fall under the categories of:

- **Goals:** Conflict may result because of differing goals or **priorities** among team members.
- **Miscommunication:** Conflict may result because a leader does not explain or identify expectations.
- **Personality:** Conflict may result because there is a lack of **chemistry** between two people or an inability to find an effective way to relate to another person on the team.
- **Resources:** Conflict may result from competition over scarce resources, or that the allocation of resources seems unfair.
- **Styles:** Conflict may result from differing communication and **thinking** styles.
- **Values:** Conflict is often not just a differing of opinions, but a differing of values.

We have already agreed that conflict is unavoidable as we work together on a leadership team. As leaders, we need to view two things as non-negotiable when it comes to conflict:

- 1) **Address conflict quickly*** see *Conflict Considerations below*
- 2) **Address conflict face to face** (when possible)

⁵ Chris Adams, *Transformed Lives* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 1999), 172.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

Jesus taught us to address conflict head on. Listen to His words from Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV): *If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

This passage is not about broken and damaged relationships; it is about guarding and keeping relationships. Throughout Matthew 18, Jesus teaches the principles of discipleship. In Matthew 18:1-5 He's asked about who will be the greatest. How many conflicts would be avoided if we had the proper perspective of our own importance, understanding it's not about our own greatness?

In Matthew 18:6-9 Jesus cautions against causing anyone to sin. How many conflicts would be avoided if we maintained a healthy abhorrence of sin? Seminary professor and pastor, Dr. Lorie O'Dea put it this way, "I need to be more disgusted with sin than I am [focused on] having my own way." This reminds me of James 4:1-2, *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you. You want something but don't get it.*

In Matthew 18:10-12 Jesus talks about a shepherd going to look for the one sheep that is lost. The ninety-nine were important, but the one that wandered away was worth search and rescue. Just like this shepherd, in ministry we must always operate with a missional mindset, looking at the situation with redemption as the goal.

In their book *Leading Women Who Wound*, Sue Edwards and Kelly Matthews declare we can become "skilled peacemakers" if we follow the steps Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17. But they caution it will not be easy. Here's how they break down the steps:

Peacemaking Step 1: Go and Show

Allow me to paraphrase the Scripture for our purpose:

If your sister sins, go and show her her fault when the two of you are alone. If she listens to you, you have regained your sister.

This directive is given to believers with the initiative taken by the one who is offended. If someone wounds you, you are to go to her.

***Conflict Considerations:** Author Denise Van Eck encourages these considerations before a crucial confrontation:

- **Pray.** Ask the Lord to help you prepare for the conversation and confrontation.
- **Clarify your purpose.** Do you have a need for everyone to know you are in charge? Is there a need to get your way? For confrontation to be effective, the purpose must be to find the truth.
- **Begin with empathy.** Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. Empathy opens a pathway for understanding to occur. When



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

you prepare for a difficult conversation, ask yourself if in some way you can put yourself in the other person's shoes.

- **Is this a matter of taste or truth?** Are you upset about a situation because you don't like it, or is there something that is truly wrong and needs to be corrected?
- **Clarify the issue.** Try to narrow down the central issue to one word. Is the issue trust? Confidence? Competence? When confronting a situation, the temptation is to list a smorgasbord of issues. Rabbit trails are dangerous as they cloud the issue you need to address.
- **Be honest with yourself.** Have you contributed to the conflict? Is the issue that bothers you in another person something you see in yourself?
- **Look ahead to future consequences.** What will be the result if this issue is *not* addressed? Will you be a part of shaping the future in a positive way by this confrontation?
- **Let go of control.** Remember you cannot control what another person thinks, feels, or believes.
- **Initiate the conversation.** Be the grown up and act.⁶ Go as soon as there is a question or concern.
- **Keep the circle small.** Contain the issue so it does not become a bigger issue. The more people involved the more challenging the resolution.

Peacemaking Step 2: Take Witnesses

But if she does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that at the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established.

Witnesses can provide emotional safety, accountability, and insight as they listen and observe. The presence of others most often serves as a motivator to seek positive, rather than negative, results. Agree together (with the person being confronted) who the witnesses will be with the goal to bring in people who are trusted and will be helpful.

Peacemaking Step 3: Take it to the Church

If she refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If she refuses to listen to the church, treat her like a Gentile or a tax collector.

Edwards and Matthews suggest that if we follow the instructions of Jesus, no more than **4** or **5** people should be aware of the conflict. Prayerfully, that small number has found a peaceful resolution and a way to move forward. But what if that does not happen? The issue must be confronted by leadership. In the case of PWOC, that would be the PWOC Chaplain Sponsor.

The challenge as we lead in our home, ministry context, and community is to learn another language: The language of peace and resolution. The choice in conflict is not to

⁶ Denise Van Eck, "The Conversation You Dread," *Leadership Journal* XXV, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 39. Used with permission per fair use standards.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

fight to the death; there is a better way. Ephesians 4:3 admonishes us to *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*. May it be so as you lead. (End of Video #2)

Local Leader: *Facilitate the time of Reflection and Activity 2. Set a timer for 3 minutes for the Reflect exercise. Encourage contemplative prayer if participants have extra time. After they reflect, instruct them to work in groups of 2 or 3. Once they are in groups, assign each group one of the scenarios to discuss. Give them about 5-7 minutes for discussion. Give groups the opportunity to share their thoughts with the whole board.*

- **Reflect:** Take a moment to practice self-examination. Put a plus sign “+” by any of the Peacemaking Steps or Conflict Considerations listed in this section that come naturally to you. Put a minus sign “-” by the Peacemaking Step(s) or Conflict Consideration(s) that are most difficult for you. You will use this information in Activity 2. If you have extra time, use it for contemplative prayer.

ACTIVITY 2: CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCENARIOS (15 minutes)

- **Apply Your Knowledge:** Work in groups of 2-3. Take about 5 minutes to consider the conflict resolution scenario assigned to your group in light of your personal reflections regarding what comes naturally to you and what is most difficult for you in handling conflict. Answer the questions below. Your group will have the chance to share your ideas.

1. Based on your personal tendencies, how do you think you would react in this situation?
2. What consequences would follow? Would your action/inaction bring healing or further damage?
3. Do you need to shift your perspective or approach on conflict resolution? How?

Scenario 1: Your PWOC President is extremely extroverted and has to verbally process everything. Board meetings are frustrating and always go overtime. The decisions that are made are often later reversed, making the meetings feel like a total waste of time. The board is frustrated, and you see cliques forming. It's not like there is sin involved, and maybe the President can't help the way she is, so should you say something? What do you do?

Scenario 2: One of the women in your PWOC body is becoming well known for her public outbursts filled with frustration and anger over a variety of topics. She feels justified in her behavior and sees it as “being genuine” rather than “being fake” like everyone else. You see some women in the PWOC body avoiding her, while a few others are beginning to behave like her. It doesn't take much to set her off, and the atmosphere of your PWOC morning is shifting. What do you do?



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

Scenario 3: You are the 1VP of Spiritual Life and are in the process of choosing studies for the Fall semester. You have wisely chosen to build a team who will prayerfully help you make selections. There is a particular study that you feel called to offer, but there is a sharp divide on your team. One woman is so strongly opposed to the study that she states she will no longer attend PWOC if the study is offered. You are at an impasse. What do you do?

Scenario 4: Your 2VP of Programs wants “all hands on deck” for the setup, execution, and cleanup of the next Program. She asked you to bring several items for decoration. It takes you quite a while to assemble the items, plus a few trips to the store to supplement what you do not have. When you get to the chapel to help with setup, you see several of the items you were asked to bring already there and in use. You are told your items are not needed, yet you invested time and money and feel hurt. You don’t want to be petty—it’s just stuff. Do you say something? Do you let it go? What do you do?

Scenario 5: You are the Outreach Coordinator on the board and have a powerful vision for how to reach your community for Christ. Your ideas require financial support. When you present your plans to the President, you are told there is no money for outreach, but you happen to know from a private conversation with the Financial Liaison that several thousand dollars has been allocated to PWOC. Is the President lying? Why would she say there’s no money if there is? Is she against outreach? Against you? What do you do?

Scenario 6: You are the Praise & Worship leader. One of the women on your team thinks it is wrong to sing anything but hymns. She still participates in worship practice and sings on the team...so long as it is a hymn. Though she is mostly respectful, you have heard some sharp side-remarks and recently overheard her talking to a friend, expressing her doubts about your leadership, specifically because you choose songs “from the radio” that are not appropriate (in her opinion). You understand that PWOC encompasses a wide variety of beliefs and perspectives. Should you address this? What do you do?

Scenario 7: You are a detail-oriented PWOC President trying to work with the PWOC Chaplain Sponsor who is a global, big-picture, visionary sort of thinker, who wants to be involved in the decision-making process. As you are trying to make plans for your year, you are finding it hard to nail down specifics on calendar, budget, curriculum, and theme. Your Chaplain wants to keep options open, but you need some concrete plans to move forward. Your board is beginning to become impatient with your vague answers on all these topics. You don’t want to badmouth your Chaplain, but his/her indecision is impeding progress and creating tension. What do you do?



III. CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE, BUT COMBAT IS OPTIONAL (20 minutes)

FOCUS: Conflict does not have to be something from which we shy away from or fear. We can learn to use it as an opportunity for positive growth. In the words of Max Lucado, "Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional." How we respond to conflict and how we resolve it will limit or enable our success as a leadership team.

SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION: Acts 6:1-7

Local Leader: Play Video #3.

Conflict Resolution Video #3 (8:15)

Believe it or not, conflict does not have to be something which we shy away from or fear. We can learn to use it as an opportunity for positive growth. In the words of Max Lucado, "Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional." How we respond to conflict and how we resolve it will limit or enable our success as a leadership team. Consider this situation that took place in the early Church found in Acts 6:1-7:

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Why, you ask, did I read this passage of Scripture? There's no conflict. EXACTLY. Acts 6:1-7 is a passage that illustrates best practice of a leadership team. Think about it—this was a prime opportunity for the Church to implode if the leaders in the early Church had not handled this situation correctly. A situation rife with potential for conflict was instead turned into an opportunity for growth.

The entire book of Acts gives an account of the birth of the Church. Acts 6 indicates that word about the Church had spread, and growth had taken place to include the coming together of different backgrounds and cultures—not unlike what we find in PWOC.

Let's look a little closer at this passage and see what we can learn:

- First of all, the disciples viewed the situation through the lens of their God-given mission. Their mission was the Great Commission. We have that same mission in PWOC—To lead women to Christ.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

- In verse 2 we read that the Hellenistic Jews came openly with their complaint to the disciples. The disciples listened and responded immediately with a practical solution. Instead of imposing an arbitrary rule, they involved others in the solution and allowed them to participate in the plan. Their response showed they valued everyone. The needs of the widows were given significance.
- We see in verse 3 they gave clear instructions and initiated a specific plan.
- Verse 6 tells us they sought God's help.
- Finally, verse 7 indicates they expected new growth—and that is what happened. *So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.* Did you get that—a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Priests—the religious group who were antagonistic toward Jesus and the newly birthed Church. The mission God had for them moved forward.
- They raised up new leaders. In fact, they came out of this conflict with seven new leaders.⁷

For many people, conflict means something negative. We may think that entering into conflict with someone means we will lose something, or it will end a relationship. We often fear conflict because it means that something awful might happen and we are not sure we can handle the consequences. We want our meetings and relationships to be neat, tidy, and tied with a pretty bow. Sometimes in order to resolve conflict, things get messy. We may have to work through intense emotions with one another. Too often we would rather not have to do the hard work of resolution, but then we miss an opportunity.

Conflict offers many opportunities for a PWOC leadership team. The tension can lead us toward identifying needed change. Conflict can indicate the health of your leadership team. We too often go out of our way to avoid conflict, when working through conflict can be the catalyst for more productive PWOC ministry. When we steward conflict well, we invest in the discipleship of others, which is the primary purpose of the PWOC Aims. The world can see the character of Christ at work in His people. Above all, God is glorified as we work together for Christ in the pursuit of unity.

Yes, sisters—how we steward conflict is a discipleship issue. And yes, conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional. We can choose to have crucial conversations with one another. We can choose to pray together, work together, and collaborate together. Let's talk about it a little more. After you've had a few minutes to work together on the next activity, I will return to close out the workshop. (*End of Video #3*)

⁷ Dr. Lori O'Dea (2013, July). *Conflict Management*. Class lecture, AGTS, Springfield, MO.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

Local Leader: *Instruct your board to read the paragraph (below) in their Participant guide and to mark anything that is meaningful. After they have read it and made their marks, encourage them to journal their thoughts. If time allows, invite board member to share what they wrote. When finished, play Video #4.*

- *Mark & Journal:* What impacts you the most in this paragraph? Why? Mark what is most significant to you, then journal about it.

Conflict is actually an opportunity. First Corinthians is a long conflict resolution letter. At the end of chapter 10, Paul sums up by saying, "...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God, not for your own good but for others. Follow my example." Paul says to look at conflict as God looks at it. In every conflict, He has given you an opportunity to exalt Him. He wants you to behave so differently that people take notice and are impressed. It is an opportunity to grow in Christlikeness. If we embrace conflict as a primary means of sanctification—it's not something we go looking for, but when it comes—we slow down and say, 'Lord, if nothing else in this situation, refine me.'⁸

Conflict Resolution Video #4: Conclusion (4:07)

In the words of Ken Sande, author of *Peacemaker*, "...the Bible teaches that we should see conflict neither as an inconvenience nor as an occasion to force our will on others, but rather as an opportunity to demonstrate the love and power of God in our lives."⁹

Consider the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 (NIV):

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

As we close this section of our training, let's declare our commitment to work together toward unity when conflicts arise among us. You have a responsive reading printed in your Participant Guide. I will read the light print and you join in reading what's printed in bold.

➤ *Responsive Reading:*

Leader: When we are tempted to take sides rather than work together,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

Leader: When we are tempted to hold grudges,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

⁸ The Leadership Forum, "Keeping Conflict Healthy", *Leadership Journal* XXV, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 21.

⁹ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991). 31.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.

Leader: When we are tempted to gossip or be malicious,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

Leader: When we would rather complain than work toward a solution,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

Leader: When we find ourselves adding to disorder or division,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

Leader: In the inevitable misunderstandings and miscommunication we will face,

ALL: Jesus, help us live in peace.

ALL: Give us courage to admit our wrongs without being defensive.

Give us determination to assume the best about others.

Teach us to imitate you, God

To be gracious

To be compassionate

To be slow to anger

To be rich in love.

Help us make every effort to stay unified in the Spirit through the bond of peace. Amen.¹⁰

My Sisters in Christ, wherever you are serving today, I pray God's blessing on every word you speak; may He bless the work of your hands, and may your military community be drawn to Him because of your love and unity.

¹⁰ "Congregational Reading about Unity", Rethink Worship: Creative Ideas for Your Services, January 14, 2013,. <http://www.rethinkworship.com/congregational-reading-about-unity/>, accessed June 2, 2021.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041.