

# Activities for an Occupation Free Faith Community

## Education

Host a series of educational events, using *Steadfast Hope* or the *Kairos Document* as a basis for study. At each event, have a petition, form letter, or postcards from the US Campaign to End the Occupation for people to sign. Make sure your educational events always include an action component.

Share pages of *Steadfast Hope* during coffee hour or other times with those who may have missed class.

Host someone who has returned from a delegation with Interfaith Peace Builders, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Friends of Sabeel, or the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program, or another individual with personal knowledge of the region.

Show videos that depict what's going on in the Holy Land today.

Erect a replica of the Separation Barrier/Apartheid Wall around or near the Nativity Scene during Advent.

Insert informational material or form letters to sign into the church bulletin.

Armchair advocacy: Circulate by email Action Items from websites like Churches for Middle East Peace, Friends of Sabeel North America, US Campaign to End the Occupation, the Israel/Palestine Mission Network, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, or the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness.

Organize a service focusing on justice and peace in the Holy Land. Include an action component. Encourage members to make "Minute for mission announcements" about facts on the ground in the Holy Land and what boycott activities are taking place locally.

During "joys and concerns," publicly share prayers for justice and peace and for nonviolent actors working to bring about a just peace in the Holy Land.

Provide a "change for change" box (like the cardboard banks of old) where people can drop spare change and bring to church to be given to organizations that support human rights in Israel/Palestine.

Find out what consumer products are made in illegal settlements, or made by companies that support or profit from the Occupation and publicize the information to congregants.

## **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions**

Have your session declare your congregation an “Occupation Free Zone” by passing a resolution certifying that no settlement products will be used by the church.

Encourage your faith community to endorse the Palestinian Christian *Kairos Document*.

Have your session submit an overture on divestment or boycott to your presbytery.

Ask congregants to boycott certain items in local stores. Provide an Occupation-free shopping list for them and use the list as a scavenger hunt. Have people report back about where items are found so others can protest to the store carrying them. Keep track on church bulletin board.

**Create coupons that consumers can give to managers at stores carrying boycottable products**, to let stores know customers are dissatisfied with them carrying products made in the settlements in the occupied territories.

Provide form letters to congregants so people can sign and send them to stores that stock items selected for boycott.

Encourage people to ask in stores, for forms to fill out and send to corporate headquarters objecting to items on the shelves. Safeway’s form is postage prepaid.

Encourage your pastor or other leader of your faith community to send a letter to the administrators of their pension fund asking the fund to divest from companies that support Israel’s illegal occupation.

Make sure your church is not invested in companies profiting from Israel’s occupation.

## **U.S. Policy**

Have congregants sign a form letter to their Member of Congress and Senators supporting the Letter from the 15 clergy calling for an investigation into possible violations of US law by Israel using US military aid. If your community uses an offering plate, have them put the letters in as offerings, or leave a box for the forms in the narthex and have one person collect them and mail or hand deliver them to the representative and senators.

Hold a Bible study or educational event that culminates in a letter writing or op-ed writing activity.

Construct a fake “Wall” in or by the sanctuary (get permission first!). Have people write prayers for peace on the Wall. Then, after the service, have people help dismantle the Wall and then sign a letter to a Member of Congress objecting to US support of illegal settlements and the wall.

**Based on: The US Campaign to End the Occupation**

**<http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=2707>**