

Why Palestine Matters, The Struggle to End Colonialism

COURSE GUIDELINES FOR GROUP FACILITATORS

BY REV. KATHERINE CUNNINGHAM

Why Palestine Matters is intended to open a space for engaging the cross-currents among some contemporary global justice issues through looking at the history and present-day experiences and outcomes in Palestine. We suggest some important guidelines in creating a study group, including:

- Keep the discussion non-judgmental and open to discovery. The goal is to create a safe space for exploring the intersectional dynamics from the chapters for each session.
- Accept experiences of dislocation from one's comfort zone and accept debate on ideas regarding what is normal or standard.
- Focus on collaborative learning, resisting leadership as "the expert" and allow enough time for processing information and responses.
- Affirm the diversity of perspectives with emphasis on how the material is touching hearts and minds. Try using summary statements to help move discussion to the next questions or topics to be considered.
- Incorporate various facilitation strategies to maximize participation, and be flexible if your approach isn't working. If your group is too large for whole group discussions, transition into working in partners, triads, or small groups before coming together as a whole group.
- Have the following materials available: newsprint, easel, markers, index cards, pens or pencils, tape or gum to attach paper to surfaces or a whiteboard.
- Use video clips or sidebar quotes as discussion prompts.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR INITIAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Tailor the group's format to time available because the quality of learning and interaction on these topics is of greater importance than covering all of the material in the book. The book provides a 4-5 week course for an initial run, not a deep dive, leaving open the possibility of future in-depth topic/chapter groups. Most adult groups can commit to 3-4 sessions of 60-90 minutes. Keep the sessions scheduled weekly to maximize energy and commitment to the study.

Video clips can be part of the preparation for the next class along with do-ahead readings.

