



Mediation for Crisis Relationships

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Introduction: The power of the Gospel

Isa. 61:1-2a

I'm assuming as a basis for this presentation some basic knowledge of principles *The Peacemaker* or *Peacemaking for Families* by Ken Sande or *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflicts* by Robert Jones.

I. Overview: Biblical basis of mediation, why be involved, and what facilitates mediation:

A. Christ as Mediator—the Gospel (I John 2:1; I Tim. 2:5, a mesites [an arbitrator, mediator])

B. Reconciliation: “ministers of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5: 18-21; Eph. 4:1-6)

The idea of two followers of Christ being unreconciled with each other is antithetical to the Gospel!

C. Phil. 2:1-15—serving one another/washing feet (John 13).

D. Discipleship/shepherding opportunity.

E. God’s sovereignty (Psalm 139): It is not a mistake that you are the one aware of this conflict.

F. Creating a climate for conflict resolution (a culture of peace/reconciliation, a Gospel culture) instead of a conflict/firestorm/red flags warnings atmosphere—**What kind of climate will there be in your church or home?**

- **Model a Peacemaker demeanor and principles yourself (for example, deals with things quickly, don’t let them fester).**
- **Teach and enforce these principles regularly**

G. The concept of neutrality. You are “for” each party.

II. Preparation for the mediation (see also the “PAUSE” principle in *The Peacemaker* pages 227-246, chapter 11)



Trying to set them up for success and create a climate conducive to reconciliation. This happens as each own his or her own sin and better understands his or her own heart.

A. Pray

B. Your own holiness: "...a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim 2:21)."

C. Conflict coaching:

The goal is NOT extended counseling—the goal is reconciliation. How can we get these people ready to meet each other as soon as possible since they are unreconciled? Issues requiring more extended counseling may come up. Conflict coaching is about getting them ready for the mediation (probably five meetings, maybe more, sometimes less depending on how well they understand Peacemaker principles).

What barriers need to be broken down so that it safe for him or her to "come to the table?" What are his or her fears/concerns?

Give hope—the LORD can help them. I often use Isa. 61:1-2a along with the "signs" that the Lord did that show His deity to demonstrate how powerful He is!

Teach each how to use the Peacemaker brochure

The "three opportunities" from *The Peacemaker* (To: Glorify God, Serve others and Grow in Christlikeness).

Help him/her understand her own or his own heart (Prov. 4:23; James 4:1-2).

Prep them for what to expect during the mediation meeting and get agreement to follow the rules.

Get them to agree to confidentiality—that is, they will not talk to others unless they are part of the reconciliation process.

Homework: See premediation session by session notes

III. The mediation itself:

G-R-A-C-E-E

GRACE is about ...



Phil. 2:1-10

Location—neutral, ideally with proper facilities (bathrooms, kitchen)

Length—I've done week by week mediations but prefer 1 ½ day or more depending on the amount of issues.

Gospel welcome and atmosphere (devotional to set tone)/getting commitment to abide by rules

Remind of opportunities to Glorify God, Serve others, Grow to be like Christ.

Confidentiality—we will not talk to people outside of the circle of those trying to resolve these issues.

Your role, roles of all in the room (introduce others such as pastors, lawyers—all should have agreed ahead of time on who will be in the room).

Honesty/openness

Respectful communication

No “assumicide”

No interrupting but do take notes (mediators can interrupt to get clarification or address issues)

Get agreement

No disruptive departures

Private meetings—will give report afterwards

Breaks as necessary—anyone can call for these.

Any other rules they would like to add

Reaffirming relationships and stating hopes for the mediation

Brief statement of what each believes needs to be accomplished to come to agreement and their hopes for the relationship. Summarize what you are hearing with them.

Allowing all to unfold the story and allowing issues to be clearly stated (confession and forgiveness are mixed through the process here and anywhere during the GRACEE process).



What got them to this point?

Who goes first?

You clarify as they go (facts and feelings).

You listen for heart themes—what seems to be motivating them? What are their desires? Wants?

Loves? What are they serving?

Ask them to be specific. We need to deal with facts not assumptions.

What to do with disruptive parties.

Clarifying issues and turning issues into questions to be answered

What are the **issues**—put them in question form.

What is his or her **position** on these issues? Ask questions until it is clearly understood.

What is his or her **interest**? Fear? Concerns? Underlying motivations

Create an issues list with each issue turned into a key question or questions to be answered. This takes time.

Exploring answers to the questions (Let's brainstorm as a team!)

I start with the easiest issue to show how the process works and then go to the hardest.

Eph. 4:29-32

Be wild—the sky's the limit (quantity not quality)

No judging/criticizing

Hitchhiking is encouraged

Ending with agreement on the best answers to the questions.

Writing up a record of what transpired and the agreements into a “Redemptive Agreement” (Memorandum of Understanding [MOU])



Out of all the options these seem like they will work

A “redemptive” agreement—write it up if necessary/appropriate (see example)

Address all issues. Don’t ignore the seemingly impossible issue!

What can I do to help restore you?

What can you do?

What can I do to help resolve the pain?

What actions can I take that would help you know I am serious about reconciliation?

IV.A successful mediator:

- Understands the role of the mediator—a facilitator, a reporter, a suggester, a servant, neutral, listener.
- Is willing to get involved in the messy affairs of others out of love for Christ and others.
- Practices good listening skills (asks good questions and restates and clarifies the person’s statements).
- Practices turning issues into questions to be answered biblically
- Practices understanding the real “interests”/motivations/heart of others. “What’s the real issue here?” is on his/her mind regularly.
- Endeavors to understand his or her own heart worship/motivation issues and seeks to understand these with others.
- Follows up out of a desire to shepherd/disciple people—are they keeping their commitments.
- Is willing to put issues “on the table” that others are reluctant to bring up so as to seek resolution.