

Discussion Guide

for select articles in

Western Friend



Some general approaches to group discussions:

- Choose a text no longer than three pages. Bring enough copies for everyone to share.
- Begin and end with a moment of worship.
- Begin by asking one volunteer to read the whole text aloud. (Having one reader helps people focus on the meaning better than multiple readers.)
- Perhaps simply conduct worship-sharing about the text.
- Perhaps ask people to begin by discussing the text in pairs or triads.
- Perhaps ask different small groups to begin by discussing different sections of the text.
- End by asking everyone to share reflections with the whole group: Which ideas raised earlier were especially surprising or meaningful?

Two Borders, Two Border Walls

by Jamie Mudd

What does the author see in the two lands she describes?

What are the different political forces at play in these two places?

How are the dynamics on the two borders similar / different?

What scenarios can you imagine that would lead to dismantling these walls?

What spiritual barriers inside people cause us to build walls outside?

Women Doing Life

An interview with Lora Lempert

What did you learn from the author about how it would feel to live inside prison?

What are some ways that prison guards exercise authority over prisoners?

What aspects of prison life are most destructive to a person's spirit?

What can these women in prison teach you about finding meaning in your life?

If you had the power to change things, where would you start with prison reform?

Prisoners Transforming Prisons

by Laura Magnani

What physical limitations that are placed on these prisoners?

What did the prisoners hope to win through the hunger strikes, and how close did they get to those goals?

What different types of organizations did the story describe as working for prison reform? How can those groups work together?

Why do hunger strikes ever work? What is their power?

What "divide and conquer" tactics did the authorities use in this story? How can communities protect themselves from such tactics?

Sanctuary in Mancos

by Sandy Feutz and Tom Vaughan

How would you describe Rosa's life today?

What were the steps in Rosa's life that brought her to live in the Mancos United Methodist Church?

How does Rosa's view of her life in the U.S. differ from the views of protectionistic nationalists?

How complicated would it be for your meeting to decide to provide sanctuary for a refugee?