



**Faith and  
Peace**

# Is religion a cause of conflict and war, or could it be the basis of a real peace?

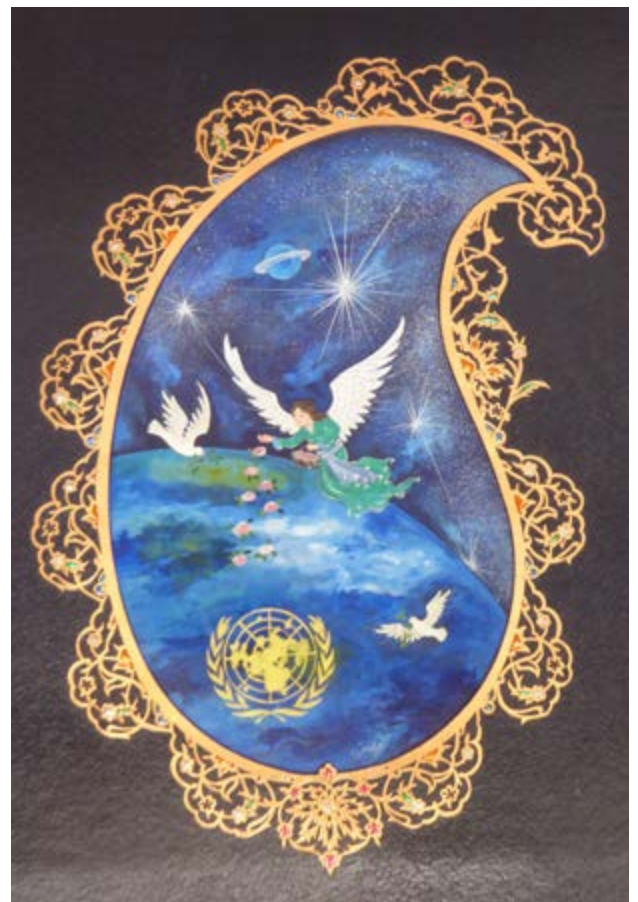
**Religion is blamed for much of the violence in the world, yet most faiths demand respect for all human beings.**

The three “Religions of the Book” – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – share common roots in ancient stories of such spiritual ancestors as Abraham. They also share values and visions of peace, recognising the human worth of all people.

This exhibition looks at the way in which the three faiths promote peace – in their teaching, and in the lives of their people.

We look especially at the creative lives of women from different faiths, living together in peace, in Bradford, Yorkshire. Their collaboration, in producing the creative art in this exhibition, has itself been a work of peace.

Of course, the richness and diversity of world religions mean that this cannot be the whole story. But a glimpse into the priority of peace in these three faiths is surely a sign of hope – hope that, far from being the problem, these faiths could actually hold in themselves the solutions to the troubles of our world.



Painting by Ms Farzaneh Jafari and the craftwork by Mr Majid Malazadeh

# CHRISTIANITY: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

## JESUS CHRIST

Jesus of Nazareth was nonviolent. He taught about the Kingdom of God. In his Sermon on the Mount, he stressed loving God and loving one's neighbour. He called on his followers to forgive others and to love their enemies. Reconciliation was a priority.

Roman soldiers occupied his country. Jesus showed kindness to them and befriended both freedom-fighters and collaborators. He refused to lead a military revolt and entered Jerusalem on a humble donkey rather than a soldier's horse. When arrested, he stopped Peter, one of his followers, defending him with a sword. His nonviolent stand led to death on a cross, and was vindicated in his resurrection.

"In disarming Peter, Christ disarmed every soldier"

[Tertullian, 2nd century CE]



"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" [Matthew 5:9]  
Oxford Christians for Peace banner. [© The Peace Museum]

# CHRISTIANITY: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The early followers of Jesus Christ continued this nonviolent tradition. Paul told Christians to

“Bless those who persecute you ... Do not repay anyone evil for evil” [Romans 12:14, 17].

The first Christians stayed out of the Roman army, both to avoid idolatry and for pacifist reasons. In the 4th century CE, Martin, a soldier doing police-work, refused to go into battle saying “I am a soldier of Christ; it is not lawful for me to fight”.

When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, war became tolerated, with conditions. Few wars have ever met all the conditions.



Martin renounces the army [Simone Martin, 14th century CE, Assisi]

## THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

Nonviolence and reconciliation are central to being Christian today.

“I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values.”

[Pope Francis, 2017]

“Reconciliation doesn’t mean we all agree. It means we find ways of disagreeing – perhaps very passionately – but loving each other deeply at the same time, and being deeply committed to each other.”

[Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury]



A bullet converted into a cross of peace. [World Council of Churches]

# CHRISTIAN PEACE PEOPLE

Pope Francis has listed Dorothy Day – revered by the Catholic Church as a “Servant of God” - and Martin Luther King Jr. as two of the four greatest Americans. They were both outspoken in their support of nonviolence.



Bob Fitch photography archive, [© Stanford University Libraries]

## DOROTHY DAY

In 1933, Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker newspaper and movement, setting up Houses for Hospitality for homeless people. A writer and activist, she chose to live in poverty. She was ready to face arrest and jail for her nonviolent civil disobedience against war and injustice. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, 1941, she wrote:

“We are still pacifists. Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount, which means that we will try to be peacemakers. Speaking for many of our conscientious objectors, we will not participate in armed warfare or in making munitions...”

## DESMOND TUTU

A former Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for being the champion of nonviolent opposition to the apartheid. After the fall of the régime, he helped to build a new order in South Africa by chairing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, exposing injustice in the past.

“When will we learn that human beings are of infinite value because they have been created in the image of God?

We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in peace. Let us work to be peacemakers.

Let us beat our swords into ploughshares.”



[© LightLock]



# CHRISTIAN PEACE PEOPLE

Pope Francis has listed Dorothy Day – revered by the Catholic Church as a “Servant of God” - and Martin Luther King Jr. as two of the four greatest Americans. They were both outspoken in their support of nonviolence.



Bob Fitch photography archive, [© Stanford University Libraries]

## MARTIN LUTHER KING

An American civil rights leader, committed to nonviolence as a path for change, King was a passionate orator, and organiser of protests, boycotts and marches. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

“Nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life”

“Was not Jesus an extremist for love: ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you...?’”

## THE ANGLICAN PACIFIST FELLOWSHIP

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship (APF) has been campaigning against war and for peace since 1937. It is a worldwide movement, active in the Anglican Communion of Churches, including the Church of England. APF rejects war and seeks nonviolent means to bring about peace and justice. APF believes:

“that Jesus’ teaching is incompatible with the waging of war; that a Christian church should never support or justify war; that our Christian witness should include opposing the waging or justifying of war.”

For more information, and to join APF, see [www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk](http://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk).



[© Anglican Pacifist Fellowship]

# JUDAISM: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

## SEEKING PEACE

“When the Holy One created the first human, He took him and led him round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: ‘Behold my works, how beautiful, how splendid they are. All that I have created, I created for you. Take care, therefore, that you do not destroy my world, for if you do, there will be on none left to repair what you have destroyed.’”

[Midrash Kohelet Rabbah, 1 on Ecclesiastes 7:13; c.700-950CE]



Words of Peace: Shalom in Hebrew and Salaam in Aramaic [© The Peace Museum]

## THE VISION OF PEACE

The people knew that their future would not be determined by might alone, nor by power, but by spirit and by being faithful to the vision of God's ultimate peace.

The prophets (8th to 6th centuries BCE) and the Sages (150BCE – 299CE) saw peace as the vision and goal for righteous people. There was a unity in humanity, and a distaste for war. It also made good practical sense to build relations among peoples.

R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Hanina:

“The disciples of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says, And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children... The Lord will bless His people with peace.”

[Berakhot 64a]

# JUDAISM: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

## A 21ST CENTURY PEACE

A former chief rabbi in the UK reflected on the traumas faced by Jewish people in modern times.

“Hating the German people will not bring back to life one victim of the Holocaust. Hating the Palestinians will not bring Israel one step nearer to peace. Loving God more does not entitle me to love people less...

I honour the past not by repeating it but by learning from it – by refusing to add pain to pain, grief to grief.

That is why we must answer hatred with love, violence with peace, resentment with generosity of spirit and conflict with reconciliation.”

[Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference, 2002]



JONAH: Jews Organised for a Nuclear Arms Halt [© The Peace Museum]





# JEWISH PEACE PEOPLE

## PRIZE-WINNING MEN

Three leaders of Israel have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Each had a military past, yet took bold steps for peace.

Menachem Begin, 1978 [joint with Anwar al-Sadat]. As Prime Minister of Israel, he signed the Camp David Accords, a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. In his Nobel Lecture, he recalled the prophets' words:

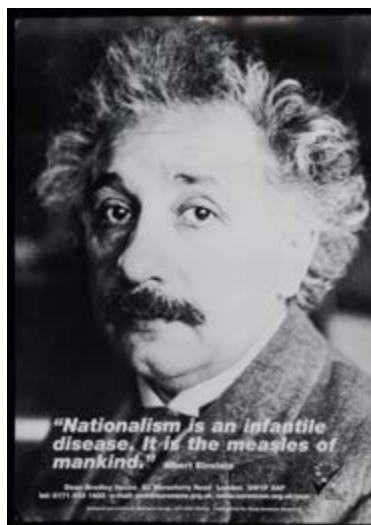
"And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more."

[Isaiah 2.4, and Micah 4.3]

Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, 1994 [joint with Yasser Arafat]. Peres negotiated the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians, approved by Prime Minister Rabin. In his Nobel Lecture, Peres said:

**"Slings, arrows and gas chambers can annihilate man, but cannot destroy human values, dignity, and freedom.  
The message of the Jewish people to mankind is that faith and moral vision can triumph over all adversity.  
Israel's role in the Middle East should be to contribute to a great, sustained regional revival. A Middle East without wars, without enemies, without ballistic missiles, without nuclear warheads...  
A Middle East that is not a killing field but a field of creativity and growth."**

Other Jewish winners of the Nobel Peace Prize include Josef Rotblat and Albert Einstein, both scientists who became passionate opponents of nuclear weapons.



Albert Einstein poster; Josef Rotblat by Maggie Glover [The Peace Museum]

# ISLAM: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

## PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) AS AN ADVOCATE FOR PEACE

From when he was a young boy, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) earned a reputation as al-amin, the trustworthy, due to his honesty and fairness in dealing with people. This led to him commonly taking the role of arbiter between conflicting groups of people.

An example of these peace-making qualities is the world's first ever recorded constitution in 622BCE: Dastūr al-Madīnah (The Medina Charter). Invited to Yathrib (Medina), Muhammad (pbuh) mediated between warring tribes of Muslims, polytheists and Jews. His practical agreement led to a united community based on peace. Each clan had its own responsibilities. The rights of all people were recognised despite their differing religious backgrounds.

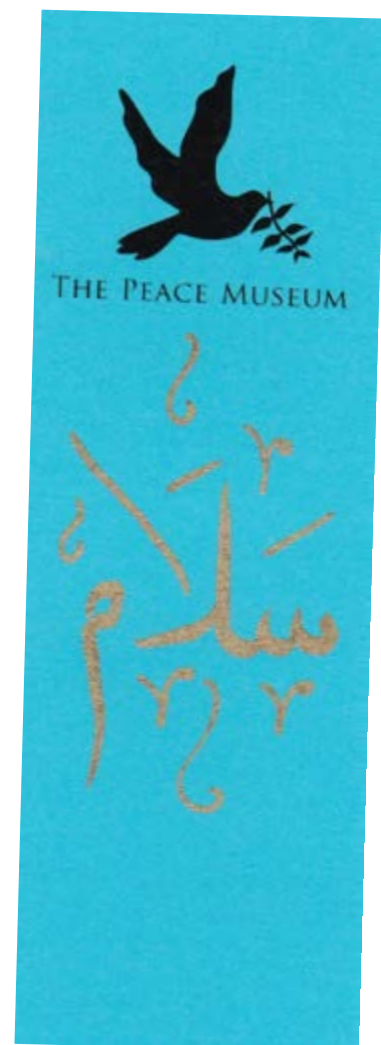
## LIMITS TO WAR

In some cases, verses do describe violence against those who commit persecution, but there are very strong rules to follow:

“And fight in the way of God those who fight against you but *lā ta'tadūā* (do not transgress); indeed God does not like transgressors.”

[Surah al-Baqarah (2:190)]

“Transgression” includes: targeting non-combatants (women, children, the aged...); unnecessary destruction, even of trees and animals); and fighting for gain or glory.



[© The Peace Museum]

# ISLAM: A RELIGION FOR PEACE

The Arabic words “Islam” and “Salam” (peace) come from the same semitic root: S-L-M. This means that the concept of complete submission to Allah (God) is linked to the concept of peace in Islam.

“As-salaamu-alaykum.” Peace be upon you.  
Muslims use these words of greeting every day.

“Wa-alaykum-assalam.”  
And peace be upon you too, is the response.

## THE QUR’AN AND PEACE

Many names convey attributes of Allah throughout Islam’s holy text, the Qur’an. In Surah al-Hashr, Allah is described as “as-salaamu,” the source, or giver of peace (59:23). In the Qur’an’s 114 surah’s (chapters), 113 of them begin with:

“bismillah-irrahman-irrahim”  
“In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate.”

Some chapters in the Qur’an were revealed in response to specific events in Mecca or Medina. Many ayah’s (verses) include commands from Allah to treat others peacefully.

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace...”

[Surah al-Furqan (25:63)]

Peace is favoured even with those considered to be enemies:

“If the enemy inclines to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah. Verily, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing.”

[Surah al-Anfal (8:61)]



[© The Peace Museum]

# MUSLIM PEACE PEOPLE

## SHIRIN EBADI

Shirin Ebadi was the first Nobel Peace Prize winner from the Islamic world. An Iranian lawyer, she was awarded the prize in 2003 “for her efforts for democracy and human rights. She has focused especially on the struggle for the rights of women and children”



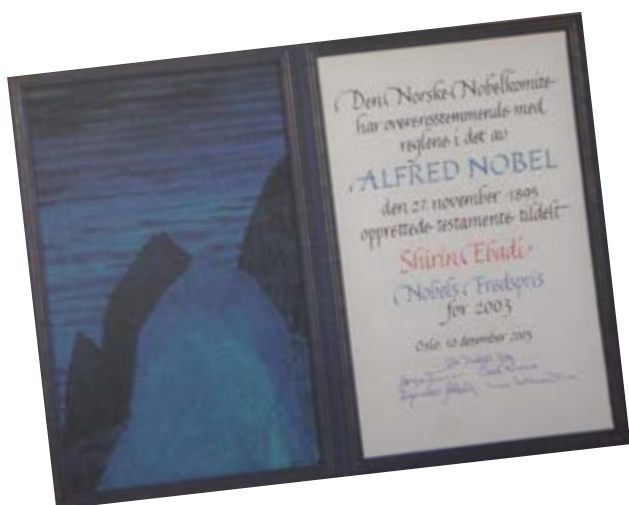
Shirin Ebadi  
[Photo: Persian Dutch Network]

## MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Born in Swat, in north-west Pakistan, she survived a 2012 assassination attempt and became an international focus for the education of girls. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, aged just seventeen.



Malala Yousafzai [Photo: Simon Davis/DFID]



Nobel Peace Prize ceremony,  
2003 [The Peace Museum]



# MUSLIM PEACE PEOPLE

## KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN AND THE KHUDAI KHITMATGAR

In the 1930s and 1940s, the British army was often brutal in the North West Frontier Province of India. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan took on the colonialists in a nonviolent way that he felt would show the true spirit of Islam. He became known as the Frontier Gandhi.

Khan gathered up to 100,000 nonviolent red-shirted soldiers, the Khudai Khitmatgar ("Servants of God"). They tried to bring about change through passive resistance and non-co-operation. Many were arrested. Khan spent half of his life in British, then Pakistani prisons.

"The Holy Prophet Mohammed came into this world and taught us 'That man is a Muslim who never hurts anyone by word or deed, but who works for the benefit and happiness of God's creatures.' Belief in God is to love one's fellow men."

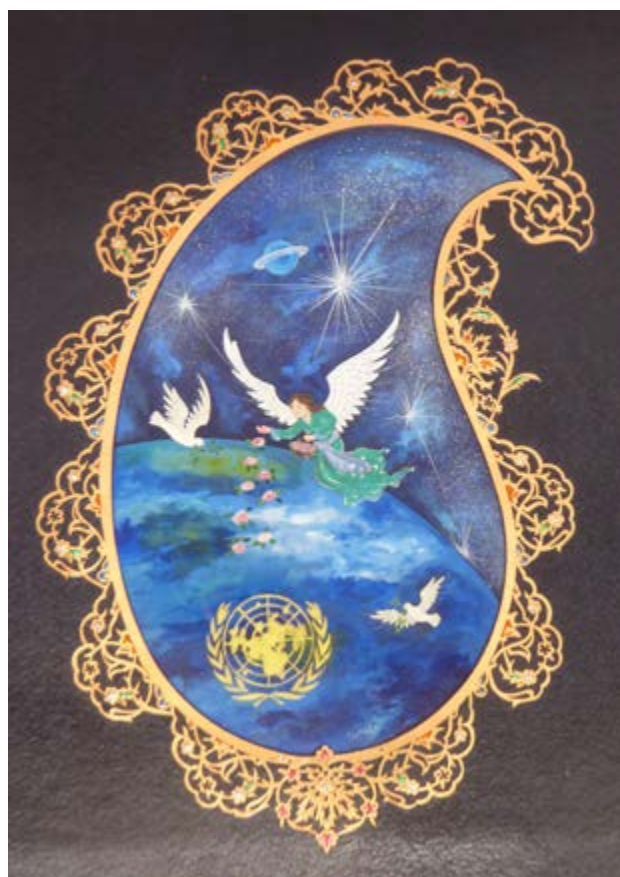
"There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca."

"I promise to serve humanity in the name of God. I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge."

[The Oath of the Khudai Khitmatgar]



Khan, left, with Gandhi



An angel sprinkles rose petals of peace on the earth.  
[Painting by Ms Farzaneh Jafari and the craftwork by Mr Majid Malazadeh.]

# HOSPITALITY

The holy writings of all faiths tell of the need to respect and to act peacefully towards people who are different. It is the basis for good inter-faith relations. Each teaches the importance of welcoming anyone who is a stranger.

## JEWISH

The Jewish people remembered the time when they, too, were strangers in a foreign land.

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.... The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.”

[Leviticus 19.33-34]

## CHRISTIAN

Jesus taught his followers that what they do to other people, they do to him:

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.”

[Matthew 25: 35-40]

Elsewhere in Christian writings is the advice:

“Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

[Hebrews 13.1]

## MUSLIM

The Qur’anic commentator al-Tabari (d.923BCE) tells this story:

“A hungry man among immigrants came to the Prophet to be his guest. The Prophet didn’t have any food to provide. Therefore, he asked if anyone could host him. One of the helpers, Abu Talha, took the man to his home. He advised his wife to honour the Prophet’s guest, yet they were also not very rich. Their food was enough only for one person. So, the helper dimmed the lights and put his children to bed. He talked to his wife and decided that they would pretend to eat, so that there would be food for this hungry immigrant.”

The Qur’anic verse praises their generosity and sacrifice.



[© The Peace Museum]



[© The Peace Museum]



[© The Peace Museum]

# CARING TOGETHER

**Jews, Christians and Muslims have often supported each other in times of disaster and persecution. Each faith is seen at its best when it reaches out in peace.**

## IN HISTORY

- Jewish people have faced persecution in east and west many times in the past two thousand years. Jewish refugees often found safety in the Muslim Ottoman Empire.
- Quaker Christians in Britain in the 1930s supported the Kindertransport programme which saved German Jewish children from the Nazi Holocaust.

## AROUND THE WORLD

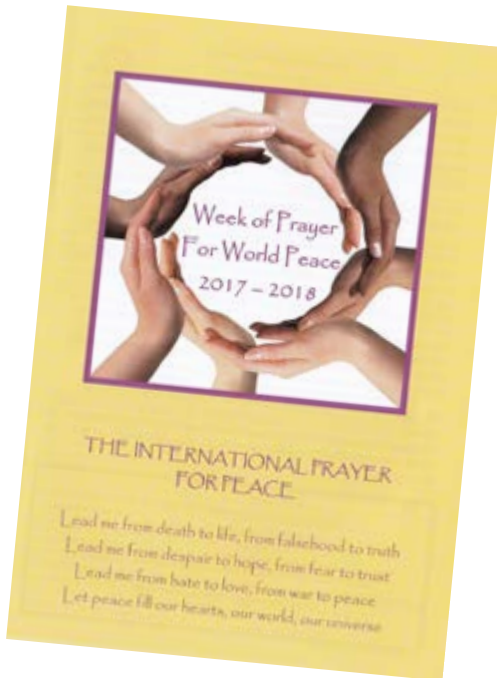
- The development agency, World Jewish Relief, with other partners, helped rebuild damaged homes in Pakistan after devastating floods in 2010. They still train women there in embroidery techniques, and run an employment programme to support Syrian refugees in the UK.
- Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, World Jewish Relief and other faith-based charities have spoken out together on the need to address climate change.
- The charity, René Cassin – named after a Jewish winner of the Nobel Peace Prize - works to promote and protect universal human rights, drawing on Jewish experience and values.
- Christian Aid runs post-conflict programmes in Iraq, regardless of people's faith or ethnicity. This includes a focus on women's rights and protection.



Ursula Michel's small suitcase was all she possessed in August 1939 when she came to England as a Kindertransport child refugee.  
[© The Peace Museum]

# CARING TOGETHER

**Jews, Christians and Muslims have often supported each other in times of disaster and persecution. Each faith is seen at its best when it reaches out in peace.**



[© Week of Prayer for World Peace]

## WORKING TOGETHER IN PEACE

- The Week of Prayer for World Peace was started by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship in 1974. It celebrates the spirituality of peace at the heart of all faiths.
- Local authorities around Britain are signing a Faiths Covenant, recognising the impact for good that faith groups can have in helping the poorest people in society.
- Many towns and cities have a Faiths Forum, or similar, building relationships between people of different faiths.
- Inter Faith Week is held every year in November. What is happening in your area?
- In “Scriptural Reasoning” groups, people learn about the holy writings of each other’s faith.

## EVERYDAY STORIES

- The Jewish synagogue in Bradford was given so much support by the local Council of Mosques, that a local Muslim was invited on to the Synagogue Council.
- After floods in the Lake District, Bradford Council of Mosques made a substantial donation to Cockermouth Council of Churches, to help local Christian relief action.





# WOMEN, FAITH AND PEACE

## BIASAN WOMEN'S CLUB AND AL-MARKAZ UL ISMALI

In partnership with Al-Markaz ul Islami we brought together Muslim women who had all fled Syria as refugees and were building new lives in Bradford. The women created a Tree of Life which featured their own perspectives and responses to the themes of Faith and Peace. The women used different mediums to create their pieces including textile painting and embroidery. Some of the pieces the women created depict their lives before and after the conflict in Syria, some reflect their feelings on the role women play in creating peace and some depict their lives now in the UK.

## SHINE CREATIVE THREADS GROUP

We worked in partnership with Shine, a community organisation, working out of St Stephen's Anglican Church in the heart of West Bowling in Bradford. We worked alongside an established group of women who meet every week and from a huge range of ages, backgrounds, heritages and life experience. The women created individual lino cuts which were printed and brought together as a book which reflects their feelings and experiences of Faith and Peace as women. For some women the page they created reflects their experiences of being peacemakers, others tell stories of the lack of peace in their own lives, some pages depict the things that the women have found create peace for them.



Image of the Syrian women painting and embroidering their pieces  
[© The Peace Museum]



Image of the Shine group printing their lino cuts [© The Peace Museum]

# WOMEN, FAITH AND PEACE

## BRADFORD CATHEDRAL

Finally we worked with a diverse group of local Christian and Muslim women who met weekly at Bradford Cathedral. Alongside Cathedral staff and an experienced textile artist, the women created a textile piece of art which was inspired by a stained glass window in the Cathedral which features women from the Bible, all of whom were peacemakers in their own lives. The technique is known as reverse applique and involves laying pieces of fabric on top of each other and removing different layers to create an image. Some women have created pieces which draw on women in their own lives who they see as peacemakers or the role women in general play in building peace. Some pieces reflect the things that bring peace in their lives, such as the homes they have lived in or the roles they have played or people who have inspired them. Others have found a connection between a Biblical story and a situation from their own lives which they have reflected in their work.



Image of the Syrian women painting and embroidering their pieces  
[© The Peace Museum]

# WOMEN, FAITH AND PEACE

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOMEN INVOLVED IN CREATING THE ART



[© The Peace Museum]

### A participant from Bradford Cathedral sharing her finished artwork

For me it was about the positive of what women do and how they hold things together but also a sense of how they can be constrained by gender.



[© The Peace Museum]

### Participants from Shine work with Shaeron Caton-Rose in drawing their designs in pencil before transferring their designs to lino

Peace is a lack of conflict and an environment where people can thrive and be creative.

For me peace is safe, it's being safe I want peace for all people, French, English, Arabic, anyone. For children, anyone.



[© The Peace Museum]

### A participant from the Syrian women sharing her finished piece

Peace means the people live together without any conflict, from different races, colour, origins, speak to each other without any disturbances and wishing for each other the goodness, not wanting any control. This life is short, we have to live it as happily as we can.

**So often, we hear it said that religions are a  
“problem” in the world.**

**Yet, within Judaism, Christianity and Islam  
there is a strong calling to peace, and a strong  
commitment to care even for strangers.**

**They are religions for peace.**

**They are part of the solution for our world.**

**They are part of the peace of our future.**

Thanks to everyone who has helped to make this exhibition possible:

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The Peace Museum, Bradford

Shine Creative Threads Group, Bradford

Bradford Cathedral

Biasan Women’s Club, Bradford

Al-Markaz Ul Islami, Bradford