# Religion *and* Mediation



ACTION GUIDE

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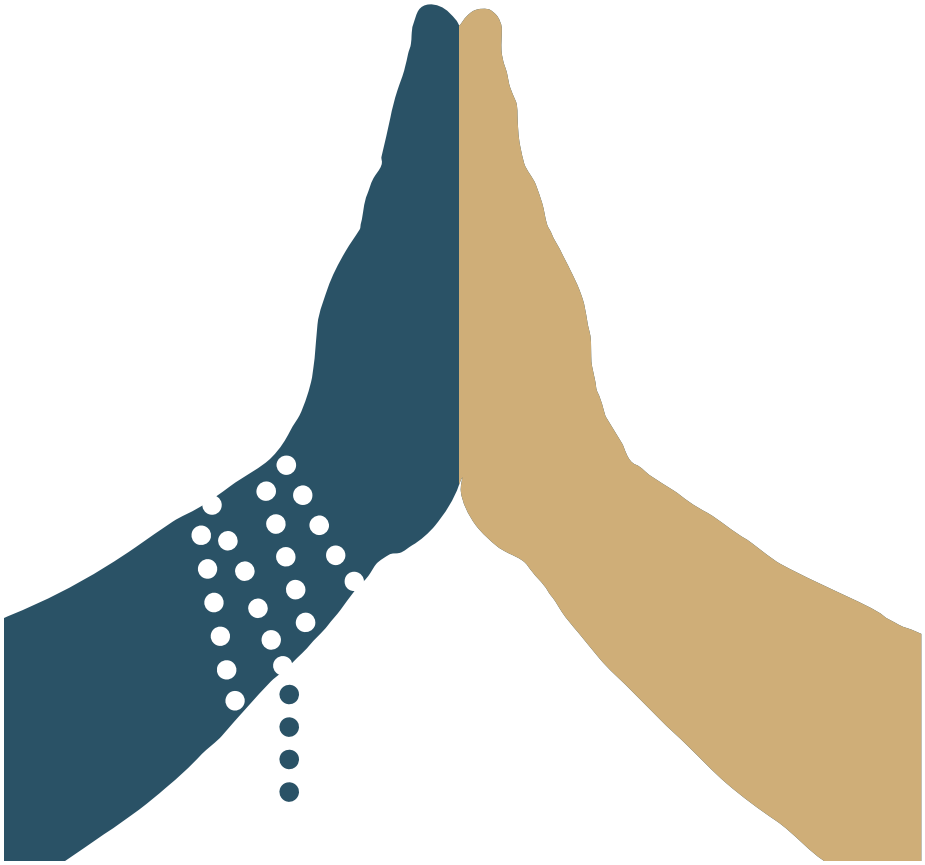

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# Getting Started

THIS ACTION GUIDE will help you more effectively organize, facilitate, or support mediation where religion is relevant to the participants, the process, or the issues. It provides guidance on how faith-based mediators, texts, principles, values, symbols, or rituals can be useful when religious issues and identities are important to the parties to a conflict.

This Guide takes a flexible approach to mediation, recognizing that any such initiative must be designed to fit a specific context and complement other peacebuilding efforts. It offers guiding principles and practical considerations for the preparation, implementation, and follow-up aspects of a mediation process; real-world examples to illustrate key ideas; and warnings about the risks of doing harm when intervening in conflict. It is intended to be of use to both religious and secular practitioners who already have a basic understanding of mediation. *Secular* is understood here as not explicitly affiliated with any specific religion but also not hostile to religion.[1] The Guide will also interest religious and civil society leaders, diplomats, funders, and staff of various local and international organizations.

For the purposes of this Guide, *mediation* is defined as an approach in which a mutually acceptable third party supports a process for those who are in conflict to move toward resolution, improved relationships, or a better situation. Without the third party, the process would be considered a direct negotiation. However, unlike third-party judges or arbitrators, mediators do not make binding decisions for the participants. The mediator does not force participants to participate, nor determine the outcome of the process, although the mediator's skills, knowledge, resources, relationships, and ideas do influence the direction the process takes. Additional definitions can be found in *Peace Terms: Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding*, published by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).[2]

Most literature on mediation is based on the outsider-impartial model common to problem-solving approaches in Western and secular contexts. This contrasts with the insider-multipartial model more common, but not exclusive, to religious and traditional contexts. Table 1 on page 6 summarizes the key differences between the two approaches.

1 Some scholars argue that even secular approaches are implicitly religious because of the degree to which they have been informed by Protestant norms and values. Note that secular mediators may find this Guide particularly helpful for grasping the nuances of mediating in non-Protestant contexts.

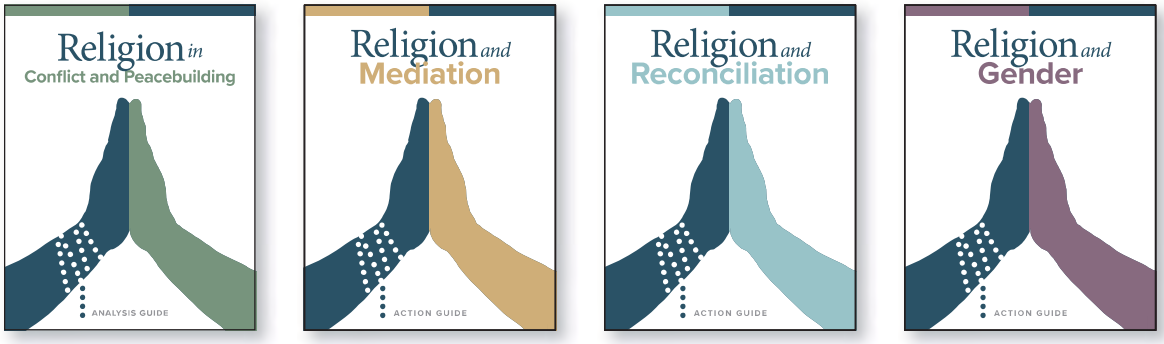
2 Dan Snodderly, ed., *Peace Terms: Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2011), 35, 37, www.usip.org/sites/default/files/files/peaceterms.pdf. A second edition of *Peace Terms*, larger than the first, was published by the United States Institute of Peace in 2018.

TABLE 1. **A comparison of mediation models: key characteristics**

| PROBLEM-SOLVING OUTSIDER-IMPARTIAL | RELIGIOUS OR TRADITIONAL INSIDER-MULTIPARTIAL |
|---|---|
| • Participants are treated as individuals interacting in a private, confidential space<br>• The mediator is an expert unaffiliated with the participants<br>• Participation is explicitly voluntary with possible legal consequences for not participating<br>• The process is linear and focused on solving problems<br>• Mediators are mostly concerned with the process and indirectly influence the outcome<br>• Mediations result in explicit written agreements | • Participants are treated as community members interacting in a public space<br>• The mediator is a member of the community with relationships to the participants<br>• Participation is implicitly voluntary with possible social consequences for not participating<br>• The process is nonlinear and focused on maintaining relationships and community<br>• Mediators are less concerned with process and may directly influence the outcome<br>• Mediations result in explicit and implicit understandings |

*Source*: Based on Jacob Bercovitch, "Mediation in International Conflict: An Overview of Theory, a Review of Practice" in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

This is the second in a series of four Action Guides for religious peacebuilders. The first, *Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding: Analysis Guide* (hereafter referred to simply as the *Analysis Guide*), was published in 2018. The third and fourth, *Religion and Reconciliation* and *Religion and Gender*, are scheduled to be published in 2021–22. Each guide draws on historical and contemporary examples from a range of geographical regions and religious traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and interfaith settings. We acknowledge that there are many traditions not represented and do not thereby intend to imply their insignificance. Within the page limits of these guides, we have selected religions that we deemed relevant to most readers, confident that the concepts presented apply to other faiths, including indigenous belief systems.



## Understanding Religion

Religion is a complex concept. Each religious tradition is distinct from the others. At the same time, each individual tradition is defined and expressed in varying ways by different people from one place to another as they interact with the cultural, political, social, and economic character of that context. This Guide adopts the following definition of religion: "A human response to a perceived nonphysical reality concerning the origin, meaning, and purpose of life. It is typically organized by communities into a shared system of symbols, rituals, institutions, and practices."[3]

To offer a systematic and comprehensive way to consider the role of religion in mediation, this Guide presents five interrelated dimensions of religion, as described by Owen Frazer and Mark Owen in the *Analysis Guide* and depicted in figure 1:[4]

- **Religion as a set of ideas:** A shared set of teachings, doctrines, norms, values, stories, and narratives that provides a framework for understanding and acting in the world
- **Religion as community:** A defined group of followers and believers that provides individuals with a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves
- **Religion as institution:** The formal structures, leaders, and organizations associated with religious communities
- **Religion as symbols and practices:** The many visible manifestations of a religion, from buildings to dress to ceremonies and rituals
- **Religion as spirituality:** A personal experience that provides a sense of purpose and connectedness to something greater than oneself, as well as a powerful source of motivation

FIGURE 1. **Different dimensions of religion relevant to mediation**




Too often, considerations of religion's role in conflict include only one or two of these dimensions. It is important to consider all five dimensions for a more complete analysis of religion's role in conflict.[5] Oversimplifying religion's role in conflict is as problematic as ignoring its role entirely. For example, explaining the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or Daesh, as simply driven by fundamentalist religious ideology ignores the significant ways different religious identities contribute to alliances in the conflict, how the situation of religious minorities in the region influences the involvement of external actors, and the role of religious actors as peacebuilders, as well as the many economic and historical reasons for the conflict. Staying curious about the many ways religion plays a role in conflict and peacebuilding helps avoid this oversimplification.

3 Snodderly, ed., *Peace Terms*, 2nd edition, 45.

4 Owen Frazer and Mark Owen, *Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding Analysis Guide* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2018), 8, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/USIP_Religion-in-Conflict-Peacebuilding_Analysis-Guide.pdf.

5 The idea of dimensions of religion was originally developed by Ninian Smart (see Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, 2nd ed. [New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1976]) and adapted by others, e.g., Linda Woodhead "Five Concepts of Religion," *International Review of Sociology* 21, no. 1 (2011): 121–43; and A. Ullmann, "Understanding Religion in Conflict" (presentation at Religion and Mediation Course, Schwarzenberg, Switzerland, 2015).

## How Religion Relates to Mediation

Faith traditions have a long history of practicing and encouraging mediation as a way of addressing conflict. The text box below offers some examples.

### Mediation in Various Faith Traditions

**EXAMPLES**

- In the **Jewish** tradition of *redifat shalom* (pursuit of peace) or *tivuch shalom* (mediated peace), mediators bring parties to a compromise known as *p'shara*. Moses' older brother, Aaron, is recognized as the first mediator in rabbinic tradition.
- **The Buddha** often intervened in disputes between his followers. In textual accounts, he asks them questions to understand what was driving the dispute and find a way forward. The Buddha employs the practice of "right speech," grounded in loving kindness and equanimity, that does not cause discord, but rather helps bring people together.
- Throughout centuries, **Muslims** have used mediation (*wasatah*) to resolve disputes based on the model of Prophet Mohammed, who mediated conflicts among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims.
- The first recorded instance of **Quaker** mediation dates back to 1850, when Joseph Sturge and his colleagues attempted to mediate a peace agreement between the king of Denmark and German nobles in Schleswig and Holstein.

The five dimensions of religion help us understand how religion can act as a "divider" (a source of conflict) and a "connector" (a source of peace) in any given context. This Guide invites readers to consider how these dimensions can be drawn on in the preparation, implementation, and follow-up of a mediation process as connectors and how to avoid them as dividers. Table 2 presents some examples from around the world of how religious dimensions can function as dividers or connectors

As a set of ideas, religion shapes how actors in a conflict think and act. However, religious ideas are not rigid. There is room for adaptation and multiple interpretations within one body of ideas. In terms of mediation, religion offers teachings, doctrines, norms, values, stories, and narratives that encourage those in conflict to participate in the process—and, once participating, to listen for understanding, express themselves honestly and vulnerably, recognize commonalities and accept differences, humanize the other, and care for the needs of all.

As community, religion is closely associated with identity.[6] Everyone has multiple identities related to characteristics they have in common with others, such as their profession, nationality, ethnicity, religion, skin color, class, gender, and even the sports teams they support. In a mediation, religion may be a source of shared identity that brings participants together across conflict lines to take part in the process or allows those outside the process to accept the outcome that the participants representing them came to.

6 "Identity refers to the way people see themselves—the groups they feel a part of, the aspects of themselves that they use to describe themselves. Some theorists distinguish between collective identity, social identity, and personal identity. However, all are related in one way or another to a description of who one is, and how one fits into his or her social group and society overall. Identity conflicts are conflicts that develop when a person or group feels that their sense of self is threatened or denied legitimacy or respect." Snodderly, ed., *Peace Terms*, 1st edition, 29.

As institution, religion has structures, hierarchies, resources, and leaders. Different religions are organized differently, varying even within one religion from one context or sect to another. Religion can offer influential mediators and organizers broad networks, channels of communication, and logistical and financial resources to support the preparation, implementation, or follow-up of a mediation process. Religious (and secular) institutions can also block a mediation process if it is perceived to counter their interests.

Symbols and practices are how religion becomes visible in daily life. During a mediation, religious sites, rituals, and objects such as shrines, blessings, chants, altars, robes, candles, or singing bowls can encourage participants to have an open heart and seriousness of purpose.

The spiritual experience that religion offers can be a powerful motivation for seeking peace. Because religion engages deep feelings beyond the cognitive level, it can play a strong role in shaping the personal experience of a mediation process. Religion offers a way for participants to connect to and express visionary dreams, grief, love, unity, remorse, and forgiveness.

TABLE 2. **Examples of the dimensions of religion as dividers or connectors in mediation**

| DIMENSION | DIVIDER | CONNECTOR |
|---|---|---|
| **Religion as a SET OF IDEAS** | During the twenty-six-year civil war in Sri Lanka, a Buddhist belief about the need to "defend the Dharma" against threats posed by non-Buddhists led some monks to oppose various mediation processes. They drew from a story in the Mahavamsa, a paracanonical text, about a righteous Sinhala Buddhist king who militarily defeated a Tamil Hindu king and was praised by quasi-divine Buddhist figures for so doing. | There are many stories of Prophet Mohammed serving as a mediator, including when a conflict between Meccan tribes about the relocation of the Black Stone in Kaaba was resolved by having all the tribes carry the stone and allowing the Prophet, as mediator, to put it in its place. Mediation efforts around the Muslim world are inspired by such stories, as well as principles found in the Quran and Hadith. |
| **Religion as COMMUNITY** | The 1993 Norwegian-mediated Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization provoked a backlash from some Jewish groups who believed the accords denied Jews' biblical heritage. An extremist assassinated Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, who signed the accords, claiming he was a traitor to the Jewish community. | In apartheid South Africa, Christianity was an identity shared by the white government and black resisters and was drawn on at times to promote a multiracial sense of community. Some black and white Christian clergy and other faith leaders created coalitions to encourage the peace process that ended apartheid. |
| **Religion as INSTITUTION** | In Colombia, some Evangelical and Catholic clerical leaders opposed the mediation between the government and FARC rebels because it included LGBTQ persons and recognized their distinct needs. This ran counter to their religious values. They mobilized nationwide opposition to the public referendum on the agreement through their church networks and organizations. | The Interreligious Council of Thailand has been a forum for Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Sikh leaders to address tensions between the Buddhist majority and religious minorities, especially Malay Muslims in the country's south. Drawing legitimacy from across religious lines, the council has also acted as a trusted mediator between Muslims and Buddhists. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Religion as SYMBOLS AND PRACTICES** | In mediating a conflict around issues of land and housing between local communities in Erbil, Iraq, in 2013, USIP facilitator Abdalaziz Younis Salim noted escalating tensions as the Shi'a Shabak prepared for Ashura, a day of mourning for the death of Imam Husayn, and the Christians for Christmas, a celebration of Jesus' birth. Fears rose that both groups' holiday processions would overlap and lead to violence.[a] | Parties to the civil war in Sierra Leone accepted the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) as an evenhanded and fair mediator. When the actors failed to even look at each other, the IRCSL was able to break the ice and calm the actors through joint prayers. In Cambodia, the Buddhist monk Maha Ghosananda used mindful walks, called Dhammayietra, to encourage the implementation of peace accords and reconciliation in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge's violent reign. |
| **Religion as SPIRITUALITY** | Members of the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda understand their violent resistance as a form of spiritual practice that draws on Christianity and animism to bring commitment, focus, and courage to their fighting. As a result, peace talks have been disfavored. | Quaker Clearness Committees approach conflict with "open-ended questions to respectfully and artfully put someone in touch with their highest and best internal self." They invite mediation participants into silence and reflection to connect with their inner spiritual nature.[b] |

**NOTES**

a Ultimately, Salim managed to mediate an agreement with key religious leaders on both sides to ensure the processional routes would not overlap and to articulate a commitment to nonviolence during the holidays. Author interview with Susan Hayward, USIP, February 20, 2020.

b Debra Jones and Alexia Georgakopoulos, "The Promise of Spirituality in Mediation: The Significance of Spiritual-Based and Faith-Based Approaches in Mediation," *Peace and Conflict Studies* 16, no. 1 (2009).

## How to Use This Guide

We strongly recommend you first consult the companion *Analysis Guide* to better understand the role religion plays in your particular conflict and to determine whether and how mediation can be valuable in light of that role. The next two guides in this series (*Religion and Reconciliation* and *Religion and Gender*) will, when published, help you account for important gender considerations and offer advice on overcoming a history of distrust and harm between individuals or groups. You may also reference the wide variety of texts and websites available on secular or Western mediation, particularly if you want to learn about basic mediation skills. Some of these are listed under "Additional Resources on Religion and Mediation" on page 55 of this Guide. Be aware that these sources may define and structure mediation differently than this Guide does.

### HONORIFICS

Honorifics are words attached to the names of people, places, and things to express status or respect. To honor what is sacred, religious communities regularly use honorifics, saying or writing, for example, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama," "the Holy Bible," "The City of Enlightenment—Medinatual Munawarrah," "His Holiness the Pope," and "the Prophet Mohammed—Peace Be Upon Him" (sometimes abbreviated to "PBUH"). Even if you are not a follower of a particular religion, it is important to recognize the use of honorifics and to understand how they can help you build interpersonal trust and relationships in certain contexts.

In this Guide, we faced a decision between using honorifics to show respect toward and familiarity with each faith tradition and abiding by the conventions of academic publishing, which consistently avoids honorifics in order not to appear to represent any particular religious perspective. We opted not to use honorifics in the Guide, and this was not for lack of respect for any of the sacred people, places, or things referred to in this publication.

This Guide focuses on the elements of mediation related to religion. We divide mediation into three phases—premediation, the mediation sessions, and postmediation—each building on the next. Table 3 lists the key questions related to the most relevant dimensions of religion in each phase, while the text box on page 12 illustrates how one religious actor—the Conciliation Commission of Nicaragua—was active in all three phases. The premediation chapter is the longest section of this Guide, reflecting how critical preparation and planning are as a foundation for the rest of the process.

TABLE 3. **Key questions to ask at each phase of mediation**

| PHASE | MOST RELEVANT DIMENSIONS | KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF |
|---|---|---|
| PREMEDIATION | Set of ideas | How can religious teachings and values inspire actors to initiate or participate a mediation process? |
| | Community | How will the religious identities in the conflict affect the process and who participates, mediates, and organizes? |
| | Institution | How can religious leaders, networks, and resources contribute to the process? |
| MEDIATION SESSIONS | Set of ideas | How can religious doctrines and stories encourage (or undermine) trust, openness, understanding, and collaboration? |
| | Community | How can religious identities bring participants together? |
| | Symbols and practices | How can religious materials, ceremonies, and rituals contribute to the process? |
| | Spirituality | How can religion help participants experience greater trust, empathy, and hope? |
| POSTMEDIATION | Set of ideas | How can religious norms and narratives contribute to broader support for the outcome of a mediation? |
| | Community | How can religious identities contribute to broader support for the outcome of a mediation? |
| | Institution | How can religious leaders, networks, and resources support implementation of an agreement? |
| | Symbols and practices | How can religious materials, ceremonies, and rituals support broader acceptance and implementation of the outcome? |
| | Spirituality | How can transcendental experiences help participants and their constituents gain (or maintain) trust and motivation? |

## The Conciliation Commission of Nicaragua: From Premediation to Postmediation

The Conciliation Commission of Nicaragua, comprising East Coast Indians and Miskito pastors, played multiple roles in mediating Nicaragua's civil war in the 1980s. During premediation, the commission took responsibility for the safety of the rebel leaders and for coordination of the time and place for the meetings, and facilitated communication between actors. During the mediation sessions, commission mediators used prayers and religious references to open sessions and emphasize certain values and principles. For example, they read devotions from the Bible and Moravian book of inspirational readings that speak of serving rather than being served: Job's acceptance of the evils visited upon him despite his personal integrity; the distinction between worldly and divine wisdom; the harvest of righteousness that awaits those who sow peace; and the example of Christ, who was humble and obedient unto death. In postmediation, the commission continued to facilitate communication and supported the fulfillment of the accords.

*Source:* Bruce Nichols, "Religious Conciliation between Sandinistas and the East Coast Indians of Nicaragua," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 64–78.

Throughout this Guide, we use the term *actor* (or *party*) to identify any person or group involved in the conflict or in some way concerned by it. An actor can be an individual, organization, network, or institution. The term may refer to females and males of all ages: children, youth, adults, and elders. *Religious actors* refers both to formally recognized religious leaders and authorities such as the pope, the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, and the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand and to actors who are religiously inspired (also referred to as *faith-based*) such as the international humanitarian organization World Vision and the Palestinian political party Hamas, as well as a village elder who is recognized for her religious wisdom. Actors may carry multiple religious, traditional, and secular identities and roles.

Finally, we use *participants* to refer to actors who participate directly in the mediation process; *representative participants* are those representing larger groups that are in conflict; *mediators* are those facilitating the mediation sessions; and *organizers* are those convening, coordinating, resourcing, and following up on the mediation, including selecting mediators and participants. The roles of mediator and organizer may be carried out by several people or groups or by the same individual or group, in which case we may refer to them as *mediator-organizers*. We use the singular (*mediator* or *organizer*) and the plural (*mediators* or *organizers*) interchangeably.

# Three Guiding Principles

## Do No Harm

The most important principle in peacemaking is to avoid making a situation worse. Mediators and organizers are not neutral, passive actors. Their presence during the process, who they do and do not engage with, what they say and do, and the issues they raise can all have an impact.[7] Take care to ensure your intervention in no way makes the problems worse or puts others at risk. Do not skip over premediation preparation, including conflict analysis. Always aim for informed consent from your participants. If you are from outside the community, partner with local actors who have deep local knowledge and awareness of problematic issues. If you lack experience or familiarity with mediation or any aspect of religion that is relevant to the process, seek assistance.

## Be Self-Aware

We all bring our own biases to any situation. We may not be able to erase them, but we can be aware of them and how they affect our role as mediator or organizer. How do your own religious or secular identity, education, experiences, community, and perspectives influence your perception of the mediation, its participants, and a just outcome? Reflect on how to anticipate and navigate beliefs different from your own, particularly religious beliefs that are inflexible and provocative. Doing so will involve recognizing and regulating your own judgments and emotions, especially when others' actions and statements may be hard to understand or upsetting.

## Embrace Complexity

Conflict rarely has simple causes or answers. It is complex, messy, contradictory, and fluid, and so is mediation. Adding religious elements and addressing religion's role in conflict introduces even more complexity. Do your best to understand the conflict, select the right mediator and participants, design a meaningful process, and respond to challenges as they arise. Beyond this, you cannot control where the process will go. Although you may hope for a particular outcome, do not get attached to it. Expectations can get in the way of attending to the unexpected, which may have its own surprising value. And remember, the success of a dynamic process is not always obvious at any one moment in time.

7 See Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

# Premediation

IMAGINE HOURS AND HOURS of phone calls and emails, office visits, planning conversations, internet research, drafting schedules and budgets, and team meetings. This is the premediation phase. It includes initiation of the process; context mapping; selection and preparation of the mediator, organizer, and participants; determining when and where to mediate; and planning the mediation. It is the crucial work that happens behind the scenes to set the foundation for a successful mediation session. Table 4 identifies some questions to consider during premediation.

TABLE 4. **Key questions to ask during premediation**

| MOST RELEVANT DIMENSIONS | KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF |
|---|---|
| Set of ideas | How can religious teachings and values inspire actors to initiate or participate in a mediation process? |
| Community | How will the religious identities in the conflict affect the process and who participates, mediates, and organizes? |
| Institution | How can religious leaders, networks, and resources contribute to the process? |

## Initiation of a Mediation Process

The first step in a mediation process may involve one or more conflict actors approaching you with a desire to initiate a process. Alternatively, you or another third party may initiate a process and then invite conflict actors to participate in it. Usually, a conflict actor who initiates a process or accepts an invitation to join a mediation does so because they prefer what they anticipate will be the outcome of the mediation to a continuation of the conflict in its current form or to negotiation without a third party. Such an attitude suggests that the conflict is "ripe" for mediation—a term and concept explained in the text box on page 15.

### Ripeness in Mediation

A conflict is considered "ripe" for mediation when conflict actors perceive higher benefits and lower costs of mediation outweighing lower benefits and higher costs of continuing the conflict. Actors who have reached this view are likely to be genuinely ready and willing to mediate. When a conflict is not ripe, an actor may express an interest in mediation, but may actually be motivated by a desire to delay the conflict or to merely *appear* to be cooperative. Initiating mediation when conditions are not ripe may lead to a failed attempt and greater resistance to mediation in the future.

To determine ripeness, consider asking the following questions, either directly to the conflict actors or to others who know them well. When relevant, follow up on each of these questions by asking the actors (or those who know them) to elaborate on their responses with regard to the short or long term, as well as in relation to power, time, money, resources, peace of mind, reputation, relationships, precedent, and religious or secular values and principles.

1. What do the conflict actors believe they have to gain from continuing the conflict? How certain are they of this?
2. What do they believe they have to lose from continuing the conflict? How certain are they of this?
3. What do they believe about how long the conflict will continue and how it will end?
4. What do they believe are the likely outcomes of mediation?
5. What do they believe they have to gain from mediation? How certain are they of this?
6. What do they believe they have to lose from mediation? How certain are they of this?
7. What do they believe about the outcome of any past mediations, negotiations, or other interventions?

A trusted third party can "ripen" a conflict for mediation by urging conflict actors to reflect on these questions, offering perspectives that influence their perceptions of the costs and benefits of conflict and mediation, or by using the third party's leverage to change the actual costs and benefits. (For more on leverage, see page 22.)

Religious communities, actors, institutions, ideas, symbols, practices, and experiences can influence an actor's perception of the costs and benefits of conflict and mediation by highlighting, in particular, the spiritual costs of conflict and the spiritual benefits of peace. Religious actors and institutions may also exert spiritual and other forms of leverage on the conflict actors.

## Map Your Mediation Context

Mapping your mediation context is an important part of preparation. Most of the existing guidance on mediation comes from models that were originally developed in Western secular contexts. This Guide does not presume that these models are the most effective for all contexts and encourages you to adapt to your specific context.

Whereas the *Analysis Guide* provides guidance on conducting a comprehensive, detailed assessment of the context, here we present a narrower framework to guide your preparation for a mediation process. Table 5 contrasts various aspects of secular contexts typically found in many European and North American settings with more religious or traditional contexts typically found in many African, Asian, and Middle Eastern settings. (See also table 1 on page 6.)

TABLE 5. **A comparison of secular contexts and religious or traditional contexts**

| SECULAR CONTEXTS | ASPECTS OF CONTEXT | RELIGIOUS OR TRADITIONAL CONTEXTS |
|---|---|---|
| People identify strongly as individuals | **Personal identity** | People identify strongly as part of a group (e.g., family or clan) |
| Status is based on what you achieve or earn by your own efforts | **Social status** | Status is based on age, relationships, and/or the group identity you are born into |
| There is emphasis on people being inherently equal | **Hierarchy** | People fit into a natural order of importance or authority |
| People trust those with specialized technical expertise | **Credibility** | People trust those with religious or traditional roles |
| There is emphasis on direct and candid communication | **Communication** | There is emphasis on indirect ways of communicating to maintain respect |
| There is emphasis on efficiency and timelines | **Time** | Use of and expectations around time are flexible |
| There is emphasis on material (often written) solutions | **Goals of conflict resolution** | There is emphasis on harmonious relationships |
| Conflict is a private and personal matter | **Scope of conflict** | Conflict is of community concern |
| Religion is a private and discrete part of life | **Role of religion** | Religion is a public and integral part of life |

Keep in mind that table 5 presents generalizations. In reality, each aspect of context falls on a spectrum. For any specific setting, some aspects may be toward the left-hand side of table 5 while other aspects may be toward the right-hand side. For example, a corporate setting may generally be on the left but have a high degree of hierarchy. An indigenous village may generally be on the right but have a limited role for religion in government institutions as a legacy of its colonial past.

To adapt your mediator and mediation process to your particular case, use the mediation context mapping tool on page 17 to assess relevant aspects of your context. We will refer to the results of this mapping in later sections.

FIGURE 2. **Mediation context mapping tool**

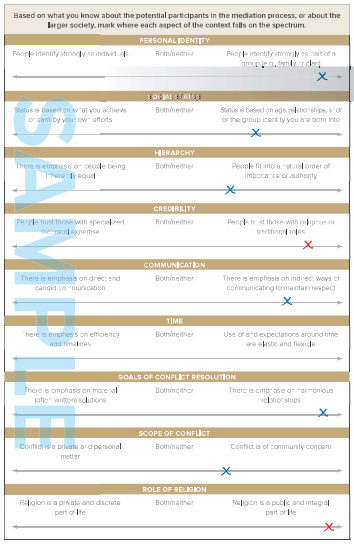
**Based on what you know about the potential participants in the mediation process, or about the larger society, mark where each aspect of the context falls on the spectrum.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **PERSONAL IDENTITY** | | |
| People identify strongly as individuals | Both/neither | People identify strongly as part of a group (e.g., family or clan) |
| **SOCIAL STATUS** | | |
| Status is based on what you achieve or earn by your own efforts | Both/neither | Status is based on age, relationships, and/or the group identity you are born into |
| **HIERARCHY** | | |
| There is emphasis on people being inherently equal | Both/neither | People fit into a natural order of importance or authority |
| **CREDIBILITY** | | |
| People trust those with specialized technical expertise | Both/neither | People trust those with religious or traditional roles |
| **COMMUNICATION** | | |
| There is emphasis on direct and candid communication | Both/neither | There is emphasis on indirect ways of communicating to maintain respect |
| **TIME** | | |
| There is emphasis on efficiency and timelines | Both/neither | Use of and expectations around time are flexible |
| **GOALS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION** | | |
| There is emphasis on material (often written) solutions | Both/neither | There is emphasis on harmonious relationships |
| **SCOPE OF CONFLICT** | | |
| Conflict is a private and personal matter | Both/neither | Conflict is of community concern |
| **ROLE OF RELIGION** | | |
| Religion is a private and discrete part of life | Both/neither | Religion is a public and integral part of life |

## Select Your Mediator and Organizer

In contexts toward the left-hand side of the context mapping tool, mediators and organizers are often expected to be disinterested outsiders who express no preference toward one outcome or participant over another, though they may be bounded by certain legal or ethical constraints. They are trusted because of their lack of connection to the participants and because of their specialized role as mediators or organizers. Such outsider-impartial mediators are generally more suited to secular conflicts, actors, and societies than to conflicts involving religious actors or themes. They tend to hold some form of certification or accreditation and market their services as professionals. They may not be difficult to find online or through conflict resolution networks. There are also international and local organizations—ranging from the United Nations Mediation Support Unit and Mediators Beyond Borders to state mediation associations and community mediation centers—that professionally organize outsider-impartial mediations, manage referral services, or maintain lists of mediators.

In contexts toward the right-hand side of the context mapping tool, an insider-multipartial mediator is more common and more likely to be accepted. Mediators and organizers typically have preexisting relationships with the participants, often as a member of their community with a stake in its well-being and social ties that remain in place long after the mediation is over. Here, conflicts are of greater community concern and mediations are more public, focused more on maintaining social relations than on process and problem solving.



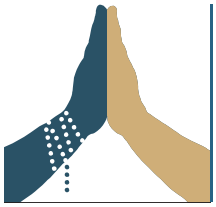

Refer to your completed context mapping.

The farther to the right of center you have marked most, if not all, of the aspects of context, the more effective an insider-multipartial mediation will be.

Additionally, we recommend you *consider* a religious or traditional actor (or other community leader) to serve as mediator-organizer if you have marked far to the right for one or more of the following aspects: personal identity, social status, hierarchy, communication, goals of conflict resolution, and scope of conflict.

We recommend you *actively seek* a religious actor to serve as mediator-organizer if you have marked far to the right for credibility and role of religion. If you seek religious mediators and organizers for conflicts where the actors or issues involve more than one religion, consider a team of co-mediators and co-organizers who reflect the different religious identities in order to make the process more acceptable and relevant to all parties.

Religious actors, such as monks, nuns, imams, rabbis, priests, religious educators, or laypeople with strong religious associations or training, can serve as effective insider-multipartial mediators or organizers, though they may not refer to themselves as mediators. They are often deeply familiar with and invested in the community. Their moral and spiritual authority makes them trustworthy and influential. Their mere endorsement of a mediation process, let alone their active involvement, can help bring parties to the mediation and then toward resolution (see the discussion in "Who Are the Actors with Social and Political Influence?" on pages 39–41 of the *Analysis Guide*). Women religious actors likely enjoy trust and influence in a community, though their leadership may not be recognized or official. (see the text box "Gender, Religion, and Mediation" on page 32).



Religious mediators and organizers represent religion as a community and an institution and can bring relevant religious ideas, symbols and practices, and spirituality to the process.

When conducting an insider-multipartial religious mediation, determining the specific individual(s) to play the role of mediator and organizer can be the most significant and sensitive decision in the process. Selection works best as a process of ongoing consultation with the conflict actors, who can suggest or consent to one or more different candidates or criteria for candidates. Whether you already have identified yourself or other candidates as possible mediators, or are just starting a search, consider the separate, but related, concepts of legitimacy, leverage, and capacity.

## Legitimacy

Mediator (and organizer) legitimacy has to do with how readily participants believe it is fair and acceptable for that person to take the role of mediator (or organizer) and the power that comes with it. The more legitimate the mediator, the more participants will trust the process, participate in good faith, and follow through on the outcome. Religious actors are not automatically legitimate to all participants, including those of the same faith. People may respect a religion as a set of ideas, as symbols and practices, and as a community and still not trust the institution or particular leaders. Alternatively, people may trust the religious institution or actor and not follow the ideas, symbols, or practices.

To better understand mediator legitimacy, let us examine its five sources: informed input and consent; perceived motivation; community connectedness; rank or status; and spiritual authority.

***Informed Input and Consent.*** Legitimacy comes from the nature of the process. Any mediation in which the participants suggest or approve the mediator or organizer will benefit from greater legitimacy.

***Perceived Motivation.*** Although the actual motivation of mediators and organizers determines whether and how they will intervene, their perceived motivation affects their legitimacy. Generally, one of the advantages of religious actors' involvement in mediation is that even people of a different religion will likely believe that the actor is truly committed to their role of mediator or organizer. Even so, you should do what you can do to determine the actor's actual motivations and to discover what potential participants perceive to be the actor's motivations. An example from Nigeria of the importance of perceived motivation is provided in the box on page 20.

## Mediator Legitimacy and Perceived Motivation in Nigeria

In 1967, during Nigeria's civil war, the president of neighboring Niger, a member of the Consultative Committee created by the Organization of African States, suggested that Quakers, with their unofficial status and long experience, might be able to convene a secret meeting of lower-level officials from both sides to seek an agreement. Quakers were able to earn the trust of the parties due to their spiritual motivation and a religious identity that was unaffiliated with the conflict actors. A belief in God and dedication to humanity led them to face the dangers of traveling into conflict zones. Joseph Iyalla, the representative of Nigeria at the United Nations, stated that "the Quakers were readily perceived as friends who did not favor one side or the other but understood the underlying commitment on both sides that gave rise to all this ferment. They were obviously regarded as having no particular ax to grind, but at the same time as being genuinely concerned."

*Source:* Cynthia Sampson, "To Make the Real Bond between Us All: Quaker Conciliation during the Nigerian Civil War," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 106–11.

***Community Connectedness.*** Core to the notion of insider-multipartial mediation is that participants believe the mediator or organizer has a connection to the place where the conflict is taking place and to those whom it is affecting. If not considered a member of the community, the mediator or organizer may still be recognized for their long-standing relationships among, familiarity with, or life experiences in the community. Religious actors can have a particularly strong connection to faith communities.

***Rank or Status.*** Particularly in contexts that you marked high on hierarchy, an actor's perceived social status or rank within a religious or other institution adds to their legitimacy. If you are considering a religious actor as mediator or organizer, there are often different levels of authority to choose from, as shown in table 6 on page 21. Each level has its own advantages and disadvantages that relate to legitimacy, leverage, and capacity.

***Spiritual Authority.*** Religious actors gain legitimacy to the extent they are perceived to represent a higher moral order and a set of values that have not been compromised by a history of corruption or scandals. The text box below presents an example from Cambodia.

## Spiritual Authority in Cambodia

In Cambodia, villagers call on community elders known as *chas tum* to serve as mediators because of their moral standards and familiarity with Buddhist teachings. As "the living memory of the village," they also bring knowledge about past events such as land transactions or inheritance to the mediation. For similar reasons of spiritual authority, interventions developed by organizations with Buddhist perspectives, like Buddhism for Development, based in Battambang, Cambodia, enjoy great legitimacy.

*Sources:* Damien Coghlan, "Religion and Power: The Cultural Context of Mediation in Rural Cambodia," (n.d.), www.academia.edu/539568/Religion_and_power._The_cultural_context_of_mediation_in_rural_Cambodia; and Fabienne Luco, "Management of Local Conflicts in Cambodia: An Anthropological Approach to Traditional and New Practices," trans. E. Richardson (Phnom Penh: UNESCO, 2002), 30–33, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001595/159544e.pdf.

TABLE 6. **Advantages and disadvantages of different levels of religious authority**

| | EXAMPLES | ADVANTAGES | DISADVANTAGES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **High-level religious leaders** | • The pope<br>• The Dalai Lama<br>• A chief rabbi<br>• A grand imam<br>• Other representatives of national or international religious authorities | • Have access to national or international resources and networks<br>• May have significant credibility among government officials, other high-level conflict actors, and local populations<br>• May attract desired public and media attention | • Often have limited availability due to competing responsibilities and opportunities<br>• Have a high profile that can attract unwanted public and media attention<br>• May be less familiar with and committed to grassroots communities, and so prioritize their own interests<br>• May be less likely to speak openly on sensitive topics due to their high profile<br>• Unlikely to be women and young people |
| **Midlevel religious leaders** | • Imams and sheikhs or sheikhas<br>• Rabbis<br>• Monks and nuns<br>• Priests and pastors<br>• Religious educators<br>• Other local clergy and scholars | • May have some access to both high levels and grassroots levels to coordinate resources and support toward a mediation and its outcome<br>• May have long-standing presence in the community | • May have unpredictable and limited availability due to responsibilities to their communities, such as leading worship or rituals |
| **Grassroots leaders** | • Religious and faith-inspired individuals and groups | • Often have deep familiarity with and commitment to a community at the grassroots level<br>• Often have long-standing presence in the community<br>• Often have greater availability than higher-level leaders | • May lack access to resources and networks at higher levels<br>• May not have the needed capacity or credibility<br>• May not have significant legitimacy among government and other high-level conflict actors<br>• May be too close to the conflict to be trusted, especially where violence has happened |

## Leverage

The tangible and intangible ways a mediator or organizer can influence actors to participate in mediation or to move toward resolution is known as leverage. Legitimacy, as discussed above, is one of the primary sources of leverage. Additionally, leverage may come from using social, economic, political, or physical—and in the case of religious actors, spiritual—power to create incentives or disincentives. For example, a religious mediator-organizer could promise an actor special blessings or financial assistance for participating in the process and reaching an agreement. Alternatively, the mediator-organizer could, when confronted by an actor who refuses to participate, threaten to remove the actor's access to sacred sites or to withdraw their endorsement for that actor in upcoming elections.

Using, or simply projecting, power-based leverage risks reducing legitimacy, because it is not consensual and may be inconsistent with a religious actor's character. It may bring about short-term progress that cannot be sustained over the long term, resulting in renewed conflict. Power-based leverage should be built carefully and strategically and used only when nothing else moves the process forward (see "Ripeness in Mediation" on page 15).

## Capacity

Capacity refers to the abilities and resources of a mediator or organizer that allow the mediator or organizer to play their role effectively. Capacity for religious mediators includes religious fluency, knowledge of context and issues, basic skills, financial and social capital, and time.

***Religious Fluency.*** The ideas, symbols, and practices of a religious tradition, such as proverbs, stories, textual references, chants, rituals, and imagery, can create moments of clarity, humility, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, or fear. Religious fluency is understanding the meaning these religious resources have to the participants and knowing when and how to fit those resources into the mediation process.

***Knowledge of Context and Issues.*** Understanding the actors and their sensitivities, interests, and needs; the historical, social, political, and cultural background of the conflict; prior efforts at its resolution; and the technical aspects of the issues involved can help a mediator and organizer prepare for and implement a mediation process. When dealing with religious themes or identities, know the specific religious context and issues. If any of this information is missing, revisit the *Analysis Guide*.

***Basic Skills.*** Using basic techniques such as active listening, reframing, tracking, naming, and summarizing in certain moments is key to improving the flow of communication in a mediation. For the organizer role, useful skills are similar to those used in project management: communications, logistics, accounting, human resources, and information management. An organizer must pay careful attention to detail and, for complex matters, be able to use organizing systems and technology. These are general abilities and religious actors may not necessarily be skilled or trained in them. Fortunately, there are many trainings, books, websites, and other resources available to help people learn them.

***Financial and Social Capital.*** Mediation, and the implementation of agreements, can be costly and complicated. Faith-based organizations such as the Quakers, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Vatican, and Islamic Relief Services may be able to access a variety of resources to support the process. These include donations, loans, and grants; transportation; lodging and meeting space; volunteers and technical experts; and access to media, civil society, and government contacts through their own institutions or via well-established regional and global networks.

***Time.*** Preparing for, conducting, and following up on a mediation can take months, even years, of intensive efforts. Religious actors, especially local ones, may have the time, patience, and long-term commitment to endure the process—as illustrated in the text box below about Sant'Egidio in Mozambique.

## Sant'Egidio's Extended Mediation in Mozambique

Mediators from the Community of Sant'Egidio worked patiently for twenty-seven months on a mediation process in Mozambique, ultimately leading to the end of the civil war in 1992. One of the mediators, Emberti Gialloretti noted:

> *Contrary to a strong mediator who usually enters the negotiations with a preconceived draft and uses techniques of manipulation as leverage, we spent a lot of time letting [the parties to the conflict] speak about the details and take things step by step. You waste a lot of time, but we have a lot of time. The parties had more control, and the final agreement was their own sweat and blood, not imposed by anyone.*

*Source:* As cited in N. Hegertun, "Faith-based Mediation? Sant'Egidio's Peace Efforts in Mozambique and Algeria" (MA thesis, University of Oslo, 2010), 55.

## Selection Worksheet

To account for all these considerations in your selection of a mediator or organizer, we recommend you complete the following worksheet for each candidate that you or the actors have in mind and then use the worksheet to inform your decision making. Print out or photocopy as many copies as you need.

### SELECTION WORKSHEET FOR MEDIATORS AND ORGANIZERS

**Purpose**

Use this worksheet to inform your selection of mediators and organizers. It can also be used to help select representative participants.

**Instructions**

1. Use one worksheet per candidate, Each worksheet has three sections, one to evaluate the candidate's legitimacy, one to evaluate leverage, and one to evaluate capacity. For nonreligious candidates, disregard the rows on spiritual authority, spiritual leverage, and religious fluency.
2. Enter the conflict actors in the first row of the legitimacy section, adding more columns for any additional actors.
    a. If considering a potential mediator or organizer, the conflict actors are the individuals or primary groups involved in the conflict.
    b. If considering a potential representative participant, the conflict actors are the group or groups the participant represents.
3. Based on your conflict analysis and other available information, match the best-fitting responses to the question in each row to come up with a score for each box. Dark blue text is for selecting mediators or organizers and red text for representative participants. If you are not confident about the answer to the question, conduct further research. Enter any comments that explain your scoring in the notes portion of each box.
4. Add up the total score for each section. The legitimacy section will have total scores for each actor. An "X" in any row automatically results in an "X" for the whole section. You can change the weight for any question to reflect the importance of that factor in your context.
5. It is useful to have at least two people independently complete the worksheet for each candidate and then compare and average scores.

**Recommendations Based on the Scoring**

I. Consider the candidates with the highest legitimacy and capacity scores, using the leverage scores as an additional consideration for candidates with equal or close scores.

II. Do not consider any candidates who have an "X" for any box or total scores of less than 10 for either legitimacy or capacity unless you have co-mediators, co-organizers, or co-participants whose scores compensate for those low scores.

III. Do not consider any candidates whose legitimacy totals have more than a 3-point difference between any of the actors unless you have co-mediators, co-organizers, or co-participants whose scores compensate for that difference in scores.

IV. Carefully reassess the effectiveness of a mediation process if none of the candidates you are considering satisfy either recommendations II or III.

Candidate's name: _____

## LEGITIMACY

**INFORMED INPUT AND CONSENT: Does the actor provide input and/or consent?**

INPUT = The actor suggests the candidate or criteria for a candidate CONSENT = The actor approves the candidate

SCORING: X 0 1 2 3 4

- X: There is no input and no consent
- 0: There is input, but no consent for candidates they do not suggest
- 1
- 2: There is consent, but no input
- 3
- 4: There is input and consent

| CONFLICT ACTOR 1 | CONFLICT ACTOR 2 | CONFLICT ACTOR 3 |
|---|---|---|
| X 0 1 2 3 4 | X 0 1 2 3 4 | X 0 1 2 3 4 |
| Notes: | Notes: | Notes: |

**PERCEIVED MOTIVATION: To what extent does the actor perceive the candidate to be genuinely committed?**

SCORING: X 1 2 3 4

- X: Not at all
- 1: Very little (or don't know)
- 2: Some
- 3
- 4: Very much

| CONFLICT ACTOR 1 | CONFLICT ACTOR 2 | CONFLICT ACTOR 3 |
|---|---|---|
| X 1 2 3 4 | X 1 2 3 4 | X 1 2 3 4 |
| Notes: | Notes: | Notes: |

**COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS: What does the actor perceive the candidate's connection to the community to be?**

SCORING: 0 1 2 3 4

- 0: No connection
- 1
- 2: Some experience and relationships with the community
- 3
- 4: Fully integrated community member

| CONFLICT ACTOR 1 | CONFLICT ACTOR 2 | CONFLICT ACTOR 3 |
|---|---|---|
| 0 1 2 3 4 | 0 1 2 3 4 | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| Notes: | Notes: | Notes: |

**RANK OR STATUS: How does the actor perceive the candidate's institutional rank or social status?**

SCORING: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low rank or status | Middle rank or status | High rank or status

| CONFLICT ACTOR 1 | CONFLICT ACTOR 2 | CONFLICT ACTOR 3 |
|---|---|---|
| 0 1 2 3 4 | 0 1 2 3 4 | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| Notes: | Notes: | Notes: |

**SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY: What does the actor perceive the candidate to represent in terms of morality and values?**

SCORING: X — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Immoral or corrupt | Average | An example of the highest spiritual values

| CONFLICT ACTOR 1 | CONFLICT ACTOR 2 | CONFLICT ACTOR 3 |
|---|---|---|
| X 1 2 3 4 | X 1 2 3 4 | X 1 2 3 4 |
| Notes: | Notes: | Notes: |
| **Conflict Actor 1 LEGITIMACY TOTAL** | **Conflict Actor 2 LEGITIMACY TOTAL** | **Conflict Actor 3 LEGITIMACY TOTAL** |

Candidate's name: _____

## LEVERAGE

### SOCIAL: What social influence does the candidate have to praise or shame the actors into action?

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low/no influence — Medium influence — High influence

*For example: a large or influential base of followers; a substantial social media following; large attendance at religious service; regularly broadcasted media interviews*

Notes:

### ECONOMIC: What financial or other assets can the candidate turn into material incentives or disincentives?

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low/no assets — Some assets — Significant assets

*For example: strong relationships with donors; a philanthropic fund or trust; staff or equipment to loan; access to discounted supplies*

Notes:

### POLITICAL: What political power can the candidate turn into incentives or disincentives?

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low/no power — Medium power — High power

*For example: regular meetings with political actors; campaign endorsements; decision-making authority or voting power in a political body; access to intelligence*

Notes:

### PHYSICAL: What physical strengths can the candidate use to protect or threaten?

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low/no strengths — Some strengths — Overpowering strengths

*For example: physical size; control or influence over military, security forces, or armed groups; access to weapons or shelters*

Notes:

### SPIRITUAL: What religious resources can the candidate control to create incentives or disincentives?

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Low/no resources — Some resources — Significant resources

*For example: access to religious ceremonies or holy sites; blessings or curses; forgiveness or pardoning of sins; lending or giving sacred objects; spiritual guidance or healing services*

Notes:

**LEVERAGE TOTAL**

Candidate's name: _____

## CAPACITY

**RELIGIOUS FLUENCY: How well does the candidate know and use religious ideas, symbols, and practices?**

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Does not put religious resources into significant practice | Can put religious resources to some use | Significant knowledge and use |

Notes:

**KNOWLEDGE OF CONTEXT AND ISSUES: How well does the candidate know the context and issues?**

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Not familiar with the context or issues | As familiar as the conflict actors | More knowledgeable than the conflict actors |

Notes:

**BASIC SKILLS: What are the candidate's abilities to facilitate, organize, or negotiate?**

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | No or low prior experience or training | Some prior experience or training | Significant prior experience and training |

Notes:

**FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: What resources can the candidate access to support the mediation process or its outcome?**

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | None of the resources that are still needed to support the process and expected outcome | Some of the resources that are still needed to support the process and expected outcome | All of the resources that are still needed to support the process and expected outcome |

Notes:

**TIME: How much time can the candidate realistically commit to the process?**

SCORE: 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | No time because of many competing high-priority commitments | Limited time and some competing low-priority commitments | Sufficient time that does not compete with any existing commitments |

Notes:

**CAPACITY TOTAL**

## Prepare Your Mediator and Organizer

Once a willing mediator and organizer—one or both of whom might be yourself—has been selected, consider ways to increase their religious fluency, knowledge of context and issues, and basic mediation or organizing skills, as needed. You can build these capacities through research, training, practice, coaching, and other forms of preparation before the mediation. See the text box "Supporting Your Own Resilience" below; "Additional Resources on Religion and Mediation" on page 55 of this Guide; and the "Self-Reflect" section (pages 21–33) of the *Analysis Guide*.

### Supporting Your Own Resilience

At points in the process, organizing and mediating conflicts can be stressful and triggering. Actors' actions and words may seem to undo what you have invested time and energy into developing. The process may get stuck or go in unexpected directions. You may feel anxiety, frustration, hopelessness, despair, and even guilt. During and in preparation for times like this, set an intention for and practice self-care. Call on your own religious, spiritual, or other resources to sustain compassion, patience, creativity, forgiveness, grace, and resilience. For example, mediators have asked others to pray for them when the process was at a low point (see "Praying for Inspiration in Kenya" on page 45).

Consider the following additional ideas as you make a plan for difficult moments:

- Identify a prayer or mantra to recite discretely when needed.
- Bring a sacred object such as prayer beads to the mediation sessions.
- Attend religious services before or after mediation sessions.
- Consult a religious or spiritual companion to reflect upon and process challenges.
- Perform ritual, read scripture, chant, or dance.

## Build a Team

The mediator may need the help of a mediation team to manage a high workload and build sufficient legitimacy, leverage, and capacity. For example, adding a midlevel or grassroots actor as co-mediator or support person can make up for the lack of time, local familiarity, and commitment of a high-ranking religious actor. Teams are more likely to have the diversity of expertise needed to address the complex issues at stake When the actors come from different religious backgrounds—as well as different ethnic, gender, class, or political backgrounds—a team can be formed that represents each of these identities. An example of an interfaith initiative—the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative—is given in the text box on page 30.

## The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative

Founded in 1997, the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI) is an interfaith peace group of Anglican, Muslim, Catholic, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, and Orthodox leaders that mediated between the government of Uganda and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. The team members' contacts with rebel officers led some rebels to lay down their arms and take advantage of the government's amnesty. In 2002, ARLPI publicly opposed Operation Iron Fist, which the Ugandan Army launched against LRA rebels based in Sudan. Some ARLPI members, together with traditional leaders, started meeting with LRA commanders to form a bridge between the rebels and the government. ARLPI earned international recognition for its efforts, including the 2004 Niwano Peace Prize for promoting peace through interfaith cooperation.

*Sources:* Mohammed Abu-Nimer and S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, *Muslim Peacebuilding Actors in Africa and the Balkans* (Washington, DC: Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, 2005), 17–18; and the Acholi Peace website, www.acholipeace.org/.

At the same time, teams pose their own challenges. The more mediators or organizers, the more moving parts to coordinate and the greater the need for resources to support them. Be prepared, too, to deal with misunderstandings, or even conflict, within the team. Intentional teambuilding, preparation, and communication are key to aligning your relationships, efforts, priorities, approaches, and goals. The text box below offers dialogue prompts for working on an interfaith team.

Furthermore, make sure you are aware of any other mediators or organizers outside of your team who are working to address the same conflict. Coordinate with them to avoid competition and to facilitate collaboration. "Step Four" of the *Analysis Guide* (pages 73–86) provides more guidance on mapping other peacebuilders and peacebuilding activities.

## Working Together on an Interfaith Team

To better understand one another, collaborate, and model cooperation across different faiths, sects, or denominations on your team, we recommend that you engage in your own internal dialogue before advancing the process. Some questions to talk through together include:

- Considering the five dimensions of religion, what does your faith mean to you as a set of ideas, as community (or identity), as institution, as symbols and practices, and as an experience of spirituality?
- What specific experiences have strongly shaped your relationship to religion?
- What positive and negative messages did you receive from family, friends, school, media, and society in general about the other religions represented on the team?
- What is most important for others to understand about your faith?
- What might your team members or participants say or do that triggers strong emotions related to your faith, and how can the team prevent and respond to such a situation?
- What tensions exist among members of your faith?
- If you are not religious, what gives you a sense of meaning, belonging, and purpose in life?

## Select the Participants

A conflict will involve and affect multiple individuals or groups—both religious and nonreligious—and it is not always clear who from among them should participate in the mediation. Leaving out certain individuals or groups may mean missing key perspectives, interests, and resources needed to reach a meaningful outcome (see "The Dilemma of External Resisters" on page 32). At the same time, certain participants, or too many participants, may slow down or undermine the process altogether.

The following considerations and actions can help you to strike the right balance:

- **Conduct a stakeholder analysis**, referring to "Who Are the Actors in the Conflict and What Are the Relationships among Them?" in the *Analysis Guide* (pages 56–60) to identify religious stakeholders, alongside other reference materials for conflict analysis more generally. See "Additional Resources" on page 56 of this Guide.
- **If participants are to represent a group, ensure that they have the necessary legitimacy, leverage, and capacity** to act on the group's behalf (the worksheet on pages 25–28 can help you determine this). Ask participants such as heads of family, chiefs, council members, officials, and directors to seek explicit authority from those they represent. Even when they are not direct parties to the conflict, consider inviting influential religious actors to motivate the other participants and rally public support for the process and outcome. Note that religious actors may need permission from their own institution to participate.
- **Ensure that legitimacy, leverage, and capacity are balanced among participants.** Any significant imbalance may lead one or more participants or their followers to reject the process and its outcome. For instance, if one group's representative has considerable religious and moral authority, invite someone with a similar level of authority to represent the other group.
- **Make sure that marginalized groups such as religious, ethnic, racial, and other minorities, as well as women and youth, are represented and participate directly in the mediation process.** An intergroup process that excludes these groups will consider only the needs, interests, and perspectives of dominant groups, thereby compromising the sustainability and acceptability of any mediated agreement. See the text box "Gender, Religion, and Mediation" on page 32 for guidance on making the mediation process gender sensitive.

## Gender, Religion, and Mediation

In most religious institutions, formal leadership consists of men—more specifically, individuals who identify as and look like what their society considers a "man." Religious institutions and social norms may exclude women from religious education or official clerical roles. Even when women hold leadership positions, they are usually less visible and occupy lower ranks. Women are typically underrepresented in mediation around any given conflict despite how distinctly they may have been impacted by the conflict; how active they may have been in local and informal peacebuilding around the conflict; how significantly they may be affected by the result of mediation efforts; and their importance to the implementation of any agreements.

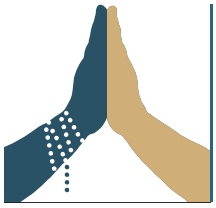
With uneven and inadequate representation of women, a mediation process and its outcomes will not benefit from the unique experiences, perspectives, interests, and capacities of women. To bring greater gender sensitivity to the process:

- Actively seek mediators, organizers, and participants who are women and sensitive to gender issues.
- Broaden your notion of religious leadership to include informal women's religious leadership.
- Model gender balance in your mediation team.
- When the inclusion of female participants or mediators is unacceptable to key male actors, bring in a gender perspective through speakers, videos, films, readings, or other resources.
- Reach out to representative women's groups to get their input and feedback on all aspects of the process.

Gender sensitivity also means incorporating the unique experiences, perspectives, interests, and capacities of people who do not fit the categories of man or woman or the standard for heterosexuality. These people are often referred to as "gender non-conforming" and may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, intersexual, asexual, transgendered, or nonbinary (or LGBTQ+). For more, refer to the *Religion and Gender Action Guide* (forthcoming in 2021–22).

## The Dilemma of External Resisters

Efforts to mediate complex, multiparty conflict may face actors—often labeled as "spoilers" by their critics—who seek to undermine the process from the outside by applying economic, social, or political pressure; organizing physical attacks; or using spiritual power if they are religious. You, the participants, and your networks may be able to engage them in the mediation or in a parallel process or otherwise counter their actions. The keys to effective engagement are preparation, strategic timing, and strong relationships with anticipated spoilers and any of their more moderate allies.



Religious participants represent religion as a community and an institution. They bring to the process religion as a set of ideas, symbols and practices, and spirituality.

## Prepare the Participants

Effective premediation contact with participants builds their trust in and familiarity with the mediator, organizer, and process, as well as nurturing their commitment to participate. It also provides you with important information to use in designing the process. As you draft letters of invitation, correspond with selected participants, and hold premediation meetings with participants, consider the following:

- **Legitimacy is the door to participation,** so apply the first portion of the selection worksheet on pages 25–26 to each team member or supporter to determine who initiates phone, email, and/or in-person contact with each actor based on their levels of legitimacy in the eyes of each actor.
- **Meet in person** for important premediation conversations in spaces where the participant feels comfortable and safe. When it is not possible to meet in person, consider ways to meet in safe, virtual spaces.
- **Clarify early on who are the mediators and organizers in the process, making clear their religious identities.** This will help to model transparency and avoid surprises. If you have a different religious identity from that of the participants, or no religious identity, express commitment to respecting all identities.
- **Explain the motivation for the mediation, its objectives, and its structure, including any religious aspects**, to ensure clear expectations of the process and everyone's role in it, including that of the mediator.
- **Invite input and contributions** related to where and when to hold the mediation sessions; meaningful questions to ask and religious ideas, symbols, or practices to use; sensitive issues or safety and privacy concerns to address; and additional participants to invite.
- **Address capacity imbalances** by using the worksheet on page 28 to identify capacity differences among particpants and by suggesting research, training, practice, coaching, and other forms of preparation to reduce those differences.
- **Explore participants' perspectives, interests, and needs** with questions similar to those you plan to ask in the mediation sessions to encourage them to reflect and practice expressing themselves and to prepare yourself for what may come up in the meeting.
- **Take a mind/body-sensitive approach** by anticipating, recognizing, and accommodating the effects of trauma, developmental (cognitive, emotional, and social) differences, and disability on participation. Many trainings, books, and websites provide guidance on how to accomplish this. See page 55 of this Guide for some resources on trauma.

- **Address security risks** that participants may face by clarifying how, if at all, the process will be documented or publicized and what secure means of communication and transportation to use.
- **Once participants have been fully informed of the process, seek consent and sincere commitment** to participate with the intention of moving toward resolution. Consider asking participants to make a vow, marked by a small ritual or symbolic act, to reflect this commitment. If you do not get a sincere commitment, the conflict may not be ripe for mediation (see "Ripeness in Mediation" on page 15).

## Determine When and Where to Mediate

If you have prepared the participants and they are committed to participating in the process, schedule the mediation for a time and place that is convenient and safe for all participants. This may be difficult, and a single meeting is usually not enough to address the issues involved in a complex conflict. Consider alternating times and places so that any inconveniences of the process are spread evenly among the participants. Remember that dates and places of religious significance can act as connectors or dividers.

### Ramadan Truce in Afghanistan

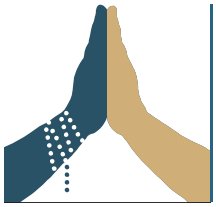
The 2018 Eid al-Fitr, one of the most important holidays in Islam, marking the end of Ramadan, was the occasion for the first break in the war in Afghanistan since the 2001 US invasion. Months-long grassroots protests and a campaign by Muslim religious authorities (ulema) prompted the truce. After consulting over five thousand individuals and groups and gathering two thousand clerics in Kabul, the National Ulema Council declared that Islamic law required all parties to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. Toward that goal, the government declared a ceasefire over the last week of Ramadan, which Taliban rebels joined two days later. The government's timing took advantage of the Islamic belief that good deeds during this time will have increased impact. Through a combination of activism, work by the ulema, and thoughtful timing, Afghanistan was brought closer to peace.

*Source:* Palwasha Kakar, "Afghanistan's Imams Helped Achieve a Surprise Truce," United States Institute of Peace, June 14, 2018, www.usip.org/publications/2018/06/afghanistans-imams-helped-achieve-surprise-truce.

Inquire into and accommodate any religious events that conflict with or impact the mediation, including holidays; days of fasting, rest, or silence; and daily times of prayer. As an illustration of how often religious holidays alone may arise in a religiously diverse setting, see the calendar for April 2020 in figure 3 on page 35. Religious actors involved in a mediation may not be available or willing to participate during holidays and prayer times. However, participants may also be more available during religious times or days when they have fewer other responsibilities. Due to their religious significance, certain holidays may also inspire greater trust and commitment, as illustrated by the example in the text box "Ramadan Truce in Afghanistan."

FIGURE 3. **A crowded calendar: religious events for April 2020**

| APRIL 2020 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| | | | 1 | 2<br>Rama Navami (Hinduism) | 3 | 4 |
| 5<br>Palm Sunday (Western Christianity) | 6<br>Mahaveer Janma Kalyanak (Jainism) | 7 | 8<br>Hanuman Jayanti (Hinduism)<br>Passover begins (Judaism)<br>Lailat al-Bara'a begins (Islam) | 9<br>Theravada New Year (Theravada Buddhism)<br>Lailat al-Bara'ah ends (Islam)<br>Lent ends (Western Christianity) | 10<br>Good Friday (Western Christianity) | 11 |
| 12<br>Easter (Western Christianity)<br>Palm Sunday (Orthodox Christianity) | 13<br>Vaisakhi (Sikhism, Hinduism)<br>New Year celebrations (Hinduism) | 14<br>Hindu New Year celebrations (Hinduism) | 15<br>Hindu New Year celebrations (Hinduism) | 16<br>Passover ends (Judaism) | 17<br>Good Friday (Orthodox Christianity) | 18<br>Great Lent ends (Orthodox Christianity) |
| 19<br>Easter (Orthodox Christianity) | 20<br>Yom HaShoah begins (Judaism) | 21<br>Yom HaShoah ends (Judaism) | 22 | 23<br>Ramadan begins (Islam) | 24 | 25 |
| 26<br>Akshaya Tritiya (Hinduism, Jainism) | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | |



Religious events and sacred sites represent religion as symbols and practices and can also bring to the process religion as a set of ideas, community, institution, and spiritual experience.

Similarly, consult with your participants about possible places for the mediation meetings that are safe, accessible, and convenient; as public or private as needed; and inspiring and connecting, such as holy sites or houses of worship. To this end, even secular spaces can be decorated with prayer flags, shrines, and other religious symbols. When religious identities and issues are a dividing aspect of the conflict, nonreligious locations and a lack of religious decorations are best. Once you have selected a space, think about how participants will be seated. There may be religious customs about who sits where, on what, and at what height, depending on their religious role or title, as well as how men and women are arranged. Remember that you may also need to provide separate and suitable places for prayer.

Meals must respect religious considerations for what is served and how it is prepared. Other logistical matters to consider include lodging, security, transportation, visas and other travel documents, identity papers, and language interpreters.

## Plan Your Mediation

Developing a plan encourages reflection by the mediator and organizer, provides participants with predictability, and creates a supportive structure during the mediation process. Experienced mediators may not make a plan for each new mediation when the process they use is familiar to them and customary in their institution or community. The more complex the conflict or the less familiar the mediator is with the process, including its religious elements, the more we recommend developing a written plan that incorporates the context mapping and other information gathered during premediation.

A mediation session typically consists of one or more meetings that move through some kind of opening, exploration of issues, development of options, conclusion of an agreement, and closing. What to plan for in each step of the mediation session will depend, in part, on whether you adopt an outsider-impartial or an insider-multipartial approach. Table 7 on page 37 provides examples of what plans for each approach might look like; the blank space below each step is for you to write in your own plans.

TABLE 7. **Examples of plans for the different steps in a mediation session**

| | OUTSIDER-IMPARTIAL EXAMPLE | INSIDER-MULTIPARTIAL EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| **SETUP** | A private meeting room with participants seated across from each other at a table. | An outside community meeting space with participants seated in a circle and surrounded by community members. |
| Your case: | | |
| **OPENING** | The conflict actors gather at a specific time. The mediator opens by welcoming and introducing those present and then briefly explains the process, its voluntary nature, confidentiality, and the mediator's own impartial role. | The conflict actors, their families, and other community members gather over time, leading to an opening ceremony with prayers and acknowledgments of those present, including spirits or ancestors. Elders welcome participants and call on religious values or stories to motivate them. |
| Your case: | | |
| **EXPLORATION OF ISSUES** | The mediator asks participants to take turns sharing their experience of the conflict, intervening to refocus, clarify, summarize, and highlight key issues, participants' interests, and common ground. | The mediator asks participants to comment on the situation in order of their social status. The mediator listens and responds, expressing opinions on the situation and sharing religious stories or other references that convey relevant community norms. |
| Your case: | | |
| **DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS** | The mediator asks participants to list all imaginable solutions (brainstorming). | The mediator offers ideas for addressing the situation and, in order of social status, asks participants for input, including objections and apologies. |
| Your case: | | |
| **CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT** | The mediator helps find the solutions that all agree to, asks questions to finalize details, and writes out a final agreement. | The mediator summarizes and assesses ideas that have been raised, reexploring issues and options until participants reach a shared understanding. |
| Your case: | | |
| **CLOSE** | The mediator thanks participants and provides them with a copy of the agreement. | Participants thank the mediator and elders and affirm their commitment to the community. Elders lead a closing ceremony with prayers. |
| Your case: | | |
| **DURATION** | The meeting is scheduled for two hours with a follow-up session if needed. | The meeting lasts for as long as needed. |
| Your case: | | |

# The Mediation Sessions

THE ACTUAL MEETING OF PARTICIPANTS, sitting at a table or under a tree, tense or nervous, is what we think of most readily when it comes to a mediation process. If you followed the guidelines from the previous chapter to arrive at this phase of the process, congratulations! It means the mediators and participants are ready, there is a time and place to meet, and you have a plan for how to proceed. It is now time to bring that plan into action. The support you provide participants through a structured plan, a trusting relationship with you, and your skilled use of tools and techniques can shift even the most difficult conflicts. This chapter covers those tools and techniques, as well as the challenges to be prepared for, particularly as all of these relate to religion. To begin, review some of the key considerations in table 8.

TABLE 8. **Key questions to ask during the mediation sessions**

| MOST RELEVANT DIMENSIONS | KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF |
|---|---|
| Set of ideas | How can religious doctrines and stories encourage (or undermine) trust, openness, understanding, and collaboration? |
| Community | How can religious identities bring participants together? |
| Symbols and practices | How can religious materials, ceremonies, and rituals contribute to the process? |
| Spirituality | How can religion help participants experience greater trust, empathy, and hope? |

As table 9 on page 39 shows, a wide variety of tools and techniques are available for you to use during the mediation sessions. If and how you use them should be determined by the context, issues, and participants involved. To learn more, see "Additional Resources" on page 55 of this Guide for a list of some of the available manuals, courses, and other resources.

TABLE 9. **Mediation tools and techniques**

| CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES | . . . IN ORDER TO . . . |
|---|---|
| Establishing guidelines or shared values | support a sense of safety and establish norms for managing challenges |
| Using storytelling where participants share relevant personal life experiences | promote empathy and understanding between participants |
| Conducting icebreaker activities | build trust and familiarity |
| Sharing and affirming participant intentions | increase trust and motivation; identify shared purpose |
| Using, and training and asking participants to use, active listening techniques (encouraging, eliciting, restating, clarifying, summarizing, reframing) | promote open and clear communication, shared understanding, and organization of ideas |
| Naming and challenging assumptions | support self-reflection, critical thinking, and shared understanding |
| Using, and training and asking participants to use, empathetic listening techniques | build trust, openness, and empathy; calm difficult emotions |
| Tracking verbal and nonverbal communication | increase mediator awareness and ability to listen actively |
| Asking open-ended questions | promote open communication and shared understanding |
| Redirecting attention to the mediator | reduce tension and calm difficult emotions |
| Establishing a pre-set talking order | evenly and predictably share the opportunity to speak |
| Using a talking piece with the instruction that only the person holding it is invited to speak | minimize interruption |
| Asking participants to switch roles | promote empathy and shared understanding |
| Jointly defining, analyzing, and addressing issues (a problem-solving approach) | increase cooperative decision making |
| Identifying, prioritizing, and addressing topics separately (e.g., from easiest to hardest) | improve organization of ideas |
| Distinguishing positions and interests | promote shared understanding and identify mutually acceptable solutions |
| Establishing decision-making criteria | promote shared understanding and objectivity |
| Caucusing (talking with participants separately) | open communication when there is distrust or secrecy |
| Using leverage | increase motivation and balance power |
| Involving issue experts or reference materials | support shared understanding and objectivity |
| Brainstorming (of possible agreement points) | generate possible solutions |
| Writing issues and ideas on a large board or paper | improve clear communication and organization of ideas |
| “Reality checking” agreements for feasibility | increase sustainability of agreements |
| Having breaks and physical exercises | help support focus and regulate difficult emotions |
| Including creative activities such as drawing, music, and movement | promote self-expression, increased engagement, and inclusion of less verbal participants |

Although not specific to religion, some of these tools and techniques may be enhanced with religious texts, stories, objects, or rituals. For example, you can:

- Establish guidelines or shared values on the basis of religious rules.
- Prompt storytelling by asking participants to "share a time when your faith helped you overcome a significant challenge in your life."
- Share and affirm intentions through prayer.
- Name and challenge assumptions as exemplified by a religious story.
- Encourage empathetic listening by reminding participants about the divine in each other.
- Use a religious object as a talking piece.
- Establish decision-making criteria on the basis of religious doctrine.
- Balance power by blessing stronger participants who are willing to make compromises.
- Invite creative expression through religious chanting or dance.

## Religion-Specific Tools and Techniques

Whereas many mediation tools and techniques are not specific to religion, some others are and may prove especially powerful as you conduct the mediation session. In this section, we elaborate on how religion can contribute to the mediation according to its five dimensions.

As you read through these religion-specific tools and techniques, note that they may already play a role in addressing issues and conflicts in participants' everyday lives. Faith often contributes greatly to supporting an individual's or a community's emotional and relational needs. But in a mediation session, religion-specific tools and techniques must be used with care, for they have the potential to heighten rather than reduce tensions among participants or to otherwise prove counterproductive. Table 10 offers several important considerations to bear in mind before using any tool or technique tied to religion. Remember, too, that participants may also have material needs that emotional and relational healing alone cannot satisfy and that should be addressed in the mediation process.

TABLE 10. **Questions to ask yourself before using any tool or technique tied to religion**

| BEFORE USING ANY TOOL OR TECHNIQUE TIED TO RELIGION, ASK YOURSELF . . . |
|---|
| 1. Who designs and leads the use of the tool or technique? How inclusive is the tool or technique of different perspectives and identities on your team and among participants? Does it reinforce power differences? |
| 2. What will participants think and feel about a particular reference to religion? Might it act as a divider, highlighting differences and separation or adding confusion and discomfort? |
| 3. Can participants choose not to participate in a religious activity without risking judgment, confusion, or tension from the mediator or other participants? What opportunity is there for them to propose their own activity? |
| 4. What options and plans are there for changing directions if the tool or technique is harming the process? What fast and reliable forms of feedback do you have to assess this? |

## Religion as a Set of Ideas

The mediator or participants can introduce religious teachings, doctrines, norms, values, and narratives to increase trust, openness, motivation, shared understanding, and focus, as well as to regulate difficult emotions. These teachings might include prophetic stories and scriptural verses from the Bhagavad Gita, Bible, Mishna, Quran, or Torah, among other sources. See, for example, the following text box about how one mediator has used Buddhist ideas in Myanmar.

### Buddhism and Mediation in Myanmar

Disputes over land, development projects, and political rights have been common as Myanmar has transitioned away from military dictatorship since 2010. Myawaddy Sayadaw, a Buddhist monk, stepped in to mediate a number of such disputes, using his status to gain trust from both sides and to frame peace efforts as a Buddhist mandate. Particularly when mediating between Buddhists, Sayadaw has used Buddhist ideas, such as the Four Noble Truths, which acknowledge the existence of suffering and point a way out, to explain and encourage peaceful conflict resolution and democratic ideals. Sayadaw often takes stories from the time of the Buddha to explain current politics in Myanmar. He addresses interreligious conflict by emphasizing values shared across traditions. By relating conflict resolution and democratic ideals to the Buddhist tradition, while appealing to the shared religious value of peace, Sayadaw encourages and empowers the mediation processes he leads.

*Source:* Harry Myo Lin (a human rights and development worker who has worked with Sayadaw), telephone interview by Maximilien Mellott, USIP, January 28, 2020.

Religious sources related to reconciliation, peace, forgiveness, mercy, acknowledgment of responsibility, virtue, love, seeking truth, equanimity, justice, confession, repentance, and the "golden rule" can help to shift participants' attitudes and motivations. (Table 11 presents a dozen different religious expressions of the golden rule.) Those sources may also offer practical guidance on issues such as handling property disputes and jointly managing a resource. You can also use religious references to counter religious ideas that escalate the conflict (see page 53 of the *Analysis Guide*).

TABLE 11. **The golden rule across religions**

| RELIGION | HOW THE GOLDEN RULE IS EXPRESSED |
|---|---|
| **African traditional (Yoruba)** | *"One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts."* YORUBA PROVERB (NIGERIA) |
| **Bahá'í Faith** | *"And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself."* LAWH'I 'IBN'I DHIB, "EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF" 30 |
| **Buddhism** | *"Hurt not others in ways you yourself would find hurtful."* UDANA-VARGA, 5:18 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Christianity** | *"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."* MATTHEW 7:12 |
| **Confucianism** | "*Do not unto others what you do not want them to do to you.*" ANALECTS 15:13 |
| **Hinduism** | *"This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."* THE MAHABHARATA, 5:1517 |
| **Islam** | *"Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."* FORTIETH HADITH OF AN-NAWAWI, 13 |
| **Jainism** | *"A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated."* SURTRAKRITANGA, 1:11:33 |
| **Judaism** | *"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole of the Torah; all the rest of it is commentary."* TALMUD, SHABBAT, 31A |
| **Native American (Lakota)** | *"We are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive."* ATTRIBUTED TO CHIEF BLACK ELK |
| **Sikhism** | *"Don't create enmity with anyone as God is within everyone."* GURU GRANTH SAHIB, PAGE 259 |
| **Taoism** | *"Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."* T'AI SHANG KAN YING P'IEN |
| **Zoroastrianism** | *"That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself."* DADISTAN-I-DINIK, 94:5 |

*Sources*: The chief source for this table is "The Golden Rule," Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, tanenbaum.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/The-Golden-Rule.pdf. Additional material is taken from "A Meditation on the Teaching of Black Elk," Scarboro Missions, www.scarboromissions.ca/golden-rule/golden-rule-meditation-exercises/10; and "The Golden Rule Is Universal," Golden Rule Project, www.goldenruleproject.org/formulations.

Some religious ideas are specific to one faith, such as "original sin," "jihad," or the "chosen people," and are referred to as *primary language*. In contrast, *secondary language* refers to ideas that are shared by faith traditions. When your participants are of the same faith, use both primary and secondary language. When they are from different faiths, focus on secondary language early in the process to emphasize shared principles and values. Once there is greater trust, consider using primary language if you can provide references from the different religions that are noncontroversial and lead to the same conclusion or if you are addressing religious ideas and misconceptions that are dividers in the conflict.

## Religion as Community

Religion offers followers a group identity that connects them to something larger than themselves. When participants are of the same faith, call on this shared identity by naming it or through religious references, symbols, and practices so as to increase trust, openness, and motivation.

When they are of different faiths, religious identity has a strong potential to be a divider in the conflict, if it is not already. Acknowledge this dynamic with the participants and avoid emphasizing religious identity. At times, it may help to call on a larger shared interfaith identity. Consider, for example, whether "religious practitioners," "religious people," "followers of Dharma" (for Hindus and Buddhists), "children of God" (for theistic faiths), or "followers of Abraham" (for Abrahamic faiths) applies to your context. See "Common Religiosity at Camp David" for an example of strategically using religious identities to form key relationships.

### Common Religiosity at Camp David

Religion has often been seen as a divider in the conflicts between Israelis, Palestinians, and their Arab neighbors. However, in the case of the negotiations between Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin in the late 1970s, US president Jimmy Carter strategically used the leaders' identity as men of religious conviction to mediate peace talks at Camp David, Carter's country retreat near Washington, DC. During the start of the process, Carter emphasized that their shared God and the common origins of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism provided a unique ability to overcome difference. Religious observance was honored throughout the process. The movie hall at Camp David was designated for Islamic prayer and Christian worship. No meetings were held on Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, and the meals accommodated both Muslim and Jewish dietary restrictions. The first joint statement issued by the three leaders was a global interfaith call to prayer that referenced their faith in the same God. Carter strengthened his connection with Begin by referring frequently to his annotated bible and with Sadat by offering to share a prayer space with him. Carter later credited these relationships as crucial to keeping the talks going during several tense moments when both sides threatened to leave. After thirteen days of negotiation, the two leaders agreed on the framework of the first peace treaty between Israel and a neighbor.

*Sources*: "Camp David Accords: Thirteen Days after Twenty-Five Years," Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, accessed March 4, 2020, www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/research/thirteen_days_after_twenty_five_years; and Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1995).

## Religion as Institution

Religious institutions that you, participants, or supporters are associated with may have already provided support, resources, networks, and leverage to initiate and organize the mediation in premediation. During the mediation sessions, their continuing involvement can help collect information, expand options for solutions, and ensure sustainability. Institutional legitimacy and leverage may also be used—with great care and thoughtfulness—to address an imbalance of power among participants or to encourage persistence when the process is stuck. An example of this is presented in the text box "Easing Tensions in Iraq" on page 44.

### Easing Tensions in Iraq

After the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" (also known as Daesh) killed some seventeen hundred mainly Shi'a air force cadets at Camp Speicher in northern Iraq in mid-2014, tensions ran high between Iraq's already conflicted Sunni and Shi'a communities. Many Shi'a believed local Sunni tribes had aided Daesh in their attack. Sunni leaders feared their community would be a victim of revenge attacks by armed Shi'a groups. At a mediation led by the Network of Iraqi Facilitators and Sanad for Peacebuilding, participants expressed doubt that the other side would keep to any agreement. The representative of the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani calmed these fears. As Iraq's highest Shi'a authority, al-Sistani had earned wide respect across religious communities for his conciliatory approach. The representative did not participate in the discussions, but his mere presence empowered Shi'a participants to speak for their communities and signaled to Sunni leaders that the Shi'a were negotiating in good faith and would honor any agreement reached. As a result, a cycle of revenge was prevented and hundreds of Sunni families returned safely to their homes in areas recaptured from Daesh by Shi'a militias.

*Source*: Viola Gienger, "In the Shadow of a Massacre, a Peaceful Return in Iraq," United States Institute of Peace, July 16, 2015, www.usip.org/publications/2015/07/shadow-massacre-peaceful-return-iraq-part-i.

## Religion as Symbols and Practices

Religion shows itself through dress, architecture, objects, rituals, music, chants, art, and ceremonies. These are powerful forms of connection and expression and can be used to reinforce spoken language or to go beyond its limitations. Consider introducing symbols and practices, or inviting others to do so, to communicate ideas, represent religious identities and institutions, and open participants up to new inspiration and spiritual experiences, particularly when normal conversation seems:

- Too direct or conspicuous
- Unable to convey the nuance or complexity of a message
- Unable to make space for different interpretations
- Too controversial or triggering
- Limited by language barriers
- Disconnected from participants' emotions
- Hopeless, overwhelming, or despairing

For an example of the use of a religious practice to overcome obstacles, see "Praying for Inspiration in Kenya." on page 45.

### Praying for Inspiration in Kenya

Prayer or other contemplative practices can support mediators when they are feeling overwhelmed or anxious. In 2006, the Kenyan government asked peace activists Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Francis Mutuku Nguli to mediate between the Pokot and the Samburu, two pastoralist communities in the northeast of Kenya. The Pokot and Samburu disagreed about the distribution of grazing land and proposed conservation projects. Both distrusted the government because of its historical marginalization of the region. The two groups and the government had already met thirty-four times without reaching an agreement. Abdi and Nguli spent the first day facilitating dialogues within each group. By the end of the day, things were not going well. The groups were spying on each other and the atmosphere was tense. To regain their own composure and motivation, the mediators asked a colleague on pilgrimage in Mecca, the holiest city in Islam, to pray for the success of their mediation and thereby share the responsibility for success and failure. With renewed resolve, they reached an agreement between the Pokot, Samburu, and the government to improve security in the area.

*Source*: Dekha Ibrahim Abdi and Simon J. A. Mason, "Mediating the Pokot-Samburu Conflict," in *Mediation and Governance in Fragile Contexts: Small Steps to Peace* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2019), 137–152.

Take extreme care selecting, or asking participants to select, traditional religious symbols or practices in multifaith settings, as they may be powerful dividers as well as connectors. Bring together objects or rituals that represent the religions in a balanced way, combining them to make interfaith objects or rituals or inviting participants to create their own symbols and practices.

## Religion as Spirituality

Through religion, followers experience a higher sense of purpose and a deeper state of connectedness. During a spiritual experience—often prompted by a sense of religious community or by religious references, art, and rituals—they may transcend normal ways of thinking and feeling. In the course of a mediation session, such an experience may open them up to new ideas, perspectives, and visions; bring about empathy and acceptance; and change their notions of self and relationships with others. This can shift the direction of the process toward resolution, transformation, and even healing in line with what seems like a divine plan or calling. For an example, see the text box on page 46, "Spiritual Transformation in Afghanistan."

Transcendent states cannot be forced upon people, nor precisely planned for. They are difficult to access when participants feel self-conscious, fearful, or anxious in unfamiliar settings around people with whom they are in conflict or who are not followers of their faith (including those with secular identities). Encourage participants to feel comfortable opening up in front of others by giving them certainty and choice around when and how they do so and by selecting a setting that is familiar or reassuring in some way.

### Spiritual Transformation in Afghanistan

A frequently used path in Kapisa Province in northeast Afghanistan ran through the property of one of the village families. The family demanded that others stop trespassing on their land. The village divided into those who sided with the landowners and those who opposed them. When anger turned to violence, the religious clerk from the local mosque stepped in. He made separate visits to each group, the members of which were all Tajik Muslims, before bringing the groups together for a mediation where he was joined by the head Islamic scholar (ulama) and village chief.

During the mediation, they referenced a variety of Islamic sources, such as "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy" (Qur'an, 49:10), as well as the messages of the caliphs—the first four companions of the Prophet Mohammed—conveying that there are no boundaries in Islam and that, instead of building a wall between Muslims, one must treat them with sympathy. In the Hadith, Prophet Mohammed said: "Angel Jibril advised me continuously to take care of the neighbor till I thought that Allah is to make him an inheritor" and taught that a "neighbor" is not just the one next door but includes all those up to forty houses in all directions.

The words from the Quran and Hadith stimulated a spiritual experience that softened the participants' hearts. They felt kinship with one another and realized that if they did not resolve the matter, they would leave a legacy of hate. The landowners agreed to allow passage over their property and added another meter to the path. The session ended with a recitation of the Quran and participants embracing.

*Source*: Marzia Mobareez (a member of one of the feuding families), interview by Tarek Massarani, Kabul, January 30, 2020.

## Addressing Common Challenges Related to Religion

As this chapter has explained, religion provides a variety of tools and techniques you can use to move the mediation toward understanding, connection, and agreement. At the same time, however, religion may be the basis for a number of difficult dynamics that can emerge during a mediation session. The rest of this chapter offers suggestions (some of which relate back to the preparation you do in premediation) for addressing those challenges.

### When Religious Ideas or Identities Are Drivers of Conflict

Your conflict analysis may have indicated that religion is a divider in the conflict. For example, conflict actors may use religious texts, images, and groups to create an enemy of the other. In this way, a conflict over a particular resource or territory may also be a conflict over competing identities or ideas, often expressed in the form of myths or worldviews. This competition of identities or ideas introduces three often overlapping dynamics that make it difficult to move past the conflict during the mediation session:

- When one actor's ideas or identity are perceived to contradict those of the other actor, the other actor will perceive any expression of their ideas or identity as an attack.
- When one actor's ideas or identity rely on misconceptions and moral judgments of the other, that actor will not value or trust the other enough to engage with them or treat them well.
- When one actor's ideas or identity rely on beliefs about being a past or present victim of the other, that actor will interpret anything the other does or says as threatening.

While not limited to religious ideas or identities, these dynamics are particularly challenging when it comes to sacred and nonnegotiable religious "truths" that are an important source of certainty, order, meaning, and belonging. To deny, doubt, or question such truths in a mediation may trigger a variety of self-protective responses, from walking out or shutting down to becoming aggressive.

Separate premediation meetings may help you identify these potential dynamics early on and build participants' trust and openness toward you and the process. Once in the mediation session, use the tools and techniques from page 39 to build trust, openness, and empathy among the participants. Use religious resources only if you are confident they will not trigger one or more of the above dynamics. Relationship building takes time and may involve moments of walking out, shutting down, or becoming aggressive regardless of how much you have done to prevent such behavior. However uneven the process of building relationships, the development of trust, openness, and empathy toward one another will translate into trust toward the larger groups the individuals represent, making it easier to name and address the religious ideas and identities driving the conflict.

Talking with participants separately before the sessions, or during them (known as *caucusing*), allows you to ask participants to reflect on their own perceptions and religious interpretations with more vulnerability. Try eliciting and affirming the deepest values and ideals of their religious beliefs and identity, then asking what form they have taken in different times, places, and social contexts. Point out complexity, nuance, or uncertainty that arises in the details. Awareness of the imperfect and varying ways humans apply religious truths to the practicalities of life may lessen the role of such ideas and identities in driving conflict.

## When Participants Relate to Their Religion Differently

Even when participants identify with the same faith tradition, assume they have different ways of relating to it until they show you that is not the case. There may be significant differences in the way they practice its rituals, follow its rules, wear its symbols or dress, associate with other believers, read or memorize its texts, study or understand its doctrines, belong to or participate in its organizations, or experience spiritual states. The more devoutly people do any of the above, the more they may consider themselves "legitimate" or "true" followers of that faith while being considered "fundamentalist" or "close-minded" by less strict followers. As such, be mindful of how you introduce religion into the process, even when just asking participants to share their religious affiliation. You may provoke discomfort, judgment, and tension between participants.

You can assess this dynamic during the premediation meetings, particularly by asking participants what it means to be a person of faith and how they relate to differences between people of their faith. Then consider how these differences can act as dividers during the mediation session and consider how to address this. For example, if participants have conflicting beliefs about the acceptability of women and men sitting next to or touching each other, you may acknowledge this to the group and seek everyone's consent to avoid mixed seating or touching while the session is under way. If there is resistance, consider talking with the participants separately to ask for their flexibility and to find a workable solution.

## When Religious Ideas, Symbols, and Practices Conflict

Be aware of primary language or other aspects of participants' differing religions, sects, or denominations that contradict each other. The text box below offers examples of this. Even the same faith traditions hold contradictory interpretations. Unless these contested elements are important to addressing the conflict, do not introduce them or focus on them if participants raise them during the mediation. Instead, shift focus to the religious ideas, symbols, or practices that are unifying, such as the general notion of devotion or worship. Religious mediators with strong legitimacy and fluency may also clarify differences or reframe them to be less significant.

### Contradictory Beliefs and Practices

**EXAMPLES**

- Abraham and the Old Testament are found in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith; however, there is disagreement in faiths as to who and what is the last and defining prophet and scripture. Indeed, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also referred to as Mormonism) does not have a last prophet, but rather an ongoing line of contemporary prophets.
- Most Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and pagans believe in reincarnation, the notion that the nonphysical essence of a being passes through many cycles of birth and death, changing into a different human or nonhuman physical form each time. Most Christian, Jewish, and Islamic denominations may believe in life after death, but they do not believe in reincarnation into a new body on Earth.
- The strong emphasis on one God in Islam is in tension with the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity with Jesus as the Son of God and with the multiple deities found in Hinduism and a variety of traditional religions.
- Worship at shrines in Hinduism and the depictions of God in Christian churches conflicts with the Islamic practice of not representing God or the Prophet through art or material objects.
- Sunni and Shi'a sects of Islam disagree on whether Abu Bakar or Ali ibn Abi Talib was the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammed.
- In Judaism and Catholicism, drinking wine is a part of certain religious ceremonies such as the Sabbath or Communion, whereas alcohol and drugs are largely forbidden in Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, and Mormonism. In Hinduism, Rastafarianism, and certain indigenous traditions, cannabis or other psychedelic plant medicines are central to spiritual experiences and ritual practices.

## When There Are Power Imbalances Specific to Religion

In mediation sessions, more powerful participants may not take the process or the other participants' interests seriously and less powerful participants may distrust the process or its outcome. Be aware of the particular ways that power imbalances may appear around religion. Actors belonging to a religious institution or community may have power on account of their position within it. Religious actors may hold power from their perceived ability to access divine truth or perform spiritual acts such as blessing, healing, sorcery and witchcraft, predicting the future, channeling spirits, or communicating with the ancestors. Power imbalances along gender and generational lines are common among religious leaders and institutions (see "Gender, Religion, and Mediation" on page 32).

First, identify and address power imbalances during premediation, as discussed in "Select the Participants" on page 31 and "Prepare the Participants" on pages 33–34. Second, during the premediation meetings, you may counter imbalances by building trust, openness, and empathy among participants (see "When Religious Ideas or Identities Are Drivers of Conflict" on pages 46–47). During the session, caucusing can be used to check in on participants' perceptions of power imbalances and ideas for how to address it. Third, consider one or more of the strategies listed in "Mediation Tools and Techniques" on page 39, such as establishing guidelines, storytelling, naming and challenging assumptions, empathetic listening, using leverage, and involving issue experts and reference materials, including to raise awareness of the role of power differences.

## When Religious Actors Do Not Have the Authority to Act on Behalf of Their Institutions

Although you should aim to have religious actors get explicit authority to act on behalf of their institutions or followers in premediation, the authority may not be granted or may not cover what arises during the mediation sessions. This challenge is also faced by political or other secular representatives participating in the session who need the approval of their constituents or organizations. Have such representatives anticipate the interests and concerns of their groups—for instance, by soliciting them through surveys, listening sessions, or focus groups—and address them proactively in the draft agreement. Then have representative participants take their proposed agreement back to their constituents or organizations to obtain their input and eventual approval. The representative participants may need to repeat this consultation process several times before the agreement gains support or approval. Even when authority is granted before the mediation sessions, you may still urge representative participants to carry out such consultations to increase ownership over the agreement.

# Postmediation

A MEDIATION SESSION may end with laughter and embraces, a shared meal, a community celebration, and a list of agreements. After hours, weeks, and even months of hard work, this can be a moment of relief and satisfaction for you and your team that is hard to describe. However, not all mediation sessions end in this way. Some break up with an abrupt eruption of tension. Some wind down as energy and motivation fades. In these cases, you may try to bring participants together for another session after they have had some time to calm down or reflect and you have met with them individually for additional preparation. If there is an unwillingness to meet again, refer to the box on ripeness in mediation (page 15) for guidance. The conflict may have turned unripe for mediation, making it time for you to consider other peacebuilding interventions or to simply wait until your energies can be spent more effectively.

Provided you carried out thorough premediation preparation and applied your plan, tools, and techniques effectively during the meetings—always making sure to maximize the connecting aspects of religion and minimizing the dividing aspects—your last mediation session will likely be a success. It may result in a desire to continue meeting or cooperating, a shared understanding that the conflict has been resolved, an agreement around additional steps that need to be taken, or a combination of these. *Postmediation* refers to the wide variety of follow-up actions the mediator, organizer, or a newly selected third party may take to ensure that any outcome of the process lasts.

Postmediation activities may include:

- Writing up and distributing agreements.
- Monitoring the conflict and the implementation of agreements.
- Supporting participants in implementing agreements.
- Reporting on the process and its outcomes to participants, stakeholders, funders, the media, or the public.
- Organizing additional mediation sessions or other processes, including with former external resisters (see page 32).
- Facilitating ongoing communication and relationship building between participants.
- Assessing the process and participants' and other stakeholders' satisfaction with the outcome.
- Organizing events such as memorials to communicate or celebrate the outcome.
- Reinitiating a process when outside developments lead to renewed conflict.

Table 12 on page 51 identifies some key considerations for postmediation. Your answers to these questions will help determine how religious ideas, identities, institutions, symbols and practices, and spirituality can enhance your follow-up activities.

TABLE 12. **Key questions to ask during postmediation**

| MOST RELEVANT DIMENSIONS | KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF |
|---|---|
| Set of ideas | How can religious norms and narratives contribute to broader support for the outcome of a mediation? |
| Community | How can religious identities contribute to broader support for the outcome of a mediation? |
| Institution | How can religious leaders, networks, and resources support implementation of an agreement? |
| Symbols and practices | How can religious materials, ceremonies, and rituals support broader acceptance and implementation of the outcome? |
| Spirituality | How can transcendental experiences help participants and their constituents gain (or maintain) trust and motivation? |

Religious mediators and organizers can lend their legitimacy, leverage, and capacity to these activities in the postmediation phase just as in premediation and the mediation sessions. Religious participants who are committed to a successful outcome can do so as well. You can also turn to religious institutions, networks, ideas, identities, rituals, and messages to mobilize stakeholders, constituents, and additional resources.

Consider the example of a mediation between representatives of herders and farmers from differing ethnic and religious groups whose long-standing conflict involves the shared use of grazing and farming lands and has recently led to violence. In premediation, a team of credible and capable mediators and organizers is selected. They choose participants who represent the important perspectives, identities, and constituencies needed to address the conflict, including religious leaders, heads of major families and clans, and female community leaders. The mediation meetings take place on days suitable to all, alternating between different houses of worship and drawing on religious customs, stories, and values to build trust and cooperation among participants. The meetings result in an agreement to implement a grazing schedule, a compensation scheme for damaged crops, land-use designations, reconciliation meetings for those involved in or affected by the violence, and a community ceremony to publicize the agreement. How can religion play a role in supporting these efforts?

In their sermons, religious leaders can educate the community about the agreement and motivate them to follow it. They can reach out through their networks to invite the community to a signing ceremony, particularly those community members whose cooperation is critical to successful implementation. Religious leaders may be the most credible actors to monitor implementation and address instances of noncompliance. Their houses of worship can host the numerous follow-up meetings needed, as well as display important information about the agreement. They may offer a budget for refreshments or contribute funds to the compensation scheme. During the ceremony, reconciliation process, and other points along the way, religious values, stories, and rituals can be used to promote forgiveness and collaboration. The text boxes on page 52 illustrate the roles that religious leaders can play in postmediation with the examples of a joint celebration by a pastor and an imam in Nigeria and a papal visit to South America.

## Celebrating Mediation with the Imam and Pastor

Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa are former enemies turned interfaith peacemakers in their home state of Kaduna, Nigeria. In 2004, after hundreds were killed and tens of thousands displaced by Christian-Muslim violence in neighboring Plateau State, Wuye and Ashafa traveled repeatedly to the area to mediate a peace agreement. Afterward, a large gathering was held to inform the wider community, celebrate the agreement, and unveil a newly built monument to commemorate it. Muslim and Christian religious leaders led prayers and blessings side by side. Thousands attended, including many who had been displaced by the violence.

*Source*: *The Imam and the Pastor*, DVD, directed by Alan Channer (London: FLTfilms, 2006). For more information, see www.fltfilms.org.uk/UK.html.

## The Pope's Visit to Chile and Argentina

In the late 1970s, a territorial dispute over islands in the Beagle Channel threatened to escalate into war between Argentina and Chile. The dispute was successfully mediated by the Vatican and sealed by a peace treaty between the two countries in 1985, aided by Argentina's 1983 transition to democracy. Pope John Paul II visited Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina in 1987 to commemorate the peace deal, at the time his longest foreign trip and the first time a modern pope began Holy Week outside of Rome. The trip started with a ceremony to honor the peace treaty in Uruguay. In Chile and Argentina, the pope then urged both countries to move past their dispute and work for human rights and democratic reconciliation at home.

*Sources*: Tim Coone, "Pope Begins Latin American Tour," *Financial Times*, April 1, 1987; "Million Faithful Greet John Paul as Mass Ends Visit to Argentina," *Toronto Star*, April 13, 1987; and Bruce Handler, "Pope Calls for Victory of Peace over Violence in 'Dictatorial' Chile," Associated Press, April 1, 1987.

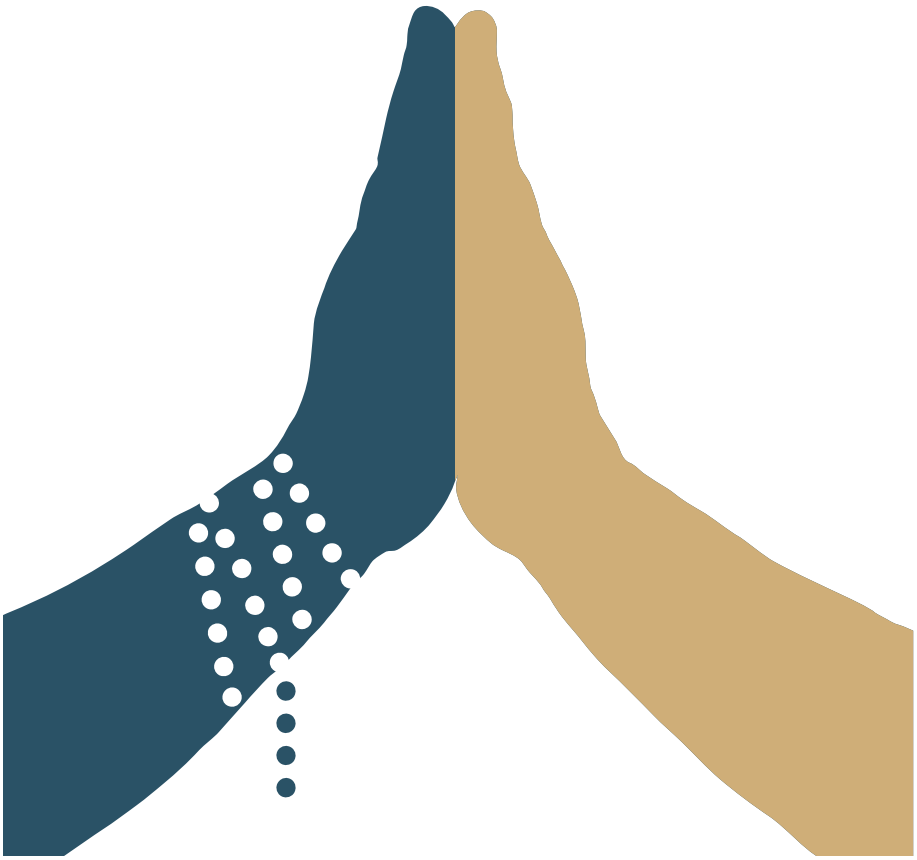
Even though participants may broaden their understanding, break down stereotypes, and change their attitudes during the mediation process, they typically face social pressures in their communities that can cause them to lose trust in one another, in the process, and in any agreement it yields. Religious mediators can play an important role in addressing such reentry problems by organizing follow-up opportunities for participants to stay connected, communicate, work together, and reaffirm their commitments. For example, a meeting may be called to share updates and challenges participants face in their communities, develop strategies to cope with them, and give each other feedback. The gathering can draw on religious resources and spiritual experiences to reinspire participants to continue working for peace.

Postmediation efforts are particularly important and challenging when the mediation addressed a conflict between groups with a long history of distrust and harm, the resulting agreement is complex, implementation is costly and will take a long time, and many people who were not directly involved in the process are nonetheless affected by or expected to follow the agreement.

# Final Remarks

MEDIATION IS AN ARTFORM with a long and diverse history around the world. In this Guide, we have shared key ideas about the role religion can play in a mediation process based on our experience, consultations, and research. We hope you take some time to think through how to incorporate these ideas into your mediation practice, seeking additional resources and support where needed and then reflecting on the results. You will learn what works in your context in the process and we encourage you to share those insights with others. In this way, we hope this book is just one step in humanity's ongoing journey of deepening our understanding of, and our abilities to address, conflict.

Remember that mediation rarely, if ever, addresses all the root causes of complex social conflict at community, national, and international levels. It can touch on important issues, but it must be part of a comprehensive and strategic approach to peacebuilding if a just and sustainable peace is to be reached. This approach may include nonviolent campaigns and movements to shift power and improve awareness, reconciliation and reparation efforts to address past harms, and legal and political advocacy to push for more equitable policies and for political leaders who care about justice. In the course of these efforts, there will be moments when adversaries are willing to talk to each other with support of a third party to reach new understandings, relationships, and agreements. This is when the conflict is ripe for mediation. Grab this Guide and take up the challenge!



## Organizations Working on Religion and Mediation

The following is a nonexhaustive list of international and local organizations working at the intersection of religion and mediation. Additional listings are available via www.usip.org/programs/religious-peacebuilding-action-guides.

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University
https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu

Community of Sant'Egidio
www.santegidio.org

Cordoba Peace Institute
www.cordoue.ch

Culture and Religion in Mediation Programme, Center for Security Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich)
www.css.ethz.ch/policy_consultancy/Mediation_and_Peace_Promotion/Religion/index_EN

Institute for Global Engagement
https://globalengage.org

Interfaith Mediation Center
https://interfaithmediation.org

International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation
www.icermediation.org/organizations/international-center-for-ethno-religious-mediation

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD)
http://icrd.org

King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)
www.kaiciid.org/en/the-centre/the-centre.html

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center
https://lmpeacecenter.org

Mediators Beyond Borders
https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org

Network for Religion and Traditional Peacemakers
www.peacemakersnetwork.org

Pax Christi International
www.paxchristi.net

Salam Institute for Peace and Justice
http://salaminstitute.org

Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding
www.tanenbaum.org

United States Institute of Peace, Religion and Inclusive Societies program
www.usip.org/issue-areas/religion

United Religions Initiative
http://uri.org

## Additional Resources on Religion and Mediation

The following nonexhaustive list of publicly available resources complements this Action Guide, providing basic information on mediation, information specific to certain religions or secular contexts, and references to related topics such as trauma. Additional resources are available via www.usip.org/programs/religious-peacebuilding-action-guides.

9Adar Constructive Conflict Project Resources by the Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution
www.9adar.org/resources

Dialogue and Mediation: A Practitioner's Guide by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
www.wanep.org/wanep/files/pub/dialogue_mediation/pg_dialogue_and_mediation.pdf

Ethnoreligious Conflict Mediation Training by the International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation
www.icermediation.org/projects-campaigns/mediation-training

Global Campus Courses by the United States Institute of Peace, including Conflict Analysis, Introduction to Religion and Peacebuilding, and Mediating Violent Conflict
www.usip.org/academy/catalog-global-campus-courses

The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding including *The Little Book of Trauma Healing* and *Reconcile: Conflict Transformation for Ordinary Christians* by Eastern Mennonite University
https://emu.edu/cjp/resources/little-books

Mediator's Handbook by International Alert (in English, Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek)
https://www.international-alert.org/publications/mediators-handbook

Peace and Conflict Learning Hub of the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities
https://jliflc.com/about-the-peace-conflict-hub

Peace Exchange member forum, webinars, and resource library by the United States Agency for International Development
www.dmeforpeace.org/peacexchange

Peacemaker's Toolkit series by the United States Institute of Peace, including *Timing Mediation Initiatives, Debriefing Mediators to Learn from their Experiences, Managing Public Information in a Mediation Process,* and *Managing a Mediation Process*
www.usip.org/publications/2012/02/peacemakers-toolkit

Religion and Mediation Course by the Center for Security Studies
https://css.ethz.ch/en/think-tank/themes/mediation-support-and-peace-promotion/religion-and-mediation/rmc.html

"Say Peace"—Islamic Perspectives on Conflict Resolution: A Training Manual for Muslim Communities by the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice
http://salaminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Say-Peace-2016.pdf

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience Resources by Eastern Mennonite University
https://emu.edu/cjp/star/toolkit

United Nations Guidance for Mediation
https://peacemaker.un.org/guidance-effective-mediation

United Nations Mediator's Manual: Advice from UN Representatives and Envoys
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ManualUNMediators_UN2010.pdf

Working in Conflict: A Faith-Based Toolkit for Islamic Relief
www.islamic-relief.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/A_Faith_Based_Toolkit_for_Islamic_Relief.pdf

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## About the Action Guides

Why were the Religious Peacebuilding Action Guides written? Although it is difficult to deny that religion plays a role in many conflicts across the world, only relatively recently has there been an interest in what this means for peacebuilding. Religious peacebuilding has developed as a recognized field in its own right since the turn of the century. However, religion continues to be neglected in the wider field of peacebuilding both because of a secular bias that tends to downplay the importance or relevance of religion and because of a shortage of practical tools to help peacebuilders navigate the complexities of the religious dimensions of conflict.

The Action Guides aim to address this shortage of practical tools and challenge the persisting secular bias in peacebuilding. We hope they will bridge the divide between secular and religious peacebuilding by ensuring that peacebuilding actors are capable of understanding and acting within the religious landscape of conflict environments.

These four Action Guides are the product of a collaborative process involving seven authors coordinated by three editors with support from the religion and peacebuilding team at USIP. Starting in 2014, two consultations, one in New York and one in Thailand, with stakeholders from the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia; a global survey of some eighty respondents; two Washington, DC, symposia of religious and thematic specialists; and manuscript reviews by experts fed into the process. Editors were then responsible for integrating and finalizing the publications, ensuring consistency across all four Guides.

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## About the Supporting Organizations

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers builds bridges between grassroots peacemakers and global players in order to strengthen the work done for sustainable peace. The Network strengthens peacemaking through collaboratively supporting the positive role of religious and traditional actors in peace and peacebuilding processes.

See www.peacemakersnetwork.org/about-us for more information.

The Salam Institute for Peace and Justice is a US-based nonprofit organization for research, education, and practice on issues related to conflict resolution, nonviolence, human rights, and development, with a focus on bridging differences between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The Salam Institute has extensive experience directing projects focused on peacebuilding and interfaith dialogue and exchange in Muslim countries.

See http://salaminstitute.org for more information.

The United States Institute of Peace is a national, nonpartisan, independent institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for U.S. and global security. In conflict zones abroad, the Institute works with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict. To reduce future crises and the need for costly interventions, USIP works with governments and civil societies to build local capacities to manage conflict peacefully. The Institute pursues its mission by linking research, policy, training, analysis, and direct action to support those who are working to build a more peaceful, inclusive world.

See www.usip.org for more information.

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Making Peace Possible

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THIS ACTION GUIDE is written for people who are organizing and facilitating mediation processes where religious issues or identities are important and religious texts, principles, values, symbols, or rituals may be used. It is one of four Action Guides in a series; the others are *Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding, Religion and Reconciliation*, and *Religion and Gender.*