

The Art of the Possible: exploring the meaning of faith in the world of politics

Introduction

Does politics have a role in the Church or is it a distraction from our mission? Is politics about compromise – what is possible – when our Christian faith is about truth? At a time when a lot of people say they are turned off by politics, many people in our churches are still concerned about what is going on in our world. What does politics mean for our faith – and what should our faith mean for our politics?

About *The Art of the Possible*

- The series contains six sessions covering different aspects of Christianity and politics, including our images of God, why politics is about more than voting, whether Christians should break the law, and why Christians should do politics.
- Depending on your group you could cover the whole series, pick a “taster session”, or tailor a session to the particular needs of your community

About this website

- You will find leader’s notes and handouts for six sessions, which can be read or downloaded as Word documents or PDFs. The list of contents can be found at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/artofthepossible

About the group facilitator

- Each session will require preparation from you, the leader.
- The leader’s notes offer guidance on the structure, input and activities for each session. Do not feel you need to stick rigidly to this – you know your group and what will work.
- Activities are inset in bold together with a suggested timeframe
- Input is in normal type. You will not want to read these sections out to the group as they will make for very boring sessions. Instead try reading through them beforehand to identify what *you* think are the important things that the group takes away. Then either use these points to guide a discussion or summarise what the learning points might be.
- You may choose to work with a co-leader to prepare these session.

About the sessions

- Each session is structured to last 90 minutes – people rarely concentrate for longer than this! You may decide to skip over certain sections – eg the discussion questions at the end of each session – if it looks like over-running
- Each session begins and ends with a prayer – you may wish to use the prayers provided or have time for silent or shared reflection
- People learn in different ways – each session contains a variety of learning activities, eg doing, listening, thinking visually, discussing, studying the bible, and reflecting. Depending on the balance of your group, some ways may work better than others...

About the authors

- **The Art of the Possible** was written by David Bradwell, Rosemary Kidd, Rachel Lampard, Graham Sparkes and Geoff Thorington Hassell, with illustrations by Steve Walker, on behalf of the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.
- The Joint Public Issues Team was set up to work together in living out the gospel of Christ in the church and in society. The Team aims to promote equality and justice by influencing those in power and by energising and affirming local congregations. It has produced **The Art of the Possible** to help churches to explore the importance of Christian engagement with public issues.
- We want to learn from your comments and improve future editions of this resource. Please complete the evaluation forms at the end and return them to us.

Finally thank you for exploring the links between faith and the world of politics. We hope that this will be a useful resource for you and your church as you discern what God is calling you to in your local community and in the wider world.

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk