



Study Guides for Geez Now Available!

Study guides are created for use in community – in the classroom, in book groups, with your faith circle, or for quiet reflection on your own. You can find a PDFs of this study guide and previous issues' at geezmagazine.org/resources/study-guides

STUDY GUIDE GEEZ 56: DISOBEDIENCE

ABOUT GEEZ

Geez magazine is a quarterly, nonprofit, ad-free, print magazine about social justice, art, and activism for people at the fringes of faith in Canada and the U.S.

Geez is committed to not just raging against oppression but offering the hope, beauty, and power alive in local communities doing their work.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

Geez 56: Disobedience – Historically, engaging with laws through breaking them has been part of the arc that moves us towards justice. In this issue, we unpack the nuances of breaking the law and the choices we do (or don't) make in the process.

Page 8 – With Spirit and Body and Being – Shut It Down! by Lydia Wylie-Kellermann

“Geez Out Loud” is a listening series that offers audio accompaniment by the author for select stories, geezmagazine.org/geez-out-loud.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Whether you are in conversation with folks in a classroom, at a dining room table, or on the internet, be mindful that this work is not just intellectual but work of the heart. Be gentle with one another along our different journeys.

Part 1: The Complexities of Law

Part 2: The Case for Disobedience

Part 3: The Discernment of Resistance

Part 4: The Cost of Action

For copies of Geez 56: Disobedience, visit geezmagazine.org/store.

PART I THE COMPLEXITIES OF LAW

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 15 – Breaking America's Law: On Being Suspect by *Will See*

Page 45 – An Illegal Road Trip: Drugs, Friendship, and Following Jesus by *Nicolas Crier and Scott Neufeld*

Page 49 – Fantasy Breakers by *Rhanimalz*

Page 51 – Inside, Outside, All on the Same Side! by *Dean Dettloff*

DEFINITIONS

Prison industrial complex: the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems

Prison abolition: a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance, and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How were rules taught growing up? Could you break them? Were you punished? How did you behave toward rules?
2. How do you relate to the law from your social location (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, economic status)? Do you view police as helpers in your neighbourhood or as threats?
3. Should prisons be abolished? Explore alternatives systems built on human dignity and justice.

ACTIVITY

1. Seek opportunities to participate in prison abolition work with organizations in your area. Support your Black Lives Matter chapter and IOWC, incarceratedworkers.org/get-involved.
2. Organize a study group of Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

STUDY GUIDE GEEZ 56: DISOBEDIENCE

PART 2 THE CASE FOR DISOBEDIENCE

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 12 – The Disobedient Body by *Maggie Helwig*

Page 36 – The Fire is Raging: A Case for Civil Disobedience by *Liz Theoharis*

DEFINITIONS

Civil disobedience: A form of peaceful protest by intentionally refusing to comply with a law or pay a tax or fine. First coined in the 1840s by Henry David Thoreau.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever considered participating in civil disobedience? What feelings come up when you think about participating in an action?
2. Is civil disobedience an important form of justice-making? Why or why not? In a time when people protest via newsfeeds and hashtags, does putting your body on the line say something?

ACTIVITY

1. Learn the stories of folks doing civil disobedience in your community. So often, this work is not given airtime by mainstream media. Share on your social medias. Spread the word.

PART 3 THE DISCERNMENT OF RESISTANCE

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 22 – Fear and Power at my First Protest by *Kathleen Nagle*

Page 23 – For the Love of Family, I Won't be Arrested by *Liz Miller*

Page 25 – Eucharist at Gunpoint by *Bill Wylie-Kellermann*

Page 32 – Apprenticing to Saints Cla(i)res by *Lindsay Airey*

Pages throughout – Why is Grandpa in Jail? by *Lydia Wylie-Kellermann*

DEFINITIONS

Discernment: A process of decision-making which opens oneself up to a greater sense of spirit, guidance, or call

Liturgical direct action: A form of protest that is rooted in shared, public worship aligning with the Christian liturgical calendar

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does social location affect decisions around who gets arrested?
2. What is the relationship between prayer, discernment, and resistance?

ACTIVITY

1. Journal about where you are in your own discernment about disobedience and the law. For what would you be willing to risk jail time?

PART 4 THE COST OF ACTION

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 30 – Guilty: Kings Bay Ploughshares by *Chrissy Nesbitt*

Page 40 – “A Hidden Life” movie reflections

Page 43 – Hong Kongers, Resist! by *tan ning-sang*

DEFINITIONS

Ploughshares movement: A series of nonviolent direct actions that began in the U.S. in the 1980s, advocating for peace and nuclear disarmament. Its name is based on the Biblical call for people to “beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4).

Conscientious objection: Refusing to partake in a state-sanctioned military requirement on the grounds of one's ethical, moral, and/or religious conviction.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are there moments when you have broken a rule (legal, cultural, expected) and you were willing to take the consequence?
2. How do you see the role of community in your own work of nonviolence or resistance?
3. Do you read Isaiah's ploughshare vision literally and enacted personally? Why or why not?
4. When doing civil disobedience, is it important to break the law and remain present to take the consequences? Is it ok to resist in mask or in the dark and run? What are the advantages to each?

ACTIVITY

1. Create some ways to honour resistance warriors who have borne the real cost of resistance. Perhaps build an altar of movement ancestors. Name the rooms in your house after heroes/ sheroes. Write little bios in your church bulletin.
2. Write letters to prisoners of conscience: nukeresister.org/inside-out