



GOAL

Youth learn about people who speak up against injustice—including Jesus—and grow in their confidence to advocate and educate.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

God, Jesus' ministry was one of listening and advocating. Help me to do likewise as I guide these young people. Amen.

THIS SESSION

When we speak up, we bring awareness to bigotry, oppression, and bullying. It is important that we raise awareness in ways that do not call out and exclude individuals or communities with harmful beliefs and actions. Rather, the aim is to call people to recognize the harm in their beliefs and actions and invite them into a life that promotes justice, fairness, and well-being. Speaking up includes sharing personal narratives, advocating for others, and educating people on the impacts of their beliefs and actions and the underlying systems and structures at play. Jesus spoke of justice by drawing people close, recognizing their lived realities, and naming a vision of a more just world, which he invited people to co-create.

THE BIBLE STORY

When Jesus enters the temple in John 2:13–16, he notices that people are selling goods and commodities for profit in a place intended to provide refuge, connection, and holy teaching. Merchants had distorted the sacredness of the space. Jesus is filled with anger. He overturns their tables and scatters their money, releases the animals, and chases the merchants out of the temple. He reminds people the temple should not be a marketplace. He speaks up with words, emotions, and actions about how the actions of the people do not reflect God's purposes.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

In recent years, there has been a rise in *cancel culture*. This form of modern ostracism excludes a person from their community for their beliefs, statements, or actions. Youth will most likely be familiar with cancel culture and know of celebrities or artists who have committed wrong and whose movies, art, or music are now rejected or ignored by many. It is important to distinguish today's cancel culture with God's call to speak up, advocate, and educate. Speaking up brings attention to injustices and calls for change, while cancel culture attempts to ignore, erase, or *cancel* offending people or organizations.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Micah 6:8 Requirements” (p. 24): Display the opening ritual instructions on Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 11).
- “Service Project” (p. 27): Use the “Speak Up” instructions from Resource Page 4 from session 1 (p. 15).

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Paper and pens

AIRPLANE MESSAGES

As youth arrive, give each person a piece of paper and a pen. Have them write a message encouraging someone to speak up against injustice. Then have them fold the paper into an airplane. Encourage youth to assist one another in making the paper airplanes.

Once all youth have arrived, have them fly their airplanes across the room and retrieve a plane that is not their own. Task youth with reading aloud the message they retrieved and guessing who wrote the message. Allow youth three guesses before requesting the original writer reveal themselves.

Ask youth which messages they found most encouraging and why.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 11)

MICAH 6:8 REQUIREMENTS

Use instructions on Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 11) for an opening litany. Save them to use throughout the practice.

HUMAN KNOT GAME

Gather youth in a circle. Prompt them to play the Human Knot Game with these instructions:

- Place your right hand in the center of the circle and grab someone else's right hand.
- Place your left hand in the center of the circle and grab someone else's left hand. Make sure you do not grab the left hand of the person whose right hand you are holding.
- Without letting go of your grip *and* without speaking, work together to untangle the knot.

At the end of the first round, discuss the challenges that arose during the activity. Repeat the game, allowing players to speak. Debrief the activity using these questions:

- ➔ What was different about the two rounds?
- ➔ When was it useful to speak up during this activity?
- ➔ What does this remind you about the importance of speaking up?

 **Teaching Tip:** This game is best played while standing. Adapt this game by using ropes at least 2 feet long for every two players. Youth grab the ends of another person's rope. If your group is larger than 10 people, form multiple smaller groups.

- ☐ Newsprint
- ☐ Markers

IMPROV GAME

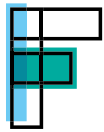
Invite youth to list situations in which they need to disrupt injustice. Write their comments on newsprint. Explain that they will work as a group to create a short skit about speaking up for justice in one of the situations listed on newsprint.

Give the group two minutes to brainstorm characters and a general plot. Then have them improvise their skit.

Have them reenact their original skit, using one or more of these different scenarios:

- Underwater
- In slow motion
- In a crowd of strangers
- In front of your crush
- On public television
- In front of your parents

Following the second performance, discuss how their behavior and their message changed in the different scenarios and why they think these changed.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or more options.

VISUALIZING THE SCENE

T C CT

☐ Internet-connected device

Show the YouTube video “John 2:13–21 Jesus Cleanses the Temple” (bit.ly/FMCleansing, 2:57, stopping at 2:15).

Form pairs to summarize the video. Encourage them to identify why Jesus was speaking up, about what, and how he did it. Gather the group and invite youth to talk about their initial responses to the video as well as Jesus’ reason for speaking up. Continue conversation, asking:

- ➡ If you had been present in the temple during this event, what would you have thought or felt?
- ➡ What would you have done? Why?

CREATING A NEWS STORY

D

☐ Bibles

Read aloud John 2:13–16 as youth follow along. Form two groups. Have each group create a skit of a news story reporting on the scene described in the passage. Encourage youth to depict how the news anchor would talk about the story, what the story headline might be, and what clips might be shown during the coverage. They may include in the skit interviews from witnesses, experts, or Jesus.

Invite the groups to showcase their skits. Debrief the activity by discussing similarities and differences between the skits. Have youth discuss how news of this event may have spread without newspapers or mass media. How might people who heard about the event have responded to the news?

DISCUSSING THE STORY

C AT

☐ Bibles

Invite a youth volunteer to read aloud John 2:13–16 as other youth follow along. Facilitate a conversation with the following questions:

- ➡ What words come to mind when you hear this story?
- ➡ How would you react if you were in the temple during this event?
- ➡ Where in today’s world do you think Jesus would similarly speak up with his words and actions? Why?



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

☐ Internet-connected device

NUNS ON THE BUS

T CT C

Explain that a group of Roman Catholic nuns initiated cross-country bus tours to give visibility to their efforts on behalf of people who are poor, hungry, and marginalized. Invite youth to pay attention as they watch the video to the different justice issues the nuns support. Show the YouTube video “Nuns on the Bus Movie—Trailer” (bit.ly/FMNuns, 3:59).

Invite youth to talk about their initial impressions of the video. Have them identify the justice issues the nuns support. Discuss what is indicated about how the nuns’ faith influences their involvement in social justice.

☐ Internet-connected device



For information about the Student Voice Campaign, see bit.ly/FMStudentVoice.

STEPPING UP

T CT C

Introduce a video about a high school senior who connected with her identity as a mixed-race student through her activism with Student Voice Campaign). Show the YouTube video “Stepping Up: The Social Justice Activist” (bit.ly/FMStepUp, 3:06). Invite youth to discuss their initial reactions to the video. Discuss the different messages about education and empowerment the student received in the places she lived. How did education and empowerment allow her to understand herself? How did she use what she learned to speak up for herself and others?

☐ Internet-connected device

POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN

T C

Explain that the Poor People’s Campaign is a moral movement in the United States that advocates for a variety of justice issues. Direct youth to access the executive summary of the campaign’s moral policy agenda (bit.ly/FMPlatform). Have three volunteers read the three quotations at the top of the page. Discuss how these statements challenge Christians to a moral movement for social justice.

Show the YouTube video “Today We Gather—June 21st PPC Promo” (bit.ly/FMPoorPeoplesCampaign, 5:23). Select from these questions to facilitate conversation:

- ➔ What emotions were on display in the video?
- ➔ Who was shown on the video?
- ➔ What were people speaking up against? Speaking up for?
- ➔ How did people speak up and express themselves?
- ➔ What difference does their speaking up make?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

☐ Paper
☐ Drawing supplies
☐ Internet-connected device

JUSTICE FLYERS

A

Distribute paper and drawing supplies to youth. Invite youth to think about a justice issue they want to speak up about. Have youth create a flyer to educate others about this issue. Encourage them to describe the harm of the injustice, illustrate the impacts or the solution, and invite viewers to participate in the solution. They may find information using an internet-connected device.

Have youth work on their flyers. Invite them to display and describe their finished flyers to the group. Ask youth who their target audience for the flyer includes and where they might display it to reach their intended audience. Discuss other ways to inform people about the rationale behind justice issues and rally them to action.

JUSTICE CHANTS

C CT

Invite youth to share a story about a time they participated in a protest, march, or direct action. Encourage them to describe the purpose, what they did, who was there, and the results (if known). Ask them to recall chants they heard or participated in. What message did the chants communicate?

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and pens. Have youth take turns reading the chants out loud, with each person reading at least one chant. Encourage youth to circle their favorite chant and to write additional chants on the page. Challenge them to include a faith component or message in their chants. Invite youth to read the chants they wrote and tell when they think they would use these messages.

If time allows, have youth create posters with their favorite chants. They may display these in their learning space, carry them around their church to call attention to their voices and concerns, or take them home as a reminder of the value of their voice.

- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 1
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Poster board and markers (optional)

SERVICE PROJECT

S

Use the instructions from Resource Page 4 from session 1 (p. 15) to lead the youth in a discussion for the third step of the service project: Speak Up. Save the Resource Page for use in session 4.

- ☐ Resource Page 4 from session 1 (p. 15)
- ☐ Newsprint and markers
- ☐ Paper and pen



FOLLOWING JESUS

POPCORN PRAYER

QC

Invite participants to join you in a popcorn-style prayer. Explain that you will begin a group prayer, then leave space for youth to say aloud their prayers for people and communities experiencing injustice. There is no particular order for their speaking. They may contribute multiple prayers or pray silently. Invite youth into prayer.

Just and loving God,

You give us the world and all resources to live; still, we witness injustice, pain, and brokenness among us. Stir us to speak up for justice. We raise our voices now, in prayer for . . .

(leave space for people to voice their prayers)

We know, O God, that you care for those who experience harm, hunger, hurt, and other forms of injustice. We pray that your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Justice Chants

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Resource Page 1

Call: When Black lives are under attack, what do we do?

Response: Stand up, fight back!

Call: When Black youth are under attack, what do we do?

Response: Stand up, fight back!

Call: Show me what democracy looks like.

Response: This is what democracy looks like.

Call: Show me what community looks like.

Response: This is what community looks like.

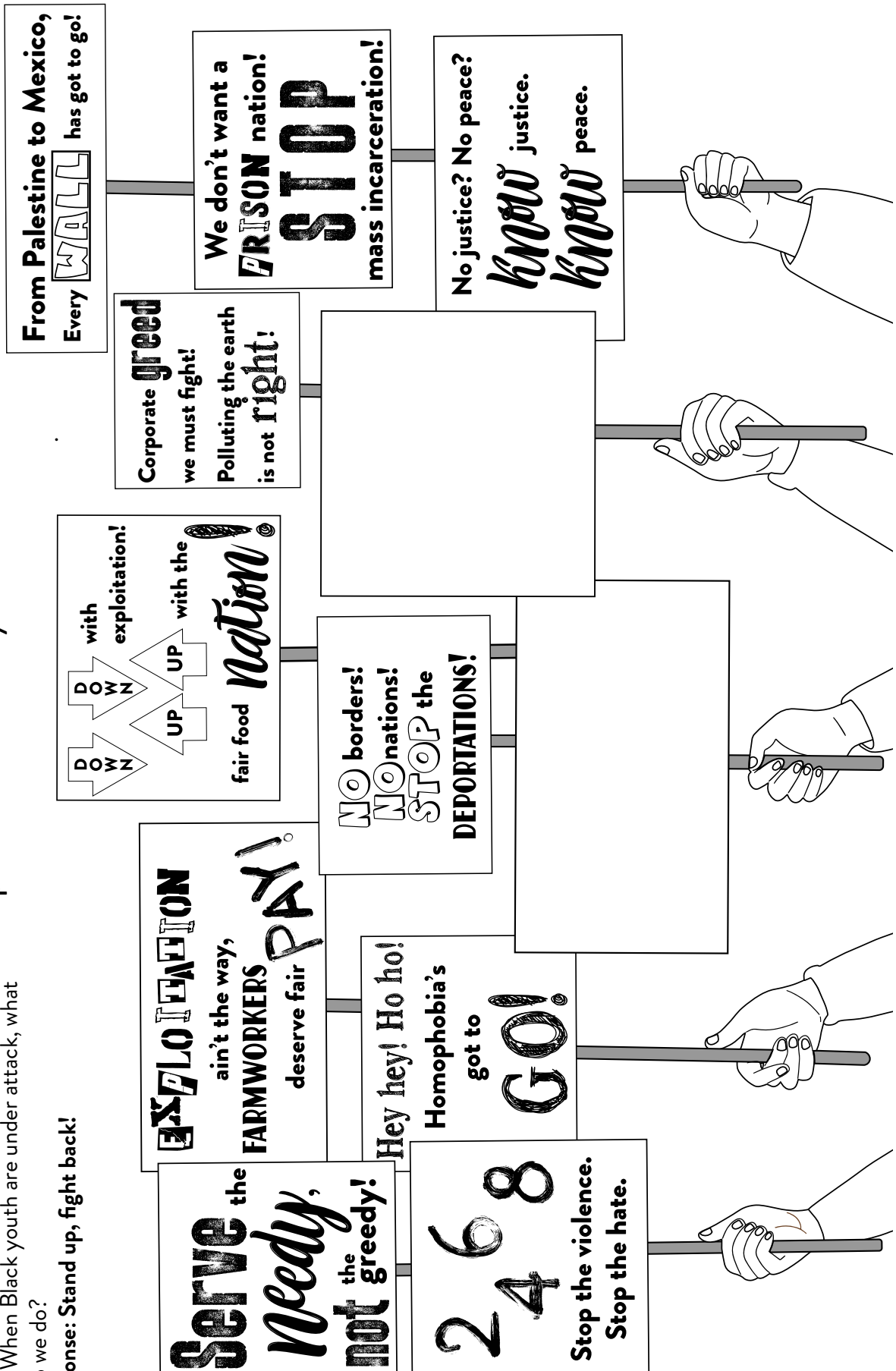
Call: Show me what solidarity looks like.

Response: This is what solidarity looks like.

When I say "healthcare" you say "for all!"

Call: Healthcare!

Response: For all!



Youth: Session 3—Speak Up