

Do the Work

ISAIAH 58:1-12

4



GOAL

Youth are inspired to do justice as a practice of and testimony to their faith.

- 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

O Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, in my teaching, let me do. In my doing, let me teach, giving you honor and glory. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Justice moves beyond words and feelings to action. Doing justice is a public testimony to our faith and commitment to God. The prophet Isaiah gives a clear message about who God is and how God receives our worship: we should look no further than the justice to which God calls us. Fellowship with God occurs when people actively care for those who are hungry, lack decent housing, or are oppressed.

Jesus acts on faith and does the hard work of justice building. As Christ followers, there is no longer an *us* or a *them* in doing God's work. We live in relationship with those with whom we agree and disagree and respond to the needs of those who are oppressed, actively treating and counteracting injustice.

THE BIBLE STORY

The prophet of Isaiah 58 condemns a community who display their holiness and righteousness in personal practices of fasting and prayer yet do not assist those in need. God's people are called to move beyond acting out rituals of faith and into noticing and disrupting the ways in which they are self-serving and oppressive and harm others. Isaiah calls people to notice and speak out against injustice as requirements for creating a world aligned with God's vision for all of God's children. Faith is both an inward commitment and outward work on behalf of God's creation.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Young people see examples of justice and injustice in their personal lives, on social media or through mainstream media. Generation Z in particular are interested in climate, economic, racial, and LGBTQIA+ justice movements. These movements combat vast injustices of large systems, structures, and institutions. Youth will need help identifying tangible and meaningful ways that they can advocate for justice in their daily lives while the roots of injustice loom large. Because youth are immersed in today's technological culture, focused on convenience and immediacy, youth may expect immediate results, and will need help understanding that the path to justice is long.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Revisiting the Scope of Justice" (p. 30): Obtain the *Do Justice* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 2 Set).

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Micah 6:8 Requirements" (p. 30): Display instructions for the opening ritual on Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 11).
- "A Penny of Justice" (p. 32): Collect pennies dated 1970 or later.
- "Service Project" (p. 33): Use the "Do the Work" instructions on Resource Page 4 from session 1 (p. 15).

GETTING STARTED

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- ☐ *Do Justice* infographic poster (Year 2 Set)

REVISITING THE SCOPE OF JUSTICE

CT

As youth arrive, refer to the *Do Justice* infographic poster. Have them read the seven descriptions of justice and their accompanying Scripture passages. Have them work together to name examples of “Doing the Work” of justice for each description.

When all youth are gathered, discuss their understanding of the difference between knowing what is just and doing justice. How are both necessary for a just world?

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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

MICAH 6:8 REQUIREMENTS

AM

Use instructions on Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 11) for an opening litany.

ACTS OF JUSTICE GAME

G

Instruct youth to form a line on one side of the room. The leader stands at the opposite side of the room and gives the following instructions:

- The leader calls out an action that promotes justice in the world. The actions called out cannot be repeated. Youth may suggest justice actions for the leader to call out by raising their hand.
- Youth who have done or currently do the action will move forward. Their movement could be a step, a somersault, a jump, and so on, but it can be only one movement per person.
- The first person who reaches the leader takes the leader role for the next round.

After several rounds, invite youth to identify justice actions commonly done by the group. Then name actions that were not as common among the group. Discuss why youth think some actions are more common than others.

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- ☐ Paper and pens

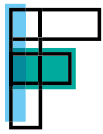
WRITING A POEM

QC

Distribute paper and pens. Have youth write a five-line poem using the following format:

- Line 1: *justice*
- Line 2: two words that describe justice
- Line 3: three verbs that end with *-ing* that relate to justice
- Line 4: four words that describe a feeling about justice
- Line 5: one word that is like justice

Invite youth to share their poems with the group.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or more options.

SCRIPTURE SYMBOLS

A CT AT

Distribute Bibles. Invite youth to take turns reading aloud Isaiah 58:1–12 verse by verse. Form four groups. Distribute the paper and drawing supplies. Assign each group one of the following sections of verses: 1–3a, 3b–5, 6–9a, 9b–12. Have each group draw symbols that retell their assigned verses.

After groups finish, invite them to reveal and describe their symbols in the order their verses appear in the passage.

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- ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Paper
 - ☐ Drawing supplies

REFLECTING ON SCRIPTURE

QC

Distribute paper and pens. As you slowly read aloud Isaiah 58:1–12, have youth list words and phrases that stand out for them. Invite youth to read aloud their lists. Other youth may raise their hand when they hear a word or phrase they also wrote. Discuss Isaiah’s message about “Doing the Work” of justice.

Have youth make two columns on their paper. At the top of each column, write the phrases “Spiritual practices that I do and why I do them” and “Spiritual practices God is calling me to do and why.” Invite youth to keep in mind their spiritual practices and what God is calling them to do as you reread Isaiah 58:1–12. Encourage them to reflect on Scripture and their spiritual practices and write their thoughts in the columns.

If time allows, invite volunteers to talk about their insights and reflections.

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- ☐ Bible
 - ☐ Paper and pens

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

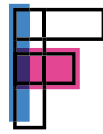
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Read aloud Matthew 25:34–40. Discuss what these verses teach about “Doing the Work” of justice.

Invite youth to think about themselves and why God calls them to do justice. Then, form pairs and have youth discuss with their partner why God calls them to do justice. Encourage partners to affirm one another in what each of them can do for “one of the least of these.”

Gather youth as a group and invite them to talk about why God calls Christian followers to do justice. Challenge them to think of actions of justice beyond those listed in Matthew 25 (sharing food and drink and clothing, welcoming the stranger, visiting the prisoner).

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- ☐ Bible



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Pennies
- ☐ Internet-connected devices
- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 1

A PENNY OF JUSTICE

T

Give each youth a penny. Have them use copies of Resource Page 1 to find the social justice event that occurred during the year when their penny was made. Task them to use personal internet-connected devices to research a social justice movement and prepare a short summary for the group.

When youth complete their research, invite them to tell the year of their penny and their short summary of a social justice event.

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Internet-connected device

OPEN TABLE NASHVILLE VIDEO

T C

Read aloud Isaiah 58:6–8. Show the YouTube video “Open Table Nashville” (bit.ly/FMNashOT, 5:31). Invite youth to share what stands out to them from the video. Facilitate a conversation with the following prompts:

- ➔ How is Open Table Nashville doing the work of justice?
- ➔ What biblical values did you hear reflected in the video?
- ➔ What specific activities does Open Table Nashville do in their community?

Invite youth to list organizations they know that are also doing the work and describe how the work promotes justice.

- ☐ Internet-connected device

“DO SOMETHING”

M T C

Play the YouTube video “Matthew West—Do Something” (bit.ly/FMDoSomething, 4:05) without showing the video. Ask youth to name what they thought about while listening to the song.

Show the video with the visuals displayed. Ask youth what they thought about while watching the people with their signs. Wonder with youth if this is a fair representation of justice.

Invite youth to list other people or signs that could have been displayed in the video. Discuss the message these changes could communicate.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Newsprint and markers

A NEW DAY’S RESOLUTION

AT

Invite youth to think about the start of a new year and the resolutions many people make for the year ahead. Have a discussion using these questions:

- ➔ What is a New Year’s resolution?
- ➔ What are some examples of New Year’s resolutions?
- ➔ Why do people make New Year’s resolutions?
- ➔ Do people wait until the start of a new calendar year to make a change? Why or why not?

To conclude this practice, encourage youth to make a New Day's resolution to enact a change in their lives that promotes justice. Form pairs. Have each pair think of three New Day's resolutions they can enact. Each pair will write their three resolutions on newsprint.

After all resolution ideas are written on newsprint, review the lists to identify commonalities and differences in their New Day's resolutions. If there appear to be repeated resolutions, discuss whether the youth could make these group-wide resolutions. Determine steps to live into these resolutions.

Have youth place a mark next to one New Day's resolution that they will commit to in their lives.

SUMMARIZING THE PRACTICE

C

On the top of each newsprint sheet, write the titles of each session in this practice: "Recognize Injustice," "Check Your Privilege," "Speak Up," and "Do the Work." Display these and distribute markers to youth. Invite youth to write what they remember about each session on the newsprint.

When youth have finished, read aloud what is written on each sheet. Have the group create a summary of the spiritual practice *Do Justice*, drawing from what they recall from the four sessions in this practice.

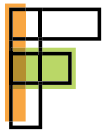
- ☐ Four sheets of newsprint
- ☐ Markers

SERVICE PROJECT

S

Use the instructions from Resource Page 4 from session 1 (p. 15) lead the youth in a discussion of the fourth step of the service project: Do the Work.

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



FOLLOWING JESUS

DO JUSTICE

Gather youth in a circle and have them hold hands with the persons next to them. Explain that in the closing prayer there will be opportunity for each person to say something that they can do to *Do Justice*. Tell them that after one person has contributed to the prayer, they squeeze the hand of the person on their left to signal them to contribute. Invite youth into the following prayer:

God of justice,
you teach us, inspire us, and equip us.
You empower us to promote justice in the world in your name.
In honor of you, we can . . . (*name a Do Justice action, then squeeze the hand of the person on your left*).
(*After each person has contributed, continue the prayer.*)
Thank you for all the gifts you give us to do your work.
Amen.

A Penny of Justice

Each event below contains either an element of justice or the results of the event had just consequences. Research the event that corresponds with the date on your penny and prepare a brief summary to explain to the group!

1970s

- 1970 Christopher Street Liberation Day March
- 1971 Massachusetts passes Chapter 766
- 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties
- 1973 Wounded Knee Occupation
- 1974 Jung Sai garment workers' strike, San Francisco
- 1975 The Education for All Handicapped Children Act
- 1976 Soweto riots
- 1977 The Food Stamp Act of 1977
- 1978 The Longest Walk
- 1979 First National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights

1980s

- 1980 *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*
- 1981 Brixton riots
- 1982 Ladies' garment worker strike
- 1983 Zapatista National Liberation Army
- 1984 The Refugee Act
- 1985 Mental Illness Bill of Rights Act
- 1986 Air Carrier Access Act
- 1987 H.R.442—Civil Liberties Act of 1987
- 1988 Deaf President Now student protests; Civil Liberties Act of 1988
- 1989 Berlin Wall falls

1990s

- 1990 ADAPT's Wheels of Justice action in Washington, DC
- 1991 First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
- 1992 Los Angeles's Rodney King protests
- 1993 Coalition of Immokalee Workers
- 1994 Zapatista rebellion
- 1995 Million Man March
- 1996 California's Proposition 9
- 1997 UPS workers strike
- 1998 West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT)
- 1999 Supreme Court strikes down Chicago's anti-loitering law

2000s

- 2000 Elián González child custody controversy
- 2001 Favorite good news stories after 9/11
- 2002 No Child Left Behind Act
- 2003 Protest in Miami of FTAA
- 2004 First Disability Pride Parade
- 2005 *Roper v. Simmons*
- 2006 Immigrants' rights protests
- 2007 First minimum wage increase in ten years
- 2008 Longest Walk repeat
- 2009 Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities' launches its Real Communities initiative

2010s

- 2010 *Hollingsworth v. Perry*; Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- 2011 Occupy movement
- 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
- 2013 Black Lives Matter movement
- 2014 People's Climate March
- 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges*
- 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protests
- 2017 Global Climate March
- 2018 March for Our Lives
- 2019 TelegramGate protests

2020s

- 2020 George Floyd protests
- 2021 COVID-19 vaccines

