

Share Justice

ISAIAH 58:1–12; LUKE 4:16–19

3



GOAL

Youth develop an understanding of justice as part of being generous and recognize God's call for us to advocate for justice for all God's creatures.

- 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, I know you as the One who comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. Let your justice and love guide all creation, including my teachings.

THIS SESSION

Many Christians are generous to people in their own church or community. Yet we are called to be generous to all creation, which often means promoting justice in situations where people are suffering.

Justice is a holistic commandment and reminds us we are called to give with our mind, body, and spirit in the pursuit of equity for all of God's creation. When we engage in these actions, we practice generosity through sharing God's justice; we engage in the fast that God requires.

THE BIBLE STORY

Faithful worship of God always includes the sharing of justice. Fasting has been one way throughout time that the faithful have focused on worship of God. Yet biblical prophets and Jesus criticized those who fasted only for their own benefit. The fast God chooses—and calls us to practice—is one in which the oppressed are set freed, the stranger is welcomed, and the hungry are fed. Jesus picks up on this connection between the right worship of God and promotion of justice in his inaugural sermon. Reading from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus reveals that God has anointed him to proclaim good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom for the oppressed.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Younger youth often hold concrete views of right versus wrong while older youth understand and express nuances in their political, social, religious, and economic views. As youth develop a community consciousness, they begin to consider and analyze structures of power and privilege in society. They can also begin to situate themselves within these systems and structures. Youth begin to recognize that their network of interdependence is far beyond their immediate family unit and extends throughout creation.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Giving and Receiving” (p. 24): Be prepared to teach and lead youth in the second verse of the song “When We Are Living,” using American Sign Language as in the first session (see p. 5, “Session Preparation”).

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Infographic Poster” (p. 24) Obtain the *Practice Generosity* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 2 Set).
- “Barriers to Justice” (p. 25): Post four sheets of newsprint. Read the instructions on Resource Page 2 to prepare.
- “Local Justice Efforts” (p. 26): Invite a church leader to talk about ways your church works for justice.

GETTING STARTED

☐ Copies of Resource Page 1

☐ Pens



Learn the signs by watching the YouTube videos “ASL Signs for When We Are Living, Verse 2” (bit.ly/FMSignsForVerse, 0:50) and “ASL Signs with When We Are Living Verse 2” (bit.ly/FMSignsWithVerse, 0:28).

FAITHFUL PRIORITIES

QC C

Welcome youth as they arrive and give them a copy of Resource Page 1 and a pen. Tell them to spend a few minutes on their own and number the actions on the paper in order of what they think should be priorities for Christians. Assure them there is no one correct ordering, and you will discuss as a group when all are gathered.

Gather as a whole group and invite a volunteer to tell how they ordered the list and why. Invite a few more volunteers to do the same. Tell them that today’s topic of practicing generosity is about seeing the importance of justice as part of the practice.

GIVING AND RECEIVING

AM

Remind youth of this activity done at the beginning of each session. You will say and do the motions for the second verse of the song “When We Are Living,”¹ using American Sign Language. Rehearse it with the group, teaching any newcomers and reminding others. When ready, go through it once as a group together.

Through all our **living**, (*both hands in fists with thumbs up, move from waist up to shoulders*) /

we our fruits [**work**] must **give**. (*move both hands, palms down and slightly cupped, back and forth in front of you; thumb in palm facing up on right hand moving away from you to another*) /

Good works of **service** (*move right flat palm from chin to left palm facing up; both palms facing up and alternate hands moving in and out from chest*) /

are for **offering**. (*right finger hooked and move hand away from you to another*) /

When we are **giving**, (*thumb in palm facing up on right hand moving away from you to another*) /

or when **receiving**, (*right fist on top of left fist held out at arm’s length, pretend to grasp rope and move hands toward self*) /

we **belong to God**; (*interlock thumb and index finger of both hands as a chain; then move open right palm facing left from above head to center of face*) /

we **belong to God**. (*repeat above action*) /



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

☐ Practice Generosity infographic poster

INFOGRAPHIC POSTER

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Gather youth around the *Practice Generosity* infographic poster. Wonder with youth what justice themes need to happen for the world to be a generous place.

1. Writer Credits: St. 1 anon., sts. 2, 3, 4 Roberto Escamilla, trans. by Deborah L. Alvarez; Copyright: © 1994 Abingdon Press (BMI) (Administered by Music Services). All Rights Reserved.

BARRIERS TO JUSTICE

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Using Resource Page 2, guide youth through the activity exploring the injustices people face and ways youth think to respond and promote justice. After writing on the four pieces of newsprint, engage the youth in discussing the relationship between generosity and justice. Ask, “How is promoting justice a way to practice generosity?” One response may be that Jesus came for everyone and not everyone has access to a good life, so Christians work for justice so that all may experience his love.

- ☐ Resource Page 2
- ☐ Four prepared pieces of newsprint
- ☐ Marker



This activity could be an option in “Practicing the Practice” as well as here.

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

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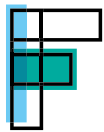
Shuffle the cards and instruct youth to choose one each. If preferred, you might have them work in pairs for their answers.

Allow youth to think about the prompt on the card for about a minute before inviting volunteers to share their responses.

- ☐ Cards cut from Resource Page 3



If your group is larger than ten youth, make additional copies of the resource page.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

THE FAST I CHOOSE

C T

Invite youth to tell what they know about Christian fasting and if anyone has ever done a fast from food or something else. Explain that fasting was a communal spiritual practice for Jews in ancient Israel and is still an important spiritual practice for many. The point of fasting is to help focus the person and community on following God, and not to show how religious they are.

Read Isaiah 58:1–12 aloud, taking turns and reading a verse at a time. Then invite youth to quietly listen to a video version of the verses being read. Show the YouTube video “Isaiah 58 (feat. Amena Brown)” (bit.ly/FMIsaiah58, 2:29) and discuss:

- ➔ For Isaiah, fasting was important, but people were practicing the wrong type of fast. What were they doing wrong?
- ➔ How do you see people today doing the same thing?

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Internet-connected device

JESUS’ GENEROUS JUSTICE

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Have a volunteer read Luke 4:16–19 as others read along in their Bibles.

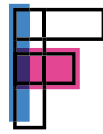
Ask:

- ➔ According to Jesus, what is his mission?
- ➔ Who are the groups Jesus says he came to help?
- ➔ How does your community do the same?

The Bible Project has a helpful video putting the Gospel of Luke into context and might help youth better see how justice is related to practicing generosity. Show the YouTube video “Overview: Luke 1–9” (bit.ly/FMLuke1-9, 8:16; especially 3:39–5:51). Discuss:

- ➔ Of all the Bible, why do you think Jesus chose the passage in Isaiah 58 to read as he began his mission?
- ➔ Who is he showing generosity to?
- ➔ How does he challenge us today?

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Internet-connected device



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

LOCAL JUSTICE EFFORTS

C CT X

Introduce the guest and ask them to talk about ways your church engages in efforts for justice. Invite them to tell youth how they can be involved if they are not already involved.

Allow an opportunity for youth who are involved in similar efforts to talk about them. Encourage all youth to be involved in some activity.

☐ Internet-connected device

DOROTHY DAY

T C

Show the YouTube video “Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story” (bit.ly/FMDorothyD, 3:10).

Facilitate a conversation using the following questions:

- If you could ask Dorothy Day one question, what would it be?
- How did Dorothy Day promote justice?
- How did Dorothy Day’s faith impact her life?

☐ Hymnals

☐ Internet-connected device



If your group is a musical one, encourage youth to sing along.

SONG FOR JUSTICE

M T

Music plays a powerful role in the promotion of justice. It helps us to understand what God requires of us and it inspires us to engage in just practices. Show the YouTube video “For Everyone Born (A Place at the Table)” (bit.ly/FMForEveryone, 7:58; *Glory to God*, #769). Invite youth to talk about what phrases of the hymn resonated with them.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

☐ Bibles

☐ Colorful paper

☐ Colored pens

ISAIAH 58 OR LUKE 4:16–19 FOR TODAY

A QC

Invite youth to spend some time quietly and choose one of the Bible texts read today. First, have them think about how to rewrite that text so that it has the most meaning and relevance for them today. Then invite them to use paper and pens to rewrite and decorate their version.

Have volunteers show what they wrote and drew. Discuss whether they want to display their art publicly or in your space.

☐ Newsprint and marker

JOIN THE EFFORT

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Facilitate a discussion of all the justice organizations or efforts that your youth are involved with already, if any. They can be organizations that are engaged in efforts such as feeding people who are hungry, helping people who are homeless, immigration reform efforts, and so on. Write them on the piece of newsprint. Invite youth to name additional groups in your community or the world that they would like to be involved with.

Ask youth who are already involved to share ways others can participate. Also, discuss any efforts the group might wish to join together to support.

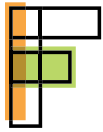
A PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

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□ Newsprint and marker

Invite youth to name one issue of justice they feel is very important. Invite them to state their issue aloud and encourage a variety of topics.

Work together to write a prayer that promotes justice in the world. Instruct each youth to contribute one sentence to the prayer that focuses on the issue of justice they expressed to the group. Write their sentence on the piece of newsprint. Alternatively, provide multiple markers and let the youth write their own sentence on the newsprint. When all have written their sentence, recite the prayer in unison as a group.



FOLLOWING JESUS

ONE THING LEARNED

C

□ Newsprint and markers

Write “Share Justice” on the newsprint. Invite youth to write one thing they learned about sharing justice in today’s session.

CLOSING BLESSING

AM

Instruct youth to repeat your words and actions:

O God, / (*Raise arms, hands outstretched, above head*)
you provide all there is on earth. / (*Circle arms downward, around body*)

Let us humbly receive / (*Pull arms toward chest*)
and graciously give / (*Extend arms in front of body*)
as we love you / (*Form hands into hearts and raise above head*)
and love our neighbors. / (*With hands still in a heart shape, circle arms in front of body*)
Amen. /

Faithful Priorities

Rate the following activities from 1 to 8 in terms of Christian priorities, with 1 being the most important. Be ready to explain your answers to the group.

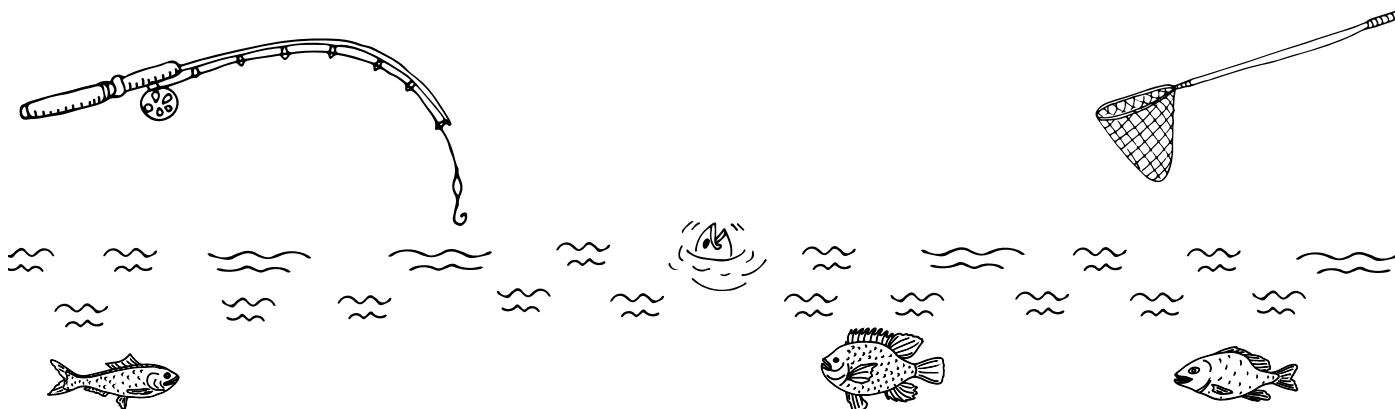
- _____ Attend worship weekly.
- _____ Give up something for Lent.
- _____ Feed people who are hungry.
- _____ Identify yourself as a Christian and smile all the time.
- _____ Participate in a justice rally.
- _____ Read the Bible.
- _____ Give to people whether or not you think they deserve it.
- _____ Befriend the person no one likes at school.



Barriers to Justice

Instructions for Leader

1. Read the following to youth:
A person was hungry, so they went to the riverside. They struggled to catch a fish with their hands to eat. An onlooker felt sympathy and gave the person a fish to eat so they would no longer be hungry that day.
2. Title the first piece of newsprint “People’s Basic Needs” and ask youth to call out all the basic human needs they can think of. For example, the person by the side of the river needed food. Write that down and ask for more things people need to be named. (*a nutritious diet, clean water, adequate shelter, health care, connection to community*)
3. Read the following to youth:
The next day, the same person was once again hungry, so they went to the riverside. They struggled to catch a fish to eat. The same onlooker was there fishing to feed their own family. The onlooker felt sympathy, gave the person a fishing pole and net, and taught the person to fish so that they could continue to catch meals and not go hungry again.
4. Label the second sheet of newsprint “What People Need to Get What They Need” and ask youth to call out things like a fishing pole that help people get what they need. Write answers down as youth call out these things. (*education, wealth, mutual aid, community support, employment*)
5. Read the following to youth:
The person, now a confident fisher, returned to the river to catch meals for their family. One day, however, a sign went up that said that fishing was restricted to wealthy guests of a nearby resort. A huge fine would be given to anyone breaking the law. The person could no longer catch fish and was left hungry.
6. Label the third piece of newsprint “Barriers.” Instruct youth to list the things, systems, and situations that prevent people from accessing what they need to live healthy and happy lives. (*poverty, geographic isolation, racist systems, labor exploitation, resource depletion as a result of climate change*)
7. Finally, title the fourth piece of newsprint “Ways to Promote Justice” and encourage youth to call out all the actions they know about that help to promote justice. List them on the sheet and affirm that practicing generosity involves working for justice so that all people can have what they need. Summarize youth’s responses.



Definitions and Examples

Justice is ...

Injustice is ...

A time I witnessed
injustice in
action was ...

I have responded
to injustice by ...

Justice is ...

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A time I witnessed
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