



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Do Something / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

When you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help the entire group choose how they will react when they (or someone in the group) face injustice.

SCRIPTURE

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them (Daniel 3:24-27 NIV).

See if there is any offensive way in me, (Psalm 139:24a NIV)

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- *Communicator Note: Talk about a time when you or someone close to you experienced an injustice.*
- We've been talking about injustice the past couple of weeks, which we've defined as the things in our world that are not right, unfair, or unequal.
- It's painful to experience injustice, and it makes us all ask the question: "Why doesn't somebody *do something*?"

TENSION

- If you've been the victim of injustices like racism, oppression, discrimination, or prejudice, then you know what that feels like. And if you haven't, here are some experiences from real people who have.
- *Note: The Interactive happens here. See your Teaching Script for details.*
- If you've felt that way, you may be showing up each week and wondering, "How do I handle this when it's happening TO me and not just AROUND me?"

- Or maybe others of you are thinking, “That’s NOT me. That’s not my story.” I get that, too. But, as family, when one of us suffers, we all suffer.
- So if you are experiencing injustice or have experienced injustice, what do you do? What do you do when you feel like you are alone in that?

TRUTH

- There was a Babylonian king named Nebuchadnezzar who was very powerful, and had conquered and captured Israel. He built a giant golden statue that stood 90 feet tall, and ordered everyone to bow down to worship the statue. If they chose not to, they would be thrown into a blazing fire.
- The Bible tells us that there were three Jewish men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were worshippers of God and refused to bow down to the statue.
- The king orders the fire to burn seven times hotter than usual! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are tied up and thrown into the fire.
- I get none of us have been thrown into fires recently, but I think we can agree that this feels unfair. And many of us do know what it feels like to be treated unfairly.
- In a moment of extreme injustice, they were not alone. God did not abandon them or leave them to suffer on their own (*Daniel 3:24-27 NIV*).
- And in the same way, you are never alone when you face injustice. When you experience injustice, you don’t have to face it alone.
- God cared about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and made sure they weren’t alone in their suffering or their injustice.
- God cared for them while they were suffering, and in the same way, God cares about you and doesn’t want you to be alone when you face injustice.

APPLICATION

- Maybe you hear this story, and you feel the injustice part. I want you to know that you don’t have to be alone. God is with you.
- Here are some steps for you to consider:
 - Talk to Jesus.
 - Remind yourself over and over that you are not alone.
 - Remember that He will send others to be with you.
 - Talk to your Small Group Leader or talk to a trusted friend or adult.
 - Consider getting help from a professional counselor or mentor.
 - Keep moving.
- Some of you however, may have heard that story and thought, “I haven’t really experienced injustice.” Well, we all participate in injustice in some way, often by allowing it to happen while we watch.
- If that’s you, I want you to know that YOU can talk to God about that, too (*Psalms 139:24 NIV*).
- Start there. Ask God to help you see ways that you’ve participated in injustice.
- *Communicator Note: Depending on the personality of your group and your students’ unique experiences with injustice, this week may feel heavy and require some time to think, pray, and process before moving to group conversations. Consider closing the service with a worship song before moving to Small Group.*

LANDING

- When injustice happens, it is painful, but you don’t have to do something alone. Not only is God with you, but so are the people in your small group.
- In your small groups, the conversation you have today has the potential to be one of the most honest, personal, and important discussions you’ve ever had.
- Maybe today, your group can be a real human reminder that when you experience injustice, you don’t have to do something alone.

INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens in the Tension section; please see that section for more details. For this Interactive you'll need...

- A pre-recorded video of a short interview with someone in your community who has (or whose family has) experienced injustice.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Do Something / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

When you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

(Communicator Note: Talk about a time when you or someone close to you experienced an injustice.)

My freshman year of high school, I had to write a report about World War 2 for World History class. We had a little bit of creative freedom, so I decided to write about the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, and I interviewed my grandparents who had all been alive on that fateful day. I wanted to learn about what it was like for my Japanese-American grandparents during that time.

As you may have learned in school, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, in Oahu, Hawaii, which caused the U.S. to declare war on Japan and join the second World War. Out of fear of espionage, the U.S. government rounded up Japanese-Americans and forced them to move to what they called "internment" camps. Between 1942 and 1945, around 120,000 Japanese-Americans who called the United States home were held at these camps¹. But this isn't just something I know about from the history books. It's personal to me because three of my grandparents went to internment camps.

My grandma was detained in one of those camps instead of being allowed to start college. She never got the opportunity to go to college after the war, which affected her for the rest of her life.

And my dad's parents? They met in the internment camps and got married after they were released, which sounds like a happy ending except that they lost everything they had before the war, including their property and businesses. Though they made the best of it, the hurt and injustice they experienced continued to shape them for the rest of their lives. Injustice is a very real part of my family story.

We've been talking about injustice the past couple of weeks, which we've defined as the things in our world that are not right, unfair, or unequal.

It's painful to experience injustice, and it makes us all ask the question: **"Why doesn't somebody do something?"**

¹Japanese American Internment | History & Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 May 2014, www.britannica.com/event/Japanese-American-internment.

It's even worse when injustice is ongoing, systemic, and constant. Last week, we talked about how God sees and cares about what's happening. **God is anti-injustice, and part of following Jesus means we care about the things He cares about—enough to do something.**

TENSION

4 MINUTES

Maybe you hear that and think, *“That’s great, but what about me?”* If you’ve been the victim of injustices like racism, oppression, discrimination, or prejudice, then you know what that feels like. And if you haven’t, here are some experiences from real people who have.



INTERACTIVE

Before your message: shoot a video with some adults from your community who have experienced injustice. Do not assume anyone’s story or that they would want to tell it on stage rather, find participants by reaching out to those in your community who are already speaking openly about their experience (in person or on social media) as part of their justice work. Ask them to say in a few words how it felt to be treated unjustly.

If you’ve felt that way, you may be showing up each week and wondering, “How do I handle this when it’s happening TO me and not just AROUND me?”

Or maybe others of you are thinking, “That’s NOT me. That’s not my story.” I get that, too. But, as family, when one of us suffers, we all suffer. This is a good opportunity for you to hear what injustice feels like to one of your family that is experiencing it. That’s why I want to challenge you to lean in and practice what we talked about in our first week: be curious.

So, if you are experiencing injustice or have experienced injustice, what do you do? What do you do when you feel like you are alone in that? With that in mind, I want to tell you a true story about three friends and what happened to them.

TRUTH

8.5 MINUTES

There was a Babylonian king named Nebuchadnezzar who was very powerful, and had conquered and captured Israel. One day, he built a giant golden statue that stood 90 feet tall, and ordered everyone to bow down to worship the statue whenever they heard certain music playing. If they chose not to do as ordered, they would be thrown into a blazing fire! The Bible tells us that there were three Jewish men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were worshippers of God, and refused to bow down to the statue.

You could probably guess that the king wasn’t thrilled by this news, and he ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought to him. He gave them one more chance to bow down and worship the statue when the music played, or they would be thrown into the fire. But these three men stood their ground. They believed that God could rescue them, but even if He didn’t, they didn’t want to turn from their devotion to Him. What an incredible example of courage and faith!

So of course, the king is in full-rage-mode now, and orders the fire to burn seven times hotter than usual! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are tied up and thrown into the fire. The furnace was so hot that the soldiers who threw the men into the fire died simply from coming near the flames!

Now look, I get none of us have been thrown into fires recently, but I think we can agree that this feels unfair. And **many of us do know what it feels like to be treated unfairly...**

- **To be discriminated against for our skin color.**
- **Treated like we're less-than because of our family's finances.**
- **Held back because of our gender.**
- **Considered less important because of something we have absolutely no control over.**

And if you've experienced this, you know it can be scary, frustrating, and sad. These guys, I'm sure, felt all those things.

Now, let's continue with the story. I want you to see what happens next after they were in the fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them (Daniel 3:24-27 NIV).

Now, there are many Bible scholars and researchers who have opinions about this story, and who the fourth man in the fire was. Was he God? Was he Jesus? Was it an angel or someone else? I don't know the answer, but one thing is clear: in a moment of extreme injustice, they were not alone. God did not abandon them or leave them to suffer on their own.

And in the same way, you are never alone when you face injustice.

Let that sink in.

When you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.

God cared about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and made sure they weren't alone in their suffering or their injustice. Did things change eventually? Yes. Did the laws change as a result of the injustice? Yes. But don't miss what happened even while they were suffering. God cared for them. And, in the same way, God cares about you, and doesn't want you to be alone when you face injustice.

APPLICATION

3.5 MINUTES

Maybe you hear this story, and you feel the injustice part. Maybe you are so tired, so hurt, so burned by things you've experienced that you don't know where to turn. I want you to know that

you don't have to be alone. God is with you. He hears you. If you're processing that for the first time, or just don't know what to do next, here are some steps for you to consider:

- Talk to Jesus. He cares—maybe even more than you realize. Share your feelings of frustration, confusion, or hurt.
- Remind yourself over and over that you are not alone.
- Remember that He will send others to be with you.
- Talk to your Small Group Leader or talk to a trusted friend or adult. Even if you think they won't understand, keep talking until someone does.
- Consider talking to your family about getting help from a professional counselor or mentor who can help you process the injustice you experienced and begin to heal.
- Keep moving. The guys in the fire didn't give up. Let's be honest. YOU shouldn't have to do anything about the injustice that is affecting you. Others SHOULD step up. Generations older than you should have figured this out by now. It's unfair. All that is true, but at the same time, doing nothing isn't always helpful. So keep moving.

Some of you, however, may have heard that story and thought, "I haven't really experienced injustice. Does that mean I'm like the evil king who caused the injustice?" Maybe. Maybe not. Or perhaps it makes you like the people in the crowd who stood and watched while all this was happening. We all participate in injustice in some way, often by allowing it to happen while we watch. Maybe you didn't throw somebody in a fire, but maybe you...

- Laugh along when you hear a racist joke.
- Watch people get bullied, but don't say anything.
- Listen to music that's degrading to women.
- Shop from stores that use child laborers to create their products.

If that's you, I want you to know YOU can talk to God about that, too. In Psalm 139, the writer opens up and asks God the most beautiful question:

See if there is any offensive way in me (Psalm 139:24a NIV).

Start there. Ask God to help you see ways that you've participated in injustice. This is so important because the truth is, some of the people you care about most—your friends from school or from Small Group—have been on the receiving end of injustice. And maybe, for the first time, you see it differently and you care differently because of how it affects them. Let it become personal to you.

(Communicator Note: Depending on the personality of your group, and your student's unique experience with injustice, this week may feel heavy and require some time to think, pray, and process before moving to group conversations. Consider closing the service with a worship song before moving to Small Group. One option that connects to the text: "Another in the Fire" by Hillsong United.)

LANDING

1 MINUTE

When injustice happens, it is painful, but you don't have to do something alone. Not only is God with you, but so are the people in your small group. That's why we have small groups. We want you to have a group of people who are FOR you. We want you to have a group of people who are listening TO you, praying WITH you, learning FROM you, and cheering FOR you.

In your small groups, the conversation you have today has the potential to be one of the most honest, personal, and important discussions you've ever had. If you've experienced injustice,

think about how you can let the group know that you need support. If you haven't experienced injustice, think about how you can listen and genuinely care for someone in your group.

This may sound like a lot right now. I get it. Even if you don't talk to your whole group tonight, I hope you'll talk to your leader. They signed up to do this because they want to be here for you and maybe today, they can be a real human reminder that when you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
