

SMALL  GROUP

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

One Step / Week 3

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

God loves justice.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:35-37 NLT

Isaiah 61:8a NLT

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To show students God's heart for justice and the work God is already doing in response to injustice.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This conversation asks middle schoolers to apply some abstract thinking to look for a God at work whom they can't physically see. This kind of thinking is still developing in this phase, so concepts like this can be challenging. In addition, it also asks middle schoolers to join in the work of justice themselves. This might be hard for students on several levels. Some may feel too young, too powerless, too ill-equipped, or too unsure to choose to respond to injustice right now. Others may already be working with God for justice, so they recognize the need to honor those who have come before them as well as continue the work today. Some may be experiencing injustice themselves, so asking them to join in to do the work may feel impossible (or inappropriate) as they're the ones needing someone to step up on their behalf. They may even struggle to see how God is at work when the injustice they're experiencing is still very real. No matter where your students come from here, facilitate a conversation with the goal of leading them to see two things more clearly: how God is doing good work for justice and how they can choose to be part of it.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the content as needed, and don't feel you need to complete everything listed.

DURING GROUP

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Get out the poster board you used last week; remove any leftover sticky notes. (If you're using a new poster board, divide it into three columns. At the top of the left column, write "Small Step," in the middle column, "Next Step," and in the right column, "Big Step.") Pass out sticky notes to your students, ask them to write down questions they can ask related to God's work for justice, and then stick them on the poster board under "Small Step." When they're done, move on to the discussion questions. (You'll revisit this poster board toward the end of group time.)

DISCUSS THIS

1. Why do you think it's important to ask questions when we see injustices?
2. Why do you think some people question God when they see or experience injustice?
3. What's one way we can know how God really feels about justice? *[Complete Experience 2 as you discuss this question.]*

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

Pass out the provided take-home card and discuss Question #3 as you review Scripture that demonstrates how God feels about justice.

4. How does it feel to know God invites us to join the work and move toward justice?
5. What might change about injustice in the world if we all chose to take one step toward joining God's work in the world?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 3)

Lead your students through completing the remaining two columns on the poster board. They'll write down their thoughts on their sticky notes and place them on the poster board after you give them prompts. For "Next Step," ask your group to think about and write down ideas about the work God has already done and is currently doing for justice. Who are the people God has used to work toward justice? And who is joining in God's work for justice today? For "Big Step," have your students brainstorm ways they can personally be brave enough to move toward justice. Ask them to pick one step they want to pursue over the coming weeks.

TIP: Save the poster board for next week. You'll use it again!

GOD LOVES JUSTICE

I WILL SHEPHERD THE FLOCK WITH JUSTICE.
(EZEKIEL 34:15B NIV)

"FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS, HE LOVES JUSTICE . . ."
(PSALM 11:7A NIV)

"... RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF HIS THRONE."
(PSALM 97:2B NIV)

THE LORD LOVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE: THE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS UNFAILING LOVE."
(PSALM 33:5 NIV)

AND THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR HE IS A GOD OF JUSTICE.
(PSALM 50:6 NIV)

"FOR I, THE LORD, LOVE JUSTICE..."
(ISAIAH 61:8A NIV)

FOR THE LORD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE.
(ISAIAH 30:18B NIV)

THE LORD GIVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE TO ALL WHO ARE TREATED UNFAIRLY.
(PSALM 103:6 NIV)

I KNOW THAT THE LORD SECURES JUSTICE FOR THE POOR AND UPHOLDS THE CAUSE OF THE NEEDY.
(PSALM 140:12 NIV)

THE KING IS MIGHTY, HE LOVES JUSTICE...
(PSALM 99:4A NIV)

"... I AM THE LORD, WHO EXERCISES KINDNESS, JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ON EARTH, FOR IN THESE I DELIGHT." DECLARES THE LORD."
(JEREMIAH 9:24B NIV)

"THIS IS WHAT THE LORD ALMIGHTY SAID: 'ADMINISTER TRUE JUSTICE; SHOW MERCY AND COMPASSION TO ONE ANOTHER.'"
(ZECHARIAH 7:9 NIV)

GOD LOVES JUSTICE

I WILL SHEPHERD THE FLOCK WITH JUSTICE.
(EZEKIEL 34:15B NIV)

"FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS, HE LOVES JUSTICE . . ."
(PSALM 11:7A NIV)

"... RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF HIS THRONE."
(PSALM 97:2B NIV)

THE LORD LOVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE: THE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS UNFAILING LOVE."
(PSALM 33:5 NIV)

AND THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR HE IS A GOD OF JUSTICE.
(PSALM 50:6 NIV)

"FOR I, THE LORD, LOVE JUSTICE..."
(ISAIAH 61:8A NIV)

FOR THE LORD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE.
(ISAIAH 30:18B NIV)

THE LORD GIVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE TO ALL WHO ARE TREATED UNFAIRLY.
(PSALM 103:6 NIV)

I KNOW THAT THE LORD SECURES JUSTICE FOR THE POOR AND UPHOLDS THE CAUSE OF THE NEEDY.
(PSALM 140:12 NIV)

THE KING IS MIGHTY, HE LOVES JUSTICE...
(PSALM 99:4A NIV)

"... I AM THE LORD, WHO EXERCISES KINDNESS, JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ON EARTH, FOR IN THESE I DELIGHT." DECLARES THE LORD."
(JEREMIAH 9:24B NIV)

"THIS IS WHAT THE LORD ALMIGHTY SAID: 'ADMINISTER TRUE JUSTICE; SHOW MERCY AND COMPASSION TO ONE ANOTHER.'"
(ZECHARIAH 7:9 NIV)