

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

What If...

BIG IDEA

What if God wants you to make wrong things right?

BIBLE

Acts 16:16–34; Revelation 22:12–13;
Romans 12:18

ABOUT THIS WEEK

So much art is made by repurposing broken or discarded materials to create something brand new. This week, we'll hear the story of when Paul and Silas were in prison, and an earthquake opened the doors to their prison cell. Their decisions during this unique situation inspire us to think, **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Paint Pop Relay

- Welcome back to the final week of “What If...!” We all love pondering those intriguing “what if” scenarios, right? From the lighthearted ones like, “What if cats could talk?” or “What if the ground magically turned into lava?” to the deeper ones such as, “What if I miss my morning bus?” or “What if my relationship doesn’t work out?”
- Throughout this series, we’ve centered on one big “what if” question: “What if we can change the way things currently are?” So, let’s play a game that’s all about changing something
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you need two pieces of plywood or foam board, darts, several balloons, drop cloth, and tempura paint. In a space that’s allowed to get messy or outside, fill an equal number of balloons with paint and staple them to each board [like this](#). To play, divide the group into two teams and have them stand an equal distance from their boards. One at a time, teams will attempt to toss a dart at their board to pop a balloon. The first team to pop all of their balloons wins.*
- Sometimes, life can feel a bit messy. For the last few weeks, we’ve been talking about how to pursue God’s vision for the world by helping right the wrongs we see. Inevitably, when we do this, it means we will have conflict. Not everyone is going to want what God wants for the world.
- We all have different feelings about conflict. Some people thrive on conflict. Others will do everything in their power to shy away from conflict.

POLL | How Comfortable Are You With Conflict?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Poll your group’s responses to the question above. You could have them hold up a number on their fingers, indicating how comfortable they are with conflict. One finger means not comfortable at all. Ten fingers means very comfortable with conflict.*
- How comfortable are you with conflict? When we see injustice in the world, we’re called to take action, even if it means facing some conflict along the way.

VIDEO | Good Trouble

- Some of us might prefer to avoid doing or saying anything that causes conflict. We just want to navigate life without making waves. If you resonate with that, awesome! Your perspective helps balance out those of us who feel compelled to speak up and act.
- However, if we aim to address the injustices in the world, sometimes we have to voice uncomfortable truths. But let's reframe this notion so it doesn't feel like we're stirring up chaos.
- The late John Lewis, a renowned civil rights leader who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, introduced the concept of "good trouble" to reshape our understanding of standing up for what's right. Listen to him explain what he means in this 2014 commencement address.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play [this video](#) (0:00–1:08) of John Lewis speaking about "good trouble" in a 2014 commencement address. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- John Lewis was a firm believer that if you spot something unjust, it's crucial to speak up and take action—to get into "good trouble." Sure, it might cause some conflict, but sometimes, we need to step up and challenge what's wrong to make things right.
- Over the past month, we've learned that when we strive to bring about God's justice on Earth, God's right there beside us, supporting us all the way. So, let's dive into a story from the Early Church to explore what it means to get into a little "good trouble" while making things right.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:16–24

- Paul started off with quite the reputation. Initially, he was on a mission to stop Christianity and the emerging movement around Jesus. However, after a transformative experience, Paul became one of the most outspoken advocates for the Christian community.
- His willingness to speak out often got him into some difficult situations. He was working to create communities aligned with God's vision for the world, but not everyone saw eye-to-eye with him. Paul and his companions would often find themselves in prison for the things they did to share the good news of Jesus. Take a look...
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Acts 16:16–24.
- Paul spoke out and freed this woman of a spirit, but it upset people. Eventually, these people channeled their frustrations onto Paul and Silas, and the pair were arrested after being severely beaten.

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:25–34

- We might expect Paul to be upset about what happens, but...this story ends differently.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Acts 16:25–34.
- While they were locked up, a powerful earthquake shattered the chains of all the inmates and swung open the cell doors. The guard, noticing the open doors, figured the prisoners had fled. However, Paul quickly reassured him everyone was still present.
- Despite facing an unjust situation, Paul chose not to make a run for it. Instead, Paul stayed in his jail cell—even though he shouldn't have been there to begin with. By doing so, he met an injustice with something that was just. He counteracted what happened to him by simply doing the right thing. On top of that, he protected the jailer from harming himself. He spoke out to shield, comfort, and tell him about Jesus.
- In Paul's story, we see him counteract the injustice done to him with the love and hope found only in Jesus. Because of Paul's action here, the jailer and his whole household started to follow Jesus. This chapter of

Paul's life started with good trouble and ended with sharing the good news. God took something wrong in his life and made it right.

SCRIPTURE | Revelation 22:12–13

- Throughout your journey, there will be distractions trying to steer you away from doing what's right. You might feel tempted to stay silent or believe maintaining the status quo is easier. But our connection with God reminds us that standing up against injustice is more important than following the crowd or straying from the path Jesus laid out for us. God encourages us to be steadfast in our commitment to correcting injustices within our communities and relationships. This message resonates in the following passage from Revelation ...
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Revelation 22:12–13.*
- Staying close to God can feel difficult—especially when you feel like you are meeting resistance from the people around you. But following Jesus means that our reward is Jesus. We can build habits that keep us close to him, connecting with Jesus regularly to strengthen our faith and to remind us how we can be a part of righting wrongs in the world God has made.
- But we can also, at times, feel like the world is so broken that there is no reason to stand up for what is right because we know that it will just get broken again. But that's why this passage is so important. It reminds us that in Jesus, there's power that can make all wrongs right. There's nothing too broken outside of God's reach of healing, and God is partnering with people like you and me to help make this happen.

IMAGE | Kintsugi

- The ways Jesus has transformed our lives and brought about our healing can deepen our connection to him. Reflecting on God's incredible transformations in our lives fuels our desire to remain close to him.
- Each of us has a personal story of how Jesus has reconciled us with God, healing our wounds and mending what was once broken. These narratives empower us to share the message of Jesus with others and work towards restoring brokenness in the world.
- A beautiful example from Japanese culture that illustrates the concept of turning brokenness into something exquisite is Kintsugi. This art involves repairing fractured pottery with lacquer mixed with gold, creating a stunning visual of healing and beauty from brokenness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, show an image of an item restored through kintsugi [like this](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Kintsugi isn't about washing over something that may have been painful or may have broken the object. It's about honoring the object's history while making something brand new. It highlights the dignity of the pottery and moves to heal and highlight what's possible in the future.
- Each of these gold scars is part of a story and part of healing and making things right. We can all go out into the world with the same attitude Paul held and want to cling to what is good while showing others what is possible. We can be a group focusing on making the wrong things right and creating new futures for ourselves and others.
- Navigating this journey won't be a walk in the park, and that's perfectly fine. Righting wrongs demands both time and patience. Drawing inspiration from kintsugi, we can redefine our role in the world. Regardless of our location or how long we've been walking with Jesus, we have the ability to piece together fragments to create something new and meaningful.
- God wants to partner with us to take what's fractured and envision its renewed worth and potential. We can be catalysts for positive change. God calls us to be proactive participants in our world—even when it pushes us out of our comfort zones—responding to injustices with the transformative message of Jesus and pondering the question: **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

VIDEO | Make Wrong Things Right — Judith Scott

- What if God wants you to open your eyes to the world around you? What if God wants you to help those in challenging situations? What if God wants you to speak up for marginalized people and reach out to those no one cares about? **What if God wants you to make wrong things right?** There is a story of an incredible modern artist we would have never known about if it wasn't for her sister doing precisely that.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play this short clip from [2011's BBC's Culture Show](#), from (0:27–6:15) or of one similar of someone seeing something that was not right and doing something about it. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- For Judith, her sister stepped up, showing the love and support that pulled her out of a tough spot and into a joyful life. So, where can you begin? It doesn't take much for us to see the brokenness all around us, especially with social media and the internet highlighting global challenges right at our fingertips.
- Navigating all that information can feel overwhelming, leaving us unsure of where or how to jump in. With so much happening, we must recognize that we can't tackle everything single-handedly. However, here are a few actionable steps you can take today to spread God's hope in the world.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOU:** Throughout his teachings, Jesus emphasized the significance of the heart. It influences so many of our values and passions. If your vision of addressing injustice doesn't resonate with God's heart or if your compassion doesn't mirror God's compassion, you may struggle to make a meaningful impact. When your passions align with Jesus' passions, pray for God's guidance to solidify that passion within you. And if you recognize a cause that Jesus prioritized but you haven't, look to God for help.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS.** God also desires to set things right within our friendships. Friendships play a significant role in our lives, shaping us while we also shape them. This could involve having compassionate conversations with your friends about their humor and how they interact and treat others. Encourage them to offer you feedback as well! True friends provide a supportive environment where you can voice concerns or discomforts. When godly friends surround you, they'll appreciate and welcome gentle reminders to reflect more of Jesus in your interactions.
 - **MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** Once you've navigated the journey of setting things right within your heart and friendships, you can address injustices in your school or community. Identify areas where others might benefit from support, love, or encouragement in your neighborhood or school. Are there existing school clubs or groups that align with God's mission to right wrongs? Think about ways you can contribute. Collaborate with your friends and like-minded people to actively pursue God's justice to bring positive change and resolve injustices within your community.

RESPONSE | Make Your Mark

- If you were here for the other weeks of this series, we've been working on this art mural. You all have a unique way in which God has created you to make a difference in this world, and we want you to demonstrate your unique perspective in this art piece. This week, we're putting on our finishing touches. Everyone is invited to contribute, whether you've been here in previous weeks.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this Response, you need the same items you used last week: A large canvas or thick cardboard, glue, string, plastic gems, fabric scraps, and any other items you think could enhance the mural. Before your program begins, designate an area where teenagers can continue working on the collaborative*

art piece. Encourage them to use various art techniques to contribute to this community artwork. This week, your group will add 3D elements, drawing inspiration from Judith Scott's style.

- Just as each of us added our unique touch to this art piece, we all have distinct strengths and qualities God intentionally gave us to address injustices. This empowers us to make a positive impact on the world around us. Engaging in activities like this art project allows us to pause, contemplate, and reflect.

ACTIVITY | The What If ... Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already done so, this may be the last week to invite your students to participate in "The What if... Project" discipleship activity. If it hasn't already happened, it may be coming up quickly, so encourage them to participate. There are all sorts of ways to help get teenagers involved that you can read about in the planning documents over in the [Discipleship folder](#).*
- As we conclude this series, let's commit to continuing this thoughtful process, posing meaningful questions to ourselves and our peers, such as: What if **God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, and help others heal** and finally, **what if God wants you to make wrong things right?**