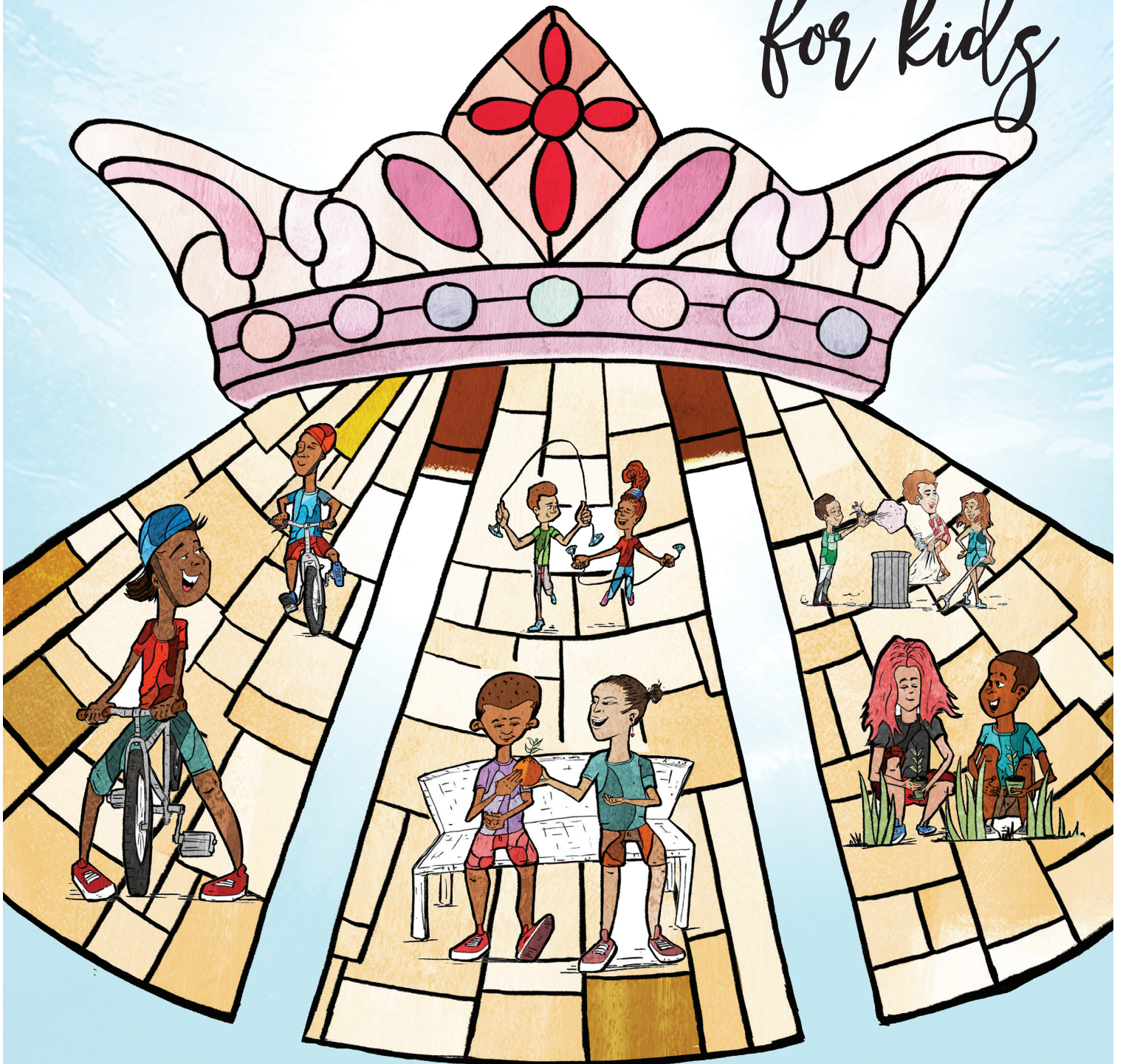


MODULES ONE - SIX



JUSTICE JOURNEY

for kids



LIVING INTO LIFE-GIVING PATTERNS OF DIVERSITY, COMMUNITY, AND LOVE

Hyperlinks have been set on all URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF to easily access suggested videos and online resources.

A single list of all links is also available at:
covchurch.org/justicejourney/links.



The Evangelical Covenant Church

LOVE MERCY DO JUSTICE
MAKE & DEEPEN DISCIPLES

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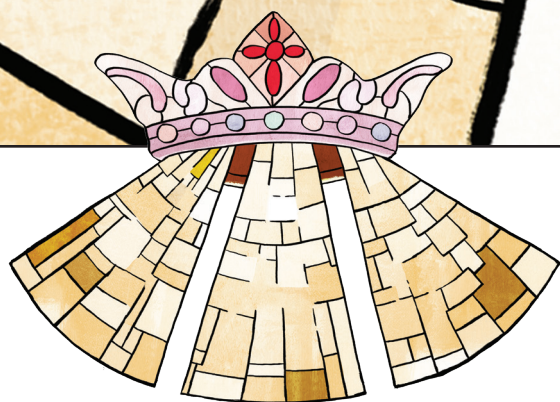
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WELCOME TO

Justice Journey for Kids!

FOR AGES 7-11

With the belief that children are fully a part of the body of Christ, and in the hope that the next generation will celebrate the diversity of God's kingdom and be empowered by the Spirit and the love of Christ to overcome the injustice inherent in a broken world, Make and Deepen Disciples and Love Mercy Do Justice have partnered to develop this resource.

Content

This resource includes seven modules with three sessions in each module for a total of 21 sessions.

MODULE 1: GOD'S DIVERSE CREATION

SESSION 1: Creation and Diversity

SESSION 2: The Church and Diversity

SESSION 3: The Kingdom of Heaven and Diversity

MODULE 2: GOD OF JUSTICE

SESSION 1: Injustice

SESSION 2: God's Shalom

SESSION 3: How Sin Keeps Us From Loving Our Neighbor and Hurts Our World

MODULE 3: IDENTITY WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

SESSION 1: Made in God's Image

SESSION 2: Appreciating the Diversity of God's People

SESSION 3: Treating and Valuing Everyone Equally

MODULE 4: JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

SESSION 1: Brokenness

SESSION 2: Right Relationships

SESSION 3: Judging Others

MODULE 5: JOINING WITH GOD TO DISRUPT INJUSTICE

SESSION 1: God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice Through the Prophets

SESSION 2: God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice Through Jesus

SESSION 3: God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice Through the Holy Spirit

MODULE 6: ONE INTERCONNECTED BODY, MANY INVALUABLE PARTS

SESSION 1: Every Person is Vital

SESSION 2: Every Part is Vital

SESSION 3: The Loving Neighbor

Goal

Creating a resource that will advance children's journey to justice

Guiding Principles

TRUTH	BROKENNESS
God created a diverse world and called it good.	Individualism
Sin has resulted in systematic issues of brokenness.	Cultural captivity
This includes brokenness among ethnicities and cultures.	Structural barriers

Healing

ANSWER: Jesus brings restoration and reconciliation.

QUESTION: Will we accept Christ and Christ's way of living and giving across cultures and ethnicities?

CHALLENGE: Acknowledging that it's not easy living as a disciple of Christ.

Approach

DWELLING WITH GOD: Scripture introducing justice concepts.

DISCOVERY LEARNING: Exploration of concept utilizing active group discovery methods.

ASSURANCE: Christ came to make things right.

REFLECTION AND RESPONSE: How might we concretely live into what we have discovered?

CHALLENGE: Living and giving like Jesus. How might this be difficult?

CELEBRATION: Celebrating God and God's diverse creation. Giving thanks to God for what we have experienced. Asking God to help us live into what we have learned. Thanking God for creating a diverse world.



GOD'S DIVERSE CREATION

MODULE ONE

SESSION 1

In this session, we will explore the biblical story of creation (Genesis 1) and examine the ways God created all people in his image. Each child will hear that they are made by God and loved by God; they will have opportunities to explore the ways that they themselves, as well as other people around them, reflect God's image through diversity.

KEY POINT: God purposefully created a diverse world and called it good.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

Creation and Diversity

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Sticky backed name tags
- Markers/coloring materials
- Drawing paper
- A Bible
- Magazine pages or printed images of several kinds of animals, plants, and land/water formations
- Pictures of cross-cultural creation stories, Christian based if possible, that show the first humans in a variety of ethnicities
- Index cards
- Playdough or clay, enough for each child to have a fist-sized lump
- Sticky notes
- Poster board
- Videos of families around the world:
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: [y2r2C26RCYs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2r2C26RCYs)
[youtube.com/watch?v=y2r2C26RCYs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2r2C26RCYs)

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH:
[PL8HqCrX4JFq28TVVxrVwZu0Iz2GpOa79p](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8HqCrX4JFq28TVVxrVwZu0Iz2GpOa79p)
[youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8HqCrX4JFq28TVVxrVwZu0Iz2GpOa79p](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8HqCrX4JFq28TVVxrVwZu0Iz2GpOa79p)
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at:
covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Write “God made...” on each name tag so kids can write their names. Put these, along with the markers, in the first place kids will see when they enter your environment.

Gather the magazine or printed images of animals, plants, and land/water formations.

Familiarize yourself with the creation story in the Bible you have chosen.

Set the creation storybooks and Bible in your story-telling area, a place where all the children can see and hear you.

Set out more markers or crayons and drawing paper in this area. If there is no table where you are telling the story, consider using hardbound books or clipboards to give kids a surface to draw on.

Write several words on index cards: love, family, truth, beauty, joy, imagination, bravery, hero. Set these aside for an activity with the play dough. Choose one or two words for the whole group to make if you have mostly younger kids.

Write a T-chart on the poster board: on one side, write “All People.” On the other side write “Some People.” Hang it on the wall on one side of your room.

Write characteristics on the sticky notes: have brown hair, wear glasses, think, plan, have a house, dream, need rest, have brothers and sisters, like pizza, have brown skin, need food, etc. Make sure to list things for all people that will help kids see that everyone reflects God’s image; and use specific things from your community that some people—those around you or those who are different from you—have, look like, or do.

Prepare to show one of the videos.

Have extra sticky backed name tags to use during closing.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Sticky backed name tags, prepared as described; markers

As kids arrive in your space, greet them warmly and offer them a name tag to personalize.

Spend time with them, asking questions like,

- How did you get your name?
- What is the best thing about being born in your birth month?
- What is your favorite food/game/YouTube channel/school subject?
- Who do you like to spend time with on the weekends?

The point is to show interest in the children as individuals, who are made and loved by God, and to notice their communities of family and friends—the people around them who also have been made and loved by God.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Several pictures for each category, such as animals, plants, natural water/land formations

Arrange kids into three groups and give each a set of pictures. Let them talk about what their pictures have in common and how they are different. Encourage each kid to contribute a thought to the group.

EXPLAIN: Your pictures all are of the same type of thing—animals, plants, the earth. But they have diversity: varieties in that type of thing. Talk in your groups about why diversity is so good in your category. Why are you glad there are more than one type of animal/plant/nature?

Listen as kids talk, and repeat ideas that stand out: how boring it would be to have the same kind of flowers at your house as everyone else; how monotonous to eat the same kind of plant every meal for every day; how sad if everyone only had one kind of pet!

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, drawing paper, crayons, flat surfaces for kids to write on, other creation accounts or pictures

Gather kids in your storytelling area. Invite them to listen carefully to the story from the Bible and to draw what they hear.

READ GENESIS 1:1-24.

ASK: What kinds of things has God made so far? Encourage them to share their pictures. Emphasize what each child noticed (not the quality of their drawing skills). "God has made a lot of things in our Bible story! He must be powerful and creative!"

EXPLAIN: Now we're coming to a really important part. Turn over your paper and put your markers down so you won't be distracted.

READ GENESIS 1:26-27.

ASK: What does it mean to be made in God's image?

Allow for answers, but recognize that most kids won't know what that means.

EXPLAIN: People were made special compared to all other creation. We are made to show what God is like. The rest of creation shows that God can do anything and make anything. But people are different. We can do a little bit of what God does. We can think because God thinks; we can love because God loves. We can plan and dream and decide. We can have a relationship with God, we can help and love other people and take care of creation, because God helps and cares for all of creation.

Every single person is made to do these things—that's what it means to be made in the image of God. This is God's gift to us, that we can reflect God's love to each other, and the rest of creation. That's amazing!

Bring out the pictures of creation/stories. No one knows what the first people looked like, sounded like, or smelled like. We don't know their skin color or hair color, but it's clear that all the variety we have in humanity are the results of God's plan for creation. Some people have brown eyes, some have blue eyes, some have green eyes. Some people have purple or yellowish eyes. There are short people and tall people; people with skin colors that are every shade from black to brown, golden, and cream. (Show pictures.)

No matter how they look, humans were created in diversity. Remember that word? It means variety. We love having diversity in nature because our lives are better for having cats and dogs and chinchillas and bearded dragons as pets; we like climbing mountains and swimming in lakes; we like strawberries and tomatoes and french-fried potatoes. Diversity in humanity makes our lives and our relationship with God better too. We're going to learn more about that today.

Review Activity

SUPPLIES: Prepared T-chart and sticky notes

Divide your group into two teams and distribute the sticky notes evenly into two piles. Line up the two teams at one side of your room, across from where the poster is hung and give each team a pile of sticky notes.

The first player on each team will run to the poster, read their note, and stick it on the side they believe describes that characteristic of humanity. Then each player runs back and tags the next player in line. The game is played until one team runs out of sticky notes first.

Gather the whole group around the poster and read each note. Ask if they think all the notes are on the correct sides, and change any that need to be changed.

EXPLAIN: Some of these things—like riding a bike or having blue eyes—are traits or abilities that describe some people. That’s diversity. But other things—like being able to make plans or needing rest—are common to all people. That’s because all people, no matter what they look like or sound like, are made in the image of God. All of us are important, special, unique, and loved because God made us and loves us. And we can love others because we are made in the image of God.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: prepared index cards, playdough

Give each child some playdough and an index card. Invite them to use the playdough to make something that shows or represents the idea on the card. If time allows, let kids swap cards to show even more the differences in how we see/reflect those ideas.

EXPLAIN: Turn to a friend, read their card, and check out what they made. Would you have made the same thing? Why or why not? We need other people to help us reflect what that idea is; all of our sculptures show something a little different and help us as a group to understand more about the diversity of God’s creation. God made each of us to reflect God’s love and show what God is like. Every single person on earth who has ever lived and ever will live is made unique by God. Each of us can share God’s love in a unique way.

Video Activity

SUPPLIES: A selected video, a media player

Gather your group around the media player and show the selected video.

ASK:

- How did the people in this video look like you? How were they different?
- Did you see any different styles of clothing, houses, school, or food than yours?
- What do you think those different things tell us about God’s image?
- How were the people in this video like you/your family/your friends?
- What do you think those same things tell us about God’s image? Why did God make us both different and the same?

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Sticky backed name tags, markers

Set out blank name tags and markers. On each tag, direct kids to write something like: God made you! God loves you! You are special! You are loved!

Encourage kids to think of a place to put these, or a person to give them to, who is both different and the same as they are—someone who shows God’s image in a different way than they do. This could mean leaving one at the grocery store cart corral in your neighborhood to be found by a stranger or giving one to a neighbor or younger sibling. Guide children to be creative in their planning.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Thank God for the diversity in creation and among humans. Ask for God’s help so we can see how others reflect God’s love.



GOD'S DIVERSE CREATION

MODULE ONE

SESSION 2

In this session, we will read the account of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-12. This passage is commonly regarded as the birth of the church. We will discover why diversity in culture, ethnicity, gifts, and roles in the church are vital to its expression as the body of Christ on earth. Each child will hear about different cultural and denominational practices in churches worldwide and affirm their own place in the local church.

KEY POINT: All are welcomed by Jesus into the church.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session

The Church and Diversity

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Markers/coloring materials
- Drawing paper
- Human Bingo page, one for each child, like this one (or make your own) scholastic.com/content/dam/parents/migrated-assets/blogs/body-text-images-5/meet-new-friend-bingo-game.png
- A Bible
- Maps:
 - Known world at the time of Christ generationword.com/framework_images/81_map_lands_pentecost.gif
 - Modern-day map of the locations of the countries mentioned in Acts 2 google.com/maps/place/Mediterranean+Sea/@36.6223748,-2.9445746,4z/
- Provide a set of the above maps for each pair of kids.
- Magazine pages or printed images of several different church buildings and services. If your church has access to missionary/outreach/evangelism magazines or bulletins, consider using these.
- Poster board, glue sticks, and scissors

- Uncooked spaghetti noodles
- Small marshmallows
- Paper plates
- Computer, tablet, or smart TV
- Video of people singing praise from around the world.
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: S-x7Yu-3cF8
[youtube.com/watch?v=S-x7Yu-3cF8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-x7Yu-3cF8)
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at:
covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Make copies of the Human Bingo page.

Familiarize yourself with Acts 2:1-12. Make sure you can point out where the mentioned countries would be located on the ancient world map as well as on the modern map. (You may need to practice some of the countries' names out loud a few times.)

Make copies of the two maps.

On the poster board, draw a large outline of a cross for kids to fill with pictures of the diverse churches.

Use the masking tape to mark out a large rectangle on the floor of your room. Make it large enough for your whole group to stand inside.

OPTIONAL: arrange a Skype or FaceTime call with a church who is different from your congregation in some way—ethnically, linguistically, generationally, or geographically (urban vs. rural, portable vs. stationary, etc.).

Welcome

As kids arrive in your space, greet them warmly and offer them some markers and drawing paper.

Ask them to draw the best part of being at church.

Spend time with them, asking:

- Do you remember (last year's VBS, being in the preschool class, etc.)?
- I remember the first time you came to church/when we first met. I felt ...
- What is your favorite thing we do here at (Sunday school/children's church/ kids' club)?
- Have you ever visited a different church? What was the church or experience like?

Prompt kids to share positive memories and experiences with your church and other worship gatherings they may have attended.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Human Bingo sheet for each person, markers, small prizes (optional)

Hand each child a sheet and encourage them to ask friends to sign a square that could apply to them. If you have a very small group, you could do this in the beginning of church when parents are doing drop off and there's a larger cross-section of your community. Or consider printing it in your bulletin/ order of service for adults to work on as well, to show the kids they support their learning.

You could offer a small prize to the person who gets bingo or who fills their sheet completely.

EXPLAIN: We have a lot of diversity right here in this church! Do you remember that diversity means variety and difference? I'm glad we have lots of different kinds of people in our church, because that reminds us that God loves all different kinds of people. What might it look like if only one kind of person—who liked the color red, or ate pancakes every day for breakfast, or hated mornings—were allowed in the church? Take a minute and talk with your neighbor about how our church would be different if that was so.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, maps, markers

Gather kids in your storytelling area. Invite them to listen carefully to the story from the Bible.

READ ACTS 2:1-12.

Go slowly so that kids can hear all the different places people came from at Pentecost. Use the ancient map and the modern map to show these places. Mark each location with a marker.

Pair the kids up and give each pair a set of maps and two markers. Encourage them to work together and mark the places on the maps as you read.

When you finish, explain: This is a really big story! Before this story, people had to go to one kind of place to worship God—the Temple. The priests leading the services spoke only one language, and only one kind of service happened there. If you didn't speak that language, or didn't understand that service, you couldn't worship God with God's people.

In fact, the reason all those people from all those countries and cities were gathered in Jerusalem is because of a big festival—it was like a worship holiday. People traveled from all over to worship God at the Temple and celebrate what God had done for his people.

But when God sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus's followers, God was doing something new. God was saying that from now on, people can worship God anywhere they are. They don't have to become a citizen of a specific place or learn a new language or travel to a far country to worship God; God wants a loving relationship with all people—that's why Jesus came to earth. Peter and Jesus's other followers now had power and boldness to travel and tell everyone the good news about Jesus and that God had given us a new way to worship.

This new way to worship and know God swept everywhere in the world. On our maps, all the

countries and cities that our Bible story mentioned seem clumped up in one tiny spot, but if you look at the ancient world map, it looks like God wanted to have a relationship with people literally all over the world. The Romans, who were in charge when this part of the Bible was written, hadn't explored the whole planet, just some areas in Asia, Africa, and Europe. But the roads and harbors they built made it possible for the disciples to tell others outside of Palestine about Jesus.

That's why people call this passage in Acts 2 "the birth of the church," because it's when God let everyone know that the new plan for worship and relationship was for everyone. From there, people who worship God and followed Jesus began to gather wherever they were to celebrate what God had done through Jesus. Those groups were called churches—and they still are!

DISCUSS

- What do you think it means that God planned to reach out to the whole world with the good news of Jesus?
- What kinds of people do you think God wanted to be part of these new churches?
- Who does God welcome into the church?

Review Activity

SUPPLIES: Prepared poster board, glue sticks, scissors, and magazine pages or printed images of several different church buildings and services. (If your church has access to missionary/outreach/evangelism magazines or bulletins, please consider using these.)

Invite kids to look through the magazine pictures or printed images and talk about what kinds of churches they see there. What are the buildings like? What are people wearing? What languages are their signs/lyrics in?

When kids gravitate toward a certain picture, encourage them to cut it out carefully and glue it onto the poster board, around the cross outline. Try to fill up all the negative space around the cross outline.

EXPLAIN: We are all different kinds of people in different kinds of churches. God planned for diversity when he started the church, but we all have one thing in common. Guide kids to talk about ways that churches worship God that are the same everywhere and different everywhere.

DISCUSS

- What are some different ways we can worship God? (Option: Do this as a charades game.)
- Why is it good that Jesus can be worshiped in many ways?
- What might we learn from the way others worship Jesus?
- Do you think God delights in the many ways people worship? Why?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Uncooked spaghetti noodles, small marshmallows, Bible

Divide into groups of three and give each small group several noodles and marshmallows. Tell them their goal is to build the biggest strongest structure they can build with those materials.

When all the teams have made their structures, remark on what is the same and what is different about each one.

EXPLAIN: When God began to build a church with people who would tell the whole world about the good news, he used a lot of different kinds of people so there would be a lot of different kinds of churches. They all do some things the same—worship God,

help each other, tell people about the good news—but they all do it a little differently. How is that like your marshmallow buildings?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27.

ASK: What role do they play in the body of Christ? Do they help others? Do they love to share answers and talk about the Bible? Are they artistic or athletic and able to create movies or games to help us understand God and others better?

Video Activity

SUPPLIES: A media player

If you've planned a Skype or FaceTime session with another church, do that now.

ASK the other group:

- Where are they located? What kind of place do they meet in? What language do they speak?
- What is their favorite part of worshiping together?
- What is their hardest part about going to church?
- What is their favorite Bible story or song?

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: The selected video, a media player

Play the video and ask kids to reflect on what is the same and different about these churches and their own. Say, "I'm glad that church is a place where all different people can worship God."

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Thank God for the diversity in churches and the way God planned for the good news to spread to all people. Ask for God's help so we can see how others in the church—locally and globally—and can work together to show all people the good news.**



GOD'S DIVERSE CREATION

MODULE ONE

SESSION 3

In this session we will focus on the marriage feast in Revelation 19:5-9 as God's ultimate goal of reconciling all people. Our diversity will not be erased but will be used as it was always intended: to show the goodness and creativity and splendor of God.

KEY POINT: Diversity demonstrates the goodness, creativity, and splendor of God.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session

3 The Kingdom of Heaven and Diversity

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Drawing paper and markers
- Paper bowls, one per child
- Plenty of cheese balls (for playing with and a few for eating!)
- A Bible, preferable NIV version
- A tablecloth
- Dishes for place settings, napkins, silverware, a vase of flowers, and small candles
- Paper plates
- Glue sticks and scissors
- Magazines or grocery store flyers
- Picture books from around the world and your local newspapers
- Video: Travis's Feast
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: u3-Px7JqAow
[youtube.com/watch?v=u3-Px7JqAow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3-Px7JqAow)
- Blank cards
- Stickers
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Mark the Bible in the following places:
Revelation 19:5-9; 21:1-4; 22:1-5.

Read the passages so you're comfortable with the language. Consider using different voices as you read so that kids get a sense of who is speaking during the Revelation songs. You might want to invite a friend with a different speaking voice or accent to help you.

Look through the picture books and your newspapers for people who have various jobs, wear different items of clothing, or are eating food.

Watch the video of Travis's feast so you're ready to discuss it.

If you have a community meal, a small group, or a church supper coming up, be prepared to make invitations with the kids so these can be used to welcome your community to your local version of the great feast!

Welcome

As kids arrive in your space, greet them warmly and offer them some markers and drawing paper. Ask them to draw pictures of the biggest celebration they have ever been invited to—a wedding or anniversary party, a birthday or quinceañera or bar mitzvah.

Spend time with them, asking:

- What was this party celebrating?
- Who was there?
- Who was the guest of honor?
- What did you do? What kinds of foods did you eat?
- What did you wear?

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper bowls, cheese balls

Divide your group into pairs and line the pairs up facing each other, around four feet apart. Put some cheese balls into bowls and hand them to the partners on the left. Give empty bowls to the partners facing them. On "Go," the partners with the empty bowls must hold the bowls in their mouths by biting the rim. The partners with the cheese balls must try to toss them into the empty bowls from their position four feet away. The pair with the most cheese balls in the far bowl wins.

Explain: This would be a terrible way to feed people at a feast! It would be messy and inefficient and just plain unfair! What if there were people who couldn't hold a bowl in their mouths, or who couldn't move their arms to toss their partners the snacks? Some people would end up with full bowls and many others would go away hungry. What would be a good way to serve all kinds of people at a big party? Talk with your partner about it.

Discuss a fair way to share resources and honor party guests.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: A Bible marked as described earlier, tablecloth, and table settings

Gather kids in your storytelling area. Invite them to listen carefully to the story from the Bible.

EXPLAIN: We've heard about the beginning of history, when God created our beautiful and diverse world; and we've talked about the middle of history, when Jesus sent out his friends to make disciples from every country and tribe on earth, and that includes us! Now, we'll talk about the end of history.

Remember that God started everything by creating the earth and people, and then people messed up? Ever since then, people have been divided by the things that should unite us. Instead of appreciating how God made everyone different, some people decided that our diversity was a bad thing. People have even gone to war and killed other humans because they didn't like the color of their skin, or eyes, or the way they talked, or the style of their church. Even more than that, people all over the world hurt each other with words and actions because they are afraid of how we are different. That is called racism and prejudice. Many people are sad and hurting, or angry and hateful, because of those things. Do you think God is happy with that situation?

Allow for responses.

EXPLAIN: No, I don't think God is happy about that either. God is not part of racism or prejudice at all. God is the one who made us all different in the first place. Diversity was God's own idea!

God sent Jesus to save all people from all places, all over the world. We know that. But what you might not know is that God's plan doesn't stop there.

At the very end of the Bible, a man named John saw a wonderful dream from God and wrote it down. In this dream, John saw what would happen at the end of time, when Jesus comes back to earth to show all people that he loves them and rescues them. John saw the big throne room of heaven, where God rules as a king over all the earth. Here's what he saw.

READ REVELATION 19:5-9.

EXPLAIN: So in heaven people of all countries and tribes and languages were all worshipping God together. They were wearing the same white clothes that reminded everyone of the way they followed Jesus. The only thing that was different about them was the way God had made them: individual and unique, diverse and special. But they were all following Jesus and praising God. And, the end of that, verse 9 says they were all invited to a feast!

Begin to spread out the tablecloth and set it with the place settings, flowers, and candles.

EXPLAIN: My table here isn't big enough for that many people. But do people who are at war, or who hate each other or are terrified of each other, sit down at a big feast together? No. A feast means a celebration with people who love each other! So, at the end of history, people of all countries and colors will sit down at a table together, at the same feast.

The most important guest will be God, who will be at the feast. The Bible says this about what it will be like.

READ REVELATION 21:1-4.

EXPLAIN: God will end all fighting and war; there will be no more death or sadness or pain. Do you think there will be things like racism or prejudice there?

Allow for answers.

EXPLAIN: No, of course not! The end of John's dream, what God showed him, goes like this.

READ REVELATION 22:1-5.

EXPLAIN: A garden and rivers? That sounds like creation, like where God made all people in the first place! We will all be one people—God's people. Just as God made us all different in the beginning at creation, God will rule over all the different kinds of people as our king at the end of time.

DISCUSS

- Why do you think God showed John this dream of all people from everywhere worshipping God together?
- Why do you think that God wants to throw a big feast for all God's people? Do you think there are people who would not want to come? Why or why not?

Review Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper plates, glue sticks, scissors, grocery store flyers or magazines

Give each child a paper plate, and lay out the other supplies. Encourage them to cut out and glue the food pictures on their plate to create their idea of a feast. As they do this, talk about the Bible lesson:

These feasts all look different! Why do you think having lots of different foods at a feast would be a good idea?

Who would you like to share a feast with? Why?

When the activity is finished, set the plates aside to dry and guide the group to work together to clean up.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Picture books showing people from all over the world as well as your local newspaper

Look through the books and newspaper with the group. Point out all the people doing, wearing, and eating different things. Play a game similar to "I'm going on a picnic."

To begin say, "I'm going to a feast and I'm inviting someone who (name an action, food, or clothing from the pictures)." For example, "I'm going to a feast and I'm inviting someone who eats tortillas." The child next to you must say, "I'm going to a feast and I'm inviting someone who eats tortillas and (their own choice.) Continue this way until either kids start forgetting the previous answers or until everyone has had a couple of turns.

EXPLAIN: Since we know that God has invited everyone from every place on earth to his great feast, it seems silly to exclude people now.

Would you be whiny and rude to someone who was

a guest at your holiday meal? How can we be kind to people now, and treat everyone with respect, as if we were getting ready to sit down to a feast together?

What should we do when we see others being treated unfairly or unkindly because of their differences? As fellow future guests at the table, how can we stick up for them?

Video Activity

SUPPLIES: A media player

Gather the kids around the video player and play the video: Travis's Feast

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: u3-Px7JqAow
youtube.com/watch?v=u3-Px7JqAow

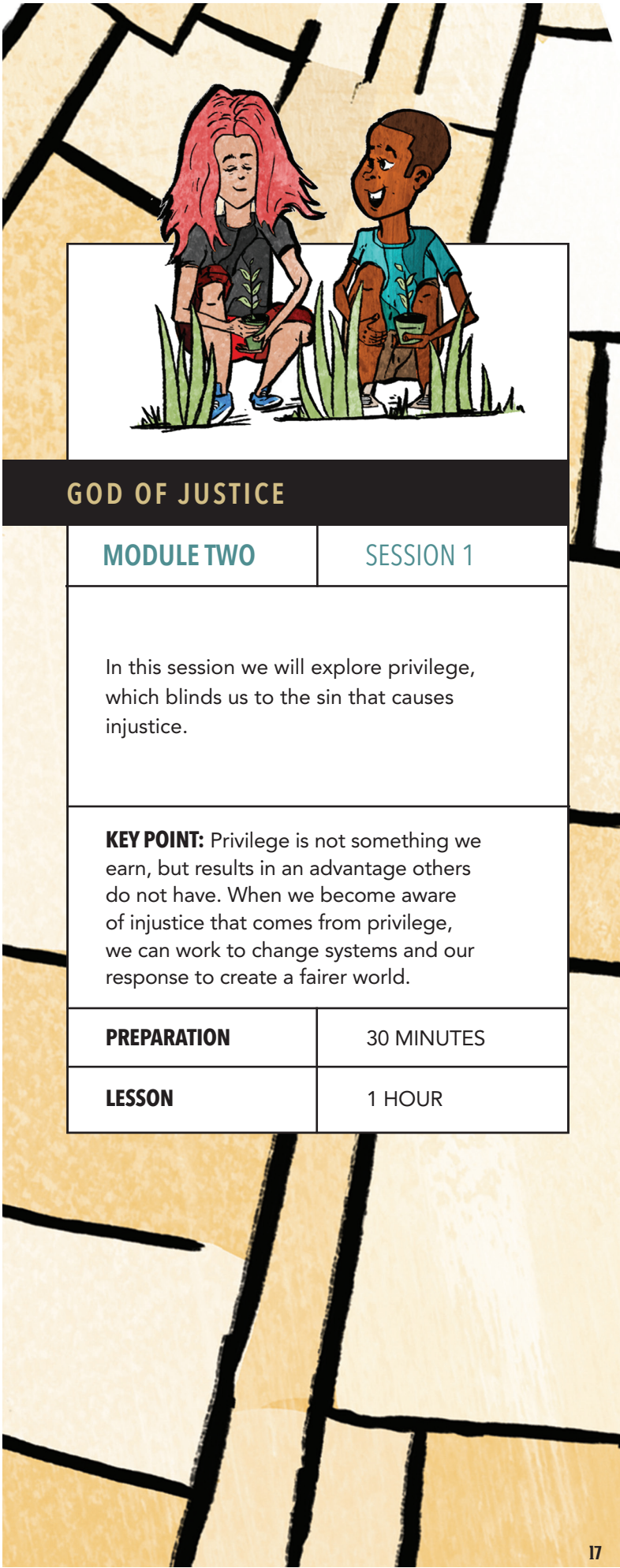
DISCUSS: What was most noticeable about the feast? Who was there? What were they saying? Was any one missing? Would you like to go to that kind of a feast?

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Blank cards, coloring materials, stickers

Invite kids to use these supplies to make invitations to whatever local gathering you've decided on. As they decorate, ask them for ideas of who your church could invite to this feast—such as people they don't normally see at church. Collect these cards and distribute them as you can.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Ask God to help us respond in a loving way to others rather than mean ways because someone is different from us. Give thanks to God for making us different and helping us to celebrate our differences.



GOD OF JUSTICE

MODULE TWO

SESSION 1

In this session we will explore privilege, which blinds us to the sin that causes injustice.

KEY POINT: Privilege is not something we earn, but results in an advantage others do not have. When we become aware of injustice that comes from privilege, we can work to change systems and our response to create a fairer world.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

Injustice

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Drawing tools or craft items
- Butcher paper or white board
- Wastebasket
- Building blocks
- Toothpicks, playdough
- Video:
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: M\$JEw3yfVgw
[youtube.com/watch?v=QmnJJGQ_gDw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmnJJGQ_gDw)
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at:
covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Write the following words on a board or large pieces of paper and post in the room: Privilege and Injustice.

Welcome

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard about their week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

It may be helpful for some children to have drawing or craft items available to help them process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Building blocks, blindfolds

OBJECTIVE: BUILD A BRIDGE.

You can do this in pairs or threes. Give some groups building blocks and other groups toothpicks and playdough. Tell the groups they have five minutes to build as strong a bridge as possible. After the groups are finished, test the strength of each bridge, using a heavy rock to test the toothpick bridges and a smaller rock to test the block bridges.

DISCUSS

- How did you feel about this challenge?
- What wasn't fair about it?
- How could it have been more fair?

EXPLAIN: What you just experienced is injustice.

ASK: What advantage did some groups have over other groups? Could everyone have built a strong bridge?

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to talk about fairness. In the Bible, this idea is called justice. When things are not fair, it's called injustice.

Injustice is a lack of fairness, mistreating others, taking what does not belong to us, or making rules and laws that exclude and hurt people. Injustice is the result of sin, and it can create unfair privileges in our world. Injustice involves taking something from

someone—something they deserve or that God desires for them. Injustice includes stealing, such as taking something you did not earn, or creating laws or rules that hurt some people and help others. The root cause of injustice is sin.

The rules that give some people an advantage over others is what you experienced today.

ROUND 2

This time each group will use the blocks to build a tower. If anyone in your group has blue eyes or blond hair, they will not participate. They will just watch the others. The rest of the group will work to build a tower as tall as they can with the blocks.

If anyone asks why some members of the group can't participate, tell them it is because of their physical traits.

If they invite their left-out friends to help, that is okay.

DISCUSS

- How did it feel to be left out because of the way you looked?
- Was this fair?
- How does this happen today? Is that fair?

Bible Time

READ

"The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him" (**PROVERBS 11:1**).

"You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts" (**AMOS 5:11-12**).

"Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless" (**EXODUS 22:21-22**).

"Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?" (**ISAIAH 10:1-3**).

DISCUSS

ASK: Have you ever seen someone left out because of how they look? What happened?

EXPLAIN: Even though Jesus forgives our sin, we still mess up. Sometimes we choose selfishness, and we forget about sharing. Sometimes we use what we have just for ourselves. Sometimes we even hurt or bully other people so we can have an advantage over them.

EXPLAIN: Jesus invites us to love others like he does. We look out for other people, especially those who are left out or overlooked. Even though we do not always act like it, we are a family, people created by God in God's image. We belong to each other, and Jesus tells us, "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you" (**MATTHEW 7:12**).

We are all connected people. As followers of Jesus, we are called to make sure no one is left out or mistreated. We cannot just be concerned about ourselves or our friends and family. God calls us to care about all people—especially those who are left out.

ASK: Can you think of a time when you may have overlooked or excluded someone else? How do you think this person felt? What could you have done differently?

Video Activity

SUPPLIES: A media player

Watch the video:

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: QmnJJGQ_gDw
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmnJJGQ_gDw

ASK: How did the boys in this video put someone else's interest ahead of their own? How could you practice that kind of generosity in your own lives?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Wastebasket, paper

Put a wastebasket in front of the room. Seat children in rows of chairs (a front row, second row, third row, fourth row, etc.) with space behind each row. If you have just a few children, seat them in chairs in a line, one behind the other. Give each child a crumpled up piece of paper.

The object of the game is to see which row can get the most wads of paper in the basket. If you have a smaller group of children lined up behind each other, give each child three pieces of crumpled up paper.

EXPLAIN: The purpose of this exercise is to toss your piece of paper into the wastebasket. Everyone must stay seated in their chair, and you must throw your own wad of paper. When I count to three, everyone will try to throw their paper into the basket.

You can see a video of this here:

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: 2KlmvmuxzYE&t=28s
[youtube.com/watch?v=2KlmvmuxzYE&t=28s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KlmvmuxzYE&t=28s)

DISCUSS

Once the game concludes, ask the students:

- In the back row(s): how do you feel about this game?
- In the middle rows: was playing a game where

everyone didn't have equal access make it less enjoyable?

- In the front row: Does it feel as good to win the game once you realize how unfair it was?

EXPLAIN: "Privilege" is an advantage that is available only to a particular person or group of people, usually because of injustice.

ASK:

- Was this game fair?
- Did the people in the front row do anything to earn the advantage they had in the game?
- Was it wrong for them to sit in the front row?
- What should we do if we notice we have an unfair advantage in a situation?

Closing Activity

ASK: How could this game have been more just/fair for everyone? (For example, put the chairs in a circle with basket in the middle.)

EXPLAIN: It's important for us to be aware when we have privilege over others and to work to make sure life is fair for everyone.

Jesus instructs us to love one another.

Sin makes us self-centered. It makes us want to focus our efforts on getting rather than on giving. Sometimes we can be so caught up in getting what we want that we forget about our neighbors and those who are poor and in need around us. The Bible instructs us to care for the poor and needy, but sin can blind us to their needs and the ways injustice has given us certain privileges.

Living like Jesus with a focus on giving makes us

aware of the privileges we have and the need to make sure life is fair for others and to give to others an equal opportunity.

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4.

ASK: How does this passage show Jesus putting our needs before his own?

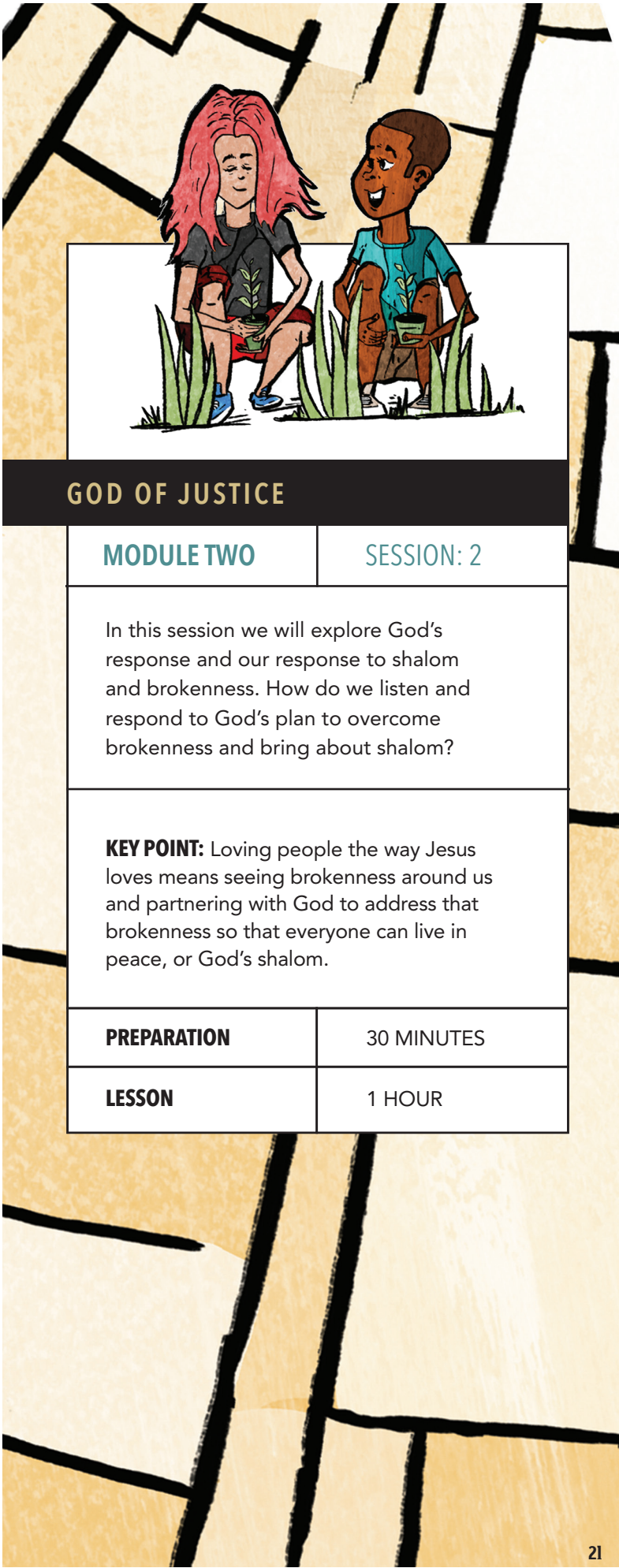
Ask students to make a plan to put someone else's needs before their own interests this week.

Share vulnerably to explore and make a plan.

ASK:

- What does it feel like to belong to a family, a group of friends, or a team?
- Who do you belong to?
- What does it feel like to be left out or overlooked?
- How can we make sure we don't make other people feel like this?
- How can we respond with love when we see other people who are left out or overlooked?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Ask God for forgiveness.**



GOD OF JUSTICE

MODULE TWO

SESSION: 2

In this session we will explore God's response and our response to shalom and brokenness. How do we listen and respond to God's plan to overcome brokenness and bring about shalom?

KEY POINT: Loving people the way Jesus loves means seeing brokenness around us and partnering with God to address that brokenness so that everyone can live in peace, or God's shalom.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session

God's Shalom

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Butcher paper or a white board
- Charade cards with words on them (see below)
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Write the following words on a board or large pieces of paper and post around the room: Injustice, Privilege, Sin, Shalom, Brokenness.

Make charade cards with these words on them: Homelessness, Hunger, Someone getting into trouble at school for something they didn't do, Sickness, Someone who doesn't have a lunch, Someone being made fun of because of how they look, Someone being bullied.

There are also several "explain" portions in this session. Children could volunteer to read those sections.

FOR LEADERS

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"
(MATTHEW 25:35-40)

God identifies with the poor. In fact, God says that when we neglect, disrespect, or forsake the least of these, we are doing the same to God. Referencing passages like Proverbs 14:31 and Proverbs 17:5, biblical scholar Elsa Tamez says, "God identifies himself with the poor to such an extent that their rights become the rights of God himself." God makes no such proclamations about any other group. God's intimate identification with the oppressed is an irrevocable sign of his particular union with "the least of these."

Welcome

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard about their week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

It may be helpful for some children to have drawing or craft items available for them to process their thoughts.

Review

Remind children of the key concepts from last week:

- **INJUSTICE:** When something isn't fair, resulting from privilege or the sin of selfishness and oppression
- **SIN:** Anything that is against God's will
- **PRIVILEGE:** An advantage that is gained because of injustice, or the exclusion of others. This advantage is only available to a particular person or group of people.

ASK: How did you put someone else's needs before your own this past week? How did you feel when you did that? Remind them that this is what the gospel calls us to do, and that God was pleased with them.

EXPLAIN: Last week we learned that sin causes us to think more about ourselves than others. God created enough good things to meet everyone's needs, but not enough for everyone's greed. Injustice, which is the result of sin, keeps people from experiencing what God desires for them. It also causes division. God is grieved by injustice and cares about how we respond to it when we see it. Seeking justice is biblical—it is how Christians join Jesus in repairing what is broken. Today we will talk what it means to share what we have. This is not just something we do to be kind—we share because we are followers of Jesus.

Bible Time

READ ACTS 2:42-47.

EXPLAIN: **God wants every person to have what they need.** That was always God's plan from the beginning. But sometimes we become selfish, and we don't share with others. When we have more than we need but do not share, some people have to go without. That is not God's plan for creation.

ASK: What is the difference between a want and a need? What wants can you name? What needs do you have? Can you think of a time you had to go without something you really needed? How did that feel?

EXPLAIN: In Acts we see the believers gathering together and sharing everything they had. As we grow closer to God, we become more willing to share what God has given us. When we refuse to share God's blessings with others, we disobey God and Scripture.

ASK: What is brokenness? (Separation, something that is no longer whole or complete, something divided and different from what God wants.) What causes brokenness? Sin that results in injustice and greed. God provides enough for everyone's needs, but our greed prevents us from meeting the needs of others.

Application Activity

- Think about a place where you see people in need—perhaps they are hungry or don't have a place to live. Do you know anyone in your church, school, or neighborhood who does not have enough (warm clothing for the winter, food to eat, or a place to live)? Make a list of the places that you see people who are in need, and if you happen to know their name, write that down too.
- Ask God how you, your family, and your church might be able to help people who are in need. Write down a prayer for them.
- Did you know one of the ways that God speaks to us is by giving us ideas and visions as we pray? Make a list of the ideas that came into your mind as you prayed.
- Draw a picture of you and your community helping someone in need, doing one of the things you heard from God.

Bible Time

READ 1 JOHN 3:16-18.

ASK:

- How do you know when someone is in need? When you see someone in need how do you feel? How do you think God feels?
- In the previous activity, what did you draw? Why?
- How is your picture connected to the Scripture passage we read?

Application Activity

Using the charade cards you prepared before class, give one card to each child who is willing to act out the concepts. When the group guesses the word on the card, ask, "What would Jesus do for that person? What could we do?"

DISCUSS: Sometimes we see people who are hurt or in need and we don't respond. What could we do to become more aware of the things that are happening around us? How could we respond?

EXPLAIN: God sees the pain and heartache of those who are in need and God expects us to see this pain too. God suffers alongside of those in need and calls us to do the same—to stand in solidarity with or stand up for someone who is suffering. God also calls us to defend their rights, dignity, and humanity.

God's shalom means peace, harmony, prosperity, and wholeness that encourages us to give back—to generously repay something in some way. God acts in Jesus Christ to bring shalom in every part of creation. Jesus wants the best for everyone.

READ JOHN 10:10; 14:27.

Application Activity

PARTNERING WITH GOD: It takes courage to give back and share Jesus's love with others.

Ask students to pair up and act out these scenarios.

Or read each illustration out loud and ask students how they would respond.

- Your friend tells you they have a secret. They tell you their family does not have enough food to eat at home. You notice that every day when your friend comes to school, they seem sad and unable to focus on their work. What can you do?
- Some kids at the lunch table were making fun of your friend's clothes because they wear the same clothes several times a week and their clothes are dirty. What can you do?
- Your friend tells you that he and his family got kicked out of their house because his mom lost her job. They are now staying in a shelter some nights and sleeping in their car other nights. What can you do?
- For Christmas you got a brand-new winter coat. You love your new coat and wear it all the time. You have an old coat that still fits, but you don't wear it anymore. On New Year's Day, you are in the car with your parents and you see people out on the street asking for food and money. You see two kids around your age who look very cold. What can you do?
- Your friend tells you that their parents are getting deported for an immigration violation. Your friend was born in the U.S. and has never been to Honduras before. They only speak English, and they are afraid. Their family doesn't have much money, and they don't know what to do. What can you do?

DISCUSS

We love others because Christ first loved us. When we see people in need God calls us to respond:

- We are called to express our faith in love.
- We do not turn a blind eye to injustice, suffering, or the needs of the least of these (those in need, the poor, those without parents, or those who feel unloved and overlooked).

- We name injustice and the wrongs that we see in the world.
- We pray to God about what is happening. We tell God how the situation makes us feel, and we ask God how we should respond.

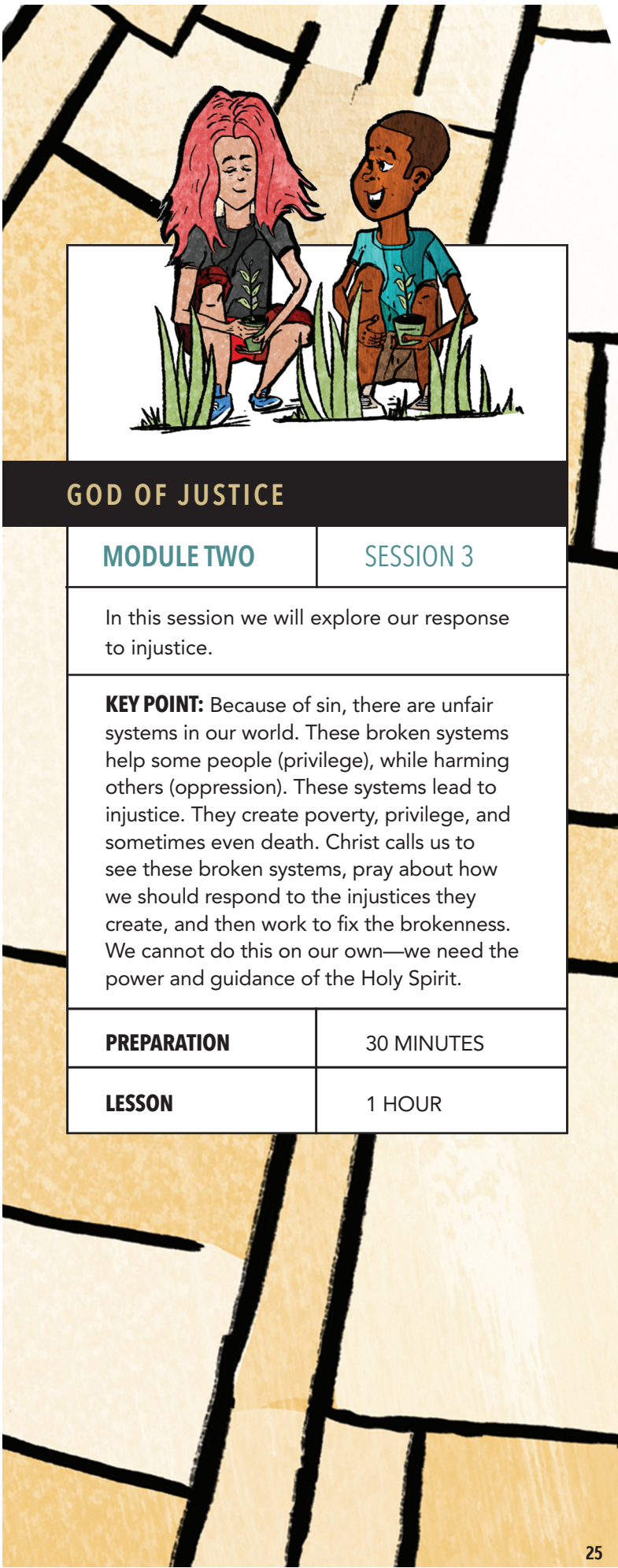
The Bible calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves, so our response should look like something we would want others to do for us if we were in their situation.

Closing Activities

- We can learn more about the problem, and figure out why it is happening.
- Pray a prayer of lament. Lament means recognizing that things are not as they should be and crying out to God, asking him to come and fix the brokenness of our world.
- Pray a prayer of intercession on behalf of those who are suffering. In this kind of prayer we remember those who suffer and we advocate for them through our prayers.
- Keep our eyes and ears open to see those who are in need and those who are not treated fairly.
- Recognize that everyone is made in God's image.
- Celebrate that God made a diverse world of people.
- Respond when we see a need.

Which of these activities will you partner with God in doing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: God, help us to love people the way Jesus loves. Help us to see the brokenness around us and partner with you to address that brokenness so that everyone can live in peace. For this we give you thanks. Amen.



GOD OF JUSTICE

MODULE TWO

SESSION 3

In this session we will explore our response to injustice.

KEY POINT: Because of sin, there are unfair systems in our world. These broken systems help some people (privilege), while harming others (oppression). These systems lead to injustice. They create poverty, privilege, and sometimes even death. Christ calls us to see these broken systems, pray about how we should respond to the injustices they create, and then work to fix the brokenness. We cannot do this on our own—we need the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

3

How Sin Keeps Us from Loving Our Neighbor and Hurts Our World

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Butcher paper or white board
- Books: *Henry's Freedom Box* and *The Story of Ruby Bridges*
- Video: Ruby Bridges
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: Y4F3sr5f-EQ
youtube.com/watch?v=Y4F3sr5f-EQ
- Materials for the celebration ideas at the end of the session
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Write the following words on a board or large pieces of paper and post in the room: Injustice, Privilege, Sin, Shalom, Brokenness, System, and Oppression. Prepare for the celebration at the end of the session.

FOR LEADERS

The Bible links justice to taking care of and taking up the cause of “the least of these” (people who are vulnerable, including widows, orphans, immigrants, and those who are poor). Israel’s inability to care for these people led them into exile. Biblical scholar Donald Gowan writes that as Zechariah identifies the reason for the exile of the Israelites, he offers a single thought: “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow and fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other” (ZECHARIAH 7:9-10). This is an acknowledgment that not just individuals but the systems of society unjustly help some while oppressing others.

Welcome

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard about their week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

It may be helpful for some children to have drawing or craft items available for them to process their thoughts.

Review

Remind children of the key concepts from the last two sessions and introduce the idea of “systems.”

- **INJUSTICE:** Lack of fairness resulting from the sin of selfishness and oppression or privilege
- **SIN:** Anything that is against God’s will
- **PRIVILEGE:** An advantage available only to a particular person or group of people
- **SHALOM:** The world as God intends it to be. Shalom is the peace, harmony, prosperity, and wholeness that encourages us to love our neighbors, see ourselves as a big connected family, and understand that everything we have is a gift from God—and that gift is not just for us, but it is meant to make the world a better place. Shalom inspires us to give back or to generously repay something in some way.
- **BROKENNESS:** Something that does not reflect God’s original intent—separation, division, or something that is no longer whole or complete. God provides enough for everyone’s needs, but our greed separates us from meeting the needs of others.
- **SYSTEM:** Places that create rules and laws regarding the way things are done
- **OPPRESSION:** When people are harmed by injustice and hurt by unfair systems and laws

EXPLAIN: In the past two sessions we have talked about how we can respond to individual injustices that we see around us. But brokenness can also affect our laws, government, and even the church. Today we will explore what unfair systems look like and who they hurt.

Bible Time

READ EXODUS 1:6–2:10.

We often say that everyone has an equal chance to succeed. But some systems are in place in our society that do not allow for equal access, which leads to some people being oppressed.

- What sinful laws or systems does Pharaoh put into place because he is afraid of losing his power?
- How are the Hebrews oppressed by Pharaoh's laws and systems?
- How is sin connected to the Hebrew's oppression?
- How does Pharaoh's sin grow and become law? When someone's sin becomes a law—that an entire society must obey—that sin becomes "systemic," which means it becomes part of the system. When sin becomes part of the system, the system becomes broken. It becomes an unsafe place that harms certain people, gives unfair advantages to other people, and goes against God's will.
- What privileges do the Egyptians get from the oppression of the Hebrews?
- How hard is it to do what's right when a law or system is unjust and everyone else around you ignores the unfairness?
- Who responded to the unjust laws of Pharaoh? What did they do?
- Can you think of ways people have been oppressed in our country?

Read *Henry's Freedom Box*. Talk about the unjust system in this story and how people responded.

CHALLENGE: To respond to injustice, we must first learn to identify it. We pray for God's guidance and ask God to shine a light on the wrong that is occurring. And then we ask God how we should respond. The Holy Spirit leads us to speak up for justice—even when it feels uncomfortable, unfamiliar, or unpopular.

READ ACTS 6:1.

ASK:

- What was the problem in this story?
(The widows didn't have access to food.)
- Did you know the same thing happens for some children here in the U.S. and Canada?

Thirteen million children in the United States live in homes that do not have enough money for food without federal food assistance and community food pantries. Five million of those children live in households that have very low food security. That means they do not have enough to eat at times because they have insufficient money or no access to other food sources such as a food pantry. In Canada 1.3 million children live in conditions of poverty and more than one third of food bank users are children.

(Statistics from the USDA and Canada Without Poverty)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest program in the U.S. to help the hungry, offering nutrition assistance to millions of individuals and families. But for up to 5 million children this is not enough. They must rely on local food pantries as well. Unfortunately for those children who live in poorer areas, there is not always enough food available. They don't have the same access to food because of where they live.

In the same way, children in poorer neighborhoods don't have the same opportunities at school that other children have. Their textbooks may be outdated, and often they have no access to computers, gym, art, or music classes. If we don't respond to this lack of access, injustice and oppression occur.

READ ACTS 6:2-3.

ASK:

- Did the apostles ignore the needs of those without food?
- What was their solution?

EXPLAIN: In the New Testament one out of every sixteen verses is about the poor. In the Gospels, the number is one out of every ten; in Luke's Gospel it is one out of every seven, and in James, one out of every five. God cares for those who are poor and for those who do not have equal access or who are oppressed because of unfair systems.

REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

Read *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, by Robert Coles and George Ford.

Or watch this video:

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: Y4F3sr5f-EQ
[youtube.com/watch?v=Y4F3sr5f-EQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4F3sr5f-EQ)

ASK:

- What is the injustice in this story?
- How could the injustice be fixed?
- How did the church help Ruby and her family?
- How could Christians in this story have followed Jesus in the ways we have learned about today?
- How was God with Ruby in the midst of her oppression?
- How is Ruby an example of how we should follow Jesus?

ASK:

- If you were Ruby, how would you have responded to the crowd?
- If you were one of the students at the school, what do you think you would have done? Do you think you would have been brave enough to stand up for Ruby?

- If all the other children were being mean to Ruby just because of the color of her skin, would I have the courage to be different, to stand up for justice—even if it meant I might lose some friends?

Application Activity

In this activity we will name ways the church can stand up for justice and partner with God to help end oppression and injustice.

Write the following list of needs on the board: Homelessness, Neighborhood violence, Lack of school supplies, Hunger, Lack of winter clothing.

Brainstorm ways we could respond as a church to each need. Some examples might be: Give food to a food pantry, organize a coat drive.

At the end of the game ask children to consider how they might partner with God to live into one of their responses.

DISCUSS

Following Jesus means confronting injustice and responding in nonviolent ways that reflect the love, grace, and justice of God.

When injustice and oppression occur—and when other people go along with it or turn a blind eye to it—Christians cannot just do what's popular or follow what everyone else is doing. As God's children, we are called to do what's right and to stand up for justice, even when it's lonely, unpopular, or costly. When we partner with God to work for justice, people around us might not understand why we are doing what we are doing, but the Bible assures us that this is what God wants us to do.

ASK: **As Christ's hands and feet in the world, what are we supposed to do now?** As we follow Jesus together, we also follow what Jesus did.

- Jesus loved people in sacrificial ways.
- Jesus used what he had to help others, instead of using it for his own advantage.
- Jesus went out of his way to love people who felt overlooked, unloved, and left out. He helps all of us realize that we belong to each other and that we are all a part of one family, the household of God.

- Plan a closing worship service and special commission of students who participated, including a commitment to keep learning, listening, and growing together.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **God, help us to not forget who we are, whose we are, and who you have called us to be. Every person in the world is made in your image, and we are one family. When our family is mistreated, overlooked, or hurt, help us to go out of our way to show them your love. Amen.**

Closing Activities

- Show-and-tell portion in service for kids—give each student 5-10 minutes to present what they've learned to the congregation. They could set up reflection stations in the church, give a live presentation, or prerecord a video.
- Share ideas and partner with church leadership to reach out to those who are experiencing injustice.
- Share testimonies of their favorite lessons and things you have learned over the past few weeks.
- Highlight stories from kids/leaders/families through video interviews.
- Create a collaborative art piece to help class participants remember what you have learned.
- Show and tell: take a journey through books, projects, art, games you played, discussed, learned.
- Create a slide show with images of the kids participating in the Justice Journey.
- Pray a closing prayer for the community, written by the kids.
- Ask the kids to write a liturgy for justice for the congregation to read during the service.



IDENTITY WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

MODULE THREE

SESSION 1

In this session we will explore what it means to be made in God's image, and to understand and celebrate that idea. We will examine Genesis 1:27, 29-31, and Psalm 139:13-16.

KEY POINT: God has made us unique and distinct from one another for his good and perfect purposes.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

Made in God's Image

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- A handout that depicts a range of different flowers/plants
- A handout that depicts a range of different animals
- A handout of children's faces from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. To download visit: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links
- If possible, a small mirror for each child
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

Create a handout with a word cloud on it that spans a range of academic subjects, hobbies, and interests. Potential entries include:

Math	Softball
Language Arts	Soccer
Science	Tennis
Technology	Bowling
Physical Education	Sports
Music	Ballet/Dance
Musical Instrument	Church/Youth Group
Art	Service
Theatre	Instagram
Singing	Snapchat
Baseball	YouTube
Football	Fortnite
Running	Video Games
Basketball	

(Or feel free to add whatever seems relevant for your group—think about the children in your ministry and contextualize for them.)

Welcome

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard about their week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

It may be helpful for some children to have drawing or craft items available to help them process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Handouts with word cloud, animals, flowers, and children for each child

SAY: Let's start today by taking a few minutes to look at this handout, and circle which items or activities you enjoy the most on this list. Which of these things do you enjoy? Give children a few minutes to respond.

SAY: Now before we go around and share, let me ask you a question. Do you think your handout will look the same as another person's? Why or why not?

INVITE ANSWERS

ASK: Have you ever looked around and noticed how many different kinds of flowers there are in the world? Or animals? Did you know that there are more than 45,000 kinds of spiders in the world?

Show handouts of flowers and animals. Feel free to fill in with your preferred specific example.

ASK: Can anyone give me an example of a flower you know?

When you receive answers, say, That's a beautiful flower! Can you imagine if it were the only kind of flower that existed in the whole world? What would that be like? A little boring, right? God's way is different—he loves to create things that are different yet all equally beautiful and valued. You can see this in all of creation, such as in the flowers and animals we were just talking about. But it also applies to us as people.

EXPLAIN: We use a word to describe the wide variety of things in the world that God has created: diversity.

WRITE ON THE BOARD IF YOU HAVE ONE

EXPLAIN: Diversity means that God loves creating different kinds of the same thing. God creates a diversity of flowers. God creates a diversity of animals. God loves creating so many versions of the same thing, because he is a God of creativity and beauty.

SAY: Let's go around and share what we each marked on our handouts.

Spend time letting the children share and affirming each child's particular interests and talents.

ASK: Who has given each of you those talents and interests? Where do they come from?

INVITE RESPONSES

SAY: I'd like each of you to pick one thing you circled and thank God for creating you with that specific talent or interest.

Go around the room and let each child fill in the following sentence: "Thank you, God, for my _____. " Feel free to model this for the children.

Let's see what the Bible says about how each one of us was created.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, drawing paper, crayons handouts of children

**READ GENESIS 1:27, 29-31
and PSALM 139:13-16.**

DISCUSS

SAY: These verses provide some important teachings about who created us and how. Let's first talk about the verses in Genesis. What do they say about God? (God created us, God provides for us, God loves us.)

ASK: Who is made in God's image? (Women, men, kids, everyone)

SAY: Each of us was made in God's image. That is pretty amazing. This is an important way that we are different from flowers and animals. Human beings are made in God's image, both boys and girls. You are made in God's image. And you are, and you are, and you are (point to each child). Each and every one of us is made in God's image. We are all so different, so unique, and yet we are each made in God's image. Every single human being on earth—that is nearly seven and a half billion people—is made in the image of God. This is a mystery, but somehow part of what it means to be a human being is that all of us together reflect who God is.

SELF PORTRAITS

Encourage children to draw a picture of themselves. Assure them that they are made by God and God loves them.

Show the handout with the children of different ethnic backgrounds, and ask the children to share their pictures of themselves.

EXPLAIN: It does not matter where you are from, what you like or don't like, whether you have a home or not, whether your skin is dark or light, whether you have lots of money or none at all—each of you is made in the image of God. In God's eyes, we are each loved and valued equally.

SAY: Let's look at the passage from Psalm 139. Can someone read this for us?

EXPLAIN: I love this phrase, "wonderfully made." Who has made you so wonderfully? God has! Nothing about you is a mistake. Not your hair color, your eye color, your skin color, your talents, or your interests. God has designed you exactly as he has intended for his purposes.

What would you like to say to God? Write it on the paper with your picture.

Application Activity

Let's see if we understand this idea of what it means to be made in God's image.

- 1. People have a special spiritual relationship with God.** What are some ways you can think of that we can relate or communicate with God? What are some ways God communicates and relates with us? (Prayer, God's word, Jesus, the Holy Spirit)
- 2. God creates and we can create.** What are some things God has created? What can we create?
- 3. God's creation is diverse.** That means that God made us all different on purpose and called it good. And just as God loves each of us who are different, we are supposed to love those who are different from us. How can we love those who are different from us?
- 4. We receive love from God and can give love to God and others.** What are some ways we know God loves us? What are some ways we love God and others?
- 5. We have free choice.** Because God loves us, we can choose to do what God would want us to do, or we can choose to disobey God.

ASK: What does it look like when we choose God's way? What does it look like when we choose not to follow God?

EXPLAIN: We are still made in God's image even when we choose not to follow God. But when we do this, we focus more on ourselves than on God or others. We separate ourselves from God. Because God loves us, God sent Jesus so we can be forgiven of our sin and learn how to love God and others.

Today we have learned that we are made in God's image and that God made each of us different. We also learned we are to love those who are different from us just as God loves all of us.

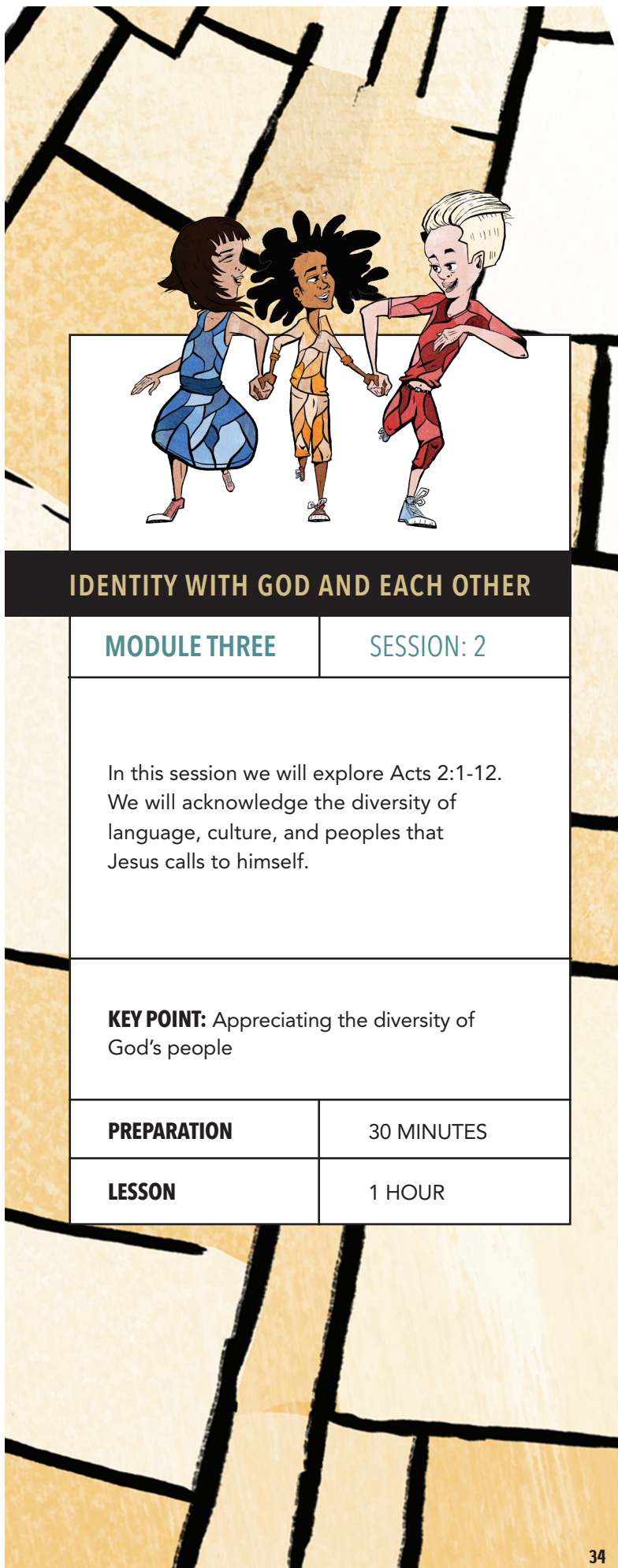
Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Mirror for each child (options)

Hand out mirrors to each child if you have them.

SAY: Notice the things that you can see, like your reflection, what you look like. Remember that God loves you, made you special and unique, wants to communicate with you, wants you to create, and wants you to love others just as God loves you!

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Thank you, God, for making each one of us different. Thank you for loving us and choosing to make us and all people throughout the world. Help us to love those who are different from us and to celebrate and rejoice that we are all different because this is the way you made us.**



IDENTITY WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

MODULE THREE

SESSION: 2

In this session we will explore Acts 2:1-12. We will acknowledge the diversity of language, culture, and peoples that Jesus calls to himself.

KEY POINT: Appreciating the diversity of God's people

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

2 Appreciating the Diversity of God's People

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- The book *Whoever You Are*, by Mem Fox
- Magazines
- Three poster boards
- Scissors and glue sticks
- A handout of children's faces from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. To download visit: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

PREPARATION

- Cut out the letters "ECC," one letter per poster-board size paper, posted up on the wall.
- Cut out pictures of children of different ethnicities.

Welcome

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard about their week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

It may be helpful for some children to have drawing or craft items available for them to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Crayons or markers, drawing paper, book *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to read a book about children from around the world. As we read notice how these children are similar to or different from you.

READ: *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

DISCUSS

What are some things you notice about the children in this book?

Give children blank sheets of paper for drawing or construction paper for creating.

ASK: Who do you belong to? What is your background? What are your favorite things to do? How are you the same or different from your friends?

Allow a few minutes for children to draw or create a story about themselves. Then take some time to share their drawings with the group.

EXPLAIN: Notice that each of us is different, but we also enjoy some things that are the same. One thing we share is the love of Jesus and Jesus's love for us.

We all need each other, and Jesus wants us all to love each other just as Jesus loves us. The same holds true for those outside the church. Jesus wants us to reach out and love those who are not yet a part of the church.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Crayons or markers, drawing paper, or playdough

ASK: What countries are there in the world? Ask children to name all the countries they can think of.

SAY: Does everyone look the same in each country? Does everyone speak the same language? Is everyone made in God's image?

Today we are going to read a passage of Scripture in which the disciples were trying to tell people from many countries about Jesus. Not all the people looked the same and not all spoke the same language. But God made them all and loved them all and wanted them to know Jesus.

READ ACTS 2:1-12.

The children will need help with the pronunciations of people groups. After reading the Scripture together, hand out paper or playdough, and ask children to draw or mold something that stands out to them in the story. Read it twice more while they work. Invite the children to share what they created.

DISCUSS

- Why do you think God made it possible for the disciples to speak in languages that everyone could understand?
- Do you think everyone is special to Jesus no matter what they look like or where they come from?
- Do you think God likes only one kind of music? Clothing? Food? Dance? How can differences be a celebration of God's creation?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Large cutouts of the letters "ECC,"
images of children from around the world

Today we are going to work together and showcase our God-given diversity in the Evangelical Covenant Church. You see these big letters, ECC, here on the board? Look how empty and boring these letters look. Let's help create some diversity!

FIRST LETS DRAW A PICTURE OF OURSELVES

EXPLAIN: On the table are copies of photographs of children from all over the world. Let's cut out pictures of these children and glue them on to the big letters so we can fill up the "ECC" with faces of children from every background and create a beautiful mosaic together. Let's see if we can fill up the whole space

OPTIONAL: Include the drawing of the children.

Help children as needed to complete this collage together. Once the letters are done, affix them to a larger piece of paper/butcher paper with a phrase such as "Made in God's Image, We Are One in the Body of Christ" below the big letters. Take a photo of the final product, and print copies to give to all the children the following session. Display in the church and encourage adult leaders to call attention to the children's work in a future service.

NOTE: You could take a picture of the children next to the collage rather than attach their drawings.

Closing Activity

SAY: I love the unity that we have created in this collage together. It's a wonderful picture of the diversity God has created in the church/world. We look like one unified, loving body of Christ!

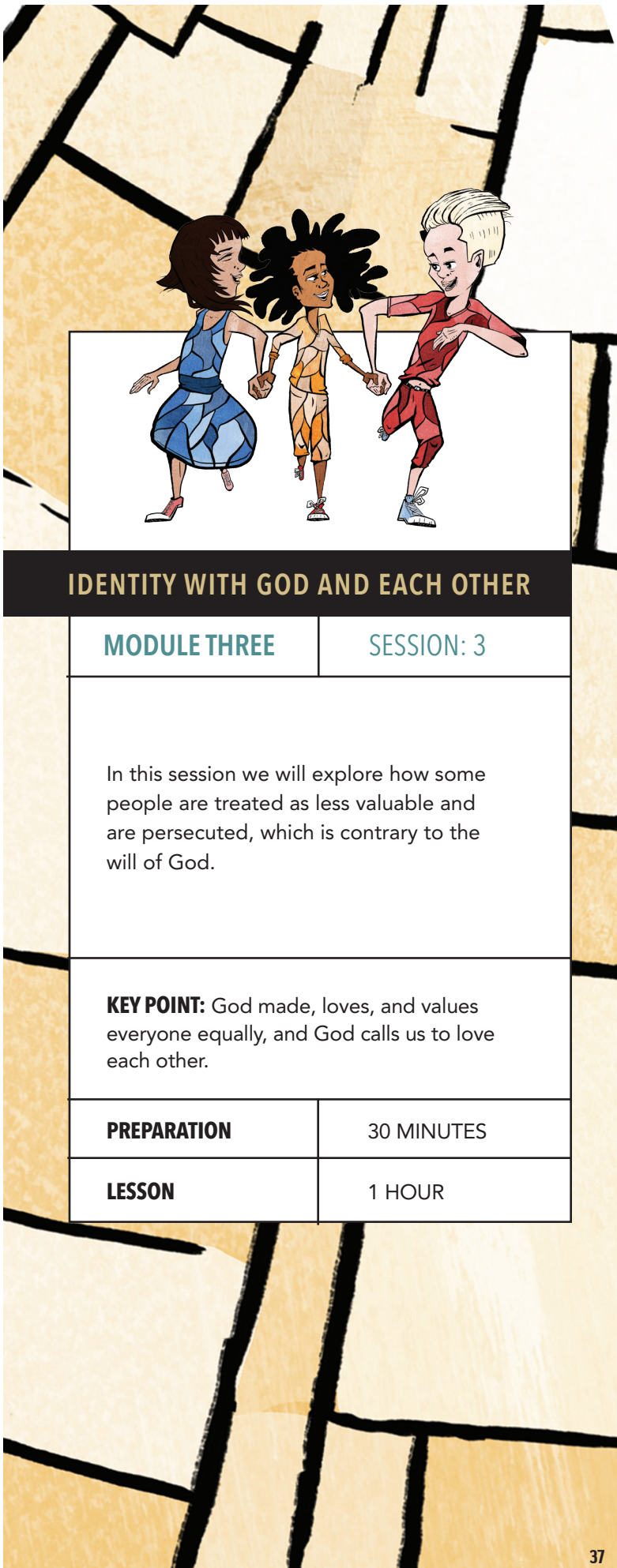
Sometimes as we move through life we may encounter friction between different groups in the body. (Gently move one of the big letters away from the others.) Maybe the hand doesn't like what the foot is doing or the other way around. Let us remember this picture we created as being one that celebrates all the uniquenesses of who God has created us to be while still being a united body. Even when challenging times come, even when you are in busy times with others in the body of Christ, remember that beauty comes from the diversity that God has created, and unity comes as we love one another across differences. The love of Christ is stronger than any other force that might seek to divide us and destroy our unity. (Bring the big letters back together in unity.)

Interactive Encounter (OPTIONAL)

Contact another local Covenant congregation in your area or the same time zone that will be having a church service and children's program at the same time as your own church. If possible, find another church with demographics that are different from your own. Use a laptop to set up a video conferencing call via Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, or similar technology. Plan for each group to teach a worship song to the other group. If you can do this in different languages, all the better!

CLOSE IN PRAYER (SAY THIS IN UNISON):

Jesus, help us to remember the beauty that comes from our differences and the unity that comes as we love one another because your love is stronger than any force that might seek to divide us and destroy our unity.



IDENTITY WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

MODULE THREE

SESSION: 3

In this session we will explore how some people are treated as less valuable and are persecuted, which is contrary to the will of God.

KEY POINT: God made, loves, and values everyone equally, and God calls us to love each other.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

3 Treating and Valuing Everyone Equally

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- A laptop or computer with Internet access, or download the following movie trailer before the session, and make sure it is able to play as well as be heard in the room you are using.
Wonder movie trailer:
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: YRXmuv7JP-A
youtube.com/watch?v=YRXmuv7JP-A
- Blank index cards and markers
- Craft sticks
- "All Around the World" song video link:
ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: ew9GjmGXD_I
youtube.com/watch?v=ew9GjmGXD_I
(Lyrics on last page of this session)
- Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at:
covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: A media player

EXPLAIN: Have any of you seen the movie *Wonder* or read the book? Ask for a show of hands, and invite a summary of the story if anyone would like to offer one. Then show the trailer.

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: YRXmuv7JP-A
youtube.com/watch?v=YRXmuv7JP-A

In this story, the main character, Auggie Pullman, has a rare medical condition that affects the development of the bones and tissues in his face. His parents have chosen to homeschool him through fourth grade, and he is very smart. But now his mom is unable to keep up with his learning, so Auggie is headed to school for the first time. What were some of the initial responses the kids had to Auggie when they first saw him?

INVITE RESPONSES

SAY: Many of the kids stared at him, or whispered to one another, right? Some even stepped away from him and put distance between themselves and him. How do you think that made him feel?

INVITE RESPONSES

SAY: Although all humans were created in God's image as we discussed in Session 1, sometimes we do not treat each other with kindness and justice. In fact, people can cause harm to others who are different from them for all kinds of reasons. It could be because their bodies look different—like Auggie's did. It could be because of where you live, or what color your hair or eyes or skin are, or what kind of things you like to eat, or where your parents grew up. There are all kinds of ways that people consider other people in the world as being less valuable. This makes God very sad, because he has made each one of us in his image and values all of us.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Index cards, markers, craft sticks (optional)

Let's see how Jesus tells us to treat people who are different from us.

During the time of Jesus, Jewish people thought Samaritans were inferior, or not equal, to them. They didn't talk to or even get close to a Samaritan.

But Jesus says we should love each other and see each other as neighbors, even when we are different. Let's see who does this in the story today.

READ LUKE 10:25-29.

EXPLAIN: Let's look for the two key things God wants us to do. (Love God with our whole heart, and love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves.)

EXPLAIN: Let's look at the rest of the story to see who our neighbor is.

READ AND ACT OUT LUKE 10:30-37.

(THE GOOD SAMARITAN)

Assign the following roles:

- Traveler
- Robbers
- Priest (pastor)
- Levite (religious leader)
- Samaritan
- Innkeeper

(As an alternative, you could ask children to draw each character, tape them to a craft stick and perform this as a stick puppet show.)

ASK:

- Who was not a neighbor? Why?
- Who was a neighbor? Why?

- Are there times when we leave someone out when we are playing at school? Why?
- Do you think Jesus loves all of us, no matter what we look like or where we are from?

WHO WAS THE NEIGHBOR IN THIS STORY?

What does it mean to be a neighbor according to Jesus?

Activity

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to read two true accounts of people who were treated contrary to the will of God. They were people with many gifts and dreams just like you, but they were treated unjustly.

Read through each story, and ask the children to respond to the questions after each one.

FIRST NATION PEOPLE

In 1838, President Martin Van Buren sent General Winfield Scott and 7,000 soldiers to remove Cherokee people from their native land so white settlers could live there instead. Scott and his troops used bayonets to force the Cherokee people into stockades while white people went into their homes and stole their belongings. Then the soldiers marched the Indians more than 1,200 miles to what was called "Indian territory." More than 5,000 of the Cherokee people died on the trip because of illness and lack of food.

The federal government promised that their new land would remain theirs forever, but soon U.S. armies and white settlers pushed westward, and the Cherokee people were forced out of their homes again. The land they were allocated was reduced again and again. In 1907, Oklahoma became a state and Indian territory was gone for good.

ASK:

- What was the situation?
- Who was treated poorly?
- How were they treated poorly?
- Do you think the Cherokee people were able to fully use their creativity and gifts?
- Who misses out when a person is not able to develop and share their giftedness?
- How do you think God feels when we treat his children this way?
- What are your thoughts or questions if you have first nation ancestors?
- What do you think God would want us to do?

SLAVERY IN THE U.S.

Slavery in America started in 1619, when a Dutch ship brought 20 African slaves to the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia. By 1850 more than 3 million black slaves were in the U.S. Many died on the ships as they sailed from Africa to America. Those who survived were sold. Families were split up. A wife would be sold to one buyer, a husband to another, and their children to yet another. They would never see each other again but would be forced to work their whole lives as slaves until they died. When black children were born, they could be taken from their families and sold to someone else. This went on for hundreds of years, even though 5,000 black soldiers helped the colonies to gain independence from the British during the Revolutionary War and 179,000 served in the Union army during the Civil War.

When slavery was officially abolished in 1865, black people were still treated unfairly in this country. They were not allowed to vote, sit in white restaurants, drink from white drinking fountains, or live in white neighborhoods.

ASK:

- What was the situation?

- Who was treated poorly?
- How were they treated poorly?
- Do you think they were able to fully use their creativity and gifts?
- Who misses out when a person is not able to develop and share their giftedness?
- How do you think God feels when we treat his children this way?
- What are your thoughts or questions if you had ancestors who were slaves?
- What do you think God would want us to do?

It is important that we learn from past wrongs we have committed as human beings towards one another. This is how we will become sensitive toward those who have faced past and present persecution and work together to correct the wrongs for a better future.

Application Activity

WHO IS YOUR "AUGGIE"?

Show the trailer for *Wonder* again.

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: YRXmuv7JP-A
youtube.com/watch?v=YRXmuv7JP-A

SAY: Imagine you were at the school that day, and you are seeing Auggie for the first time. How could you have acted differently from the kids at Auggie's school? How could you have shown that you know Auggie is made in God's image, just like you?

INVITE RESPONSES

SAY: Let's think about our own context. Think about your school, your activities, your neighborhood, your family. Is there anyone you can think of who might be treated differently by other people than they should be? Maybe, like Auggie, they are being ignored or teased, or people keep their distance for some reason. Take a moment to think about that person.

Give kids time to think about their selected person.

SAY: Take an index card and using the markers on the table, draw something to remind you of this person. You may choose to draw him or her, or maybe you will draw something that helps remind you of him or her. On the back of the card, write down one thing you can do to treat that person as God might want you to.

Give kids time to complete the activity. Invite them to share about who they chose and what they said they would do.

SAY: It is wonderful to hear the ways in which you are thinking about how you can treat one person in your life with respect and kindness. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus!

Bible Note

THE GOLDEN RULE

Write Luke 6:31 on the board: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

EXPLAIN: As we seek to be like Jesus in all we think, do, and say, this instruction from him that appears in the Gospel of Luke can be a lifelong guide to how we are to treat people. Let's read it together. (Recite verse).

ASK: What does this verse mean?
(Invite responses, or explain if it's unclear.)

EXPLAIN: Some people call this "the Golden Rule." But it's actually God's rule for how we are to treat other people who are all made in his image.

ASK: What are some ways you would like people to treat you? When someone hurts you does it help when they apologize? How might we apologize if our ancestors enslaved people or took away their land? Solicit and affirm responses. If time permits, have children write the verse on a piece of paper and decorate or draw a picture of a way we can be kind to others.

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: A media player, song sheets

"ALL AROUND THE WORLD"

Lyrics provided to print out beforehand:

To close out the session, summarize the key teaching points from Sessions 1 and 2, and remind the children of what they have experienced and learned:

1. We are each wonderfully made in God's image.
2. God loves diversity and has created a beautifully diverse world full of unique people who all have equal value in God's eyes.
3. Therefore, we are to treat one another equally and value every person the same.

Then, teach and sing the following song together, taken from the Weird Animals VBS. You can show the video first, then teach the lyrics, then end with the hand motions.

ENTER IN YOUTUBE SEARCH: ew9GjmGXD_I
[youtube.com/watch?v=ew9GjmGXD_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew9GjmGXD_I)

The video also features an array of diverse animals, so it provides another opportunity to emphasize that our God is creative and values diversity, both in animals and in people!

CLOSE IN PRAYER: God, help us to learn and appreciate the diversity of those around us. Help us to always value people as made in your image and to remember the ways people who are different can be treated poorly, even though they have wonderful gifts to share. Help us, Lord, to be a neighbor like the good Samaritan. Amen.

All Around the World GROUP PUBLISHING

All around the world something's going on
about Jesus' love, it's amazing.
He loves us so so much
with a love so strong
no one else could love us more.
It's amazing.

We're all a little different, in many different ways,
no matter where we come from, God loves us the same.
None of us are perfect, so he forgives our sin,
Jesus is our Savior, his love will never end.

All around the world something's going on
about Jesus' love, it's amazing.
He loves us so so much
with a love so strong
no one else could love us more.
It's amazing.

We're all a little different, in many different ways,
no matter where we come from, God loves us the same.
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Jesus is our Savior, his love will never end.

Jesus' love is one of a kind, he loves us so much
we're always on his mind.
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No one else could love us more, it's amazing
No one else could love us more, it's amazing.



JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

MODULE FOUR

SESSION 1

In Module One we saw that God created the world and called it good. But we know that sin has broken that good creation, resulting in selfishness, greed, fear, and behavior that hurts others. Our relationships are broken, but sometimes we don't recognize the hurt that is all around us.

We celebrate what is good together, encouraging and supporting one another along the journey. And we are called to join Jesus in fixing what is broken together.

KEY POINT: Recognizing our brokenness

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

Brokenness

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- A ball(s) of yarn
- An inflated balloon, Nerf ball, or beach ball
- Drawing or craft materials (optional)

PREPARATION

Research and arrange optional joint learning experience or testimony for review activity.

Together we will explore:

- What is broken?
- Why is it broken?
- What am I in this brokenness?
- How can we be a part of fixing brokenness together?
- What does reconciliation and restoration mean?

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been difficult this week, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: A ball(s) of yarn and an inflated balloon, Nerf ball, or beach ball

Appreciation Circle—Invite children to sit in a circle. (*You may need more than one circle if you have a large group.*)

Join them in the circle, holding a ball of yarn.

EXPLAIN: Each of us will have a chance to pass this ball of yarn to another person in the circle. But first, we will say something we appreciate about the person we are giving the yarn to. For example, “a good friend,” “kind,” “helper,” etc.

DIRECTIONS

1. Make a loop with the end of the yarn and hold the loop.
2. Give a compliment to a student across the circle and toss the ball of yarn to them, letting it unwind as it goes. Don’t worry if it drops on the floor—just pick it up and continue.
3. Ask that student to loop the yarn around a finger, then pay a compliment to someone else in the circle and toss the ball to them.
4. Each person in turn should say something they appreciate about another person in the circle, loop the yarn around a finger, and then toss it to that person. As the ball unwinds, it creates a web of interconnection.
5. Continue until everyone has gotten the ball of yarn.
6. Now play with the web a bit. Have people move it up and down. You could even drop an inflated balloon, Nerf ball, or beach ball onto the web and bounce it around. Experiment with what happens if one person pulls strongly on their loop of yarn.
7. Next invite someone to let go of the yarn. Watch what happens to the web.
8. Then ask another student across the circle to let go of the yarn.
9. One by one, invite students to let go of their yarn.

The web will gradually lose its shape. When the web is lying on the floor, ask everyone to sit down and discuss, using the questions below.

EXPLAIN: Notice how we were all interconnected by the yarn. We couldn’t have made this pattern alone. If someone had been left out, the pattern would not have been complete. We need each other. We also need to care for one another.

DISCUSS

- What were we able to do together?
- What's hard about being connected as one group?
- What is good about all being a part of the group?
- How would you have felt being left out?
- What happened to the web when the first person let go of the yarn? How does that illustrate what happens when people are excluded from a community?
- As more people dropped the yarn, what happened to the web? How did this affect its usefulness (or playfulness)?

EXPLAIN: When we were no longer connected, the pattern was broken. If someone is left out of a group, that part is hurting and other parts will hurt with it, because we are no longer a complete group.

Bible Time

READ MARK 10:13-16, NIV.

Read the passage through one time out loud.

Now invite four children to each read one verse. As they read, ask the rest of the group to act out this scene. You may choose to assign roles: the disciples, people bringing children to Jesus, the little children, and Jesus.

Invite the children to make the following expressions on their faces:

- The expressions of the parents when they first brought their children to Jesus.
- The expression of Jesus when he saw the children.
- The expression of the children when Jesus placed his hands on them.
- The expression of the disciples when they saw the parents bringing their children to Jesus.
- The expression of Jesus when the disciples told the parents and children to stay away.
- The expression of the parents and the children when the disciples told them to stay away.
- The expression of the parents and children when Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."

ASK:

- Who was trying to break the relationship between the children and Jesus?
- Was that what Jesus wanted?
- Do you think Jesus wants us to keep others out of our group, or invite them in? Why?

Application Activity

Present the following scenarios to the group.

Ask students to identify the brokenness and act out a solution.

(Small classes can do this all together as one group. Larger classes may break into smaller groups.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- You have picked teams for soccer, but some kids on the team never get the ball.
- You see someone who is sad because of something that happened at home.
- At recess some of your friends are calling other kids stupid and telling them they can't play on the equipment.
- Some kids in your class have just moved here from another country, and you want to invite them to play but your friends don't want to play with them.
- Some girls want to play football at recess, but the boys say they can't play.
- Some of your friends are making fun of kids who are a different ethnicity than they are.

ASK:

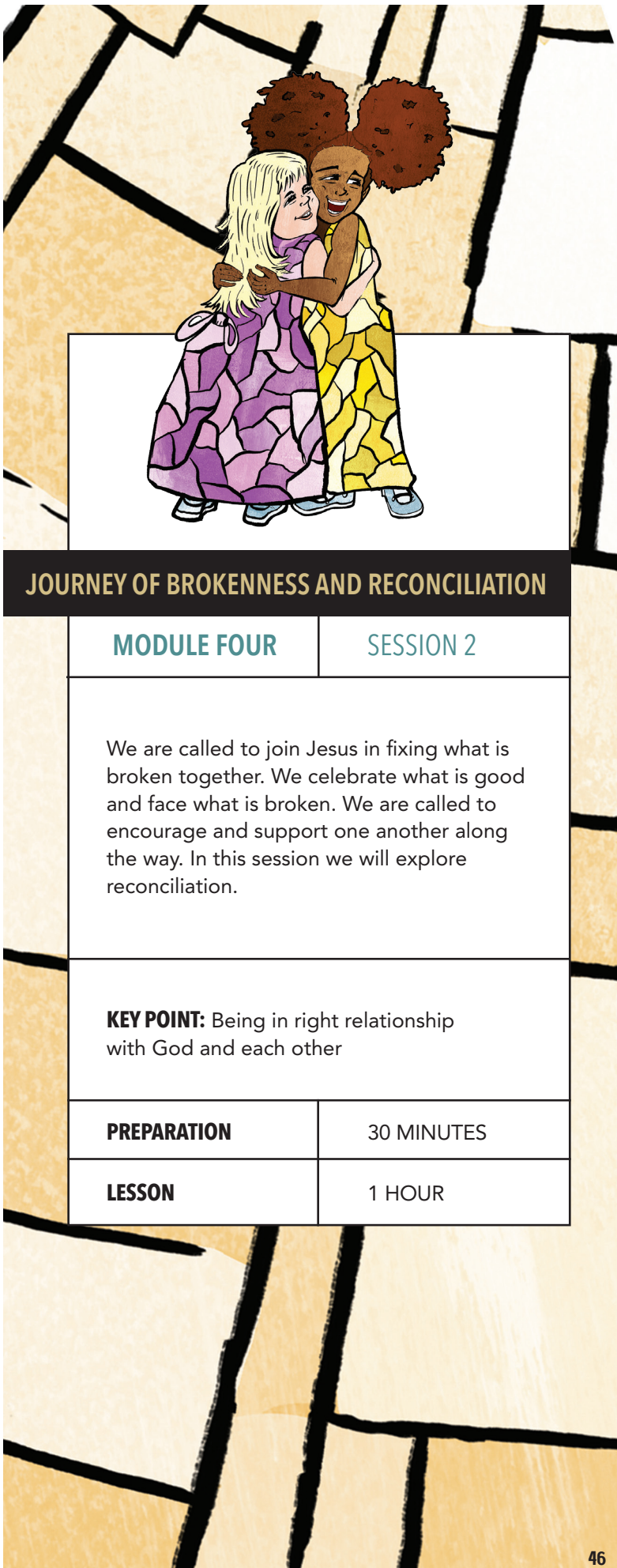
- How are we the same?
- How are we different?
- Is it hard to include everyone? Why?
(Acknowledge that it takes time to understand our differences.)
- What could it cost us?
- Why do you think Jesus wants us to do this hard work?

Closing Activity

Depending on the relationships that have formed throughout previous modules, your church may choose to engage your community in one of these ways:

- Participate in a joint learning experience in your community (i.e., find a way to engage with marginalized people in your neighborhood).
- Listen to a testimony from a community member who can speak about their experience with/as a (refugee, Japanese internment, immigration, undocumented immigrant, adult person with disabilities) and how they were able to create change, empower others, or experience support.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Jesus, thank you for coming to heal our broken relationships with you and with each other. We confess that we don't always notice what is broken or that we are the cause of the damage. Help us to notice. Help us to be strong enough to speak up and include people who are left out. Help us to be strong enough to reach out even when we are the ones being left out. Thank you, Jesus, that we can count on you loving us and being with us in the midst of brokenness. Amen.**



JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

MODULE FOUR

SESSION 2

We are called to join Jesus in fixing what is broken together. We celebrate what is good and face what is broken. We are called to encourage and support one another along the way. In this session we will explore reconciliation.

KEY POINT: Being in right relationship with God and each other

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

2

Right Relationships

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Paper, markers, pencils or pens, and paper plates (three for each child)
- Enough blocks for each child to build a tower
- White board, cardstock, or large piece of paper

PREPARATION

Write the words "Brokenness" and "Reconcile" on the board or on card stock or large paper.

Read through the Bible passages.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been difficult, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Blocks

Depending on the size of your group, pass out blocks to each child or to small groups of children and ask them to build a tower.

After the towers are built, invite the children step away from their towers. Next tell the children to slowly knock down the other towers.

ASK: How did it feel when your creation was destroyed?

Next ask the children to work together to rebuild the tower(s).

DISCUSS

- How did you work together to build the tower?
- Do you think God wants us to build together or destroy? Why?

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to talk about two important ideas: brokenness and reconciliation. What broke today while we were building?

Sometimes when that happens it can also make us mad and our friendship with others becomes broken. When we worked together to rebuild the towers, that is what reconciliation looks like.

Reconciliation is about being made right with God and being in right relationship with the people around us. It involves how we feel, think, and act toward others and what kind of relationships we have.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Three paper plates for each child

Today we will think about how our faith is a journey with Jesus that includes brokenness and reconciliation. We are not alone. We are on a journey with God, and with each other.

READ JONAH 3:2-5, 10; 4:1-4, NIV.

EXPLAIN: This is a story about the Ninevites, who did not follow God, and Jonah, who thought he was better than the Ninevites. Today we will explore how God worked to reconcile them, or make their relationships right again.

Give each child three paper plates.

Read the story two more times, and encourage students to draw facial expressions of how the Ninevites might have felt, how Jonah felt, and how God might have felt on the paper plates.

DISCUSS

Invite the children to share the expressions they drew and explain their drawing. There are no right or wrong answers. Below are some possible reasons for each expression. Be sure to offer positive reinforcement to each child for sharing.

NINEVITES: The expressions could be sad or afraid because they were worried their city would be destroyed. Maybe they were happy because God spared the city.

JONAH: Perhaps he was angry or afraid because he didn't want God to love the Ninevites.

GOD: Some children might draw an angry expression because the Ninevites and Jonah were not following

God and loving God as God loved them. Some children may draw a smiling God because God loves all people and seeks to help them to turn from evil to good and to experience God's love even as they love each other.

ASK: Did Jonah like the Ninevites? (*No, his relationship with them was broken.*)

How did Jonah respond when God asked Jonah to help make the relationship right? (He got angry and ran away. Jonah didn't want to be God's messenger, and then he became angry that the Ninevites responded to God's love.)

Jonah was an angry messenger who didn't want to make the relationship right with the Ninevites. Let's look deeper into God's word to discover what kind of messengers God wants us to be.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20, NIV.

Invite a child to read this passage.

DISCUSS

ASK: What does it mean to be a "new creation"? (The old creation was living life for myself, only caring about what benefited me.)

Invite students to act out some ways we are selfish.

EXPLAIN: That is our broken self. In verse 18, Paul says that God "brought us back to himself through Christ's death on the cross." What do you think that means? God offers us forgiveness and hope. God says, "I love you. I forgive you when you make mistakes." God also says, "Jesus brought people back to me, so you can go do the same."

Just as we were reconciled to God through Jesus, we get to share that same message with others.

Living as a new creation means living like Jesus. Jesus lived for others, cared for others, helped and healed others. Jesus worshiped God in the temple,

out in nature, and with his family and friends. Jesus fed people and prayed for them. He cared about people's bodies and relationships, and he healed people and helped them think about generosity, kindness, and hospitality.

Review Activity

Invite children to act out some ways we can live like Jesus, such as caring, forgiving, and righting a wrong.

Application Activity

Our world experiences much brokenness. Some things are not right about how we live. Invite students to share some of the ways they see brokenness in their communities (homelessness, hard things at schools, bullying, people not getting jobs, jail/mass incarceration, unfair laws, hunger/lack of access to good food, not everyone gets the medicine and medical help they need, kids can't live with their parents—foster care, sickness, etc.).

We know that God is at work to fix what is broken, and God uses the Church to help bring love and healing to the world. This is God's work of reconciliation. God is making all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In the midst of the world's brokenness, we are called children of God (1 John 3:16). Jesus invites us to walk in faith and live out our faith by loving others. Let us consider some ways we can partner with God to restore what is broken.

Invite children to share a Christ-centered response to the scenarios below:

- You got into a fight with your friend because you hurt each other's feelings yesterday about your art projects. What can you do?
- You heard some kids at the lunch table making fun of the lunch your friend brought to school. What can you do?

- Your neighborhood has a mini mart on the corner and fast food restaurants, but the nearest grocery store with fresh fruits and veggies is several miles away. Some neighbors want to plant a vegetable garden, but some other neighbors don't like the idea. What can you do?
- The weather is getting colder, and you get out your winter clothing. You notice that some people who are homeless in your neighborhood are wet and cold. What can you do?
- Your parents tell you that your church is hosting a family who are refugees. What can you do?

Closing Activity

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What are some examples of when our relationship with God or someone else is broken?
- Hold up one of the plates to show how you feel when this happens.
- What could you do this week to reconcile or make things right with God and others?
- Hold up one of the plates to show how you feel when this happens.

EXPLAIN: We are ambassadors who represent Christ. When we see brokenness, or things that are not right in the world, we can name it. But what do we do next?

Sometimes it is right to lament, or talk to God about the thing that makes us sad. King David did that in the psalms a lot. Lament psalms were written to cry out to God about things that are not right, or unjust, but they always ended with a praise for who God is. Psalms and songs of lament help us move from darkness to light or from sadness to joy.

For more on lament psalms, see the Christian Resource Institute at

crivoice.org/psalmgenre.html#Lament

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Thank you, God, for creating a diverse world. We are thankful that each of us is unique. When we see one group of people hurt others, we feel sad and angry. Forgive us, God, when we do the same thing. Help us to mend the brokenness among people. When we see something that is broken and unfair, give us the strength to speak up and take action to help restore the world as you made it to be. Amen.



JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

MODULE FOUR

SESSION 3

In this session, we ask God to help us live into what we have learned. We will explore how following Jesus helps us to notice brokenness and how Jesus helps us to live in right relationship with others.

KEY POINT: Following Jesus is a journey we do together.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

3 Judging Others

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- The book *The Harmony Tree*, by Randy Woodley
- Drawing materials (optional)
- Craft materials (optional)

PREPARATION

Read the book *The Harmony Tree*, by Randy Woodley

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to. *For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.*

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Drawing materials

Invite students to draw a picture following these instructions:

- Think about a place to draw—your school, neighborhood, or some place in your community.
- Draw a picture of yourself doing something for others in that place.
- Add some friends or family to the drawing.

ASK:

- What did you draw? Why did you draw that?
- How is Jesus present with you in this picture? What do you think Jesus would want you to do in this place?

Bible Time

READ LUKE 6:37

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What are some ways we “judge” others?
- Why is it not okay to judge others who don’t look like us or act like us?
- Have you been judged by others?
- What does it mean to forgive?
- Have you forgiven or been forgiven?

ACT OUT: Ways we judge and ways we forgive.

READ LUKE 6:38A

“Give and it will be given to you.”

DISCUSS

- What do you think God wants us to give to others?
- Even though we may not always get back exactly what we give, should we still give? Why?

ACT OUT OR DRAW: Ways we give and can be friends with others who are different from us.

READ LUKE 6:41-42

- ASK: Have you ever gotten something in your eye? What does it feel like? Does it hurt?
- EXPLAIN: This seems to be a story about things that get stuck in our eyes but it’s actually a story about judging others.

None of us is perfect. Jesus is telling a story about how we often focus, and judge others for their faults without noticing the faults in our own lives. Sometimes the faults we see in others are not faults at all. The person is just different from us.

If someone looks different from us, dresses differently or acts differently, does that make it wrong?

Jesus says we should first think about and change our own faults and then lovingly reach out to others.

- REMEMBER: We are all made in the image of God and we are all one family.

DISCUSS

- What are some faults we have that could hurt others?
- Does Jesus forgive us for our faults?
- Does Jesus want to keep doing the same things or does Jesus want to love and care for others?
- What are some ways we could do this?

Prayer Practice

EXPLAIN: We are going to take two minutes to silently pray. This will be special time with you and God. God is here and God loves you. When we get quiet, it can be easier for us to focus on God and feel God's love.

Two minutes may seem like a long time. So first you will need to find a place to get comfortable. It may be at the table or it may be on the floor, or near the wall.

ONCE CHILDREN ARE IN PLACE EXPLAIN:

- Ask God to be with you.
- Quietly share with God, whatever is on your mind.
- Ask God to help keep from you from judging others who are different from you.
- Ask God to help you think of some ways you can lovingly share Jesus's love with everyone.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: *The Harmony Tree*, by Randy Woodley

READ: *The Harmony Tree*

As Grandmother Oak shares her stories and how she came to have such deep roots, she finds hope and healing. The other trees, seeing the value of Grandmother Oak's history with the land, begin to find strength too.

Encourage children to imagine themselves in this story. Who am I in this story? Am I the Grandmother Oak? Am I one of the new trees or houses? What can I learn from the place I find myself in the story? Who is it that gives us hope and healing?

Review Activity

ASK: Are Christians always perfect? What are some things we do that hurt others?

SOME IDEAS: We have harmful ideas/thoughts about others, don't treat people fairly, choose not to respond kindly to some people or people groups, don't forgive others, leave people out, listen to some people's ideas but not everyone's.

ASK: What are some things Jesus wants us to do?

SOME IDEAS: Worship God, tithe, welcome our homeless neighbors, different ethnic groups, or people with different abilities, support kids in schools or families who are struggling, invite those who are left out, fight injustice in our city, fight against inequity for our kids/families.

Make a list of ways you and your church community can practice reconciliation. Plan to share with your church leadership.

Select an area of ministry that your group will continue to engage.

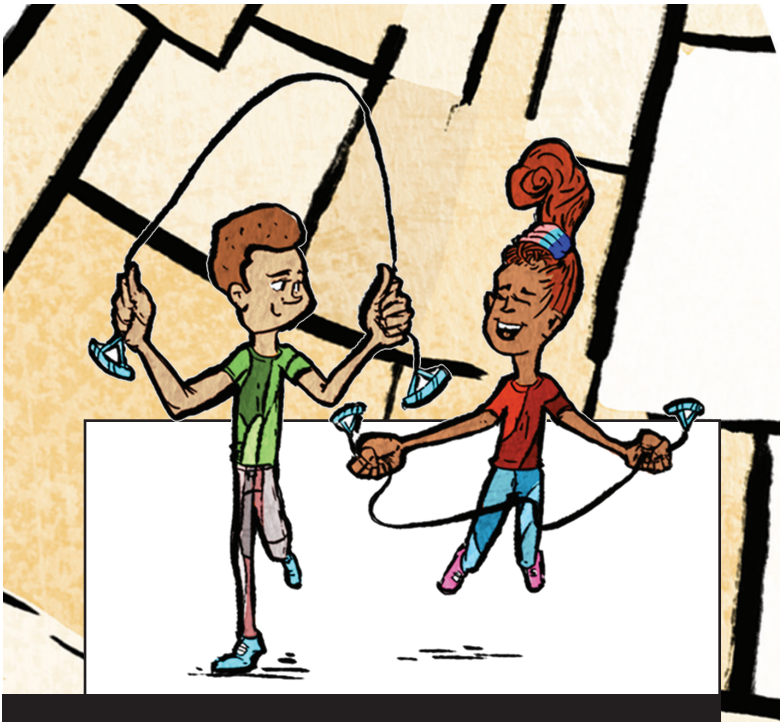
SOME IDEAS:

- Care for a local refugee community
- Address systemic problems with homelessness in your community
- Participate in justice marches or demonstrations
- Make a commitment to regular conversations around faith and race
- Learn about ways to support children and families in local foster/adoptive communities
- Start a library of diverse books and resources that you can share with your community
- Consider how well your church welcomes kids with disabilities and what you can do to care well or establish relationships

Closing Activity

Give children an opportunity to share their prayers with God as you complete this module. It could be prayers of thanks, asking God for help, prayers for others, prayers for the church. You may want to give them a few minutes to reflect and write some prayers before you begin.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Thank you God for sending your son Jesus to earth to teach us how to live. Jesus, thank you for both modeling and telling stories that teach us how to help others in need and how to live in ways that show love and justice for others. Please help us find ways to serve others who are in need and to teach and show our church, family, and friends how to live a better life together.



JOINING WITH GOD TO DISRUPT INJUSTICE

MODULE FIVE

SESSION 1

In this session we will learn how God worked to disrupt injustice through the prophets. God appointed men and women to use their voices to remind people of God's goodness when they forgot or got distracted by other things. Prophets also spoke up for people who were poor, overlooked, mistreated, and oppressed.

KEY POINT: God selects prophets to help us see and respond to injustice.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice Through the Prophets

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Small paper cups
- Pitcher of water
- Paper plates
- Paper
- Computer, tablet, or smart TV with internet access
- Playdough
- Markers, coloring supplies
- Prophets 1 video https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=edcquu_btn0&fbclid=iwar3sjdapzxvmlgdtzowkozwkoydpd_wkyai-y_fk0iiltv7595e9hc zqoiu0&app=desktop
- Prophets 2 video <https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=sumaxbjp2kg>
- *God's Story: Deborah* video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GakKDNn2_YE
- Justice video <https://thebibleproject.Com/explore/justice/>
- *A Picture Book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* video <https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=ggkysuigwdy>

PREPARATION

Read through the Bible passages for this session. Watch the videos and prepare to share them with students.

FOR LEADERS

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

In the Old Testament, a prophet's primary purpose was to serve as God's representative by communicating God's word to people. God-inspired prophets did not declare their personal opinions or speak on their own authority. They delivered the message God entrusted to them.

Second Peter 1:20-21 says it this way: "No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding of things. Prophecy never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So, although prophets are human, prophecy comes from God" (NlrV).

Several other passages also illustrate this point:

- **Moses is instructed by God,** "Now go. I will help you speak. I will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:12).
- **God promised Moses,** "I will raise up for [my people] a prophet like you....I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him to say" (Deuteronomy 18:18).
- **God declared to Jeremiah,** "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9).
- **Ezekiel is sent by God,** who tells him, "You must give them my message" (Ezekiel 2:7).

It is important to note that prophetic ministry was not restricted to men in the Old Testament. Scripture calls Moses's sister Miriam a "prophet" (Exodus 15:20), as well as Deborah (Judges 4:4) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14-20). Scripture also refers to a group of prophets ministering in Israel (1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Kings 18:4) who were "the

company of the prophets" (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7; 4:38).

In the eighth century B.C., the focus of the prophets' message turned more to the people at large. It would be a mistake to think of prophets in the Old Testament as only predicting the future. Their primary role was to show the people the holiness of God and the covenant obligations—they denounced injustice, systemic sin, idolatry, and empty ritualism, and they called Israel to repentance, faithfulness, and right(eous) relationships with God, neighbor, and creation.

In the period leading up to Israel's exile in the sixth century B.C., the prophets often delivered messages denouncing rampant institutional injustice, social injustice, and the oppression of the poor. After the exile, the prophets expanded their attention to more specifically include the covenantal promises of God and the spiritual blessings that come with trusting God and obeying his will.

Watch this introductory video on the prophets.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edcqUu_BtN0&fbclid=IwAR3SJdapzXvmLgDTzoWkoZwkOypd_wK-yAi-Y_fK0iLtV7595E9HCZqOiU0&app=desktop

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper plates, markers

Hand each child two paper plates. Ask them to write the word "just" on one plate and "unjust" on the other.

EXPLAIN: We will name several kinds of behavior and identify whether each one is just, meaning right, or unjust, meaning wrong.

Read each behavior, and after each one, ask students to hold up either the "just" or "unjust" plate. Then invite them to explain why they answered that way.

BEHAVIORS

- Making fun of someone because of how they look
- Laughing at someone because they are struggling with their schoolwork
- Inviting someone who has been left out of a game to join you
- Saying mean things to make someone else feel bad
- Boys making fun of girls
- Girls making fun of boys
- Sitting with someone in the lunchroom who is all alone
- Inviting someone into a game so they can play, even if it means the teams will be uneven
- Sharing when you have more than enough with someone who has little

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Dixie cups, pitcher of water

EXPLAIN: Today we will learn how God worked through prophets in Scripture to interrupt injustice, sin, and evil; bringing healing, repentance, and restoring kindness and love among people.

Let's begin by reading 2 Kings 4:1-7. This is a story of the prophet Elisha.

READ 2 KINGS 4:1-7.

Pause after reading verse 5 and fill several Dixie cups with water from a container until all the water is gone. Then finish the story.

DISCUSS

- What was the widow worried about?
Not being able to pay her bills and having her sons taken as slaves.
- Who helped her? *Elisha.*
- How did Elisha show love and kindness?
- What would have happened if Elisha had done nothing?

EXPLAIN: God's purpose for us is to show other people his love, and to invite them into the family of God. When we forget our purpose, we mistreat our neighbors and fall into sin that leads to selfishness which then results in some having more than they need and others not having enough.

God sent prophets to deliver his messages, to remind us to love others, because the Bible tells us that our "love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35, NLT). As we love people, we are also called to invite them into the family of God. God calls prophets to lead people in repenting of their sin and turning back to God. Prophets remind us that when injustice happens, sometimes only a few people are guilty of actually hurting others, but as God's children, we are all responsible for noticing it, doing something about it, and working to end it.

WATCH this video on the Old Testament prophets.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumaXbjP2Kg>

God's Story: Deborah

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GakKDNn2_YE

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What did you learn about the prophets?
- What did you learn about God?
- Why do you think that people chose not to listen to the prophets? Why do we not listen and do what God tells us sometimes?

EXPLAIN: Even though God sent the prophets to remind us how selfish and uncaring we can be, we still sin. We sin whenever we don't pay attention to where our money, clothes, toys, and food come from or whether people are mistreated in the production of those things.

God calls us to love our neighbors, which we do by using our voices and influence to make sure that they are treated fairly and speaking out when we see that they are being mistreated.

The prophets show us how to do this well. Watch this justice video. <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/justice/>

WATCH *A Picture Book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGKYSUigWDY>

ASK:

- After learning about the prophets in the Bible, why do you think people call Dr. King a great prophet of our time?
- What unfair or unjust things did you see in this video?
- How do you think Jesus feels about these things?

- What was Dr. King's message to God's people?
- What might Dr. King's message have been to the church today?

Application Activity

Supplies: Coloring supplies, playdough

DISCUSS

ASK: What are some things that are not fair today?

OPTION 1: Draw a picture or mold something out of playdough to show ways God wants us to love others to eliminate unfairness.

Invite children to share their creations with the group.

OPTION 2: Encourage children to act out ways we can love others and eliminate unfairness.

Closing Activity

ASK:

- How do we know that God wants people to be treated fairly, or justly?
- Why do you think disrupting injustice is important to God?
- How can we keep our eyes open to see injustice this week?
- What might we look for?
- How will we find the courage to speak-up and reach out with God's love?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **God, we are grateful you are a just God who wants the best for all people. Help us to see injustice around us this week, and give us the courage to respond. And help us to see the just things around us and give encouragement and praise. Amen.**



JOINING WITH GOD TO DISRUPT INJUSTICE

MODULE FIVE

SESSION 2

In this session, we will explore how God works through Jesus to interrupt injustice, sin, and, evil, bringing healing, repentance, and reconciliation through Christ to us and our world.

KEY POINT: Jesus invites us to receive God's loving gift of forgiveness and to join with God to share God's love with others.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

2 God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice Through Jesus

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Paper plates
- Paper
- Markers, pens
- Playdough
- Post-it notes
- Bibles
- Son of Man video <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/son-of-man/>
- Kids talking to a survivor of Japanese-American internment video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e1s2kwSPwU
- *How God Works to Interrupt Injustice* video <https://vimeo.com/382628714>

PREPARATION

Read through this week's Bible passages. View the videos and prepare to share them with students.

FOR LEADERS

One of the most important things the prophets do is remind us of God's covenant love. A covenant is a special promise. In Scripture, we see God making five great covenants with his people. The prophets remind God's people of those covenants.

1. **God makes a covenant with Noah** (Genesis 6:18; 8:20–9:17; Isaiah 54:9). God promises never to flood the earth again.
2. **God makes a covenant with Abraham** (Genesis 12:1–3). God promises Abraham that his family will grow into a great nation and that his name will be celebrated. God also promises that his family will be used to bless people throughout the world.
3. **God makes a covenant with Israel through Moses** (Exodus 19:3–6, 10–12; cf. Deuteronomy 4:6–8). God promises to free Israel from slavery, and Israel promises not to enslave or mistreat other people. By treating others right(eous)ly, Israel represents God's love in the world. Sometimes they accurately reflect God's love, and other times they do not. When they fail to live into their created purpose, they become self-centered, sinful, and mistreat their neighbors, particularly the poor. Consequently, God sends Israel into exile, because they have forgotten who they are—a set apart people with a mission to reflect God's love throughout the world—and whose they are as God's chosen people.
4. **God makes a covenant with David** (2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Chronicles 17; 2 Chronicles 7:18; 13:5; Psalm 89:3; Jeremiah 33:21). David intends to build a house of worship, a temple for God, and God promises to build a "house," or a dynasty, for David (2 Samuel 7:1–11). In this covenant we see a shift occur from Israel as the chief representative of God's restorative plan, to the promise of Jesus. In this new covenant with David, we learn that David's family line will produce the chief prophet, but that prophet

will not be David (2 Samuel 7:12–17; cf. Genesis 17:6, 16; 35:11; 49:10; see also Genesis 38; Ruth 4:18–22). The chief prophet is Jesus, who will come out of David's family tree, and he will live and fulfill all of God's promises. God's plans for David and Israel are interconnected (cf. 2 Samuel 7:8–11, 23–26).

5. **God sends his son Jesus in human form as the new and final covenant** (Jeremiah 31:31). In Isaiah we learn that this everlasting covenant of peace is linked to Jesus's mission to liberate the oppressed, expand God's kingdom to include the Gentiles, and reconcile the world to God's self—back to its original intent, before sin distorted everything (Isaiah 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; 61:8). Jesus's love, justice, and righteousness will be for all people, with a particular emphasis on those who suffer most because of the oppression, exploitation, and injustice that sin systemically breeds (Isaiah 56:3; Luke 4:18–19).

In order to faithfully fulfill this redemptive covenant where we are restored to right relationship with God, through Jesus's love, sacrifice, resurrection, and model for us regarding living out the will of God, we are called to "hold fast to" the covenant and follow the sacrificial example of love Jesus set for us (Isaiah 56:5–6; cf. 56:1–2). While each covenant is important because they build on one another, this final covenant is the most important because the New Testament declares that all God's covenant promises are realized in and through the covenant of Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 1:54–55, 69–75; 2 Corinthians 1:20).

WATCH *Son of Man* video.

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/son-of-man/>

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Post-it notes, pens, and a space for posting the Post-it notes

EXPLAIN: Last time we saw how God sent prophets to help overcome or disrupt injustice. We talked about how some actions are just and other are unjust. We also considered some ways we could fulfill God's hope and God's plan for a more just world.

This week we will start by making a "Naughty and Nice" list.

On the naughty list will be unkind things people do that hurt others. On the nice list will be kind things we do that help others.

Divide the children into pairs or groups. Ask each group to think of every kind thing they can do to help others. Next ask each group to think of unkind things we do that hurt others.

Each person in each group will take turns running and posting each idea on the wall. The notes do not have to be in order or separated by groups. The object is to get as many ideas on the board as you can. For smaller groups consider writing all the ideas on a whiteboard or poster instead of using Post-it notes.

Tell the groups they have four minutes to complete this exercise. (The time can be adjusted down or

up as needed depending on the size of your group.)

DEBRIEF: Read through each idea and provide space for any comments.

EXPLAIN: The world in which we live is not perfect. None of us is perfect. Hopefully we all do things that help others, but all of us also mess up.

After the prophets, God sent Jesus just as God promised. And like the prophets before him, Jesus came to show us how to love people and disrupt injustice.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Bibles

READ JOHN 3:16 and LUKE 4:16-21.

ASK: Why did Jesus come?

Jesus died for us to restore our relationship with God and to defeat the powers and authorities that create systems of sin and injustice in the world.

Jesus shows us how to truly love one another, and how we become good neighbors to the poor and mistreated, to people who are oppressed. Jesus also gives us the gift of his Spirit, so we can continue to love as he did and be used by God to continue what he started.

When Jesus says he came to "proclaim good news to the poor" (John 4:18), he is referring to people who are poor in spirit *and* people who are physically poor and suffer from systemic sin.

When Jesus says, God sent him to "proclaim freedom for the prisoners" (v. 18), he is talking about all who are captive to sin, in need of liberation that only comes through Jesus, *and* those who are unjustly imprisoned (i.e., through human trafficking, false incarcerations).

Jesus also restores our sight. Sin keeps us from seeing all people as our neighbors and blinds us to

injustice around us. Jesus teaches us how to truly see again, revealing to us that everyone is equally made in the image of God and showing us that we all belong to each other. We are a part of one big kingdom family.

ASK: How did Jesus live? Who did he focus on?

READ John 13:34-35.

ASK: What does Jesus call us to do?

READ John 14:16-17.

ASK: Who has Jesus given us to help us notice injustice and act upon it?

READ 1 John 3:16-18.

ASK: How do we know what love is and how do we show our love?

Jesus calls us to something new. He calls us to live with God and for God, by sharing the good news that God loves everyone, forgives our sin, and invites us to follow Jesus by sacrificially loving others as he did. One key way to do this is by noticing injustice, praying about how to respond, and working to end it.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Video of kids talking to a survivor of Japanese-American internment.

The Overcoming Injustice Game

Take the Post-it notes with the unkind ideas and divide them up among small groups.

Ask the groups to determine how to turn something mean or unjust into something just through kind, Christlike actions.

Ask the groups to silently act out those kind actions (charades) and then debrief.

Either ask each group to explain their charade or ask other groups to share what they saw.

Give everyone a few minutes to practice and then play the game.

DISCUSS

ASK: How does it feel to mess up? How hard was it to find a solution? Why do you think we sometimes choose to mess up and do the mean thing instead of the loving thing?

Everyone messes up. None of us is perfect. God knows we can't be perfect.

EXPLAIN: As we learned in Module 2, session 3, from the story of Moses, when a leader messes up and fails to confess, repent, and turn back to God, their sin can affect many people. We can mess up as individuals, but we also mess up as a country when we allow sin to keep us from seeing everyone as our neighbors and all people as created equally in the image of God.

In the U.S. we have messed up like this many times: oppressing Native Americans, enslaving black people, the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese internment camps, and today separating Latino families at the border, many of whom are coming here for safety.

WATCH this video of kids talking to a survivor of Japanese-American internment. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e1s2kwSPwU

When we make mistakes, God calls us to repent and to do everything that we can to fix our error. We are also called to learn from our errors so we don't repeat them. When our country makes mistakes, Scripture invites us to pray about how we can partner with Jesus to pursue justice. As we listen for God's response, we respond to injustice with love, making sure that all our neighbors are being treated fairly.

God's grace is a gift we receive, even when we do not deserve it. Because of sin, we (individually and as a nation) do not always do what we should. But because of grace, God commits to keep God's promises, even though we break our promise/our part of the covenant agreement to love others. God asks us not to be perfect but to be obedient, faithful (open to be led by the Holy Spirit), and willing to be

used by God. When we are obedient, we speak out when we see injustice happening, we stand up for our sisters and brothers who are being hurt by sin (oppression), and we sacrificially love our neighbors.

That's why God sent his Son Jesus—to show us how to love one another and to forgive us for all the times we mess up. Jesus knows what is in our hearts, and we bring him joy when we try our best to help others, love the overlooked, and pursue justice. We will not always get it right, but when our hearts are in the right place, God is pleased! And, as we grow in our relationship with God, we spend more time with God, and we will learn how to love our neighbors the way Jesus first loved us.

Jesus showed us how to follow the will of God and to love one another (1 John 3:16).

Activity

EXPLAIN: When Jesus came, he performed miracles, but he also experienced all the things we experience, including the injustices people experience today.

Today we are going to remember what Jesus experienced.

OPTION 1: Act out each of the bullet points below.

OPTION 2: Have children select one or two examples to draw or use playdough to illustrate and share.

- Jesus raised a girl from the dead.
- Jesus healed a blind man.
- Jesus saved a woman from being stoned.
- Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish.
- Jesus raised a young man from the dead.
- Jesus calmed the wind and the waves that could have injured the people out at sea.

- Jesus healed ten people with leprosy.
- Jesus healed a slave.
- Jesus healed a paralyzed man.
- Jesus talked with a woman no one else would talk to.
- Jesus was upset when his disciples tried to keep children away from him.
- Jesus rose from the dead.

ASK: What do all these things tell you about Jesus?

Jesus chose not to show his power all the time because he did not want people to believe in him only because of the miracles he performed. He wanted them to see his love for them, and he stood up for those who were suffering and acknowledged they were as loved and gifted as people in power.

DISCUSS

ASK: Have you ever thought of Jesus like this?

NOTE: Take time to process this with children. What questions do they have? How does this make them feel? What does it say about Jesus?

- Jesus knows what it's like to be a child.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be homeless.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be born to poor parents.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be an immigrant. His family was forced to leave Israel because Jesus would have been killed by a king who didn't love God or use his power for good.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be from a town that other people criticized.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be laughed at.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be spit on.

- Jesus knows what it's like to be made fun of.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be hit in the face.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be beaten up.
- Jesus knows what it's like to lose a friend, and he cried like you and I do.
- Jesus knows what it's like to have people lie about and falsely accuse him.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be unjustly punished for something that you didn't do.
- Jesus knows what it's like to be constantly challenged by people in authority.

Jesus wants us to remember these things as much as we remember his miracles, because they remind us that Jesus also calls us to disrupt injustice. Jesus loves all his children and does not want them to suffer. He invites us to join with him to end that suffering whenever we encounter it.

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Pen and paper

EXPLAIN: Jesus's love, justice, and righteousness are for all people, yet Jesus shows special care for those who are hurting because of systems that create sin and injustice. The Bible highlights people who are poor, sick, homeless, and don't have families or food to eat (Isaiah 56:3; Luke 4:18-19).

As we give God thanks for the love we are shown and the gift of Jesus, we seek to follow Jesus's example. We don't have to be perfect, but we ask God to help us be like Jesus and to love others the way Jesus did.

Here is a video of how one girl responded to disrupting injustice. <https://vimeo.com/382628714>

ASK: What might we do this week to live the way Jesus did and to follow his example to disrupt injustice?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to show us how to faithfully reveal God to the world. Thank you for loving us when we mess up and for forgiving our sin. Help us to live like you. Help us to love not just with words or speech but with actions and in truth. Amen.**



JOINING WITH GOD TO DISRUPT INJUSTICE

MODULE FIVE

SESSION 3

In this session, we see how God gives us the gift of his Spirit, who empowers us to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world today. The Bible calls us “co-laborers with Christ,” which means we are people who join Jesus in making broken things right in our world and calling people to do justice by living in right relationship with God, our neighbor, and creation.

KEY POINT: The Spirit invites us to disrupt injustice through the ministry of reconciliation. In so doing, we follow Jesus’s command to “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35, NIV).

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session

3

God's Plan to Disrupt Injustice through the Holy Spirit

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Markers/coloring materials/pencils
- Drawing paper
- Playdough
- Bibles
- Computer, tablet, or smart TV with internet connection
- 4 note cards
- Paper hearts
- Holy Spirit video <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holy-spirit/>
- Agape Love video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A>

PREPARATION

Read through the Bible passages for this session. View videos and prepare the technology needed to share them with students. Cut out heart shapes from drawing paper large enough to write one sentence on them. Write the following phrases on the four note cards: "near or far," "same or different races or ethnicity," "from the same or different countries and continents, as immigrants and refugees," and "know or didn't know."

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

While the voice of the Lord was rarely heard during what we call the "intertestamental" period, the time between the events of the Old and New Testaments, prophetic tradition in Scripture cannot be reduced to the Old Testament. The two most prominent prophetic voices in the New Testament are John the Baptist (Matthew 11:9; Luke 1:76) and Jesus. John was called to pave the way for Jesus. He called people to repent of their sins and to return to God (Matthew 3:1-12).

On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that God would pour out his Spirit "on all people" (Acts 2:17). Quoting the prophet Joel, Peter explained that as a result, "Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

Prophetic ministry in the early church grew as a result of this. A band of prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. Prophets were active in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1), Tyre (Acts 21:4), Caesarea, in the churches at Rome (Romans 12:6), Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 14:1-40), Ephesus (Ephesians 2:20; 4:11; Acts 19:1-7; 1 Timothy 1:18), and Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22).

The Spirit of God is alive and at work through the Church. Jesus gave the gift of his Spirit to empower the Church to serve as his hands and feet in the

world after he returned to the right hand of the father. The Holy Spirit directs and catalyzes us as co-laborers with Jesus in the work of reconciling all things—which includes people, systems, and structures that are broken and distorted by sin—back to God. The Spirit draws us into solidarity with our neighbors—particularly the least of these who suffer the most because of sin—and helps us to discern how we faithfully serve as ambassadors of reconciliation in our divided world.

Watch this video on the Holy Spirit,
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holy-spirit>

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Drawing or craft materials (optional)

Creating a welcoming space is critical for children to know they are valued.

Spend the first few minutes talking with each child about what they enjoy, what has been hard, how they are feeling, what they are looking forward to.

For some children, it may be helpful to use drawing or craft materials to process their thoughts.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper and pencils

Write down or draw something unkind that someone did or said to you; something that hurt your feelings, made you feel unloved, or all alone. Don't include the name(s) of the persons, just write or draw what happened.

(If a story involves abuse, check in with that child apart from the other children. In this case you do want names. Then take appropriate action in accordance with your church's safety plan.)

ASK:

- How did you feel?
- What do you wish a friend would have done for you, when you were feeling like this?

EXPLAIN: Today we're going to discover a gift Jesus gives us. A gift that assures us God is always present, even when bad things happen, and a gift that can move us and others to reach out and help someone in need. Let's explore our Bibles to see what that gift is.

Bible Time

SUPPLIES: Bibles, paper, markers, or playdough

READ JOHN 14:15-21.

EXPLAIN: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God present with us.

ASK:

- Do you have questions about the Holy Spirit?
- Why do you think Jesus asks God the Father to send us the Holy Spirit?

EXPLAIN:

- The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us so that we never have to be alone, or without God's loving presence (John 14:16-17, 26).
- The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God (Acts 5:32).
- God also gives the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks (Luke 11:13).
- The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and a deeper understanding of who God is (Ephesians 1:17).
- The Holy Spirit connects us to God and to each other as sisters and brothers in Christ (1 John 4:13).

ASK:

- Do you ever feel the Holy Spirit in you?
- What does it feel like?

EXPLAIN:

- The Holy Spirit helps us to love others.
- In the Bible it says the Holy Spirit comes on us like a "dove" or like "fire" or like "wind." Let's draw these things. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is described like this?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper and markers, Agape video

We talked earlier about a time we were hurt by someone else. Now think about a time you hurt someone else. Share what happened.

We all hurt people at some point. God knows we are not perfect. When we know we have hurt someone, we need to apologize to them, and pray to God, asking for forgiveness. Sometimes we even hurt people without knowing it. But, when we learn we have hurt someone, apologizing is ALWAYS the first step, and then we need to ask that person how we can make things better, listen to their response, and do what we can to make things right again (reconciliation).

Now when you think about what happened, write down or draw one thing you could have done differently in that situation. What did you learn?

Let's pray silently and ask God for forgiveness. Assure the children that God has forgiven them and will help us try and do the right thing in the future.

READ ACTS 2:42-47.

ASK:

- What happened within the community where the people received the Holy Spirit?
- They ate, prayed, and fellowshiped together.
- They sold their excess, so that no one went without what they needed; no need was unmet.

- They gathered together every day to learn more about God, to praise God, and deepen their friendships with one another.
- The love they had for one another made other people want to know more about God, and become part of this special community (the Church). So, these believers invited them in, told them about God, and invited them to join the family of God.

DISCUSS

In this story, we heard about followers of Jesus selling their possessions so that they could “give to anyone who had need.” What needs do people have today, that we (the Church) could sell things to help meet?

Make a list of the things students say. Then ask if they would consider selling, or forgo buying something, to help meet some of the listed needs their neighbors have.

Take the list they create and make a plan to do a churchwide fundraiser to help the needs of neighbors: Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, or Lent may all be good opportunities to bless neighbors.

Some fundraising examples:

- Raise funds that will help students in the Stateville Restorative Arts program at North Park Theological Seminary be able to stay in contact with their family and support systems as they seek to transform their lives.
- Raise money to aid families separated at the border.
- Raise money to support families impacted by the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.
- Raise funds for a particular need in your community.

WATCH AND DISCUSS

Jesus gave us the gift of his Spirit to help us be his hands and feet in the world after he returned to heaven.

Watch this video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A>

The Holy Spirit teaches us how to be partners, or co-laborers, with Jesus in the work of making broken things right. The Bible says that we partner with Jesus to fix brokenness caused by sin and to reconcile all things—which includes people, systems, and structures that are messed up by sin—back to God. The Spirit also brings us into a diverse (race, gender, class, ethnicity, abled/disabled) community of loving sisters and brothers who stand up for one another and protect each other (solidarity) as neighbors—particularly the least of these who suffer the most because of sin.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Pre-cut hearts, markers, notecards with four statements

ASK: Is love something we feel or something we do?

Assure children that both answers are true. Love is something we feel and something we do.

EXPLAIN: Jesus tells us to love God and love our neighbor.

Name some of your neighbors and where they live.

- How do they show loving kindness to you?
(Write the answers on the hearts.)
- How do you show loving kindness to them?
(Write the answers on the hearts.)

EXPLAIN: Usually we think of a neighbor as someone close to us. But when Jesus talks about a neighbor, Jesus means "everyone." Jesus loves everyone and wants us to extend loving kindness to everyone.

- Hold up the notecards one at a time and ask: (Both answers are always correct)
- Is a neighbor "Near or Far?"
- Is a neighbor "Someone with the same race or ethnicity or with a different race or ethnicity?"
- Is a neighbor "From the same country or another country?"
- Is a neighbor "Someone you know or don't know?"

ASK: How can we be a neighbor to someone who is:

- Being made fun of?
- Someone who is far away?
- Someone who needs food?
- Someone who needs a friend?

EXPLAIN: When the Bible speaks of our neighbors, it doesn't just mean the people who live next door to us or on the same street as we do.

We may hear some people call neighbors our enemies, but Jesus teaches us to "love our enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44, NIV). Regardless of where they live, or how they look, we are supposed to love everyone equally; just like we want other people to love us (Matthew 7:12). The Holy Spirit helps us to understand (discern) how we love people like Jesus loves us, in a divided world that needs a lot more love (ambassadors of reconciliation).

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Pen and paper

Ask students to make a list of people who we sometimes forget are our neighbors.

Ask them to identify people who are not treated and loved well.

Have students write a prayer to God, where they ask the Holy Spirit to show them how they, and their church family, can begin disrupting the injustices that harm the neighbors they identified as being overlooked, mistreated, and unloved.

Students could also write a letter of encouragement to one of the individuals who is a part of the group that they are going to raise funds to support. The letter could contain:

- The student's favorite Bible verse
- A reminder that God loves them, and has a plan for their lives
- A reminder that God is present with them, even during this hard time
- A reminder that believers, are praying for them, their family, and for their situation to change for the better.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Thank you God for creating a diverse world. We are thankful that each of us is both unique and equal, but sad that everyone is not treated equally. We ask you to help us live into what we have learned today and to notice brokenness in our world. Please help us to live in right relationship with others. Amen.**



**ONE INTERCONNECTED BODY,
MANY INVALUABLE PARTS**

MODULE SIX

SESSION 1

In this session we will discuss how God has given everyone unique gifts, no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they come from, in order to fulfill God's mission.

KEY POINT: Though some gifts may be more noticeable, that does not make any particular gift better than another. God created each person equally, and we all receive gifts from God.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

1

Every Person Is Vital

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- Drawing paper
- Crayons/markers
- Two small buckets or large bowls for each team of five or more children
- Five tennis balls (or similar item) for each team
- One paper plate for each team

PREPARATION

Write prompting question on the board: "What is your favorite team sport or activity?" Mark Bible passages.

KEY WORDS

- **Vital:** Absolutely necessary or important; essential.
- **Solidarity:** Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

Welcome

As students come into the classroom, allow them to get settled. Ask about their week. What was great? What was hard? When did they feel closest to God or furthest away from God?

Give students time to answer the prompting question, "What is your favorite team sport or activity?" Ask them to explain their answers.

Opening Activity

SUPPLIES: Two small buckets or large bowls for each team of five or more children, five tennis balls (or similar item) for each team, one paper plate for each team

NO "I" IN TEAM

EXPLAIN: We are going to play a game called Bucketball Relay. This is not a competition. It's a game to see how well you can work together.

Create teams of five people each. Assign a role to each player: retriever, handler, over-the-head, bouncer, spinner. (Some positions can be duplicated if you have a large group. For example, you may choose to add extra overhead or bouncer positions, or if you have fewer than five children they can double up positions.)

Ask the students to line up. Place a bucket or bowl at the end of each line. Space out the bouncers and spinners approximately six feet apart from the players on either side of them. Place a paper plate between the retriever and the handler.

PLAYING THE GAME

1. Place all the balls in the bucket at the front of the line.
2. The retriever removes one ball at a time from the bucket (or bowl) and places it on the paper plate held by the handler.
3. The handler passes the plate to the over-the-head player, who picks up the ball from the plate. If the ball rolls off before the over-the-head player removes it, the retriever must take it back to the bucket, then remove it, and place it on the plate again.
4. The over-the-head player tosses the ball backward over their head to the next person in line, who is positioned approximately six feet away. If the ball is dropped, it must be returned to the retriever who puts it in the bucket and starts over.
5. The bouncer receives the toss from the over-the-head player and bounces it to the spinner, who is approximately six feet away.
6. The spinner receives the bounced ball and spins around three times before putting the ball in the bucket at the end of the line. If the ball is dropped either from the bounce or fails to get into the bucket, the ball must be sent back to the retriever to start over.

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What was the importance or function of each player's role on the team?
- What was hard? What was easy?
- How were teammates encouraged/discouraged?
- What would happen if any of the positions were missing from the team? How would it affect the ability of the team to complete the relay?

EXPLAIN: Sometimes when we play a game, the person who scores gets the most attention. But a person can't score by themselves. There is no "I" in team, because you need everybody to win.

Today we are going to read about a church that needed a reminder about what it means to work together. In this passage, the apostle Paul reminds them that everybody in the church has different gifts, and each person is needed to accomplish the mission.

Bible Time

The city of Corinth was a major trade hub during the time of this letter. The population was made up of freed slaves, retired military, and people who would have been considered among the elite upper-class at the time. The people who made up the church in Corinth were not necessarily used to power, authority, or some of the responsibilities that came along with leadership in the early church.

The result was that people began to assign levels of importance to spiritual gifts, even though that was not God's intention. God bestowed gifts on all people to help spread the gospel, and every gift and every person is equally important in God's eyes. So it did not please God that people who were preachers and teachers began to act as if they were better than people who had different gifts. Paul, an apostle who had helped start the church, heard about what was happening. He wrote the letter we call 1 Corinthians in response to what was happening. Paul was an important person to the church in Corinth. So, if they would listen to anybody, it would be him. It was very important for Paul to correct this behavior early. The mission of God in the world was too vital for it to be stopped by people being unfair.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-26.

ASK: What are some gifts the Holy Spirit gives, and what do you think they are used for? What are some gifts God has blessed you with? (Or, what skills do you have that could be used to help others experience the love of Jesus?)

EXPLAIN: None of us is exactly the same. God has given every person gifts and talents, and every person is equally important to God. But sometimes we are tempted to seek a place of superiority over others, believing we are better.

As followers of Christ, we seek to become examples of Jesus in the world around us. That means not acting as though we are better than others and speaking up when we see people being put down or treated unfairly. As this passage says, we cannot say "we have no need of you." Every person is equally needed no matter what their gifts or abilities are or what they look like.

ASK:

- Have you ever experienced being treated unfairly?
- Do you think God likes it when we act like we are better than others? Why not?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Drawing paper, crayons or markers

Draw or act out some ways we can help when we see someone be treating unfairly.

ASK:

- Why might it be hard to speak up or befriend someone who is being treated unjustly?
- How can we gain the strength to speak up and to act?
- How can we live into our commitment to treat others equally?

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Buckets/bowls, balls, paper plates

Bucketball Relay Revisited

EXPLAIN: Now we are going to play the game two more times.

The first time we will play in silence.

Now play it one last time and tell the children they can speak, encourage and help one another.

Closing Activity

DISCUSS

- What did you experience by playing the game these two different ways?
- Where you able to encourage each other even in the silence? How?
- How did you feel when you could speak up and encourage one another?
- When we see others who are left out or treated unfairly, do you think God wants us to remain silent or to speak up? Why?
- How could we help, or what could we say when we see the injustice of not treating others equally?

Write responses on the board.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Lord, thank you for giving me a gift to use in your kingdom. Thank you for all the gifts you give to everyone. Help me to see the giftedness in other people and to recognize how important they are to you and to your church. Lord, give me the courage to speak up when people are being treated unfairly. Amen.



ONE INTERCONNECTED BODY,
MANY INVALUABLE PARTS

MODULE SIX

SESSION 2

In this session we will discuss how important each person is to the mission of Jesus in the world.

KEY POINT: Sometimes we may feel unimportant because we aren't the biggest, best, or most visible. However, just as with our physical bodies, if one part of the body of Christ is harmed or doesn't function, the entire body suffers.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

2

Every Part
Is Vital

SUPPLIES

- White board
- Dry erase marker
- Playdough
- Puzzle (Don't choose a puzzle with too many pieces. You'll want students to finish within 10 minutes.)
- Open floor space
- Plastic cups
- Water
- Paper towels
- Blue painter's tape
- Paper
- Marbles

PREPARATION

- Write the key words for the lesson on the board or somewhere visible that can be seen easily by the students.
- Read through this week's Bible passages.

KEY WORDS

- Vital: absolutely necessary or important; essential.
- Solidarity: unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Puzzle

Greet the students and encourage them to build a puzzle(s) together. (Be sure to remove a few pieces so the puzzle(s) cannot be completed.)

DISCUSS

ASK:

- What did you enjoy about building the puzzle?
- How did you feel about doing this as a group?
- Were you satisfied with the finished product? Why or why not?

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to explore the different members of the church body. Just as with the puzzles we built, we will discover how vital each part of the body is and how disappointing it can be when some pieces are missing.

Application Activity

NO OPPOSABLE THUMB

SUPPLIES: Plastic cups, blue painter's tape, water

1. Pair up the students, and ask one person in each pair to wrap tape around their partner's hand so the thumb is taped to the hand and can't be used. Now ask the student whose thumb is taped to try to pick up a plastic cup and drink from it. (Make sure to have paper towels available.)
2. Now switch places, so the other student's thumb is taped down. Ask them to try to drink from the plastic cup.

DISCUSS

Why was it difficult to accomplish this task? Talk about how important the thumb is to the function of a hand, even though it is the smallest part.

EXPLAIN: Just as every body part is important, so every person is equally important to the body of Christ and to God. Even though some parts are smaller or unnoticed, if one piece is missing, the body cannot function the way it was meant to.

Bible Time

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13 AND 20-21.

EXPLAIN: The body is the church together. We are one family.

DISCUSS

- Each one of us is invited to be a part of the body, (the church). Do you think each part is equally important to the mission of Jesus Christ in the world?
- Is it okay to say to someone "I have no need of you" because they are different from you? Why?

READ MATTHEW 28:19 AND JOHN 13:34.

ASK: What does this passage say we are to do as the family or body of Christ?

EXPLAIN: This is our mission.

ASK:

- Have you ever been treated differently because you look or act unlike the people around you?
- Have you ever seen someone else being treated harshly or unfairly? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
- How do you think it makes other people feel to be treated differently or unfairly?
- What ways can you stand together with people who are experiencing unfair treatment?

Closing Activity

SUPPLIES: Paper, marbles, playdough

EXPLAIN: Use the playdough to show ways we live our mission to love others and share Jesus's love and story with others.

SETUP: Fold a piece of paper lengthwise two times to make a trough for each person in your group.

This is not a race or a competition, even though large groups may need to be broken down into smaller groups.

HOW TO PLAY: Ask students to line up holding their paper troughs in front of them. Drop a marble into the first trough. The first student tips their trough to roll the marble into the next student's trough and so on. The object is to move the marble through the troughs to get it to the other side of the room. Once a student has passed the marble off, they move to the end of the line to catch the marble again. So the team keeps moving while passing the marble from trough to trough until the marble crosses the finish line.

DISCUSS

ASK: What was hard about this game? What was easy? How did you encourage one another? Why couldn't you do this by yourself? How does this game illustrate the importance of each person?

EXPLAIN: In this activity we see how important every part of the body is. We all bring different gifts to the body, and if any part is broken or missing.

Jesus's plan is that all people should equally be a part of the body/church. This is not just true of individuals but among people groups as well. We are all equally loved by God no matter our race, our culture, our gender, our ability, the language we speak, or the country we are from.

God loves us all and wants us to love each other as well.

ASK: What are some things Jesus is asking us to do? What are some things we might say or do when we see someone put down, left out, or treated unfairly? (*You can do this in pairs or small groups and then share.*)

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank you for making us a part of your body. We are so grateful that each one of us is important to you. Help us to be aware when other parts of the body are hurting, and give us the courage to help. Help us become like you, Jesus, and speak up for others who are treated differently. Help us to stand up to those who treat people unfairly. And help us to invite, encourage, and support each other so we can work together to share your love. Amen



ONE INTERCONNECTED BODY,
MANY INVALUABLE PARTS

MODULE SIX

SESSION 3

In this session we will discuss how important it is to see every human being as a brother and sister in Christ and for that understanding to shape how we care for people, especially people who are different from us.

KEY POINT: In sessions 1 and 2, we explored how we are one body, each created differently but each equally important. In this session we will encourage students to take an active part in caring for people who are different.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Session #

3

The Loving Neighbor

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- White board
- Dry erase markers
- Open floor space (for reenactment)
- Clothespins and material to turn clothespins into people
- Paper
- Markers/Crayons
- Pipe cleaners

PREPARATION

Write the key words for the lesson on the board or somewhere visible that can be seen easily by the students. Write the welcome prompt on the board: "Name or draw a time when you needed help." Mark Bible passages.

KEY WORDS

- **Samaritan:** (1) The Samaritans were a group of people who lived in Samaria, an area north of Jerusalem. They were half-Jews and half-Gentiles. When Assyria captured the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C., some Israelites were taken in captivity while others were left behind. The ones left behind intermarried with the Assyrians. Thus, these people were neither fully Hebrews nor fully Gentiles. The Samaritans had their own unique copy of the first five books of Scripture as well as their own unique system of worship. At the time of Jesus, the Jews and the Samaritans did not deal with one another. Jesus, however, ministered to the people of Samaria, preaching the good news to them. (2) A charitable or helpful person (with reference to Luke 10:33).
- **Solidarity:** Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.
- **Parable:** A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson as told by Jesus in the Gospels.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Paper, markers/crayons

Greet the students, and allow them to get settled. Make sure each student has paper and something with which to write or draw. Invite students to answer the prompt, "Name or draw a time when you needed help." Share drawings or answers and follow up by asking, "Did you get the help you needed?" Allow students to talk about how it felt to either receive the help they needed, or not to receive it.

PRAYER

Give students a quiet moment to focus on God. Then offer this prayer: Lord, help us to feel your presence and to learn from your word today.

Bible Time

READ LUKE 10:25-37.

Application Activity

SUPPLIES: Optional clothes pin puppets

ACT IT OUT

Ask for several volunteers. You will need a narrator, an expert in the law, Jesus, a priest, a Levite, a Samaritan, two robbers, someone to play the victim, and an innkeeper. (Children can play more than one role, or if you have a lot of students, consider adding a few extra robbers, priests, or Levites. You may also choose to make clothespin puppets and act out the story that way.)

ASK: What did you see in this story? What stood out to you the most?

ACT OUT THE STORY A SECOND TIME.

ASK:

- Did you see anything new when the story was acted out again?
- Why do you think the priest and the Levite didn't stop to help?
- What would it feel like to be the person on the road that no one would help?
- Have you or someone you know ever needed help and no one responded? How did this make you feel?
- How do you think God wants us to respond when someone is in need?

EXPLAIN:

- Jesus often told parables or stories to teach difficult truths.
- We may be prone to think our neighbors are just the people close to us, but Jesus teaches that everyone is our neighbor.

ASK: What does it mean to you that everyone is your neighbor?

- Sometimes it is easy to be neighborly, loving, and kind to people who look and act like us. Yet this story illustrates God's call to love and care for people who are different from us.
- Sometimes people suffer from unfair treatment.

ASK: How do you think God feels about this? Why?

- As people who love Jesus, we are called to consider every person as equal and important.
- The Samaritan was a neighbor in this passage. Instead of ignoring the Jewish man on the road, he put their differences aside to offer help. In other words, he stood in solidarity with the man who was hurt.

DISCUSS

EXPLAIN: Let's talk about what it means to stand in solidarity with someone. This means we are being united together or mutually supporting each other.

ASK: How did the Samaritan stand in solidarity with, or support, the man who was beaten?

REFLECT

SUPPLIES: Pipe cleaners

What are some ways you can stand in solidarity with people who need help?

Ask students to think about this question by taking a few minutes to draw or fashion pipe cleaners of situations where someone was in need and then discuss solutions.

Closing Activity

- Ask students to reflect on how they can personally and collectively be good neighbors.
- Charades: Invite students to silently act out ways of standing in solidarity with others. Ask the rest of the class to guess what their classmates are acting out.

DISCUSS

Encourage each student to choose a personal action they can take to help someone this week. Maybe it's standing up to a bully on someone else's behalf, watching out for someone in need, or going for help. (Explain that going for help is also a way of standing in solidarity.)

Discuss ways we can respond on our own and when it's best to go for help.

Discuss how we can follow up when we see someone who is being put down or hurt because they are different.

As a class, or maybe as an entire children's ministry, pick a project or activity that can help the students fully live into the idea of being a loving neighbor.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: **Lord Jesus, thank you for making us a part of your body. We are so thankful that we are important to you. Help us to be aware when others are hurting, and give us the courage to help. Show us how to be neighbors to everyone you have created. Please give us the courage to speak up when we see wrong and to help those in need. Help us to become like Christ, standing up for those who are treated differently in our world and challenging the unfair treatment of those who treat people unfairly. Amen**

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