

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, unfairness, 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: God purposefully created a diverse world and called it good.

PREPARATION

30 MINUTES

LESSON

1 HOUR

Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links

Session #

Brokenness

KEY WORDS

BROKENNESS: Separation, something that is no longer whole or complete, something divided and different from what God wants.

RECONCILIATION: Working to bring back or restore relationships that are broken.

RESTORATION: Making something right. Returning something to the way God intends it to be.

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

- Ball(s) of yarn
- Inflated balloon, Nerf ball, or beach ball
- Drawing or craft materials (optional)
- The book *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales

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.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

PRAY: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

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, NIRV.

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. Remind students that brokenness means

separation, something that is no longer whole or complete, something divided and different from what God wants.

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

RESPONDING AND RESTORING BROKENNESS

How can we restore broken relationships?

- You have picked teams for soccer, but some kids on the team never get the ball.
- At recess some of your friends are calling other kids stupid and telling them they can't play on the equipment.
- Some girls want to play football at recess, but the boys say they can't play.
- You see someone who is sad because of something that happened at home.
- 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 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?
- What is broken and needs restoring in these situations?
- 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?

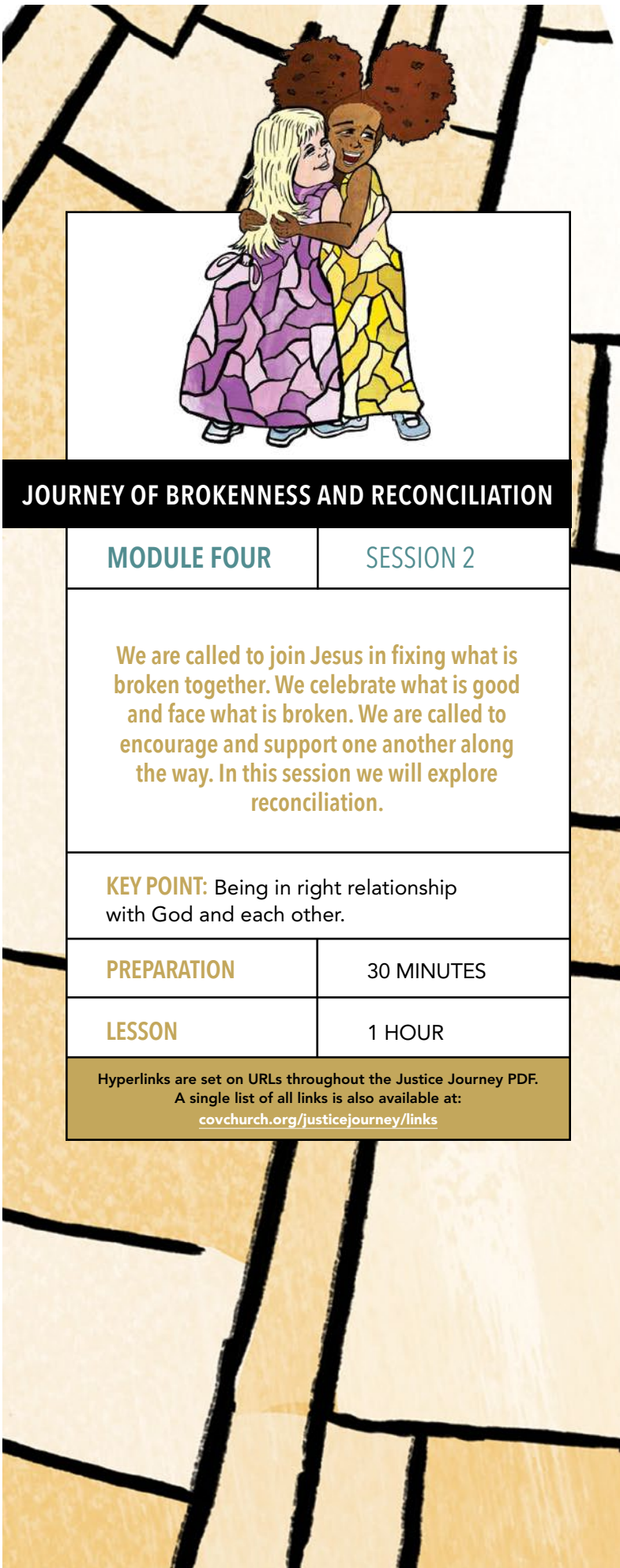
Closing Activity

OPTION 1:

Read the book *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales.

ASK:

- What are your thoughts about this story?
- What would it be like to learn a new language?
- Can everyone have dreams?
- What can we learn from each other?
- What could we lose if we choose to keep people out instead of inviting them in?



JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

MODULE FOUR	SESSION 2
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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
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LESSON	1 HOUR
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Session #

2

Right Relationships

KEY WORDS

BROKENNESS: Separation, something that is no longer whole or complete, something divided and different from what God wants.

JUSTICE: Restoring things back the to the way God wants them. This includes fixing broken relationships, laws, and systems that come from sin and that keep all people from enjoying the peace God created for all to enjoy.

OPPRESSION: When people are harmed by injustice and hurt by unfair systems and laws.

PRIVILEGE: An unfair advantage available to some people but not to other people.

RECONCILIATION: Working to bring back or restore relationships that are broken.

SIN: Anything that is against God's will.

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.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

PRAY: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

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 someone else’s tower.

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 making relationships right. It is about being made right with God and being in right relationship with the people around us. Reconciliation is also about working to fix or rebuild good things that are broken. 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.

Our relationships should reflect God’s love and justice.

Remember justice is restoring things back to God's original intent. It involves fixing broken relationships, systems, structures, and laws that emerge from sin and keep people from enjoying the shalom God created all to enjoy. Justice is ministry we do in Jesus's name to end oppression and to change the thinking and behavior which creates sinful thoughts of superiority, systemic sin, and privilege.

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, NIRV.

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."

If you have not yet asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior but would like to do so, you can pray to Jesus and Jesus will hear you. You can thank Jesus for forgiving your sin and ask Jesus to be your guide, showing you the truth of God's love, and helping you to share the good news of Jesus's love with others. Once you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior you will journey with Jesus every day. Jesus will never leave you. Jesus's love is with you always.

(Consider engaging children in this prayer with their parents, so they can also experience this sacred moment with their child.)

EXPLAIN: Once we have prayed and asked Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we can share Jesus's love with others. We will be a new creation, living our lives for and with 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. Jesus cared about people's bodies and relationships, and 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 are mistreated because of their gender and race, people are mistreated because they are immigrants or refugees, kids are mistreated because they have a disability, people not getting jobs, jail/detention center/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 or are in foster care, sickness, etc.).

We know that God is at work fixing 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), and God invites us to be partners in fixing what is broken.

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?
- A classmate’s parent has to work and there is no one else home. 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 refugee family. 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?

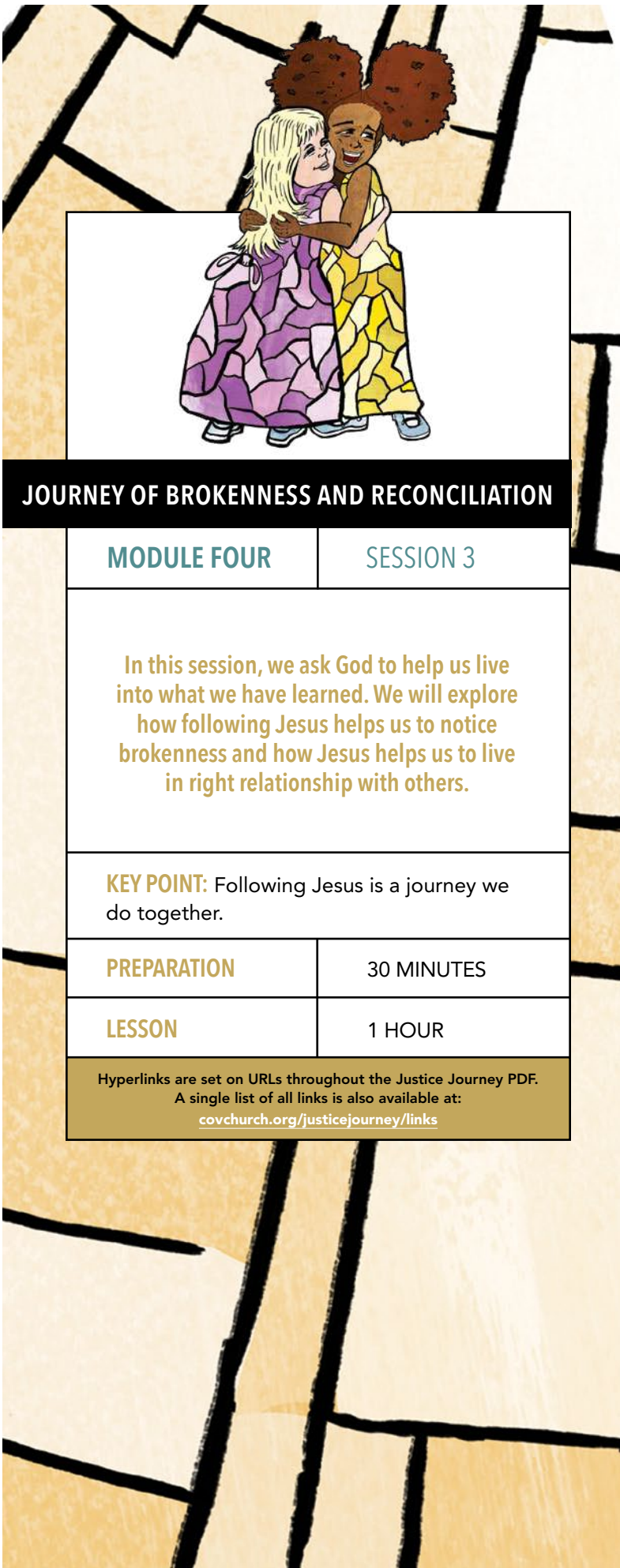
Sometimes it is right to lament, or pray and talk to God about the thing that makes us sad and hurt our neighbors. King David did that in the psalms a lot. Lament psalms were written to cry out to God about oppression, injustice, and things that are not right, but they always ended with a praise for who God is. Psalms and songs of lament help us move from hopelessness to hope 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 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.

Gather the children who want to pray and ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. Let them know we are waiting for their parents before they pray. Help to prepare them by asking what they would like to say to Jesus and what they think Jesus would like to say to them.



JOURNEY OF BROKENNESS AND RECONCILIATION

MODULE FOUR	SESSION 3
<p>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.</p>	
<p>KEY POINT: Following Jesus is a journey we do together.</p>	
PREPARATION	30 MINUTES
LESSON	1 HOUR
<p>Hyperlinks are set on URLs throughout the Justice Journey PDF. A single list of all links is also available at: covchurch.org/justicejourney/links</p>	

Session #

3

Judging Others

KEY WORDS

BROKENNESS: Separation, something that is no longer whole or complete, something divided and different from what God wants.

RECONCILIATION: Working to bring back or restore relationships that are broken.

RESTORATION: Making something right. Returning something to the way it is supposed to be.

SUPPLIES

For this lesson you will need

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

PREPARATION

Read *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.

PRAYER

Gather children in a circle for opening prayer. Explain we are entering a special time with God. Encourage children to hold their palms up as a sign we are ready to receive what God shares with us today. You may want to light a candle as a sign that God will show us how to light our way in love when we find ourselves in a dark or difficult place.

PRAY: God you love each of us and you purposely made all of us different. Because of your love for us, you offer each of us eternal life through your son Jesus and fill us with your Spirit so we may be guided by you. We look forward to what we will learn from you today and how it will help us to love others in the same way you love us.

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.

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

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

ACT OUT: Ways we judge and ways we forgive.

READ LUKE 6:38a.

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?

EXPLAIN: After fielding some thoughts, explain that we may want to make things equal, but we can’t do this without something called equity. Equity is the quality of being fair and just. This is what Jesus calls us to be as disciples, to be fair and just. So we may not get back exactly what we give, but we give because loving others like Jesus is to also be fair and just.

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, acts differently, or even worships God differently than we do—singing different songs, speaking in a different language, playing different instruments, praying in different ways, using different communion elements, and dancing in ways that we do not, as part of their worship to God—does that make it wrong?

- **REMIND:** We are all made in the image of God and we are all uniquely made, we don't all think the same or act the same, but we are all a part of God's one family.

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*

In this Native American tale, we see that 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 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, sacrificially love our neighbors, welcome our homeless neighbors, different ethnic groups, immigrants, refugees, and people with different abilities. We can also show God's love when we tithe, support kids in schools or families who are struggling, invite those who are left out, listen to what those who are suffering have to say, don't assume to have all the answers, 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:

- Build relationships with a refugee community. Listen, learn, and care
- Team up with an organization who has a close relationship with those who are homeless and build a community
- Participate in justice marches or demonstrations
- Make a commitment to regular conversations around faith and race
- Learn about ways to support and build relationships among 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 and 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.

Two columns of horizontal lines for writing, each containing 20 lines.

JUSTICE JOURNEY

for kids

covchurch.org/JusticeJourney



The Evangelical Covenant Church

LOVE MERCY DO JUSTICE
MAKE & DEEPEN DISCIPLES