

Working for Justice



Intergenerational

About this Setting

The awe and wonder of children, the passion and questioning of youth, and the wisdom and experience of adults intersect when all ages gather together in intergenerational settings. Developing a community of trust and care is a wonderful place to begin working for justice. As persons of all ages experience caring relationships, kindness extends to other situations. Modeling faithful living takes place in many ways as persons learn, grow, and practice fairness together. Right relationships with one another, God, and all of God's creation are rehearsed in intergenerational community.

Micah 6:1–8 points the way to just behavior. Persons of all ages are able to find ways to respond to Micah's call to "to seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God," whether with peers at school, with siblings or partners at home, or with colleagues at work.

No matter the age or stage of life, choices and their consequences are a part of the human experience. As followers of Jesus, children, youth, and adults are called to make faithful choices. Simple daily choices—such turning off a faucet when brushing teeth to preserve water and carpooling to school or work to preserve fuel resources—are opportunities to work for justice. A lifetime of choices leads to times when individuals and groups respond to, as well as, overlook the needs of others. Multiage and intergenerational groups offer opportunities to echo the question "When did I?" as well as to move forward with renewed commitment to demonstrating justice and fairness.

About this Faith Practice

Working for justice is putting things right. It is building right relationships with God, one another, and all of God’s creation. To work for justice, we imagine God’s Shalom and stay focused on the world as God intends it to be. Justice is a universal value that, within the biblical story, is required of people of faith. Following Jesus’ lead, we seek wholeness and reconciliation through both systemic and individual change. Working for justice is a way of life that is different from doing charity. Charity is a compassionate response to a need; justice works to repair the root cause of need. Justice is not a one way street; it requires active partners. It heals both the oppressed and the oppressor. Come, work for justice!

Intergenerational Options

Use these activities to build an intergenerational event for the beginning or conclusion of your series on “Working for Justice.” It could last up to three hours. Additionally, these activities may be used independently (15–20 minutes each), interwoven with age-specific activities throughout the series. An intergenerational event might be used during a time of year that is already set aside as special, such as Advent, Kwanzaa, Lent, Vacation Bible School, or forty days of prayer for children. Familiarize yourself with all twelve activities, four each from “Exploring & Engaging,” “Discerning & Deciding,” and “Sending & Serving.” Consider the age of participants and the time available for this event, and choose a group of activities that will meet your needs.

For an event lasting one to two hours, choose three or four activities from the list of twelve. There are enough activities for three or four events. You could also choose a single activity (15–30 minutes) to use as the activity at a community meal or other gathering. Wearing name tags is a good idea, as often older and younger members of a church do not know one another’s names.

Each activity ends with a prayer appropriate for the end of the session. Gather as a church family to grow together and have fun!

Explorations



P. 4 Discovery: In this Exploration we encounter the faith practice and look at how it intersects with human needs in community and personal life.



P. 5 Scripture: Christian faith practices grow out of the biblical story of the people of faith. For each Faith Practice, twelve Bible stories (two for each Exploration) inform and give direction to practicing our faith.



P. 7 Discipleship: Discipleship is about following. In this Exploration we consider what prompts people of faith to become disciples and probe how the Spirit leads us in the communal life of the Christian community and in our personal lives in the world.



P. 9 Christian Tradition: Practices of faith have been shaped by those who have preceded us in the history of the Christian church. The future will be shaped by the way we practice our faith today. Just as a map provides the landmarks we need to follow when we navigate in the world, this rich history of the Christian tradition guides us as we practice our faith today.



P. 10 Context and Mission: In order to claim a role in the mission God gives to the church, you have to know where you are, your local context. In the Context and Mission Exploration, we consider ways to practice faith in our community and world.



P. 12 Future and Vision: Practicing our faith leads us into the future. We seek to move into the future with a vision of where we are headed. In the Future and Vision Exploration, we consider what impels us into the future. We know that we are still practicing our faith; we won’t do it perfectly. We are empowered to keep practicing.

Exploring and Engaging Activities

Whether we are new to a particular faith practice or an old hand with much experience, all can benefit from new opportunities to explore the shape of the faith practice and to engage the issues of faith that the practice offers. Sometimes this is a matter of learning new ideas about the practice. Sometimes this is more about reflecting on what we have done in our practice. The activities in the Exploring and Engaging sphere help us to figure out how a faith practice intersects with our life and the life of the community of faith.

Discerning & Deciding Activities

Practicing our faith always involves discernment: naming the realities of our community and world and seeking the will of God for our lives and for the world. We then decide how we will act, what we will do, what values move us forward, and what faith has called us to do. The activities in this sphere give us opportunity to practice by discerning and deciding.

Sending & Serving Activities

Practicing our faith involves serving others and being sent out as Jesus' empowered disciples. We need time in our exploration to plan how we will serve. We need moments that send us forth blessed by the community from which we venture. The activities in this sphere offer opportunities to practice our faith through sending and serving.

Intergenerational Leader Preparation

Read the texts from Micah, Matthew, and John and consider how each connects to the practice of working for justice. How are your experiences of working for justice influenced by these scriptures? Consider this thought: "Justice is not a one way street; it requires active partners." How do you envision this intergenerational event encouraging partners in the work of justice?

Begin planning and promoting intergenerational events several months in advance. Allow space for your creativity and the creativity of others to engage and enhance the resource. Invite persons with a variety of skills, abilities, and gifts into leadership roles. Plan for an extravagant welcome for the participants, as well as a way to celebrate the conclusion of the event and the ways participants will continue to work for justice.

Consider the space to be used for the event and the variety of ages participating. Provide age-appropriate, comfortable furniture that can easily be moved as needed.

As you plan, consider using a variety of ways to create relationships through small groups. Building new friendships and strengthening old ones happen as participants meet together in similar age affiliations, as young and old, and in gender groupings.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Micah 6:1-8
Matthew 25:31-46
John 10:11-18

Prayer: God, you call your people to show fairness and kindness to one another. May those who lead and those who participate discover new ways to live into God's vision of shalom. Thank you for your presence as we journey together. Amen.



Exploration: Discovery

1 Justice in Word and Deed (Easy Preparation) (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Brainstorm words associated with “justice.” Review a description of the concept of justice online at the Wikipedia article “Justice” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice>).

Supplies:

- marker and newsprint or whiteboard
- (optional) props

Say the word “justice” aloud to the group. Then invite participants to brainstorm words or phrases that describe “justice.” List their suggestions on newsprint or a whiteboard. Provide additional ideas as appropriate. Mention to the group that God calls us to work for justice and to treat others fairly. Divide the group into pairs or small groups of three or four, and ask each pair or group to describe and then act out an example of fairness. If groups need help thinking of an idea, suggest actions such as: dividing a batch of cookies equally among the group; playing a game that includes everyone; providing food for hungry people; working together to build a house. If available, provide simple props that can be found around the church, such as in the kitchen, janitor’s closet, or supply closet. Provide an opportunity for each pair or small group to show their dramatization of justice and for the larger group to guess the situation. In closing, ask all the players to “take a bow.”

Prayer: Creator God, you ask us to value each and everything in your wonderful world. Whether we are at work, school, home, or with friends, we want to show fairness in all that we say and do. Amen.

2 Affirming One Another (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Think about the participants in your group and remember the unique and special gifts of each person. Be prepared to offer assistance (or encourage others to provide it) for anyone needing help with writing his or her name on paper.

Supplies:

- small pieces of paper approximately 4” × 6”, enough for 7 pieces per person
- pencils and crayons
- basket
- paper lunch bags
- markers
- stickers

Invite each participant to write his or her name on seven different pieces of paper. Drop all the pieces of paper in the basket. Mix up the pieces of paper. Then ask each person to decorate a lunch bag, making sure each participant labels the bag with his or her own name. Invite participants to draw seven pieces of paper from the basket. If a person draws his or her own name, put it back in and draw again. Distribute pencils and crayons, and ask the group members to write or draw something positive about each person on the seven pieces of paper. Men-



tion to the group that encouraging others is a way to work for justice. We are showing kindness, support, and respect through positive statements. Invite the participants to move around and drop the affirmations in the appropriate bags. Gather the participants in a circle holding their bags. Invite the group to echo the phrases: “Work for justice. Encourage one another!” Send the bags home, inviting participants to read one affirmation each day of the week.

Prayer: God of care and kindness, we celebrate times when we remember to support others through encouragement. We are grateful when others notice our special gifts. It is a blessing to give that same gift in return. Send us out, ready to show kindness and support to others. Amen.



Exploration: Scripture

③ When Did I? (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Review Matthew 25:31–46. Use *Today’s English Version* or *The Message* with the intergenerational group. Think about simple actions to add to the story to welcome the sheep and warn the goats. Consider inviting a volunteer to act as a storyteller as an alternative to reading the text. Print the words “When Did I?” on whiteboard or newsprint as the title of the litany. Print and display the litany response: “When you did it for any of my people, you did it for me.”

Supplies:

- Bible
- marker and newsprint or whiteboard

Divide participants into two groups to listen to Matthew 25:31–46. Identify one group as the sheep and the other group as the goats. When participants hear their group mentioned in the scripture, they are to respond as either happy sheep or sorry goats. Mention to the groups that this story makes a strong distinction about actions that result in working for justice and times when opportunities to work for justice are ignored. The Bible reminds people how to show fairness to others. Sometimes people act with kindness and caring. Other times, people don’t notice someone in need or don’t know how to respond.

Ask the participants to name situations that are opportunities to work for justice, such as serving food in a soup kitchen and filling water stations in the desert. List all ideas on the whiteboard or newsprint. Once everyone has the chance to contribute, teach the group the litany response. Mention to the group that their list will now become a litany answering the question *When Did I?* Invite volunteers to read from the list. After each item on the list is named, cue the group to say the litany response in unison: *When you did it for any of my people, you did it for me.*

Invite each group to choose an item from the list and formulate a plan for working for justice in that situation. For instance, if the group chooses “serving food in a soup kitchen,” make specific plans to do that. Include a timeline, a way to promote the plan, any budget implications, as well as who will take leadership. The groups may plan to do a food or clothing collection, form a Habitat for Humanity team, send letters to people in prison, and so forth. Have them write their plan on newsprint. When the plans are made, have each group present its plan to the total group. After all the presentations, invite everyone to sign up to work on one of the plans.

In closing, invite the group to say the litany response one more time in unison.



Prayer: *God, you remind us that simple actions such as sharing food and water with those in need are ways to show justice. Send us out ready to respond. The love and care we show to others is love and care that returns to you. Amen.*

4 Justice Shout Out (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Review the three phrases from Micah 6:8. The word “humble” might be clarified with synonyms, such as gentle or modest. Become familiar with the song “What Does the Lord Require of You?” by Jim Strathdee. If you are “musically challenged,” invite a volunteer to teach and lead the song. Note that the original language of the song uses the word “Lord”; you may choose to substitute “God.”

Supplies:

- Micah 6:8 printed on whiteboard or newsprint
- song: “What Does the Lord Require of You?” by Jim Strathdee; video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2O-xgxMv2A>

Read aloud the words from Micah 6:8. Then invite the participants to echo each phrase. Mention to the group that prophets like Micah spoke out forcefully about God’s concern for justice. Ask the group to brainstorm ways of showing justice, kindness, and humility and list all on newsprint or whiteboard.

Teach the song to the group, mentioning that the words to the song are from Micah 6:8 and include a question and an answer. Ask the group to sing the first two phrases of the song, asking the question “What does the Lord require of you?” Choose a participant to “shout out” one of the examples from the list. Then ask the group to respond with the answer “To seek justice, and love kindness and walk humbly with your God.” Continue singing until all of the examples have been called. Sing the song one more time in unison.

This is a good song to sing as a round. Divide the group into three small groups and assign a starting point for each group. Working together and making harmony is working for justice.

Prayer: *Loving God, you call us to find the ways of justice and fairness. Your word helps us remember that you want us to live with love and kindness. We are always grateful for your presence on our journey. Amen.*



Exploration: Discipleship

5 Heart to Heart—Church World Service (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Preview the Church World Service video. Download and print information about Church World Service Kits. Be aware that this activity provides an opportunity for the group to make choices about how to respond.

Supplies:

- video: “Gifts of the Heart,” http://www.youtube.com/churchworldservice#p/c/6784CB3B8DFA5206/19/TuOOwgYv_9Q (or a similar product)
- website: information about Church World Service Kits, <http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/DocServer/KitGuide.pdf?docID=361>
- projector to play the video
- cardboard box
- paper
- clear tape
- markers

Show the Church World Service video. Ask the group to recall the different types of kits described in the video. Remind participants that the video closes with the statement that the kits are an opportunity to “change the world one kit at a time.” Ask the group to name the kinds of justice issues that the kits address, such as poverty, wellness, and education. Then distribute copies of the kit information. Invite the group to come to consensus on ways to support the work of Church World Service. Develop a specific plan to accomplish the choice. As appropriate, offer the opportunity to cover and decorate a collection box for kit supplies.

In closing, gather in a circle and invite the participants to make a heart with the tips of their thumbs touching and the tips of their index fingers touching. One at a time, pass a blessing around the circle saying, *Heart to heart, we are called to change the world.*

Prayer: God of compassion, we are called to follow Jesus as we work for justice. Remind us that the choices we make and the way we respond to the needs of others are opportunities to grow as your disciples. Amen.



6 Decisions, Decisions (Easy Preparation) (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Review John 10:11–18 and think about the different choices made by the good shepherd and the hired hand. Think about the choices you make every day as well as the effect of your choices. Brainstorm a list of decisions with two choices such as:

- (a) buying groceries at a chain or (b) buying groceries at a farmer’s market
- (a) adopting a pet from a rescue organization or (b) purchasing a pet from a pet store
- (a) recycling plastic bags or (b) using cloth shopping bags



Designate areas in an open space for groups “A” and “B.” (Note: Depending on the ages represented in the group, consider providing options for seating for discussion time.) Consider inviting a volunteer to “tell the story” as an alternative to reading the text.

Supplies:

- Bible
- open space
- list of decisions

Invite the group to listen to the story of the good shepherd and hired hand from John 10:11–18. Ask the participants to describe the choice made by the good shepherd and the choice made by the hired hand. Mention to the group that making faithful choices shows our commitment to fairness and justice. Tell the group that you will read a situation with two possible choices and explain that these choices represent only two of many possibilities. Then read the choices on the list you made.

Depending on responses, participants gather in “group A” or “group B.” Once decisions have been made, ask the groups to talk about why they might make this choice and justice issues involved. Ask: *What other options are possible in this situation?* Continue offering situations, asking for decisions, and providing time to talk. Gather as a whole group to talk about the challenges of faithful decision making. Close with the unison affirmation such as this: *Our decisions make a difference!*

Prayer: God, you challenge your people to make faithful choices and live faithful lives. May we thoughtfully consider the consequences of our daily choices as we seek to show our commitment to fairness and justice. Amen.



Exploration: Christian Tradition



7 Prayer and Justice (Easy Preparation) (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Consider the role of prayer as a means of working for justice. Spend time in prayer about justice issues of concern to you.

Supplies:

- paper
- pencils and markers

Gather the participants and invite them to name typical times of prayer. Offer the opportunity to identify reasons for prayer. Mention to the group that prayer is a way for Christians to participate in God's vision for a just and fair world. Sometimes our prayers concerning justice issues may be a time to let God know we made a mistake. Other times, our prayers concerning justice issues may be a time to ask for help with a concern. Offer the chance to name justice concerns.

Then invite participants to choose a partner and a prayer space and spend about two minutes talking with each other and to God. Distribute paper, pencils, and markers and invite participants to use words and images reminding them of the prayer. Call the group back together. Invite those who are willing to describe their prayer. Say a unison "Amen" to bless the prayers and participants on their way.

Prayer: God of justice, we are reminded that we support your vision of a fair and peaceful world in many ways. Our words, deeds, and prayers work together to bring change. Amen.



8 The Sower and Gleaning (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Study the painting "The Sower." Research the practice of gleaning through the Wikipedia article "Gleaning" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gleaning>). Cut out pictures of a variety of food items from magazines.

Supplies:

- artwork: "The Sower" by Vincent van Gogh, https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1801449515?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15625&store_id=1401
- magazine pictures of food
- large piece of mural paper
- marker
- glue or glue sticks

Gather around the "The Sower" and invite participants to tell you what they see. Encourage participants to focus on the area with the figure. *What happens when the work of the figure is finished?* Ask participants to focus on the area behind the figure. *What happens when crops are mature?* Talk to the group about the practice of gleaning. Mention that there are descriptions of gleaning in both Hebrew and Christian scripture—actually, there are laws about gleaning in the Hebrew scriptures. Note that gleaning is a way to distribute food to the poor and hungry. Invite the group to name organizations in their community that distribute food to the hungry and write those names on the mural paper. Ask participants to iden-



tify ways they participate in giving food to the hungry and record those ways on the mural paper. Invite the participants to choose pictures of food items and glue on the mural. Display the mural where others in the community may view. Close with a prayer giving thanks for the gift of food.

Prayer: God of creation, you give your children many wonderful and life-sustaining gifts. We are grateful for plants that grow and provide food. May we share generously with others. Amen.



Exploration: Context and Mission

9 Food Facts (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Review information on hunger at a website, such as UNICEF's World Food Programme (<http://www.wfp.org/>). Specific information on hunger causes is available online at <http://www.wfp.org/hunger/causes>. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about hunger are available at <http://www.wfp.org/hunger/faqs>. Print and cut FAQ sheet into sections. Download and print the most current Hunger Map. Be aware that this activity provides the group with the opportunity to make choices about how to respond.

Supplies:

- website: Hunger Map, http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/liaison_offices/wfp185786.jpg
- marker and newsprint or whiteboard
- website: copy of FAQ sheet (cut into sections), <http://www.wfp.org/hunger/faqs>

Gather around the World Hunger Map, and invite volunteers to read the statements to the group. Look at the color legend at the bottom of the map and identify countries beginning with low hunger percentages and continue to those with high hunger percentages. Act as "scribe," and invite the participants to brainstorm a list of hunger causes. Provide additional information as appropriate. Divide participants into small groups, and give each group a section of the FAQ sheet. Encourage the groups to read and be prepared to report the information to the whole group. Once reporting is complete, ask: *How can we help?* Record each group's response. As a whole group, come to consensus about individual and group actions. Create a plan to accomplish the choices. Give thanks for the opportunity to serve others.

Prayer: God, your love and care extends throughout the world. May your love be made concrete for others through our words and actions. Amen.

10 Stories of the Community (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Invite several persons to tell stories of involvement in justice concerns. These persons might be from faith, neighborhood, town, or global communities. As appropriate, ask them to provide information about organizations or causes for the participants, as well as suggestions for ways the group might engage in this justice concern.

You might plan to serve refreshments so that the participants can interact with the guests in an informal manner. If you serve refreshments, be sensitive to food allergies.



Supplies:

- guests with stories to tell about justice concerns
- (optional) refreshments

Welcome and introduce the guest “storytellers,” and invite them to tell the group about their work for justice. Following the presentations by the storytellers, encourage the group to consider ways individuals, small groups, or the whole group might participate in these works of justice. As appropriate, provide time for those who have interest to meet with the storytellers for follow-up. Thank the storytellers with applause.

Prayer: God, you call us to action. The needs of your people are many. Open our hearts, minds and bodies to respond and use our gifts and skills in working for justice and fairness. Amen.



Exploration: Future and Vision



11 “Guide My Feet” (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Familiarize yourself with the song, “Guide My Feet.” Depending on your comfort level with music, use the video or consider inviting a volunteer to teach the song.

Supplies:

- song: “Guide My Feet,” <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>;
video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSONG20>
- “Guide My Feet,” Attachment: Activity 11
- construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- worship center located away from the meeting circle

Invite participants to look at their feet and think about how the journey toward a more just world continues. We make choices and live in just ways, depending on God’s wisdom and guidance. The song “Guide My Feet” is a reminder that our work for justice continues. Invite the group members to trace a foot (barefoot or shod) onto construction paper and cut out the footprint. Ask the participants to write or draw an issue of justice or fairness on the footprint.

Then teach the words of the first verse of “Guide My Feet.” As the group sings verse one, encourage the participants to move their footprints. Teach the words to verse two and sing in a circle with participants holding hands, footprints on the floor. Invite the participants to prayerfully bring their footprint to the worship center, naming aloud the concern. After each prayer concern, offer the response *Guide us, O God*. Repeat verse one of the song. Encourage participants to take their footprint home as a reminder of their work for justice.

Prayer: God of wisdom, you are present with us as we continue to make choices and work for justice and fairness in our communities and world. We are grateful for your guidance as we journey forward. Bless us on our way. Amen.



12 Tar Beach (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the book *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold, either through a local library or by purchasing at a bookstore. Practice reading the book aloud. Note the information about the author and artist and her concerns for fairness. Consider meeting in a relaxed, cozy setting. When partnering, suggest readers be paired with pre-readers. Display the artwork “Tar Beach II.”

Supplies:

- book: *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Dragonfly Books, 1996)
- artwork: “Tar Beach II” by Faith Ringgold, <http://tinyurl.com/FPART16>
- several newspapers

Invite participants to find a comfortable place for seeing the artwork, hearing the storyteller, and viewing the storybook. Mention to the group that the story is about a girl named Cassie who knows what it is like to be treated unfairly. Her dreams set her free.



Once the story is read, provide time for participants to ask questions and identify favorite parts of the story. Mention to the group that Cassie's idea of owning the Union Building is a way of working for justice and change. Ask: *How could that be? Just how important are our dreams, anyway?*

Then invite the group to choose partners (if your group is not even, you will need to join a pair). Have pairs look through a section of a newspaper for an issue of fairness. Dream together about possible ways to work for justice and create change. Gather as a group and provide time for pairs to talk about their dreams for justice. Decide together how dreams become reality. Give thanks for dreams that create change.

Prayer: God of hope, our dreams have the ability to set us free. Our imaginations and creativity are a gift from you. We joyfully answer the call to bring your vision of justice and fairness more fully into our world. Amen.

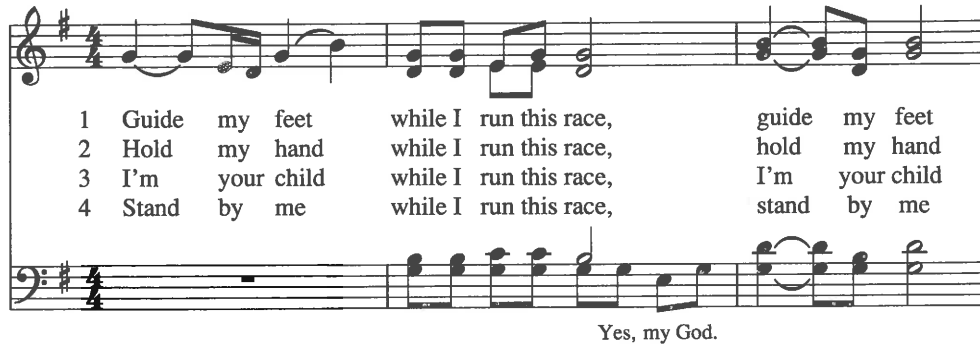
Reflect

Think about the experiences of this event and recall the activities that energized the participants. Reflect on the activities that were challenging for the group. How did participants grow in their ability to show fairness to one another? What new insights regarding fairness or commitments to justice have developed because of this event? Spend time with those who planned and implemented the event to consider additional feedback.

Attachment: Activity 11

Guide My Feet

African-American traditional; alt.



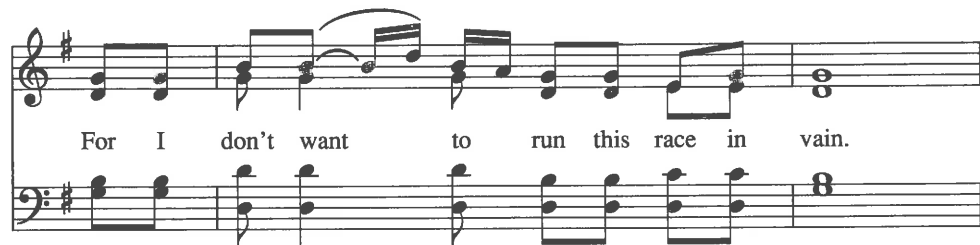
1 Guide my feet while I run this race, guide my feet
2 Hold my hand while I run this race, hold my hand
3 I'm your child while I run this race, I'm your child
4 Stand by me while I run this race, stand by me

Yes, my God.



while I run this race, guide my feet while I run this race,
while I run this race, hold my hand while I run this race,
while I run this race, I'm your child while I run this race,
while I run this race, stand by me while I run this race,

Yes, my God.



For I don't want to run this race in vain.