

Working for Justice



Exploration: Discovery

About this Age Group

For young children the concept of justice will be understood as deciding what is fair or unfair, right or wrong, just and unjust. Gray areas will be difficult for them to process. The older children in this age range will have begun to have sympathy for the “have-nots” in society, but mostly only when such people are family or friends. The use of picture books or storybooks geared for their developmental level will assist young children as they try to relate to justice and injustice. Stories about people who have been treated unfairly and people who try to make things better will provide the children with an entry point to deeper understanding as they explore this concept.

About this Exploration

Working for justice is vital in the personal and communal lives of God’s faithful people. God desires and requires the faithful to work for justice. Through it, we creatively level the playing field, break down walls, and nurture environments so that all may experience a whole and holy life. This life is free of oppression, degradation, and exclusion. We encounter stories, interpret scriptures, and participate in activities through which we discover how to engage actively in justice work in the home, church, community, and world.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Isaiah 1:1, 10–18
Luke 4:14–21

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive, and welcoming space for your children. Refresh the supplies and add relevant posters and interesting hangings to the room. This will signal to the children that something new will happen here. You might rearrange the furniture, if this is a room to which some children are returning. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. Provide name tags if this marks the start of a new year or program.

For your worship center, you might use a piece of quilted material or printed fabric made to resemble a quilt that will visually link to the activities with the *Tar Beach* resources.

Review the Getting Started introduction to these resources, noting that the suggested posters need to be ordered for timely arrival. Hymns and songs need to be located early as well. Additionally, in these particular materials for young children, there are suggestions for picture/storybooks suitable for this age group that flesh out in a narrative form the concepts that are present in the designated scriptures. These storybooks will likely be available at your public library. They can also be purchased quite inexpensively from online booksellers, such as www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for the availability of “used copies” under the book descriptions. Many of these are in

Exploring & Engaging Activities

1 Making a Covenant (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Because young children think very literally about what is right or wrong and fair or unfair, the making of a group covenant (some rules) can set a context for your conversations about justice. Literal thinkers look to rules to determine what is right or wrong and good or bad. This exercise will be useful not only for shaping behavior in the room but also for discussion during future activities. Over time, it may become necessary to add to or modify this covenant. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the changes that can happen in how we understand justice.

Supplies:

- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Tell the children that they will all be gathering regularly as a group and it will be helpful for the group to make some rules for your time together. Introduce the biblical concept of “covenant” by describing it as a “promise” we make to one another. Shape these rules to fit your particular circumstance: a regular meeting room, a changing location, or whatever setting fits your group. Rules may refer to individual and group behaviors and should include the care of the meeting space.

- Ask the children to suggest rules and guidelines.
- Record suggestions on the newsprint or whiteboard, using simple language (remember that not all are readers).
- As each idea is voiced, try to clarify the words and meanings.
- Try to state the rules in positive statements.
- When the list is finished, post it where it can be easily seen at the eye level of the children.
- Ask if the rules are fair and just.
- Make any adjustments.
- Ask the children to sign the covenant, indicating they will try their best to follow their rules.

This covenant may be useful during future sessions when there will be discussions of right and wrong, fairness and unfairness.

2 Tar Beach

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the storybook *Tar Beach*. Read the story and pay attention to the pictures. Read also the information page about the author and artist. Notice that, in the face of racial injustice, little Cassie Lightfoot finds a way to escape her plight by using her imagination and dreaming about a better life. In her dreams, not only can she fly over places she cannot otherwise visit, but as she does she also has the power to claim them as her own. The imagery of flight appears elsewhere in liberation literature and in the music and hymnody of the emancipation and Civil Rights movements.

These resources also include the use of a poster of the same title by Faith Ringgold. If you elect to use both resources, decide which one to use first. Directions are provided in activity 3 below for a group project, where your children can create a story quilt painting similar to the author’s.

“new” or “like new” condition and will be welcome additions to your church library when you are finished.

As you engage this Discovery Exploration, read the passages from Isaiah and Luke. In each, God calls God’s people to work for justice. Each author provides a list of people and places to start. Jesus chooses to remind his hometown folks of where they might begin, as he preaches in the Nazareth synagogue. As you prepare these materials for your children, identify for yourself a place where you might begin to stretch your own ministry in the area of justice. Think about the people your children might name who experience unfair treatment. Think about how you might help the children to reach out.

Pray for the presence of God’s Spirit for yourself as you plan and assemble resources for each session. Pray for the children, as individuals and as a budding community of faith.

Prayer: *Gracious God, be present with me as I prepare for these children. Help me listen to and absorb their wisdom, as we journey together in faith. Amen.*

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

Supplies:

- book: *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Crown Publishers, 1991)
- artwork: “Tar Beach II” by Faith Ringgold, <http://tinyurl.com/FPArt16>
- (optional) related books: *Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad in the Sky* by Faith Ringgold (Crown Publishers, 1992), a story a bit more complicated than *Tar Beach*; *The People Could Fly* by Virginia Hamilton (Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2009)

Tell the children that you will read them a story about a little girl who knows what it is like to be treated unfairly because of the color of her skin. Read the story to the children, showing them each picture. If you have the companion poster, note there are some slight differences between the book illustrations and the original poster. The children can identify them for you.

At the end of the story, pause for children’s responses. Give them 10–15 seconds to process what they have heard and seen. Listen to their comments. If necessary, guide them toward discovering that, by dreaming, Cassie was able to visit and claim as her own many places she could not otherwise visit. Flying in her dreams set her free to explore and enjoy. Ask some discovery questions, such as these:

- Can children really fly like that? How did she do that?
- I wonder why Cassie dreamed about flying.
- I wonder why she flew over the ice-cream factory.
- I wonder why the rooftop of her building was so special to Cassie and Bebe.
- I wonder how Cassie felt when she flew over the bridge with all its twinkling lights.
- Why do you think Cassie wanted to own the Union Building? (Be prepared with a simple definition of “unions” as you talk about her family’s experience.)



3 Making a Story Quilt

Leader preparation: Study the poster “Tar Beach II.” Use a hand lens to examine the fine details. If you have not used the related storybook, you will need to share a little basic information about the artist and her “story quilt” painting. See Faith Ringgold’s website (listed below in Supplies). Help the children understand that by flying in her dreams Cassie Lightfoot discovered she could temporarily escape from poverty and the racial discrimination visited upon her family.

Read the attachments that provide detailed instructions on the construction of a group “story quilt.” This activity can be classified as a “longer” project, so plan your time accordingly. Pre-cut the pieces of poster board and the fabric squares. The directions for including a sparkly bridge are sketchy; you’ll need to improvise once you assemble the large square pieces the children make. For a string of bridge lights, use a tube of glitter glue to just hint at a bridge peeking through the buildings. (If you are artistically challenged, recruit an experienced helper/leader for this session.)

Cover your work space with paper or plastic. Recruit extra helping hands. If you have a large group, double your supplies, split the group in half and make two quilts.

This is a group project. Some children might do the fabric frame; others, a few flying children; others, buildings. A leader should take a hands-on lead with chil-



- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

dren, assisting when the fabric frame pieces are glued onto the perimeter of the base poster board. An adult can better manage to keep the fabric-covered pieces even with the edges of the base. Otherwise, the internal pieces will not fit inside or will need to be trimmed.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Tar Beach II” by Faith Ringgold, <http://tinyurl.com/FPArt16>
- website about the artist/author, Faith Ringgold, <http://www.faithringgold.com>
- hand lens (magnifying glass)
- 2 pieces of poster board, 22” × 28”
- flowery cotton fabric, the kind used for quilts
- second type of cotton fabric, the kind used for quilts
- “Directions for Making a Story Quilt,” Attachment: Activity 3a
- “Instructions for Cutting the Poster Board and Fabric Pieces,” Attachment: Activity 3b
- heavy scissors for cutting poster board
- fabric scissors
- white glue
- marker
- 1–2 tubes of glitter glue
- paper or plastic to cover a work table

Discuss “Tar Beach II” with the children. Mention that Faith Ringgold, the artist, is African American and that she deliberately chose a fabric quilt medium to lift up the talents and artistry of women from African American communities whose work was being under appreciated by the art community. If you did not use the storybook version of this work (see activity 2 above), you will need to share information from Faith Ringgold’s website.

Ask the children to reflect on what they see in the picture. *Which building would you like to fly over and claim?* Help the children understand that flying like a bird in her dreams and imagination was a way that Cassie Lightfoot could experience freedom. By seeing and claiming things for herself, some glimpse of fairness was possible.

Invite the children to work together as a group to make a story quilt. Everyone will create a part of the project, and together all will assemble the pieces of the quilt. See the attachments for detailed instructions. Enhance the project with your own modifications.



Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Fair or Unfair? (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Prepare to help children think through and identify which things in the world are fair and just and which need to be made “more just.” Jot down a few topics that you would like the children to think about regarding justice. Some examples are: skin color, language spoken, disabilities, the environment, bullying, income level, religion, gender. You may have others to add from your particular community. Remember when using the suggested discussion starter phrases below that the “worlds” these children will imagine may differ in size and scope from family and neighborhood to city, country, and the planet. The younger the child, the more narrow his or her world.

Supplies:

- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Invite the children to think about what is fair and what is not fair in today’s world. Divide a sheet of newsprint or a whiteboard into two columns. In one column make a list of the children’s ideas. In the second column add what could be done to make the issue more equitable. You might use the following two phrases as starters for your lists.

- The things in our world that are unfair are . . .
- The world would be fairer if we could . . .

After making your lists, describe what your church is already doing to help in these areas. (You might do some research with church leaders to help the learners discover what the church is doing.) Share with the children the relevant mission projects that your church may be doing. How might your group help with one of these projects? (They might color posters and fliers for an event, for example, or sort food and cans.)

5 Jesus in the Synagogue

Leader preparation: Read Isaiah 1:1, 10–18 and Luke 4:14–21. Compare Isaiah’s list of oppressed people with the one that Jesus includes in his sermon in Nazareth. As literal thinkers, children may puzzle over why prisoners should be released if they have done something wrong. They might wonder how someone who is not a doctor could return sight to a person who is blind. Invite them to stretch beyond being literal by suggesting that words can have more than one meaning. “Sight” might also mean insight and understanding; some people are held captive when they have committed no crime.

Print Luke 4:14–21 in big letters on legal-sized paper. Roll it and secure with a rubber band. To help with this, go to the website “Bible Gateway” (www.Bible-Gateway.com) and choose a translation that the children will readily grasp, such as *The Message*.

Supplies:

- prepared printed scripture
- marker and newsprint or whiteboard

Show children the rolled-up “scroll.” Tell the children that in Jesus’ day, the scriptures were not bound in books, but were handwritten on scrolls and rolled up.



Stand up, unroll the scroll, and read Luke 4:14–21 to the children. When you are finished, roll it back up, secure with rubber band, and sit down. Explain that is how the scriptures were read in Jesus’ day—and still are by some Jewish people today.

Ask the children to think about the kinds of people that Jesus listed in his sermon who were in need of better, fairer treatment: the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed. On newsprint or a whiteboard, record their ideas of things that could be done:

- To help poor people
- To help people who are in jail
- To help people who need medicine and a doctor’s care
- To help children with no parents

Ask how the children’s families and their church might be helping with these things already. Remind them of your own church’s social action programs that address those needs.

End with a prayer for God’s blessing on these people and on us as we find even more ways to be helpful and to bring justice for all.

6 Eggs-periment

Leader preparation: Gather the supplies for this science experiment. Try this at home first, and be sure that you have a fresh egg, not an older one. An older egg may have begun to form gases inside and might not sink. Always “teacher-test” experiments and art projects to be sure your supplies work together successfully.

Supplies:

- clear drinking glass or medium wide-mouthed jar
- water
- fresh egg, uncooked
- ¼ cup of salt
- permanent marker
- spoon

Pour 1 cup of water into the glass, and very carefully place the fresh egg in the water. Ask the children to pretend that the egg is a person who is not being treated fairly. Notice that “Eggie” just sadly sinks to the bottom of the glass. Point out that this is sort of like being sad or depressed or left out or not liked very much. “Eggie” has a sinking feeling and sits alone in the bottom of the glass. Now take the egg out of the glass with the spoon and set it safely to one side, where it won’t roll away.

Add a spoonful of salt to the water and stir it briskly so it will dissolve. Explain that adding salt to the water is something like showing fairness and justice toward other people. Continue adding salt, one spoonful at a time, and stirring as you go. Mention several ways that we can show fairness: not putting people down, following the rules of a game, not shoving or hitting, taking turns, sharing, telling the truth, being kind to others, not making fun of people who are different, sticking up for someone who is being bullied. Keep mentioning helpful ways of relating, until all the salt (¼ cup) is dissolved in the glass. Stir briskly a few more times.

After the salt seems to be all dissolved, draw a happy face on the egg, and gently put “Eggie” back into the water. Notice that now “Eggie” floats. The addition of



the salt has increased the density of the water, allowing the egg to float (because the egg is now less dense than the salt water). This is the same reason that we can swim more easily in the salty ocean than in a fresh water lake.

Marginalized people begin to thrive with help of supportive friends and fair treatment and acceptance. People who are treated with kindness and justice and fairness live happier and healthier lives.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Isaiah, Amos, and Jesus list various groups of people who suffer unjust treatment. As the children explore injustice, they become better prepared to identify it by themselves. This activity gives them a chance to listen and determine if injustice is present. They may learn that judging justice or injustice is not always easy to do. Explain to the children the technique of putting “thumbs up” and “thumbs down” when making a judgment call. Agree on a sign for “not sure” or “need more information”—perhaps wiggling their hands.

Supplies:

- “Scenarios about Fairness,” Attachment: Activity7

Discuss the meanings of the words “just” and “fair.” Some related words and phrases include: “reasonable,” “fair minded,” “even handed,” “open minded,” “right,” “honest,” “honorable,” “truthful.” Then read a scenario from the attachment. Ask the children to listen carefully and make their own decision. Invite them to use their hands to show their answer: thumbs up for “it’s just and fair,” thumbs down for “it’s not just or fair,” and wiggly hand for “not sure, or need more information.”

Ask why they made their decision. Ask: *Does “just” and “fair” always mean “exactly equal”?* Have children think of a time when just and fair would not mean exactly equal. Maybe the age of the child matters; maybe the timing matters. Maybe a parent says one child will have to wait until after the next paycheck to get something new. Maybe it depends on why someone needs something, or when someone needs something. *How is a “need” different from a “want”?* Sometimes, at first glance, something may seem unfair, but once some questions are answered it might not be so unfair after all. Explain that justice requires careful listening and careful thinking.

8 *Planting the Trees of Kenya*—A Storybook

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the children’s picture storybook *Planting the Trees of Kenya* by Claire Nivola. You can find this book in your local library or order it online through www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for used copies in good condition and available at reduced prices. This book tells the story of Wangeri Maathai, the first woman from Africa to receive the Nobel Prize. Read the book and also the author’s pages at the end of the book. Notice the style of the art. Gather supplies for painting trees. Cut up sponges into 1–2” squares to use for dabbing the paint onto the paper. Experiment with the paint to get it right for sponge painting: not too thick, not too thin.

**Supplies:**

- book: *Planting the Trees of Kenya* by Claire Nivola (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008)
- drawing paper for making pictures of trees
- liquid tempera paint, with a generous amount of green
- kitchen sponges, cut into 1–2" squares
- knife or scissors for cutting sponges
- several pie pans or paper plates to hold the paint
- markers
- covers to protect work tables
- soap and water for cleanup

Show the children the picture on the cover of the book, and tell them a little bit about Wangeri Maathai. Then read *Planting the Trees of Kenya* to the children. Show them the illustrations, which were created by the author. Draw attention to the particular style of the watercolor paintings, mentioning their lacelike look.

After you finish reading the story and showing the pictures, invite responses from the children. Help the children understand that big commercial farmers had moved in and taken down the trees in Kenya to make room for more vegetable fields. By removing the trees, they had upset the balance of nature and had ruined the environment. They had taken unfair advantage of the people and abused the land, all to make more money for themselves. When Wangeri Maathai returned to Kenya after her college days in the United States, she was dismayed by the ruined land and the hard times her people were having living on the land. Maathai came up with a plan to restore the trees and save the land and the people. Together they were able to make considerable progress toward completion.

Ask the children how Maathai was able to get all that work done. *Who did she get to help her?* Explain that by working for justice for the people and their land, Maathai was able to lead the people in working together for justice for all the farmers in Kenya.

Protect your work tables. Distribute drawing paper. Suggest that the children create some trees by dabbing their dampened sponges into the paint and dabbing off the excess before creating trees on their paper. Demonstrate how to put the sponge gently into the paint and then to dab the excess off before you dab on the paper. If the paint is thick and heavy, you will not get the lacey effect. Once the trees are done, encourage the children to paint some fields and rivers as well. Once the paint is dry, the children might use markers to add people and homes.

**9 Peace Symbol**

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Study the article “Origin of the Peace Symbol” to become familiar with the Peace Symbol. The symbol is now over 50 years old and is enjoying a comeback. Check out fabric stores and T-shirt shops to see its heightened visibility. For many young children, the symbol is probably something about which they know very little. Before you gather with the children, download a graphic of your choice from the Internet (type in “peace symbol” on any Internet search engine and then click images and make your selection). Or enlarge the image on the attachment. This symbol is deliberately not copyrighted! Enlarge it at a copy shop to the largest size you can fit on your piece of poster board. Or take a string and pencil and draw the largest circle you can on the poster board and add the lines to create the symbol. Then cut out the circle.

**Supplies:**

- article: “Origin of the Peace Symbol,” http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7292252.stm
- sheet of poster board
- construction paper, several colors, or perhaps skin tones
- white glue (glue sticks don’t work well with construction paper)
- scissors
- markers, pencils
- “Peace Symbol,” Attachment: Activity 9

Tell the children that together they will make a peace symbol. Explain that a symbol is something that represents something else—an idea or a thought. A symbol points to a specific meaning or meanings beyond itself. A symbol may make a person think of something else. Share some information about the peace symbol, and show the children what it looks like. Show them the large one you prepared, and tell them they can now trace and cut out their hand shapes to glue on to it. Encourage them to trace their hands so they get 2–3 handprints out of one sheet of paper, thereby saving paper (another justice issue). Children can then cut out their handprints and glue them to the large peace symbol. Help them arrange the handprints attractively around the circle and along the angled lines. This indicates that with their helping hands they will work for peace and justice in the world. In the negative space between the “bird foot” (as some people call the lines within the circle), you can write these words, or something of your own devising: “How can we be people of peace?”

Reflect

Think about the ways the children have responded to the activities you chose. In what ways do you think they are catching on to the basic concept of “justice”? Consider how conversations might have been clearer. Think about which children might need to hear the concept of justice expressed in different words. Remember to return to the covenant (activity 1) or add to it whenever necessary throughout the use of these justice resources. Leave the covenant poster in place as reinforcement.

Attachment: Activity 3a

Directions for Making a Story Quilt**Supplies**

- 2 pieces of poster board (22" × 28"); avoid dark colors; white, yellow or light blue work best One piece is for the base; cut the second piece according to the directions below
- 14 2" × 4" pieces of poster board (cut ahead of time)
- 6 2" × 6" pieces of poster board (cut ahead of time)
- 14 4" × 4" pieces of flowery cotton fabric, the kind used for quilts (cut ahead of time)
- 6 4" × 6" pieces of cotton fabric, the kind used for quilts (cut ahead of time)
- 12 6" × 6" pieces of poster board for drawing the pictures (cut ahead of time)

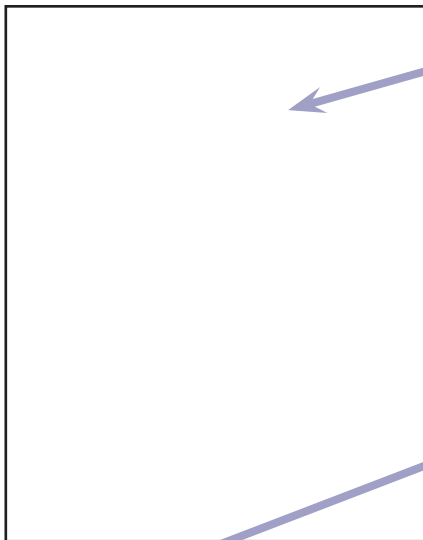
Instructions for cutting the poster board and the fabric pieces are on Attachment: Activity 3b. Cut the poster board and the fabric pieces well before the activity begins.

Making the Story Quilt

1. Protect your work table.
2. Gather your pre-cut pieces of poster board and fabric; have the base sheet of poster board handy.
3. Describe the three different parts the children can work on: (1) frame pieces, (2) drawing a building they'd like to fly over, (3) drawing themselves or Cassie in flight. Have children sit by the supplies needed for that task.
4. Prepare the frames. Pass out the 20 little frame pieces, and have the children choose the correct size piece of fabric to glue to it. Match the 14 small frame pieces with the 4" × 4" fabric squares. Match the 6 larger frame pieces with the 4" × 6" fabric squares.
5. Put glue on one side of the cardboard, position the fabric on the cardboard, and smooth down the fabric. Wrap the 2 overhanging edges to the back side, and glue them in place. Hold it until the glue sets a little.
6. Prepare the 6" squares. Pass out 9 of the large 6" × 6" inch squares. Ask each child to use a marker to draw a building he or she would like fly over. It could also be a beach, amusement park, church, national park, waterfall, or something else a child feels is special. Encourage children to make their pictures big and bold and to fill up the square. If you have more 6" × 6" squares than children, speedy workers can make a second. Reserve 3 of the 6" × 6" squares for the top row of the finished quilt. On these, some children can draw themselves or Cassie flying through the air. Be flexible. If a child has a better idea, go with it.
7. Assemble the story quilt. Using the second full sheet of poster board as the base piece, arrange the frame pieces on top of it, along the outside margin. You will begin by just laying these on until you and the children are pleased with the placement. Place 7 of the smaller frame pieces each long side. Then, place 3 frame pieces across the top and another 3 across the bottom, making sure you align them carefully with the edges of the base piece. Once everyone is pleased with the arrangement, begin gluing the frames onto the base. An adult should engineer this with the children's help. It is crucial to align these edges, to insure that the drawn pictures will fit snugly into place.
8. Once the frame is all glued in place, admire your collaborative work.
9. Finally, gather the pictures the children made on the 6" × 6" squares. Lay the pictures inside the frame, experimenting with various arrangements. Pictures of flying children should go near the top. If some of the pictures have considerable white space, try to cluster them in such a way that you can use that blank space to draw in hints of a big bridge, here and there, after the gluing is complete.
10. Next, glue the pictures into place. Trim where necessary to fit.
11. Determine where you can add hints of a bridge. Use the glitter glue for this. It will sparkle when dry, reminiscent of the sparkling lights on Cassie's bridge.

Attachment: Activity 3b

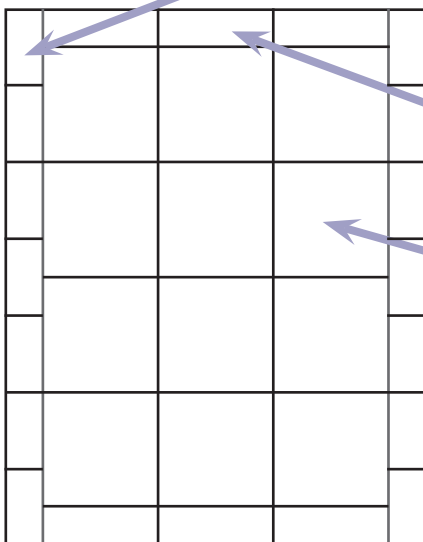
Instructions for Cutting the Poster Board and Fabric Pieces



Cutting the Poster Board

One sheet of 22" x 28" poster board is used as the base of this project. All other pieces should be glued on top of the base, following the directions on "Directions for Making a Story Quilt," Attachment: Activity 3a.

The second sheet of 22" x 28" poster board should be cut into pieces, as shown here. For best results, do the following steps in order. Do not cut until all lines have been drawn.



1. Measure and draw two long vertical strips 2" wide down the length of each side.
2. Divide each of the long side strips into 7 equal sections, each 4" long. The result will be 14 sections (or pieces), each 2" x 4". Do not cut yet!
3. Measure and draw two horizontal strips from side to side—one at the top of the poster board and one at the bottom. These strips should extend from one long side strip to the other but should not overlap the side strips. Each horizontal strip should measure 2" x 18".
4. Divide each horizontal strip into three equal sections. Each will measure 2" x 6". *No cutting yet!* Now you can see the size and shape of what will be the frame. Those segments will later be covered with quilt cotton fabrics.
5. The remaining center measures 18" x 24". Measuring carefully, divide this center section into 12 equal pieces. Each will be 6" x 6".
6. Your work should look like the drawing to the left. If it does, then cut out the pieces. Careful cutting will allow you to fit these all back together on the base piece.

If your poster board is a slightly different size than 22" x 28", then follow the spirit of the diagram. Make a 2" border all around and divide it up into small pieces so children can cover the pieces with fabric. Then split the center into 12 equal parts for drawings.

Cutting the Fabric Pieces



1. Cut 14 squares from cotton fabric used for quilts. Make each 4" x 4". Cut these before the activity begins. Cut a few extra, just in case.
2. Cut 6 rectangles from cotton fabric. Make each 4" x 6". Cut these before the activity begins. Cut a few extra, just in case.

Note: Using 3–4 different fabrics will make this project more interesting. A quilter friend might donate leftovers for this project and maybe lend a hand at construction time.

Attachment: Activity 7

Scenarios about Fairness

1. Nick and Charlie went to the mall. Their dad bought new tennis shoes for Nick but not for Charlie. When Charlie said, "That's not fair!" Dad reminded him that Nick was just chosen for the school basketball team and he needed new shoes to start the season.
2. Two cars were speeding on the highway. A state patrol car took off in chase and caught up with one of the cars. That driver got a speeding ticket, while the other speeder got away. Two speeders, but only one ticket.
3. Amanda and Emily went Trick or Treating on Halloween. At one house, they were invited to reach into a black and orange pillow case and pull out a treat—without peeking. Emily got an apple, and she was happy. Amanda got an orange, and she hates oranges. Amanda said, "That's not fair. I don't like oranges."
4. An out-of-town relative sent a package to her two nieces and one nephew. Because she doesn't know them very well and doesn't keep up with their activities, she decided to send them each the same present. She selected 3 boxes of yummy, gooey, caramel cluster candies. The kids are 6, 8, and 12 years old. Jason, the 12-year-old just recently had braces put on his teeth, and the dentist said, "Don't eat any chewy, gooey candies." When the package arrived, Jason's feelings were hurt.
5. A mother signed her two children up for swimming lessons. Jack is five years old, and his class meets at the shallow end of the pool. Grace is twelve, and she was placed in the advanced class. She gets to go beyond the ropes into the deeper water. Jack says, "No fair! I want to swim in the deep end."
6. At soccer practice, the coach says it's time to run a few laps around the field before they pick teams for a game. Everybody groans. Then the coach says, "Today only the players who attend Eastside Elementary have to run laps. The others can sit and hang out for awhile until Eastside is ready to play."

Attachment: Activity 9

Peace Symbol



Working for Justice



Exploration: Scripture

About this Age Group

Preschool and primary children best understand things they can experience for themselves. Grasping the importance of ancient scriptures will be difficult for them because scripture is about long-ago, far away events. A young child's ability to comprehend historical concepts will stretch back no further than hearing stories about her or his grandparents. Young children can understand that the Bible is a cherished book containing important stories about God. Carefully chosen, contemporary stories presented at their developmental level will be helpful in successfully connecting them with the concept of justice.

About this Exploration

Scripture asks what God requires of us and answers the question with marching orders and a road map. It admonishes against oppression, reminds us that we are created in the image of God, and demands that we work for a just world rooted in love. In Jesus we see the embodiment of loving justice, which, like an ever-flowing stream, grows to encompass the whole creation. We discover God's disappointment and anger with injustice, God's care for the poor and disenfranchised, God's zeal for justice as a way of life, and God's expectation that we structure our lives and relationships as Jesus did.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Micah 6:1–8
Amos 5:18–24

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive and welcoming space for your children. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. A full week before you meet the children again, review your plans for that next session. Gather and prepare needed supplies ahead of time, so everything is ready to go.

Read both the Micah and Amos texts. The Micah passage is pivotal for all the resources in this Faith Practice. The song “What Does the Lord Require of You?” is introduced in this Exploration. Consider repeating this song throughout the duration of your Working for Justice Explorations. From the Amos text one can notice an evolution from the practice of offerings and sacrifices that are static to the forward movement and transforming movement of justice as an ever-flowing stream.

Assist the children as they explore various areas where justice still needs to flow and how we, as God’s faithful people, can best join in that journey. Consider enhancing the center of your worship/story space with a fish bowl of water. Surround it with a length of sea-colored sheer fabric. Add a shell or an interesting pebble.

Prayer: Gracious God, be with us as we explore and play together. Open my ears to listen and be led, as I guide their explorations. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 A Make-believe Rainstorm (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Amos 5:18–24 speaks of justice rolling down like water. In this cooperative game, the children will create a make-believe rainstorm. The game is played in a circle where there are no losers and no winners and everyone works together to make a wonderful sound.

Supplies:

- a circle of chairs with some separation between them (not a tight circle)

Ask the children to describe the sounds of a rainstorm. Then invite them to play a game that sounds a lot like a rainstorm. Have the children sit in a circle of chairs with you, the leader, standing in the center. Be sure you have plenty of room to walk.

The adult leader gives the cues for this game. Explain that as you walk inside the circle of chairs and pass in front of each child, the child you are in front of should begin making the same sound as you are making. Each child should continue making that same sound until you pass in front of him or her the next time. There are four different sounds in the game, plus a reversal, so you will be walking around the inside of the circle a total of *eight* times, changing your sound each time you pass in front of Child A.

Begin by standing in front of Child A (whichever child you want to start with). Start the first sound—rubbing hands together. Walk around the circle slowly still rubbing your hands together. As you pass each child, he or she will start rubbing hands together. The noise will get louder as you pass each successive child. Continue around the circle.

When you reach Child A again, change your sound to snapping fingers. As you pass each successive child, she or he will change to this new sound.

When you reach Child A again, change your sound to slapping your thighs. Continue slowly around the circle. As you pass each child, she or he, will change to the slapping sound.

When you reach Child A again, change to the last sound, stamping feet on the floor. As you pass each child, she or he will change to the stamping sound. Continue around the circle.

When you come to Child A again, *reverse* your direction and go back around the circle the way you came, still stamping your feet.

When you reach Child A again, switch back to thigh slapping. Continue around the circle.

When you reach Child A again, switch back to finger snapping. Continue around the circle.

When you reach Child A, switch to hand rubbing. Continue around the circle.

When you reach Child A for the last time, switch to silence. Continue around until there is only one child rubbing his or her hands. Take one more step and the rainstorm is over.

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

Talk with the children about the sound of the rainstorm. Ask if they thought it sounded like rain. Ask if they think one person could make that sound alone. *Were you surprised how wonderful the sound was when you all worked together?* Explain that an important way people can experience peace and justice is by joining with other people in a group to do something that none of them could ever do alone. Working together for justice that moves like an ever-flowing stream is work that God wants us to do.

2 Habitat for Humanity

Leader preparation: Arrange to have a computer with Internet access in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clip listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not assume all computers will communicate with all projectors or that the problem can be remedied in just a few minutes.

The YouTube clip “Home Builders Blitz” is a time-lapse video showing four homes being built over 15 days. Use the link to the Habitat for Humanity website to familiarize yourself with the Habitat program. Stress the fact that these homes are built by volunteers working in partnership with the selected new home owners. If you know anyone who has worked on a Habitat home, or anyone who has moved into one, invite that person to visit with your group and describe the experience. Ask your guest to wear overalls or work clothes and a hard hat and to bring a few tools along to show.

Supplies:

- computer with Internet access
- video: “Home Builders Blitz,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhIPbfM1NgY&feature=channel>
- website: Habitat for Humanity, www.habitat.org
- (optional) a Habitat volunteer or a Habitat homeowner, if possible
- (optional) the children’s storybook from Habitat for Humanity, *Building Friends* by Ronald Kidd (Favorite Recipes Press, 1997)
- (optional) related storybooks: *Doorway to the World: A Habitat for Humanity Book* by Ronald Kidd (Habitat for Humanity International, 1997); *Grandpa’s Hammer: A Habitat for Humanity Book* by Ronald Kidd (Habitat for Humanity International, 1997); *Raising the Roof: A Habitat for Humanity Book* by Ronald Kidd (Habitat for Humanity International, 1997)

Tell the children about Habitat for Humanity. Some children may have heard of this program if families or church members have been involved. Explain how people without homes apply to receive a home and how they are expected to spend a specified number of hours helping to build the new home, along with other volunteers. If a Habitat volunteer or owner can visit with you, ask the visitor to describe the building experience. If you cannot locate a visitor, obtain a copy of one of the Habitat storybooks for children. Read a story with the children and discuss it.

Ask the children how long they think it takes to build a house. Then share the YouTube clip of four houses being built together over a 15-day period. Tell the children that sometimes churches will collect furniture to help new Habitat homeowners furnish their new homes. When volunteers and church members help Habitat for Humanity, they are working for justice. They are helping people who might not otherwise ever be able to afford a home of their own. Working for justice with many, many people helping makes the task easier. Consider making



a housewarming gift to share with a new Habitat homeowner family, such as laminated placemats, wooden doorstops, or a seasonal decoration.

3 Water Play

Leader preparation: Read Amos 5: 18–24. This activity helps the children explore the image of ever-flowing streams of justice mentioned in verse 24. Provide a way for children to explore how water moves and behaves and to learn how it flows from one place to another. Depending on the time of year and your local climate, you might do this activity outside using a shallow kiddies' pool. You might get permission to use your church's kitchen, if it is not in use. You can also set up the equipment mentioned below on child-size tables in a classroom or fellowship hall with tiled floors. You might move tables and containers outside to the yard, patio, sidewalk, or parking lot. Alert parents and guardians prior to this session, so that the children dress appropriately.

Supplies:

- Bible
- clean pans or tubs, such as new kitty litter pans, or new pans used by garages to do automobile oil changes
- warm water
- any or all of the following: containers, funnels, scoops, measuring cups, food coloring, eyedroppers, spirally straws, fat straws, ivory soap that floats, bubble blowers, small colanders or sifters, sponges
- smocks, plastic aprons, or trash bags cut to serve the purpose
- mops and paper towels for cleanup

Fill the pans or tubs with warm water, and place various items in the water that children can play with. Then share the lines from Amos 5:24 when Amos quotes God as saying, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Invite children to play and experiment with the various items in the pans or tubs filled with water. Get your hands into the water with them and draw their attention to the different ways water will flow and how gravity controls where it goes. If water is spilled, it seems to go everywhere—just what God expects us to do with just and fair treatment of the environment and the people in our world. God calls us to spread justice everywhere.

While you play in the water, explain that not everywhere in the world is there an adequate amount of water available for the needs of the people. In dry climates—and where there have been long droughts—there is often not enough water for people, animals, and gardens to have what they require for healthy living. In some countries, children would not be playing in the water like this for fun. Instead, they would be saving every drop to keep themselves, their animals, and their gardens alive. Mention how fortunate we are to have enough water. *How can our country help provide water to other countries that have a shortage? Can our country teach others how to find and dig wells and how make the water clean for safe drinking?*



Discerning & Deciding Activities



④ Wise King Solomon (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read 1 Kings 3:16–28 to refresh your memory. This is the story of Solomon’s wise judgment regarding the two women who both claimed to be the mother of one baby boy. Recall the story, but do not use this biblical version with these young children. Instead, use the condensed and modified version of the story on the attachment. The theme of this startling story appears in numerous other folktales from around the world. It presents a wrenching problem of injustice that needed to be solved fairly. With God’s help, Solomon was able to devise a clever way to get at the truth.

Reassure the children that at no time was the baby ever in danger. At no time would the king ever have hurt or killed the baby. Do not display a knife in telling this story. Don’t even motion with your hand what Solomon was suggesting. Don’t act out this story. Just let someone hold and rock the baby doll, or do it yourself. Sometimes we have to listen and think carefully about how to achieve justice. Sometimes working for justice is very difficult.

Note: If you know of any recent losses of babies or siblings of the children in your group or in your church, do not use this activity.

Supplies:

- Bible
- “The Wisdom of King Solomon,” Attachment: Activity 4
- baby doll wrapped in a blanket

Show the children where the story of King Solomon is found in the Bible, 1 Kings 3:16–28. Read aloud the attachment version of the story to the children while they take turns holding and rocking the doll. Listen to their responses. They may be shocked. They may also suggest other solutions, such as taking turns caring for the baby or having joint custody. Remember that some of the children in your group may be living in shared-custody households.

Invite the children to wonder how King Solomon figured out a clever way to learn which mother was telling the truth. *Might Solomon have prayed to God for wisdom, while he listened to the mothers argue over the baby?* With God’s help, Solomon found a way to uncover the truth.

Reassure the children that King Solomon would never, ever have hurt the baby. If he hadn’t thought of this clever way, God would have helped him to find another solution to the problem. The baby was never in danger. Explain that sometimes it is hard to work for justice, but if we are willing, then God will help us find a way.



5 Snack Time

Leader preparation: Provide some healthy snacks for your group, such as cookies, muffins, fruit, or rice cakes (be sensitive to any food allergies in your group). It will be easier if these snacks are wrapped or self-contained rather than crumbly or difficult to cut. Packaged items, fruit, muffins in muffin cups, or things in small baggies might be the best choice for this activity. Such choices will reduce the spreading of colds and flu. The children are not to eat the snacks immediately but to sit and watch and wait for instructions. This is an exercise in fair and unfair food distribution.

Supplies:

- healthy snacks
- napkins
- (optional) paper plates, cups and beverages
- chairs around a table

Gather the children in chairs around a table. Tell them you have snacks for them, but they are not to handle the food or eat it until you give them instructions.

Place the snacks in the center of the table. Then hand the snacks to the children in the following way:

1. Give one-half of all the snacks to a few children. Remind them not to touch yet.
2. Give one snack each to a few children.
3. Give nothing to the rest.
4. Remind the children not to eat or touch at this point, and then ask for their feelings about the way the food was distributed. Don't comment at this point. Just make note of the reactions and repeat aloud those reactions without passing judgment. For example, "I am hearing . . . and . . ." Ask the children how they would solve the problem of this unfair situation, and hope that they suggest sharing and redistribution from those that have some to those that have nothing at all.
5. If the group suggests sharing, help them as they work out a fair plan, rearranging the snacks accordingly. Don't be surprised if this does not happen.
6. If the group is unwilling to share, collect all the snacks, start over and pass them out equally this time. Ask how they feel about this arrangement.
7. Give thanks to God for the snacks and invite the children to enjoy them.

Point out to the children that the distribution of food in the world is not fair. Note that some people do not know when they will get their next meal. Some starve, and some get all their meals from food distribution centers because they have no money to buy food in a store. Ask if the children think everyone in their town or city has enough to eat. Most will know the answer. Mention your local food bank, your church's food pantry, or other locations where food is collected to feed the hungry. Tell them when they can bring canned and packaged food to the church for distribution. Perhaps they would like to help collect and pack that food when the time comes, or they might start a food drive if there is not one already in place. This is one way everyone can help food to get to the people who need it most. This is another way people can work together for justice.



6 What Does the Lord Require of You?

Leader preparation: Read Micah 6:1–8. In the beginning verses notice God’s disappointment with Israel’s lack of gratitude for God’s many saving acts. Toward the end of the passage, the prophet reminds the people again of what is required. God expects the people to work for justice as an act of gratitude.

Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clip listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not assume all computers will communicate with all projectors, or that a problem can be remedied in just a few minutes.

Put the words to “What Does the Lord Require of You?” on newsprint or a whiteboard. (You may want to change the word “Lord” to “God” to be more inclusive. Others also change the word “you” to “us,” which includes the whole community of faith as they sing together.) If you feel you need assistance teaching a song, invite someone to visit and help with this.

Supplies:

- Bible
- computer with Internet access
- video: “What Does the Lord Require of You?” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2Q-xgxMv2A>.
- (optional) video: “What Does the Lord Require of You?” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp74izW8y1o&feature=player_embedded (a version with a bell choir introduction)
- song lyrics printed on newsprint or a whiteboard: “What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.” (version written by Jim Strathdee)

Read Micah 6:8 to the children, and tell them you will teach them a song that has the same words. Read the words you printed on the newsprint or whiteboard, and ask the children to read along with you the second time through. Then play the video for them and ask them to listen to the tune. Invite the children to sing along. Point out they may have heard this during times when their church sings together.

Ask how they think kindness might be connected to justice. Explain the word “humbly,” if they are not sure of its meaning. Sing the song again, and ask for God’s blessing as the children try to live up to God’s request.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 The Librarian of Basra (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the children’s storybook *The Librarian of Basra* from your local library or inexpensively from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for the availability of good used copies. Visit the online article listed below to learn more about Alia Muhammed Baker, the heroine of this true story. Alia became the librarian at the new library that was built in Basra. When fighting and looting broke out in Basra and the government moved its office into her library, Alia became keenly aware of the injustice of robbing the Iraqi people of their books, the repository of their history, culture,



and ideas. By working with her neighbors and friends, she worked for a better outcome for her readers. This story can help children relate to the ongoing stories of war that flood our news. The humanness of Alia and her struggle to save books can help children connect with children in war-torn areas and break down the idea of “otherness.”

Supplies:

- book: *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* by Jeanette Winter (Harcourt, 2005)
- article: “Alia Muhammad Baker—Chief Librarian of Al Basrah (Iraq),” <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art27329.asp>

Explain to the children that you will share with them a book that tells a true story. Emphasize that this librarian was so committed to helping people learn that she enlisted the help of shopkeepers, a neighboring restaurant owner, and her family and friends to hide as many books as possible as war swept through the city. Alia felt that it was unfair to the people of the city to lose these tools for learning. At great personal risk, many people joined Alia and managed to save about 70 percent of the books in the library.

Listen to the children’s comments about this story. Ask questions such as these:

- Why do you think Alia did such a thing?
- Why did she think it was important to save the books?
- What might have happened if Alia and her friends had been caught moving the books?
- Do you think Alia could have saved the books all by herself? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to have books?
- Can you think of other times when people gather in groups and work together to get work done that they couldn’t do all by themselves?

Sometimes, whole groups of people will take chances when it is important to make difficult decisions about helping other people. Working for justice can be hard work, and sometimes dangerous. But it is important work that God wants us to do.



③ Dove of Peace

Leader preparation: Gather the supplies listed below to make white doves. Study the “Instructions for Making a Peace Dove” as well as the two patterns for the wings/tail and for the bird’s body. If you have sufficient lead time, it is always best to teacher-test activities ahead of time.

A white dove appears in the story of Noah’s Ark and symbolizes peace at the end of the storm. The dove also is a reminder of Jesus’ baptism, when the gospel writer describes the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the manner of a dove. These are widely recognized as peace symbols and figure in other world religions as well.

The children can make this dove and attach a string or ribbon for displaying the doves in the church building as a gift to the congregation. Arrange with the pastor for a suitable place to hang the children’s gifts, perhaps in a window area or in the fellowship hall where people can view them. Nearby the hanging doves, post a small sign that indicates the gift of the peace doves was from your group of learners.

**Supplies:**

- “Instructions for Making a Peace Dove,” Attachment: Activity 8a
- “Dove Body Pattern,” Attachment: Activity 8b
- “Wing and Tail Pattern,” Attachment: Activity 8c
- card stock, white (one 8.5” x 11” piece per bird)
- white office paper (one 8.5” x 11” piece per bird)
- scissors, pointed for leader use
- scissors, blunt for children to use
- string or yarn or wide ribbon for hanging
- clear tape
- (optional) markers, glitter glue

Gather the children at a work table and show them the sample dove you constructed. Ask them if they remember any Bible stories that include a white dove. A child may recall Noah and the Ark, but he or she might not remember the Spirit’s descent “like a dove” at the time of Jesus’ baptism. Tell the children that, in both cases, the symbol represents the spirit of God and peace and hope for the future.

Help each child make his or her own Dove of Peace by following the instructions on the attachment “Instructions for Making a Peace Dove.”

**9 Embrace of Peace**

Leader preparation: Study “Embrace of Peace” by George Tooker. Tooker is a living American artist. Many of his works are considered spiritual in nature, and many portray a variety of injustices in society. Learn more about the artist by reading an online article written by Ed Voves called “George Tooker at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts” (listed in the Supplies below).

Use the questions below, along with your own, to assist the children in examining this painting. Accept all comments from the children that are reasonable, remembering that only rarely do we know for sure the mind and heart of the artist. Answers to your questions will depend on how the children react at the time and will be influenced by whatever knowledge and life experiences they bring to the task of observing and reflecting on the work of an artist.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Embrace of Peace” by George Tooker, https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1801449515?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15626&store_id=1401
- article: “George Tooker at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,” <http://calitreview.com/2609>

Display the artwork for the children to see. Tell the children that this picture is called “Embrace of Peace.” Ask the children what colors they see in the picture. Take a slow pace, and listen to the ideas the children offer. Use questions such as these in leading a discussion of the painting.

- What do you see in the picture?
- What do you think is going on here? (Have the children take turns sharing what they see happening.)
- What are the characters in the picture feeling? (Take turns sharing.)
- What do you think the artist was feeling or thinking when he was creating this picture?
- Are the characters men or women or children?



- Who do you think they might be?
- What would you have named this picture if you had made it yourself?
- What do you like about this picture? What don't you like about this picture?
- What does this picture have to do with peace and justice?

Be very careful to accept the children's comments and thoughts. Refrain from telling them that their ideas are wrong. Should their responses turn silly, redirect their attention to the questions being asked.

Reflect

Consider the range of images of justice that were presented to the children. Which ones could they relate to best? Ponder the depth of some of their comments and questions. Can you see trickles of hope that they will mature into justice-loving people of faith? Give thanks for the privilege of watching children explore and grow and blossom.

Attachment: Activity 4

The Wisdom of King Solomon

One day, two women went to see King Solomon for help with a serious problem. They brought with them a little baby boy, who was only a few weeks old. “My King,” said the first woman, “this little baby belongs to me. This other woman stole him from me while I was asleep, because her own baby had just died. Now she says that this baby is hers. But he is not. This baby is mine!”

The second woman started screaming and crying. She said, “You are lying. This is not your baby boy—he is my baby!”

The first woman replied, “That is not true. I am telling you the truth. It was her baby that died, and she swapped them in their beds. This little baby is mine.”

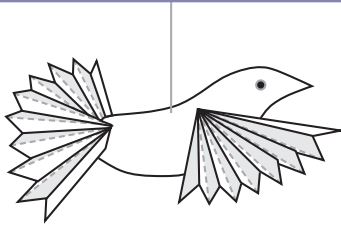
King Solomon listened carefully and watched the women as they screamed and cried and argued. Finally he said to his helper, “Bring me a sword! And cut this baby into two pieces. Then each woman can have half!”

When she heard this, the second mother shrugged and seemed not to care. She said, “Divide the baby, and it shall be neither mine or yours.”

But the first mother begged and pleaded with the king. She said, “No, no, don’t do that! Let her have him if she must, but please, please, do not hurt my son!”

Then the king spoke to his helper: “Put away the sword. Do not hurt this baby. Now we know which woman is really his mother. The real mother wanted this baby to live, even if she had to give him up. Now the baby boy will live happily with his own loving mother.”

Attachment: Activity 8a



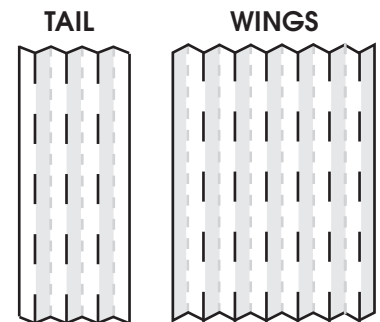
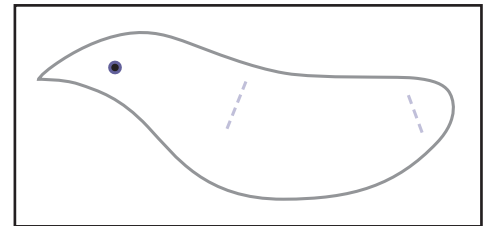
Instructions for Making a Peace Dove

Supplies

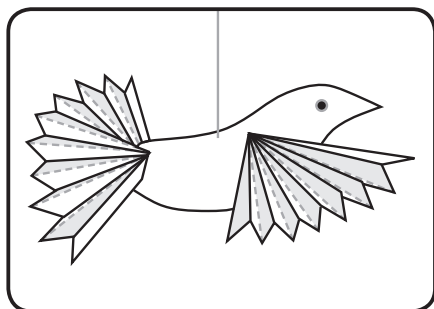
- white cardstock 8½" × 11", one piece for each bird
- white copy paper 8½" × 11", one sheet for each bird
- scissors
- one-eighth-inch ribbon, or string or yarn
- clear tape
- (optional) markers, glitter glue

Procedure

1. Copy the pattern of the bird's body—from "Dove Body Pattern," Attachment: Activity 8b—onto the cardstock. Cut out the pattern.
2. Before the children arrive, cut slits on the two dotted lines on the bird's body. These slits will be for the wings and tail.
3. Print the pattern for the wings and tail, from "Wing and Tail Pattern," Attachment: Activity 8c. Use lightweight copy paper for this pattern. One sheet for each dove.
4. Cut the pattern for the wings and tail along the line indicated.
5. Fold each piece like an accordion using the dotted lines as folding guides. Squish each one tightly together.
6. When folded, one half will be the wings, and the other half will be the tail.
7. Insert the tightly folded paper into the slits in the bird's body. The slit closest to the bird's eye is for the wings. The other tightly folded piece, inserted into the other slit, becomes the tail.
8. Slide the folded paper in far enough so that equal amounts of folded paper stick out of both sides of the bird's body.



Fold each piece like an accordion, using the dotted lines as folding guides. Squish each piece tightly together.



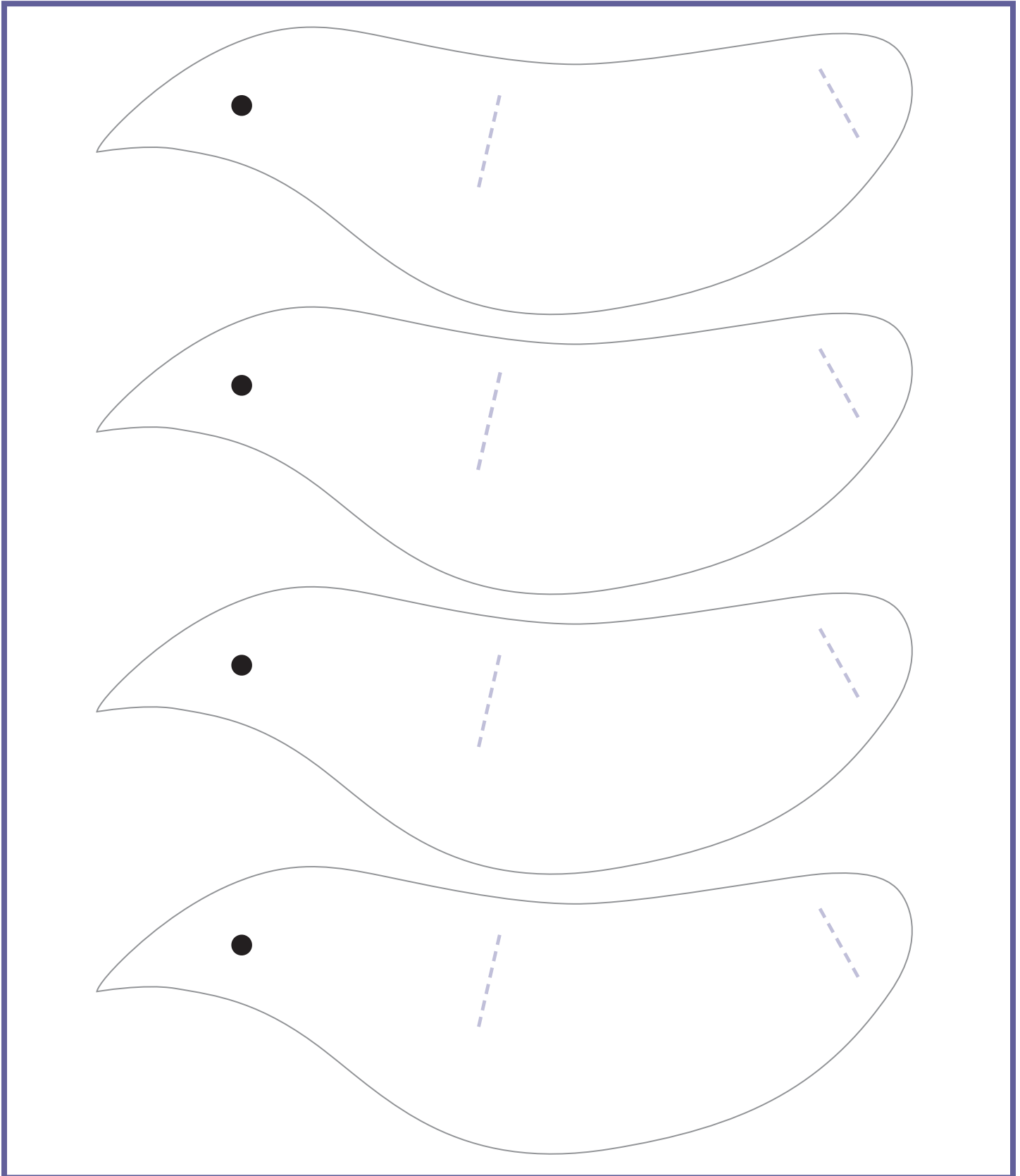
9. Secure the wings with clear tape to hold them in place.
10. Tape the ends of the tail feathers together making a fan shape.
11. Draw eyes on the dove.
12. To hang the dove, tape string, yarn, or ribbon to the center of the back of the dove.
13. (optional) Decorate the dove with markers or glitter glue.

Note: Only one side of the dove is visible, showing only the right half of the wing pattern. The paper with the wing pattern runs through the dove's body to make a left wing on the other side.

The tail has already been pushed through the rear slit and taped into a fan shape.

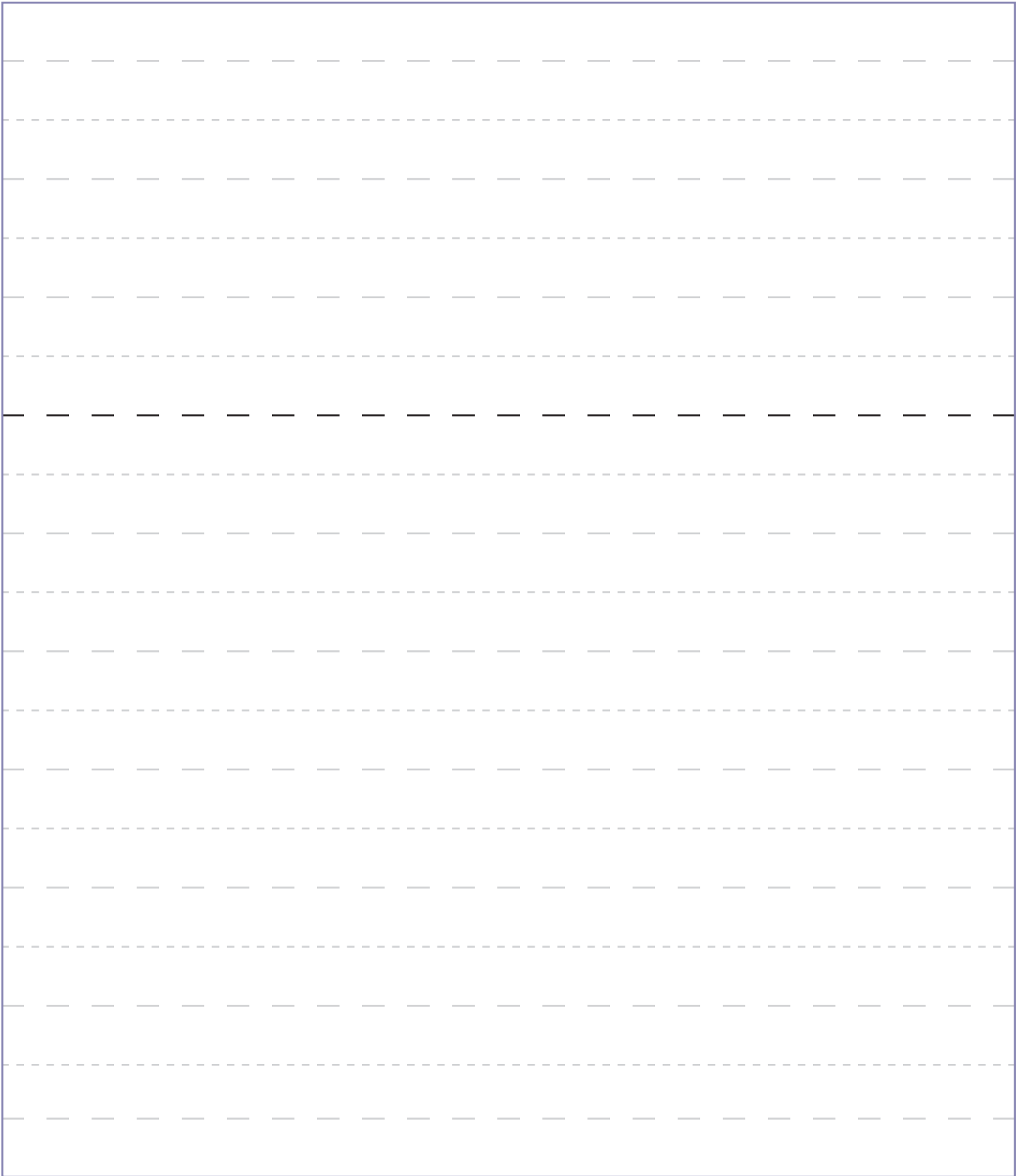
Attachment: Activity 8b

Dove Body Pattern



Attachment: Activity 8c

Wing and Tail Pattern



Working for Justice



Exploration: Discipleship

About this Age Group

These little concrete thinkers will latch on easily to the sheep imagery in the passage from John. The idea of following Jesus' example will be comfortable as well because they know Jesus as a strong, loving friend and God as a caring presence and loving protector.

About this Exploration

When Jesus bids us come and follow, what does he mean? It means following Jesus in justice work. Disciples are invited to practice their faith by making conscious choices, exploring ideas, and acquiring skills for the lives to which Jesus calls us. The activities in this exploration lead disciples to ask: How do our daily plans and routines show our commitment to working for justice?

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Jeremiah 14:7–10, 19–22
John 10:11–18

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive and welcoming space for your children. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. Consider taping several footprints, cut from several colors of paper, along the floor, up the wall, and out the door. Lay a few at the center of your worship/story space. A full week before you meet the children again, review your plans for that next session. Gather and prepare needed supplies ahead of time, so everything is ready to go.

Spend time thinking about the Jeremiah and John passages. Jeremiah 14:22 suggests that we set our hope on God, who will lead us as we follow faithfully on a path of honorable living. The passage from John is a story of the good shepherd who cares for all the sheep, knows each one by name, and cares for them equally. The images of feet and following appear several times in this Exploration.

Continue the use of songs and poster art from past activities as you experience the remaining Explorations. They serve as reminders and reinforcements of recent peace and justice concepts and engagements.

Prayer: Traveling God, always on the move, guide our feet as we explore and decide and serve together. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities

1 The Good Shepherd (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read John 10:11–18. In this story about the Good Shepherd, Jesus teaches about the importance of the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. The good shepherd, as opposed to the hired helper, is the one who goes the extra mile and beyond to care for those in his care. Justice work requires the same thing. Although the Jeremiah passage is a difficult one for younger children, there are some verses about their names and God’s care for the people of God. You might include these as well: Jeremiah 14: 8a, 9b, 22b. As you share this story with the children, consider changing the word “Father,” in verses 15 and 18, to the word “God,” in the interest of inclusivity.

If possible, locate a picture of Jesus tending some sheep or carrying one. Look around your church, in your church library, in a children’s Bible storybook, or in old curriculum. If you have sufficient lead time, you can find more facts about sheep at the online article listed below.

Supplies:

- (optional) a picture of Jesus with some sheep
- Bible
- straws, one for each child
- small cotton balls
- masking tape
- a tile floor, or a damage-resistant tabletop
- (optional) article: “All about Sheep for Kids” (background information), <http://www.kiddyhouse.com/Farm/Sheep/>
- (optional) a stuffed lamb toy

If possible, locate a picture of Jesus tending some sheep or carrying one. Look around your church, in your church library, in a children’s Bible storybook, or in old curriculum. Show the children the picture of Jesus tending some sheep or carrying one, and help them describe a shepherd. Help them to understand that a shepherd is someone whose job is to take care of sheep. Sheep cannot take care of themselves. They need someone to help them find good grass to eat and clean water to drink. The sheep need someone to protect them from attack by wild animals and to keep them away from cliffs and dangerous places.

Jesus said that he knew his sheep, each one of them, and his sheep knew him. He said he was even willing to lay down his life for his sheep. Jesus *really* loved his sheep. Share verses 11–18 with the children. If you have a stuffed lamb, hold it while you tell the story. After the story, listen to the children’s comments. Ask:

- Why do you think that sheep need to be watched so closely? (Note that sheep are easily frightened, run away, and are not easy to control.)
- How do you think the sheep knew Jesus?
- How could they recognize Jesus from any other shepherd? Was it by the sound of his voice or by the way he looked?
- How was Jesus able to tell his sheep apart? How could he remember which sheep was which?

Explain that Jesus cared so much for each sheep and knew them so well that he

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

found ways to sort them out and recognize each one. In the same way, we learn which of our friends are good or bad friends by the way they act and sound.

Play a game. On a damage-resistant tabletop or a tile floor, outline a medium sized area with masking tape to serve as a sheep pen. Leave 4–5 “gates” for the sheep to enter and exit. Ask each child to pretend to be a shepherd. Give each child a straw and a sheep (cotton ball). Place the cotton ball on the table, and have the children practice blowing through the straw, trying to move the sheep around the table. Ask the children to try to get their sheep into the pen without touching it with their hands. Then give each child another “sheep.”

Observe out loud how difficult it is to care for sheep and to get them to go where you want them to—just like real sheep. Once the sheep begin to collect near the pen, ask whether the children still know which sheep is theirs. *Are the sheep getting mixed up?* Comment on how difficult it must have been for Jesus to keep track of each animal and to know which sheep needed his attention. Jesus managed to do this because he loved them all and could tell them all apart. Remind the children that as disciples working for justice, we need to pay close attention to who in our world needs our help and our attention in matters of fairness and justice and compassionate care.

2 Feet that Follow

Leader preparation: Footprints are a reminder of the action of disciples who follow the path of Jesus. Plan this activity in a space with a tile floor or outside in a sidewalk or roped-off area of the parking lot. Plan to post the final product on a bulletin board, in the hallway, or even on a ceiling somewhere. After the paint is dry, use a large marker to add a message that says: “Guide Our Feet While We Work for Justice,” “Guide Our Feet While We Run This Race,” or something of your own choosing. You may want to recruit a few helpers for this session to help hold the hand of each “painting” child as he or she steps into the paint, walks along the paper, steps off into the soapy water, steps into the rinse water, and steps out onto a waiting towel. This activity can be slippery. Take whatever precautions are needed, given your kind of floor.

Supplies:

- tempera paint (2–3 colors)
- large disposable aluminum cake pans or roasting pans
- roll of paper (butcher, shelf, art paper, paper to cover church supper tables, or cut-up brown bags)
- masking tape (to hold the paper in place on the floor or driveway/sidewalk)
- square plastic dishpan of warm soapy water (to wash feet)
- square plastic dishpan of clear water (to rinse feet)
- a few big towels (to dry feet)

If you do this activity indoors, put down a drop cloth to protect your floor.

Cut a long sheet from a roll of paper, which will become the canvas for the children’s footprints. Tape down the paper to prevent slipping.

Pour a small amount of paint into the aluminum pans, one color per pan. Place the pans of paint at the starting end of the paper. At the far end of the paper, place towels as well as dishpans of soapy and rinse water. Put a few chairs at the end as well, for feet drying and shoe and sock replacement.

Have the children remove their shoes and socks and leave them at the far end of



the paper strip. Move the children to the starting place. Tell the children they will each get a turn to step into the paint and walk the length of the paper. They may choose a color. Tell the children that the paint will be slippery and they must not run. For safety reasons, a helper will hold their hands and walk alongside the paper as they go.

Have each child, in turn, step into the paint and wiggle her or his feet just enough to coat the bottoms. Then the child may walk down the paper, leaving footprints as she or he walks. Remember that no children should be allowed to walk through the paint or paper without assistance. Make sure you monitor your children, because children have a tendency to want to run across the paper.

When each child reaches the end of the paper, hold her or his hand as the child steps first into the soapy water dishpan. Tell the children to use their hands to loosen the paint from their feet. After using the soapy water, the child should then step carefully into the rinse water, swish the feet around a little, and then step onto a waiting towel. Each child can dry her or his feet with the towel and put socks and shoes back on.

When everyone has had a turn, admire the handiwork. Plan to hang it up after it is dry.

When we work together, we can accomplish great things. When we work together for justice, just imagine the amazing things that could happen in the world!

3 Amistad

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the children's picture storybook *Amistad: The Story of a Slave Ship*. You can find this book in your local library or order it early from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for used copies in good condition, available at reduced prices.

This is a story of particular interest to congregations of the United Church of Christ, because it is a tale from denominational history. It is also a great story for all people of faith who rejoice and give thanks when justice prevails over oppression and when right conquers wrong and slaves are freed. For further information about the *Amistad*, read *Amistad: the Slave Uprising aboard a Spanish Schooner* by Helen Kromer. Be prepared to help the children claim this story as part of their own faith history and appreciate that this particular tale is true and the workers for justice were their very own ancestors in the faith.

Supplies:

- book: *Amistad: The Story of a Slave Ship* by Patricia McKissack (Grosset and Dunlap, 2005)
- (optional) book: *Amistad: the Slave Uprising aboard a Spanish Schooner* by Helen Kromer (Pilgrim Press, 1997)
- (optional) film: (related resource for the leader but not for children) *Amistad* (1997), directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Morgan Freeman, Nigel Hawthorne, and Anthony Hopkins

Tell the children that you have a true story to share with them. This is a story that happened more than 170 years ago right here in the United States. The helpers in this story were people who worked very hard for justice. Note that the Mende language is the language of Sierra Leone and parts of Liberia in western Africa. Read the story and share the pictures with the children. Ask them how they felt



when they were listening to the beginning of the story. In discussing this story, use questions such as the following.

- What happened in this story?
- Why did it happen?
- Was it fair or unfair? Why or why not?
- How do you think the slaves felt when they were chained up in the bottom of the ship?
- How do you think the lawyer felt when they couldn't understand the Mende language?

Share with the children this interesting story about how they found a translator.

While the Mende slaves were in jail, they taught their lawyer and some friends how to count from 1 to 10 in the Mende language. Then the lawyer went down to the shipyard where the boats come in and where there were lots of workers from many different countries. The lawyer walked through the crowds of workers and counted out loud from 1 to 10 in the Mende language. Finally one ship worker heard him and recognized his own language. His name was James Covey and he could speak both Mende and English. Mr. Covey then helped translate for the Mende men, and the lawyers were finally able to understand that the Mende people had been kidnapped. After that, the lawyer could conduct a defense for the slaves.

Conclude the discussion with these questions.

- When the trial was over, how did the judge rule?
- How do you think everyone felt then?

Explain that freedom and some justice came for the Mende slaves, and they returned to their families in Africa. But twenty more years went by before the United States passed a law making it illegal to own slaves. Only then was there some justice for people who had been slaves.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 The Good Samaritan (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read Luke 10:25–37, the familiar story of the Good Samaritan. Be sure to read verses 34b and 35 carefully. Consider that as Jesus was telling this story he might have legitimately asked a different question from the one in verse 36. This is a new question that your children can answer correctly, if they listen very closely: How many people acted as a neighbor to the beaten-up man? Ponder the answer as you prepare this session. Be prepared to help the children also understand the selfless act of the innkeeper, who trusted that the Samaritan would someday return and settle the bill.

Supplies:

- Bible
- marker and newsprint or whiteboard

Share this familiar parable that all but your youngest children may have heard before. Ask them to listen for a different ending to the story. Write the words



“Good Samaritan” on the newsprint or whiteboard. Explain to the children that Samaritans were people who were not liked by the people of Israel. Even though the Samaritans worshiped the same God, they had their own temple away from Jerusalem. Samaritans were a mixed-race people and therefore not accepted by the people of Israel. Samaritans were discriminated against unfairly, and life was hard for them in that part of the country.

Now read the Luke 10:25–37 to the children. Be slow and deliberate as you read verses 34b and 35, letting the children watch you puzzle over it. Invite the children to listen carefully to the part about the innkeeper. When the story is over, ask:

- How many people ignored the beaten-up man and walked away?
- Who were they?
- How many people took the time to help the injured man?

Help the children to understand that both the beaten-up man and the innkeeper trusted the Samaritan and saw him as a helpful neighbor. Note for the children that the story ends before we find out what happened. Say:

- I wonder if the beaten-up man healed from his wounds.
- I wonder if the Samaritan ever returned to the inn to check on the injured man and pay the rest of the bill.

Give plenty of time for their responses. Then ask: *How many people were working for justice in this story?*



5 “Shotgun Third Ward”

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of “Shotgun Third Ward” by artist John Biggers. Study this painting of homes in the predominantly African American Third Ward community of Houston, Texas. Biggers once lived there, and he used his gifts as an artist to lift up and communicate some of the universal spirit of people of African heritage, whether they are in Africa, Haiti, or the Southern United States. Note the images of shotgun houses, the wheel, and the candle, images that are repeated in several of Biggers’ later paintings. Some commentators have noticed the children frolicking while the church burns; perhaps they are playing in the water. The preacher is facing the people and holding a candle of hope for the future, while part of the community is being destroyed.

One explanation for the name “shotgun house” is that one could fire a shotgun through the front door, through the internal doorways, and right out the back door in line with it. To learn more about these shotgun houses, visit the websites below. Although shotgun houses were once considered a mark of poverty, they were quite efficiently built to aid in air circulation, given the close proximity one to another, and they were ornamented on the front porch area in a very distinctive manner. The close proximity of the houses must have increased the fire danger. The front porches for visiting aided in the building of community among neighbors. These homes have an interesting history and are now being restored and preserved in many Southern cities.

Prepare to welcome reflections from the children as they look at this artwork. Don’t impose too much on them. Rather, let them “listen” to the picture for themselves.

**Supplies:**

- artwork: “Shotgun Third Ward” by John Biggers, https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1801449515?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=17101&store_id=1401
- about the poster and artist: http://americanart.si.edu/search/artist_bio.cfm?ID=414
- (optional) about shotgun houses: <http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/construction/planning/shotgun-house.htm> or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shotgun_house

Show the children “Shotgun Third Ward,” and give them a minute to study the details. Ask questions such as the following.

- What colors do you see?
- What is happening in this picture?
- What are the people doing?
- How do you think they are feeling? Why?
- How are the children feeling?
- What do you think this picture has to do with fairness and justice?
- Suggest that the children find someone in the picture who is facing front. See if they can identify him as the preacher of the burning church. (He wears a collar.) What does he have in his hand? What do you think that means?

Explain that when people follow Jesus and become disciples, the work they do for justice feels like an offering of hope to the people who are helped. Perhaps the candle the preacher is holding is a candle of hope. Perhaps its light shining in the darkness offers hope and peace for the future.

6 Not Just Your Old Musical Chairs

Leader preparation: Be sure there are enough chairs in the room to accommodate the anticipated number of children and any visitors. Test the music and music player, and decide ahead of time which bands you will play for the game. When children arrive, play the game twice, the first time using conventional rules. Notice that the directions for the second game are different. The goal of a group game such as this is to have fun together without being competitive and without having some children feeling left out. This second game differs from the conventional rules, and the children may try to correct your instructions. You will *not* remove chairs, and there will *always* be a seat for everyone.

Supplies:

- movable chairs
- music
- music player

Invite the children to play a game of musical chairs, and ask them to figure out how many chairs will be needed for the game. Let the children arrange the chairs back-to-back in a line, allowing enough space for children to march around the chairs when the music starts. Remove one of the end chairs. Remind them that when the music stops, each child should hurry to find a seat and then sit in it. Use the conventional rules for musical chairs. If you have a large group, remove two chairs during each round (in the interest of time).

Then play the game a second time. Without comment, make sure there are an equal number of chairs and children. After two or three times through, expect



that some children will notice that the rules are different from the way they usually play the game—no chairs have been removed and no one is “out.” Tell them that this is a new version of the game and proceed. Notice their reactions. Ask them if they are having fun. Ask them how this game is different. If they do not notice the change in rules, then mention that by playing this new way, everyone can play throughout the whole game. No one is left standing on the sidelines, waiting for the game to be over. There will not be just one “winner” at the end. No one is left out of the action and fun, and everybody wins together. *Which game is more fun? Which rules seem more fair and just?*

After the game, talk about which rules they like best, the old rules or the new rules. Ask why. *What does it feel like to have to wait on the sidelines? What does it feel like to have several children lose the game when only one child can possibly win? Ask them to tell about a time when they were left out of something or not allowed to be part of the group. How did that feel? What can we do to help others feel included?*

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Christ Has No Body (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read the attachment, which was written by Teresa of Avila, who lived nearly 500 years ago. Consider how this reading might help the children understand that not only does God expect people to work for justice but God also actually *needs* children and adults to do this important work.

Supplies:

- “Christ Has No Body,” Attachment: Activity 7
- drawing paper
- markers

Gather the children and ask them to describe what a disciple is. After providing time for their responses, help them understand that in the Christian church a disciple is a follower of Jesus. Following the example of Jesus’ friends and disciples many years ago, we, too, can help to do God’s work in the world today. There are many, many ways to be a good disciple, and one of those ways is to work for justice.

Share with the children the reading by Teresa of Avila. Read it slowly and deliberately, and have them wiggle their feet and hands and eyes when they hear the words of Teresa. Tell them Teresa wrote these words to help people understand that not only does God require us to work for justice in the world, but God actually *needs* us to be helpers. Now that Jesus is no longer living here on the earth, his disciples are the ones who need to get busy with God’s work. We must use our minds, our bodies, our eyes and ears, our voices and our hearts if the work for justice is to get done.

Give the children some drawing paper and some markers, and ask them to choose one body part that they can use to help work for justice. Then have them draw a picture of themselves using that body part to do some kind of work that helps make life more fair and just. As they draw, ask them to explain their pictures.



8 Tsunami

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the children’s storybook *Tsunami* by Kimiko Kajikawa from your local library, or inexpensively from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for the availability of good used copies at reduced prices.

Visit the website listed below to learn more about this true story. Ojiisan, the hero, is based on a real person named Hamaguchi Goryou, who led the people of his little Japanese village to safety by setting fire to his own rice fields. Once Ojiisan noticed from his house high on the mountain that tsunami waves were threatening his village, he had to make the hard decision to do the right thing, to do what was fair, and to try to save the lives of as many people as possible. Ojiisan could not forget what he had seen—the wave pulling back from the shoreline. It would have been dishonest to pretend there was no danger. He was compelled to take action. For background information, go to this website: <http://www.town.hirogawa.wakayama.jp/inamuranohi/english/siryogoryo.html>.

Supplies:

- book: *Tsunami* by Kimiko Kajikawa (Philomel Books, 2009)

Show the children the book that you will share with them. Read the name to them. Ask if anyone knows what a “tsunami” is. If they do not, explain it to them. Then tell them that the name *Ojiisan* means “grandfather” in Japanese. Share the story with the children, showing them the pictures and drawing attention to the collage-style artwork. The pictures were made by gluing different kinds of paper on a background to make a picture.

- Why do you think the villagers call him the man Ojiisan? Where does he live?
- What is going on in the village? What is going on with Ojiisan? How is it different?
- How do the villagers react to the changing sea? What does Ojiisan do when he sees the tsunami?
- What does Ojiisan do to get the villagers to move to safety?
- What do the villagers think when Ojiisan burns his rice fields? What do the children think about Ojiisan’s action?
- What is most important to Ojiisan?

Ask each child to name a special person in his or her life and tell what that person does to help them or to help other people. Explain that we are each called to be ready to be a special person for someone else when that person needs help in big ways and in small ways. When God calls us to be disciples, we cannot turn and look away from work that needs to be done. We cannot take the easy way out, but we must be ready to follow the teachings of Jesus and help other people who are in need.

9 “Guide My Feet”

Leader preparation: Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. Write the words to the song on newsprint or a whiteboard. If you feel you need assistance teaching a song, invite someone with musical skills to visit and help with this.

Supplies:

- song: “Guide My Feet”; words and music: <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>; YouTube video: <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong20>
- song lyrics on a newsprint or a whiteboard for “Guide My Feet” (African American traditional)

Tell the children you will teach them a song that was important to the African American people in our country when they were struggling to be allowed to vote in elections. “Guide My Feet While I Run This Race” helped them to focus on the larger picture and remain calm during that struggle for justice. It was important to the Civil Rights marchers. Discuss the history of this song with the children, reminding them that there was a time when African Americans were not allowed to vote in elections. Read the words out loud with the children, modeling the rhythm of the song as you read. Discuss the meaning of the song’s lyrics. Let the children hear the tune by going to the first website listed above. Then try to sing the song together. If possible, add the verse “Wheel with me,” which acknowledges different ways of following.

Access YouTube and have the children hear a choir sing the song. Note the slower pace. Invite the learners to sing along softly while listening to the singers. Ask the children if they can create new verses for this song, such as:

- Guide my feet, while I go to school.
- Guide my hands, while I play with friends.
- Guide my mind, while I work for peace.

Once the children have the tune, invite them to march around the room while they sing—even out the door if they won’t disturb anyone. If possible, teach them the verse written by school children about “Wheel with me, as I run this race,” which includes people who, by necessity, navigate the justice road in an alternative way.

Option: Another good justice book containing imagery about feet and friendship is *Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Karen L. Williams and Khadra Mohammed (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007).

Reflect

Give thanks for the time you spent with the children following in the way of Jesus. Hear as God continues to call you to this ministry. In what ways did the children catch the idea of movement as they discerned what it means to follow Jesus’ example? Justice workers are always on the move. Take note of what the children enjoyed the most, and reflect on the moving questions and comments that they made.

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Attachment: Activity 7

Christ Has No Body
by Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Born in Spain, Teresa of Avila entered a Carmelite convent when she was eighteen. She later earned a reputation as a mystic, reformer, and writer who experienced divine visions. She founded a convent and wrote the book *The Way of Perfection* for her nuns. Other important books by her include her *Autobiography* and *The Interior Castle*.

Working for Justice



Exploration: Christian Tradition

About this Age Group

Children at this age do not have much sense of history beyond the stories they hear of the lives of the elders in their families, neighborhoods, and churches. Timelines are confusing and the passage of hundreds of years is a mystery. These children are, however, tuned into the most frequent rituals, the predictable cycle of seasonal colors and symbols, the unfolding of the order of worship and its components, the singing of songs in praise of God.

They also see and understand the repeated collection of food for the hungry, clothing for the poor, the always-present recycle bins, and the extravagant welcome offered to visitors. They know from experience that these are some of the practices that people of faith do. They see and comprehend justice in action in the present.

About this Exploration

In working for justice, as in everything, our past is our prologue. Christian tradition calls the church to confess its participation in the creation and perpetuation of injustice. It also calls us to celebrate as Christian people who claim and test our heritage through doing the work of justice. Grounded in this history, we follow God's leading and discover new ways to practice our faith working for justice.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Psalms 34:15–22
Ephesians 2:11–22

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive and welcoming space for your children. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. A full week before you meet the children again, review your plans for that next session. Gather and prepare needed supplies ahead of time, so everything is ready to go.

As you read through the passages from Psalms and Ephesians, notice the shift in thinking about the misdeeds of the past and a turning toward breaking down the walls of hospitality. Prepare to assist the children in engaging some stories and experiences that will add to their skills and abilities to discern and decide.

Add some peace symbols to your worship/story space, such as a white dove, an olive branch, and a peace symbol. Many fabric stores sell fabric imprinted with peace symbols that could be added as well.

Prayer: God, be present as I prepare these activities for the children. Guide me as I choose and present, as I lead and follow, as I guide and assist in their discovery. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Pow Wow How (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: This is an exercise that is often used with teens at a camp or retreat at the end of a very long day. It can be used after a long day working at anything—a CROP walk, a service day, a field trip, the end of vacation Bible school, or any time that children have been together for an extended period of time. Surprisingly, this works very well with younger children also, as they reflect appropriately for their developmental level. It is a device to help them learn to reflect on their day, to know that others will be quiet and truly listen to them, and to know they are assured of a safe space in which to speak.

An important skill in justice work is learning to truly listen to people as they reflect on their needs and their feelings of being treated unfairly and as they voice their hopes and dreams for the future.

Supplies: None

Gather the children in a quiet circle. Be sure they are seated comfortably. You might read them a short story or sing a quiet song with them before you start Pow Wow How. Tell the children that the group will learn how to do Pow Wow How, and each child will have a turn to speak without interruption and without comments. No one can say, “That’s stupid!” Explain how this works by doing it first yourself. First say, “My Pow today (or yesterday) was . . .” Then quietly tell something you did not like about the day. Then say, “My Wow today was . . .” Quietly tell what you thought was the very best thing about the day. Finally say, “How I was reminded of God today was . . .” Tell how or when or where you saw God today or were reminded of God’s love.

Go around the circle, or ask for a volunteer, but each child should have a turn to share a Pow, a Wow, and a How. Do all three in a row, and then move to another child. Often young children will say, “I didn’t have a Pow today.” That’s okay, just move on to the Wow.

It is okay to repeat something another child has already mentioned, because that may be another child’s opinion, too. As always, a child has the right to “pass.” Offer to come back to them later. Once you do this a few times, the children will easily fall into the rhythm of it. Be sure to help each child mention the three items without comments, interruptions, sneers, or put-downs. When a child finishes speaking, thank him or her for sharing with the group.



2 The Golden Rule

Leader preparation: Read Matthew 7:12, the Golden Rule. This traditional, oft-quoted maxim has become part of the ethics of society, and many don’t realize it is found in the Bible. The Golden Rule makes the message from Ephesians 2:11–22 a bit more accessible to younger children, because we help them engage the concept of peaceful relationships that can help bring us together as one world. Visit the “Religious Tolerance” website for a list of how the Golden Rule is presented in several other world religions. Older children might like to see those.

Think of some scenarios for the children to use for role plays in which they will apply the Golden Rule. A few are included on the attachment. You may want to create others more specific to your children and your community. Role-playing these scenarios will provide the children with a safe space to engage situations

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

and practice a response before a real need arises. Contemplating a best response will make an important difference in another person’s life.

Supplies:

- “Golden Rule Scenarios,” Attachment: Activity 2
- website: “Religious Tolerance,” for several versions of the Golden Rule, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc2.htm>
- marker and newsprint or a whiteboard
- Bible

Ask the children if they know what the Golden Rule is. Listen to their answers. Many have heard it but might not know it is in the Bible. Write Matthew 7:12 on newsprint or whiteboard: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (NRSV). The popular version of this is “Do to others what you want others to do to you.” Discuss with the children what that means.

Tell the children that you will read a description of a time when they might use the Golden Rule, and they are to figure out how to respond. Ask them to breathe deeply and to take time to think what they would do next. Then have them role-play what they have just described. Make up scenarios for the children to act out, or use the ones on the attachment. Mention to the children that sometimes the Golden Rule is stated backward, such as: “Don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you.” Explain that that rule has some value too, but all that is required is that you don’t harm other people. Jesus, however, states the rule in a positive frame and expects us to deliberately reach out and show kindness and just behavior to other people.

If you have time, consider talking about what the Golden Rule is *not* and what these character qualities look like. Role-play the same situations using poor choices in order to experience how badly such choices might make someone feel.

Explain that being intentional about thinking before we act and then making kind and helpful choices is important part of working for justice. It helps build understanding and trust between people, whether they live near or far away. If you think your children are capable of understanding it, you might also call their attention to Ephesians 2:14 and 15, in which Paul helps us to think about what the world would be like, with Jesus’ help, if we all cared for each other as one family.



3 Make a Peace Pole

Leader preparation: Read the introductory information and the history of the Peace Pole on the website “The Peace Pole Project,” <http://www.peacepole-project.org/>. Be prepared to share a brief history about Peace Poles with the children. You might locate one in your community and be able to tell the children it is located. Print a picture of a full sized Peace Pole to show the children.

Gather the materials listed below, and have someone cut the wood and drill the holes in advance of this session. Prepare the materials and take the time to put a Peace Pole together so that you know exactly how this works and you will have a model to show the children.

**Supplies:**

- prayer: “May Peace Prevail on Earth” (in 113 languages), <http://www1.ocn.ne.jp/~infinite/pages/Earth.htm>
- “Instructions for Making Individual Peace Poles,” Attachment: Activity 3
- sandpaper (fine grade)
- white glue
- language strips (see attachment instruction sheet for details)
- ¾" × ¾" square wood molding strip, 8–9" in length
- 3–4" diameter circular, square, or other-shaped wooden disk, ⅜"–¾" in thickness
- wood screw
- screwdriver
- paper towels

Show the children the miniature Peace Pole you constructed as a model. Explain the message on the Peace Pole, and tell the children that Peace Poles can be seen all over the world. Share other items of interest from the Peace Pole project website. Invite the children to make a small tabletop Peace Pole to take home. Follow the detailed instructions on the attachment.

When you are finished, pray together the prayer at the end of the attachment.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 A Matter of Perspective (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: This activity is an exploration of how misperception can lead to injustice and unfair assumptions about people and situations. When a person has insufficient information on which to base opinions, ill-informed conclusions can be reached that result in devastating actions. Prepare to help children explore how various people can have different perceptions and be correct both from their individual perspectives and in light of a host of variables in their life experiences.

Supplies:

- “Optical Illusion—Duck and Rabbit,” Attachment: Activity 4a
- “Optical illusion—Duck and Rabbit, Modern Graphic,” Attachment: Activity 4b
- (optional) colorblindness test: http://www.kalskivision.com/color_visiontesti.html

Invite the children to explore different ways of seeing things. Sometimes what we think we see isn’t always obvious to others. Sometimes two people looking at the same picture will see two different things—and both will be correct. Show the children the images of the duck and rabbit. Show them one at a time, and help the children understand that some of the group will easily see the duck, some will easily see the rabbit, and some will see both. Help all children see both animals, if possible.

Explain that if a person sees only one animal at a particular time, he or she is not wrong. It’s just one perspective. Help the children to understand that it would be unfair and unjust to tell a person he or she is wrong if the person can only see one of the animals.



Try to make a comparison to other situations in life, where people hold different opinions about something because they understand it differently, such as family disagreements, neighbors fighting over property lines, countries fighting over territory or water rights, political candidates arguing over healthcare reform, and companies and government agencies arguing over who caused the oil leak or who causes global warming. Sometimes people get into unnecessary arguments, battles, court cases, and even wars because sides get taken before everyone has complete information. In order to have peace in our families, our neighborhoods, our cities, our countries, and the world, it is important to learn as much as we can about one another so that there is better understanding of diversity. Explain that it is important to learn that it is okay to think and understand differently and that we don't have to all agree on every detail in order to live peacefully.

The more people know and understand about differences in the world, the greater the likelihood that people will treat one another respectfully, fairly, and justly.

5 Henry's Song

Leader preparation: Remembering Ephesians 2:11–22, especially verses 14–15, we will celebrate the breaking down of walls and hostilities that can separate people. A new humanity and a new way replace former practices, and peace becomes possible. On a young child's level, the storybook *Henry's Song* presents a similar theme. This story is about one kind of physical difference that functions as a separator. Henry cannot sing well. Prepare to link the idea of this story to the many other ways we are differently abled—sometimes permanently, sometimes temporarily.

Obtain a copy of the children's picture storybook *Henry's Song* by Kathryn Cave. You can find this book in your local library or order it early from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for used copies in good condition, available at reduced prices.

Supplies:

- book: *Henry's Song* by Kathryn Cave (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 1999)

Invite the children to listen to a story about a character who can't do well something he thought all his friends could do well. Then read the children the story about Henry. After the reading, lead a discussion with questions such as the following.

- Why are the animals singing?
- What about Henry?
- Who did you think of when the story mentioned the "Maker of All Things"?
- Why didn't they want Henry to sing?
- How would you answer the question that the Maker of All Things asked, "What are your voices for?"
- When the animals sang for God, they each stood in the center of the circle and each sang alone. How did God want them to sing? (Together!)
- When Henry and all the others sang together, what did God think then? (It was perfect!)

A wise person once wrote these words about music made by the forest creatures: "If all the birds in the forest sang exactly the same song, it wouldn't be nearly as



beautiful.” God wants us to work together and celebrate the gifts and talents that each person brings to the group, whether we are working for justice or singing a song or anything else that spreads God’s love in the world.



6 “Kopf”

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of “Kopf” by Joan Miro. Order early for timely arrival. For ease in display, pin the poster to a piece of foam core. A small easel or cork board would work as well. Notice the few but strong colors in this painting and the angular features of the “head” (translated from the German). Consider which emotions the children might see reflected in this painting. Think about how you might help the children move deeper beyond a simple “happy” or “sad” response.

Supplies:

- information about the artist Joan Miro, <http://joanmiro.com/style-of-joan-miro/>
- artwork: “Kopf” by Joan Miro https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1801449515?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15625&store_id=1401
- inexpensive paper plates (for making masks)
- popsicle sticks or tongue depressors (for mask handles)
- glue gun or stapler
- markers

Show the Miro painting to the children. Tell them that the name of the picture is “Kopf,” which is a German word meaning “head.” Ask the children what colors the artist used. Note that the artist did not use very many colors. Ask the children how they think the “head” is feeling. *Is it happy, sad, angry, puzzled, wondering, or maybe something else?* Point out that with only a few brush strokes and a few bold colors, the artist was able to communicate a strong emotion or feeling. Ask the children to “make a face” to match the expression on the “head.” *What emotion does it feel like when you make it with your own face? Look at the others in the group. Do they look like the “Head”? Do you see a different feeling or emotion across the table from you? What feeling do you see across the table on your neighbor’s face?*

Pass out paper plates and markers to make masks. Ask the children to try to draw a face on the mask that looks like the “head.” Try to do it with just a few bold strokes of your marker. Have them finish that face and then turn the plate over and make a mask with a peaceful expression. *What would a mask of peace look like?* When all have finished, look at everyone’s masks. *Which parts of the face are important if we are trying to figure out the feelings behind the face? Is it eyes, mouth, brow, hair?* You can help children attach a tongue depressor to the mask for a handle using a glue gun or a stapler.

Explain that when we work for justice, it is helpful to pay close attention to the expressions on the faces of people as we figure out how they are feeling about the justice or injustice in their lives.



Sending & Serving Activities

7 **Mystery Surprises (Easy Preparation)**

Leader preparation: Review Psalms 34:18. Sometimes the tiniest little surprise can lift the spirits of those who have been crushed or disappointed. Little surprises can lift anyone's spirit. Some surprises remain mysteries forever and keep the recipient wondering for years about the identity of their benefactor. This activity is reminiscent of the practice of hanging May Baskets, ringing the door bell, and then running away in hope of never being found out. It is also similar to having Secret Pals.

Supplies: None

Ask: *Why do we do things that are good?* (God will like it; it's the right thing to do; to make others happy.) *Is it possible to do good things in a bad way?* Mention that some people do nice things but for the wrong reasons. Sometimes they want to be thanked. Sometimes they want someone to do a favor back to them. Sometimes they want to get attention or be noticed. Other times they want to look good in front of other people. *Have you ever seen anyone do that at school?* Perhaps someone has done something helpful for the teacher and hopes to get a better grade. Explain that the Bible tells us that when we help others, we should do that for no other reason than just being kind and helpful.

Think about how you might do something nice for someone, without that person ever finding out it was you. Offer these suggestions:

- You could do an extra chore at home, without announcing to everyone that you did it.
- You could write a cheerful note, or draw a picture for someone without signing your name.
- You could leave flowers at your neighbor's door and run away before your neighbor sees you.
- You could rake your neighbor's leaves while the neighbor is away for the day, and he or she would never know who did that kind thing.

Adults can donate money to people and causes anonymously, without saying who sent it. Sometimes people will find out who did the surprise act, and that's okay. But sometimes the secret surprise stays a secret for many months or even years and no one ever finds out. Remember, if you do this no one will ever say "Thank you" to you, because they won't know which friend to thank. Just doing the kind act and making someone happy is enough.

If someone planned a nice secret surprise for you and you never found out who did it, what feelings would you have?

8 **"Singing for Our Lives"**

Leader preparation: Read Ephesians 2:11–22, especially verse 4 in which we are reminded that Jesus came to break down walls and hostilities between people. "Singing for Our Lives" was written in 1978 after the hate-crime assassination of George Moscone and Harvey Milk in San Francisco. The words were a gentle, angry call for justice for the gay and lesbian communities. Over the years, the verses have undergone spontaneous adaptation for many other injustices. People sing for the days when their lives will be free of hostility, fear, discrimination, and hate. Singing for justice is a way of working for justice.



Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clip listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not assume all computers will communicate with all projectors or that a problem can be remedied in just a few minutes.

Put the words to the song on newsprint or a whiteboard. If you feel you need assistance teaching a song, invite someone to visit and help with this.

Supplies:

- Bible
- song: “Singing for Our Lives” by Holly Near; lyrics, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21a>
- video: “Moscone Milk Memorial 2008—Holly Near,” <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21b>
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Read Ephesians 2:14 to the children, explaining that Jesus teaches us to lay aside the differences that divide us and calls us to work to build bridges of understanding and acceptance between people. One way to do that is to be open to learning about all the varieties of people in the world.

Read the song lyrics to the children and have them read along with you. Then show the YouTube clip of Holly Near singing this song. Invite the children to listen and then to sing along.

This song mentions people who are gentle and angry at the very same time. Ask the children if they can think of other times when people are gentle and angry at the same time. You might use examples such as when a small baby won’t stop crying, when adults go to the polls to vote, when people join a protest march for a cause that is important to them, when people participate in a sit-in or boycott, or when people attend a nonviolent protest meeting. Violence and wild anger are not helpful when people are working for peace and justice. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., are two famous justice workers who knew how to be angry and gentle at the same time.

Sing the song together again. Create another verse or two, mentioning other kinds of people who are singing for their lives.

9 Beatrice’s Goat

Leader preparation: Heifer International is an organization that for over 65 years has been providing farm animals to village people in need to help them become self-sufficient. This aligns with the philosophy that to offer immediate charity to those in need only solves the immediate problem. But the more efficient justice work is work that addresses the systemic cause of the problem. Heifer’s work is reminiscent of this Chinese proverb: “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.” Heifer not only provides farm animals but also training and community support. Visit the website listed below to learn more about Heifer Project.

Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clips listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do



not assume all computers will communicate easily with all projectors or that a problem can be remedied in just a few minutes.

Obtain a copy of the children's storybook *Beatrice's Goat* from your local library, or inexpensively from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for the availability of good used copies.

Supplies:

- website: "Heifer International," <http://www.heifer.org/>
- video: "A Youth Perspective on Heifer India," <http://www.youtube.com/HeiferInternational#p/a/u/2/Ur6JUqJDaTw>
- book: *Beatrice's Goat* by Page McBrier (Aladdin Paperbacks, Simon & Schuster, 2001)

Introduce the children to the Heifer Project. Describe the basic idea of it, and explain how people can help by buying animals that will be delivered to families that in need. Be sure the children understand that families who receive a goat or a water buffalo agree to give away one of the first offspring of that animal to another family who will get to raise and keep the baby animal.

Show the children two videos: "Heifer in 60 Seconds," a video found on the Heifer website, and "A Youth Perspective on Heifer India," a YouTube video narrated by a 13-year-old girl. This clip contains pictures of some cute little goats.

Then read the true story called *Beatrice's Goat*. Show the pictures, and then discuss the book with the children with questions such as the following.

- What did you like about this story?
- What surprised you about this story? (Perhaps that one little goat could make such a big difference!)
- Is it better to give a poor family in Uganda some money, or is it better to give them a goat? Why?

Explain that sometimes things happen in the world, like natural disasters, where immediate gifts of money and supplies are indeed necessary. But most times it is better to equip people to help themselves—by giving them their first farm animal, for instance. Sometimes working for justice means giving a family a goat or some chickens.

Reflect

Consider what went well, and celebrate. Notice how some strategies might have been adjusted to better meet the learning needs of the children. How can you get to know the children better as you navigate new territory together? Be grateful for opportunities to learn together.

Attachment: Activity 2

Golden Rule Scenarios

1. You are eating lunch at school with your friends, and you are telling them about the animals you saw at the zoo last weekend. Your friend interrupts and starts talking loudly about something else. She won't let you finish the story you started. What could you say to her?
2. A boy in your class is always getting into trouble, and you usually don't pay much attention to him. One day he asks you for help with a homework problem. You don't want to be around him, but you think he might not have any friends to help him. Maybe he needs help. What should you do?
3. There is a bully at school that you go out of your way to avoid. One day he trips you up for no reason as you walk by. Later, you see someone else shove him hard into a fence on the playground. What would you do?
4. When you get home from school, you find some freshly baked cookies cooling on a rack on the kitchen table. They smell so good, and no one is around. There are lots of cookies, and you think your mom will never miss one. Do you eat a cookie?
5. On the very first day that you have your new braces, a classmate calls you "metal mouth." What do you say to that classmate?

Attachment: Activity 3

Instructions for Making Individual Peace Poles

Materials for Each Child

- sandpaper (fine grade)
- white glue
- language strips (see below)
- the pole— $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " square wood molding strip, 8–9" in length
- the base—3–4" diameter circular, square, or other-shaped wooden disk, $\frac{3}{16}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ " in thickness
- one #6, 1" long, flathead wood screw
- screwdriver
- paper towels (to wipe off excess glue)

Preparation

1. Have someone pre-drill the holes prior to the construction session, as follows:
 - a. Drill a hole in the center of the base with a number 42 ($\frac{3}{32}$ ") drill bit.
 - b. Countersink the hole so that the head of the screw will sit flush with the surface of the base, so that the peace pole will not wobble when assembled.
 - c. Drill a hole in one end of the pole piece with a number 51 ($\frac{1}{16}$ ") drill bit, deep enough to accommodate the length of the screw.
2. Cut the language strips into 6–8" lengths and $\frac{5}{8}$ " widths.
 - a. See the online article "May Peace Prevail on Earth," <http://www1.ocn.ne.jp/~infinite/pages/Earth.htm>. Find a compilation of translations of the words that go on the Peace Pole. The English version is: "May Peace Prevail on Earth." From the 113 languages, choose 8–12 that match countries with which these young children might be familiar.
 - b. After you have identified the list of translations, copy and paste them onto the computer file you normally use. Then, using either your computer or a copy machine, enlarge or reduce those phrases to a size that will fit onto the Peace Pole.
- c. Print the phrases and cut them apart, creating language strips that can be glued to the poles. They should be just a little bit narrower than the $\frac{3}{4}$ " width of the pole—maybe $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide and 5–7" long, depending on the languages you choose. Have an ample supply of these language strips pre-cut for the children, so they can choose four languages to glue onto their Peace Poles.

Assembly

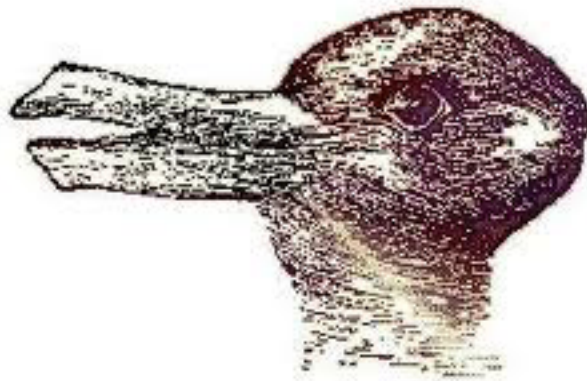
1. Give each child a base piece, a pole piece, and a small piece of fine sandpaper.
2. Show the children how to sand any rough edges on the pole and on the base piece.
3. Blow the loose dust from the wooden pieces.
4. Starting at the top of the pole, use white glue to glue the language strips to each of the four long sides of the pole. Make sure all four languages go in the same direction.
5. Insert the wood screw into the counter-sunk side of the base and affix to the pole at the pre-drilled end.
6. Tighten the screw until the base is flush with the pole.
7. Allow time for the glue to dry before handling the Peace Pole.

A Peace Pole Prayer

Each time you walk near a Peace Pole,
 feel a wave of peace come over you.
 Each time you see a Peace Pole,
 think a peaceful thought about a person who
 lacks peace.
 Each time you think of a Peace Pole,
 imagine a peaceful world.
 Amen.

Attachment: Activity 4a

Optical Illusion—Duck and Rabbit



Attachment: Activity 4b

Optical Illusion—Duck and Rabbit, Modern Graphic



Working for Justice



Exploration: Context and Mission

About this Age Group

Children this age are beginning to have questions about our world. They are inquisitive about the causes of things and ask many questions about how things work, why people act certain ways, and the purposes behind what they don't yet understand. Whether it is about the environment or human relationships, they are curious. From the power of stories discover more about who they are and where they belong. Their growing sensitivity moves them to find places to help and share.

About this Exploration

All are created in the image of God, children of God, unique and diverse in our own context. Jesus imagined a different reality from the one in which he lived. Jesus imagined the realm of God, rooted in love and justice. When working for justice, we see the face of God in others around us. God is angered by injustice, and we are called to respond. When we explore context and mission, we wake up to the just and unjust realities of our local communities and the world—and are called to action.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Proverbs 22:1-2,
8-9, 22-23
Romans 13:8-14

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive, and welcoming space for your children. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. A full week before you meet the children again, review your plans for that next session. Gather and prepare needed supplies ahead of time, so everything is ready to go.

The selected verses from Proverbs 22 lift up the treatment of the poor particularly and praise the work of those who are generous with them. In recent years, liberation theology has helped us to remember God's "preferential option for the poor" and needy of the world. It points us to humankind's lack of attention to this as an evil to be addressed and corrected. Romans 13:12 calls us to step up, to live honorably, and to follow Jesus' leading in addressing the evils of the present day. In exploring and engaging mission with justice, we observe ways that might happen as we work together.

For this Exploration you might add the following to your worship/story area: a vine (real or fake), a bird, some fruit, and other items from nature. We include our planet along with all living things on it as an arena for justice work.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Jesus and the Moneychangers (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: The Proverbs text speaks of the value of a good name over riches and the blessings of not robbing or taking advantage of the poor and needy. You may want to share a modern or child-friendly version of these proverbs, but a story that is more accessible to children and still addresses this proverbial theme is the account of Jesus in the temple at Passover. In Mark 11:15-17 Jesus finds the moneychangers taking advantage of travelers.

Supplies:

- Bible

Ask: *Who do you think God loves more: people who are poor or people who are rich?* The right answer, of course, is that God loves everyone the same. But God gets very upset when poor people are taken advantage of and cheated. Share Proverbs 22: 3, 8, 22-23. Tell the children that you will read a short story from the Bible about a time when Jesus found poor people and travelers from afar being treated unfairly. These were visitors to the city, and the cheating was going on right in the temple. Explain that the situation would be as if someone came to our church and was selling things to us in the sanctuary and charging prices that were way too high.

Read (or tell) Mark 11:15-17 to the children. Ask the children what they think about Jesus tipping over chairs and table and dumping money on the floor—right in "church." *Can you imagine that happening in your church's worship space? What would happen if someone did that?*

Explain that many people had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover holiday. Part of the celebration took place in the temple and involved offering an animal, cereal, or grain to God. Help the children understand that this was in the same way we put money in the offering plate. But travelers of the time didn't bring extra animals and grain with them on their trip, so they had to find a place in Jerusalem to buy those things. In the temple, Jesus found dishonest money changers charging high prices to change the money. It made Jesus very angry to see this behavior right there in God's Temple. So Jesus spoke harshly at them, maybe yelled at them, and dumped over their tables and chairs and money boxes. Jesus was working for justice, in a rather unexpected way. Ask questions such as the following.

- Do you think he hurt anyone?
- Do you think the money changers understood why he was angry?
- What do you think the money changers did next? (We don't know, but we can guess that they picked up their belongings and left in a hurry—or maybe went to get the Temple police.)

Explain that sometimes when we work for justice, we might get really angry. We feel we have to do something to stop it. It is important that we are careful not to hurt or harm anyone or destroy anyone's property while we are trying to make things better. Jesus tipped over a table, but he was careful not to hurt anyone in the process. This is called nonviolent protest and is a way that many people work for justice today. Sometimes they will have a parade or a rally and hear speeches and sing songs about justice.

Prayer: *Creator God, thank you for the earth on which we live and the people and animals and plants that share the planet. Move us to be better stewards of creation as we learn together how better to care for and preserve God's creation. Amen.*

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

2 The Great Kapok Tree

Leader preparation: Romans 13:8–14 admonishes the reader to wake up, work to overcome evil, and get busy with doing good in the world. There are many areas where mission and justice work overlap. In recent years, attention has turned toward learning about the inextricably intertwined link between the environment and all living creatures on the earth. Faithful people are called by God to work for justice wherever injustice occurs. The Amazon Rain Forest is one important location where the earth has been ruthlessly abused and the lives and livelihood of the inhabitants have been significantly harmed. Do some research so that you can share with the children places in your city where people are working hard to save the environment. This will help you to help with the discussion questions.

Obtain a copy of the children’s picture storybook *The Great Kapok Tree*, written and illustrated by Lynne Cherry. You can find this book in your local library or order it early from www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for used copies in good condition, available at reduced prices.

Supplies:

- book: *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry (Voyager Books, 1990)

Read *The Great Kapok Tree* with the children. Be sure to show them Lynne Cherry’s watercolor paintings of the rain forest. This book helps us to understand what rain forests mean to our world and how important they are. Stop reading at the end of the page where the man picks up his ax again and starts to leave the forest, and ask the children what they think he will do next. Allow plenty of time for “wondering.” Then turn the page and read the ending. Then ask:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What were the animals telling the man?
- What might they have been feeling when they saw the ax in his hand?
- How might the man have felt when he walked out of the rain forest?

Tell the children that the author actually took a trip to the rain forest before she wrote this book. Not only did she write it, but she also painted the pictures in the book. *How do you think that trip helped her when she started to write and to paint? Do you think she could have produced the book without taking the trip? How might the book have been different if she had not gone there to visit?*

Explain that part of the work of justice is learning about various places in the world where there is great need for people to work hard to address injustice. We cannot do the work if we are ignorant about the problem. Ask the children if they know of a place in their city or their state where people are working to improve or save the environment. Think about things such as recycling places, community gardens, nature preserves, river or stream cleanup projects, and so forth. How might your group help with that? Is there something the group could help with at your church or in your neighborhood?



3 The Web of Life

Leader preparation: Find a ball of yarn about the size of a grapefruit and arrange a place for the children to sit in a circle—on a carpet, in a circle of chairs, or outside in the grass. The group will create a web and discuss the interdependence of life. If you used *The Great Kapok Tree* in activity 2, you might also use the suggestion below that refers to that book. Make up your own categories as well.

Supplies:

- A ball of thick yarn (grapefruit-sized)

Invite the children to sit in a circle on the rug, in chairs, or outside in the grass. Tell the children they'll be playing a game with a ball of yarn. Decide ahead if you want to roll or toss the ball across the circle. If you do only one round, rolling would work. If you continue the pattern, tossing might be best.

Tell the children that when the ball comes to one of them, that child should catch it and wrap the yarn loosely around her or his hand one time. Then that child should name out loud one country in the world. You may need to provide the name. Holding tight to the string, that child then tosses the ball to another child across the circle, who will catch it and repeat the sequence, naming a different country this time. (Helping one another is encouraged, if someone gets stuck.) Continue until the ball returns to the child who started it. Freeze the game for a few minutes.

Ask the children who have birthdays during the first six months of the year (July on) to lift up the hand with the yarn. Note how the patterns shift and how everyone is affected when it happens. Have those children lower the hand with the yarn, and then ask the remaining children to lift their hands with the yarn. Watch the pattern change again. Now ask three or four adjacent children to gently pull the yarn toward themselves. See what happens. Next ask three or four children on the other side of the circle to do the same. Comment about how any tug or change anywhere in the circle changes things for all the other children.

Continue tossing the ball, asking children to name other categories in the world that are interdependent on each other. Examples include: the inhabitants of the rain forest in *The Great Kapok Tree* story (if you used it in activity 2); family members, including mother, aunt, cousin, father; natural conditions on the earth, such as storms, heat, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires, volcanoes, wind, bugs, hail, hurricanes; and things that effect the production and distribution of food.

Mention how people all over the world are affected when something changes in a big way somewhere else. When people work for justice, it is important to think about many factors that influence situations where help is needed.

To end this activity, you can rewind the yarn to use another time, or you can ask the children to just lay the yarn on the floor or ground.



Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Wants and Needs (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Prepare to help the children sort out the difference between “wants” and “needs.” The distinction is important in justice work. It helps the providers to be self-aware of their own perceptions and also encourages all to be more sensitive to the way wants and needs are perceived differently, depending on the economic situation.

Print out the “Want” and “Need” cards on the Attachment. There are 16 cards with pictures and 4 blanks. Print a set for every two children, plus extras for visitors. If possible, print them on card stock, in a couple of different colors, to keep the decks separate. If you do not have colored card stock, use colored office paper. Cut the sets apart and secure with rubber bands.

Supplies:

- “Want and Need Cards,” Attachment: Activity 4
- card stock (or office paper) in different colors
- scissors or paper cutter
- rubber bands
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- markers for the children

Have the children sit around tables, if possible, with room to spread out their cards. Ask the children if they know the difference between wants and needs. Listen to their answers and summarize:

- Needs are things that people really cannot live without.
- Wants are things we’d like to have, but can survive without.

Invite the children to choose a partner so they can work in pairs. Give each pair a deck of the cards and some markers. Ask them to lay out the cards on the table and separate the cards into two piles in front of them—one for wants and one for needs. Invite children to use the blank cards if they think of a “need” that is not pictured. A child can draw that need. Help the children who are having trouble by asking them questions to help them think further.

When the children are finished with the task, draw their attention to the newsprint or whiteboard and make group lists. Label one column “Wants” and one column “Needs.” Leave enough room in the middle to squeeze in something that might shift on occasion. Remember to ask for any additional cards the children have made and add those wants or needs to your list.

When the children are satisfied with the lists, ask these questions.

- What might be different if you lived in one of the poorer countries in the world?
- What if a parent in the household just lost a job? What might change?
- What if a family had just moved to town and didn’t have any friends here?
- What if a family member were very ill and needed lots of medical care?
- How would these situations change the list you’ve made? Which cards might we have to move around?



5 “The Pineapple Seller”

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of “Vendedora de Piñas,” a painting by artist Diego Rivera. Order early for timely arrival. For ease in display, pin it to a piece of foam core. A small easel or cork board would be work as well. Spend a few minutes with this painting and consider how the young girl might be feeling about sitting there selling pineapples. You’ll want to allow the children to try to figure out what is happening in this painting before you translate the title for them. The title translates as “a girl selling pineapples.”

Supplies:

- information about artist Diego Rivera and “Vendedora de Piñas,” <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Pu-Ro/Rivera-Diego.html>
- artwork: “Vendedora de Piñas” by Diego Rivera, <http://tinyurl.com/FPArt17>
- 1–2 fresh pineapples
- a pineapple corer
- a sharp knife (for use by the leader only)
- paper plates and napkins
- toothpicks

Show the painting to the children, and invite them to look closely at the details. Before you translate the title for them, ask the children what they think the girl is doing. Give them time to study the picture and think about it. If they do not guess correctly, translate the title of the painting into English: “a girl selling pineapples.” Or, if you have a Spanish speaking learner with you, let him or her serve as a translator. Lead a discussion of the painting with questions such as these.

- How old do you think she is?
- Where is she sitting?
- Do you think she likes selling pineapples? Why or why not?
- Do you think her brothers and sisters take turns with her selling the fruit, or does she do this alone every day?
- What else do you think she might like to be doing besides selling pineapples?

Tell the children that the artist, Diego Rivera, painted many pictures of Mexican people who had to work very hard for a living. He especially liked to paint farmers and laborers. He often made large murals on walls in places where poor people could view them, since they couldn’t afford to buy tickets into galleries and museums to see art work about their own people. Rivera lifted up the lives of the poor so others would notice in hope that their lives would become better as other people learned about their needs for better and fairer working conditions.

End the activity with a snack of fresh-cut pineapple. Cut one ahead of time, so the children can taste the fruit while you cut the second one as they watch. Mention that pineapples are grown in every tropical region of the world. The main producers are Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Malaysia, and Brazil. The bulk of the crop is canned.



6 We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands

Leader preparation: This song is an updated way to sing an old familiar camp song. As the years have gone by, singers have created additional verses and the song has grown and grown. The attachment lists several new verses that seem to appear randomly and in no particular order. Notice that the words are now stated in the plural, with the “we” and “our” emphasizing our responsibility to work cooperatively with God as stewards of the earth and its people. The newer verses lift up environmental issues that are now part of the mission of the church.

Put the words to the song on newsprint or a whiteboard. Because of the repetitive nature of this song, you can write just the one line that changes for each verse. That will be enough to prompt as they sing. If you feel you need assistance teaching a song, invite someone to visit and help with this.

Supplies:

- “We’ve Got the Whole World in Our Hands,” Attachment: Activity 6
- markers and newsprint or a whiteboard
- inflatable globe (any kind—physical, political, big blue marble)

Read the words of the song with the children. Sing the tune for them. Many will know the tune already. Introduce the inflatable globe to the group. Acknowledge that we can’t really hold the huge big earth in our little hands, but we can care for it gently, in the same way we handle the ball. Have the children sit in a circle of chairs or in a circle on the floor. As they sing, they can pass the “world” around and across the circle, modeling careful caring. As the children get used to the tune, invite them to create new verses.

Explain that not dropping the ball is an important step, but it is only the first step. Ask the children to name some things that adults and children already do to help take care of the earth. Help them think of more things they can do. Explain that they can avoid wasting paper by drawing on both sides of a piece of paper and by saving large scraps of paper for another project. Recycling is one easy step children can take as they work together for environmental justice.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 It's for the Birds! (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: This activity provides the children a chance to do something for the environment and to reinforce the idea that working for justice is about caring for the planet as well as for the inhabitants.

Supplies:

- an assortment of breakfast cereals, different kinds with holes in them that can be threaded on a piece of string or yarn
- string or yarn for stringing the cereal

Tell the children that for a very long time people have not taken good enough care of the earth. People have polluted the water in lakes and rivers, they have stripped metals and minerals out of the ground, and they have chopped down whole forests without thinking about how that might affect the land years from now. Some of the thoughtless things people have done happened because they didn’t really understand that the earth and its resources wouldn’t last forever.



Now scientists have learned so much more about the earth and how the entire planet is interconnected, and they tell us we must be more careful. We must not waste things and use up important materials that we will need in the future.

Explain that the story of creation reminds us that God told the people that they would have the job of being good stewards of the land and all the creatures that lived here. But it has taken us a long time to realize just how important that instruction was. Now we are learning about so many things we can do to save the planet.

Point out that being good stewards of the earth is an act of justice. And it might mean feeding the birds. One way to feed the birds is to string cereal on a piece of string or yarn. As children observe, tie the first piece of cereal on the string or yarn with a knot. Leave a long end for tying, and then add on more pieces. When you reach the end, tie off the last piece of cereal, leaving a long end for tying to a tree. Help children make more strings of cereal. When all children have helping in making cereal strings, take the strings of cereal and carefully wrap them around branches of trees—branches that are up off the ground. The birds will find the strings and have a feast. *Note:* It is best not to have a string hanging in a loopy fashion because birds could possibly get caught in it. Just wrap it fairly snugly around a branch, being careful not to break the cereal loops.

Remember that birds usually don't need us to give them food, but they enjoy our treats. The time that birds might really need us to feed them is in the winter, when it is very cold and snowy and when there might be ice covering the tree branches, bushes, the grass, and fields.

8 Be a Bucket Filler

Leader preparation: Working for Justice may include filling buckets. Read the book *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud. The idea is that every person has an invisible bucket, which represents that person's mental and emotional health. The bucket-filling plan is to encourage positive behavior and to be intentional about filling someone's bucket every day. When this practice is learned early in life, it can make a difference in the way a child matures. Visit the website listed below to learn more about this concept.

Purchase a "bucket" for each child in your group. Line them up on a bookcase or a window sill or hang them on a bulletin board—whatever works in your meeting space. You might use small metal or plastic buckets or little Chinese food take-out containers. You could even provide a sturdy, colorful envelope for each child. If you don't use actual buckets or containers, you could print a "bucket" graphic on a sturdy envelope.

Print each child's name clearly and boldly on a "bucket." Be prepared to check the buckets. If any are empty, it is your responsibility to write a short happy note and stick it in. You may want to recruit an additional leader to help with the writing of notes for the buckets.



Supplies:

- book: *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud (Ferne Press, 2006)
- one tiny bucket for each child and leader (real or makeshift, but able to contain small notes)
- permanent marker for adding names
- stickers or shiny things to decorate each bucket
- large supply of small slips of paper (for writing notes to put in the buckets)
- pencils or pens
- website: “Bucket Fillers,” www.bucketfillers101.com.

Read the book *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* with the children. Show all the pictures. Lead a discussion of the book with questions such as these.

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What does it mean to “fill someone’s bucket”?
- Why is that important?
- How is your bucket today?
- Who needs something in his or her bucket?
- How do you think it will feel to receive a kind and happy note in your bucket?
- What would happen if everyone in the world made it his or her job to put something in someone’s bucket every day?
- How could “bucket filling” help bring peace to our lives? To the world?

Give each child a container to serve as a bucket. Write their names on the buckets with permanent markers. Invite the children to decorate their buckets. Ask each child to think of something positive, pleasant, helpful, and kind to write on a note and stick into another person’s bucket. *Whatever you write should make the receiver smile. Nothing mean or nasty is allowed.* Tell the children that they are not to look into one another’s buckets; they are only to drop a note in those buckets. Each person’s own bucket is his or her personal, private space. This is the most important rule for this activity, and everyone must agree.

As the leader you will determine when the notes get read, depending on your particular situation and frequency of gathering.

9 Make a Poster

Leader preparation: Read Romans 13:8–14, especially verse 14, where the reader is admonished to “put on” the example of Jesus Christ. In preparation for this activity, identify a few upcoming events in your church that will need publicity. Contact the groups in charge of these, and determine if there is one that would be willing to have your children color prepared posters and signs for the event.

Because this activity will involve communicating information, such as times, dates, and locations, you might want to identify an artist, graphic designer, or a computer-graphics wizard who can create a bold flier or poster design that your children can color with markers. By coloring some elements of a ready-made poster, the children may have a successful outcome. Consider asking the artist to leave open a couple of areas in the design where a child might fill in a specific item. For example, if the flier or poster is about a rummage sale, a child could



draw in a shirt, hat, or shoes. If the event is a concert, a child could add a singing face. The rest of the flier or poster would be a simple exercise in coloring.

Be sure the type of paper used for the flier or poster will take the color of a crayon or a children's marker. Test it ahead for compatibility.

Supplies:

- printed fliers or poster for publicity for an event
- color markers, crayons

Describe for the children the event that will happen soon in your church. Tell the children what it is and why it is happening. If it is a fund raiser, tell them who will receive the money raised and how the money will be used. Provide markers, crayons, and the fliers or poster to the children, as well as ample work space. You might color part of a flier or the poster so the children can see how boldly to apply the color. Tell them of any special requests from the sponsoring committee regarding colors or any other detail.

Children have gifts that they can contribute to the mission of the church. It is a good thing when even the littlest children learn to share their talents generously to help their faith community.

Reflect

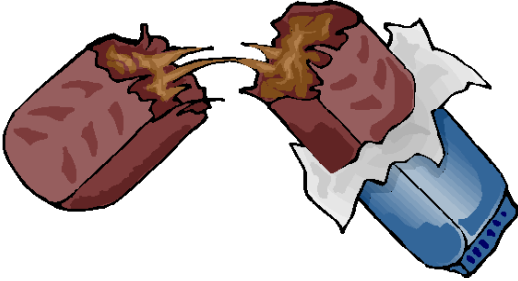




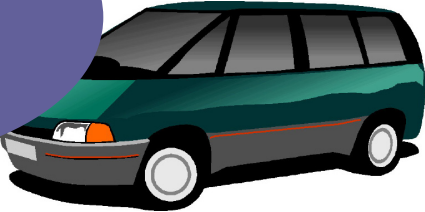
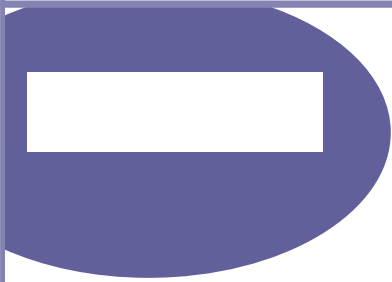
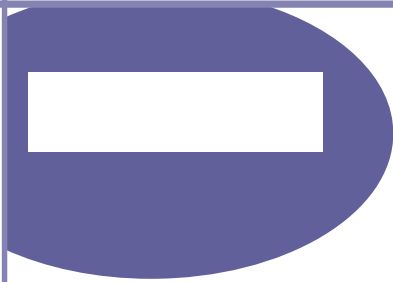
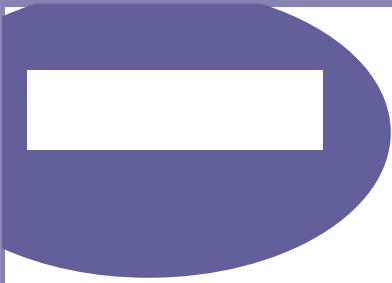
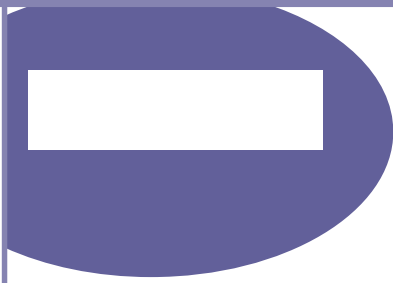
As the children investigate the idea of mission and grow in their understanding that mission is something we do beyond talk, they will begin to wonder which place and which opportunities are now available for their participation at some level. Perhaps they are thinking about what they will do when they are old enough to participate more fully. Which children seemed to resonate with the environmental issues? Did others lean toward the interpersonal areas? Pray for these children as they grow and mature and find their passion for service.

Attachment: Activity 4

Want and Need Cards

<p>iPod</p>		<p>food</p>	
<p>playground</p>		<p>clean water</p>	
<p>bicycle</p>		<p>clean air</p>	
<p>big screen TV</p>		<p>bed</p>	
<p>vacation</p>		<p>home</p>	

Attachment: Activity 4 (continued)

<p>candy</p> 	<p>medical care</p> 
<p>computer games</p> 	<p>clothes</p> 
<p>money</p> 	<p>transportation</p> 
	
	

Attachment: Activity 6

We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands

Chorus

We've got the whole world in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We've got our brothers and our sisters in our hands.
We've got our brothers and our sisters in our hands.
We've got our brothers and our sisters in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We've got the little bitty baby in our hands.
We've got the little bitty baby in our hands.
We've got the little bitty baby in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We've got the earth and the water in our hands.
We've got the mountains and the meadows in our hands.
We've got the forests and the farmlands in our hands.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We should recycle now, all that we can.
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, all that we can.
We should recycle now, all that we can.
We've got the whole world in our hands.

Working for Justice



Exploration: Future and Vision

About this Age Group

Young children are skilled at make believe and enjoy fantasy stories and fairy tales. The youngest of your children is able to imagine that just about anything is possible. The six- or seven-year-old children are beginning to understand that fantasy needs to be tempered with reality. These children are not so jaded that they won't be able to grasp a vision of a peaceful and just world and be optimistic about what they can do to make that a reality someday. They probably know more than you about the subject of superheroes, so be prepared to learn.

About this Exploration

Imagine a world where all are in right relationship with God, with other human beings, and with all of God's creation. Jesus calls us to help create the future where we live out God's love in all that we are and all that we do. We do justice because we are inspired by God's vision of healing and reconciliation, restoration and wholeness, and abundance for all. As a people of hope, we accept the call to be God's hands and feet. In this future and vision exploration, we are challenged to stay focused on this hope as we live out God's call to do justice.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Matthew 25:31–46
Isaiah 58:1–14

Leader Preparation

Prepare a bright, attractive and welcoming space for your children. Create a special place for worship and story, as well as tables for creative endeavors. A full week before you meet the children again, review your plans for that next session. Gather and prepare needed supplies ahead of time, so everything is ready to go.

As we take a look toward the future and seek to define a shaping vision for how we do justice in the future, consider the messages of Matthew and Isaiah. Matthew tells us that our good works honor God at the very same time they help people. Isaiah admonishes us to act justly as we care for the poor and the needy and do it out of a genuinely generous spirit.

Some seeds or bulbs, a flowering plant, and a scale might be added to your worship center, pointing ahead to a vision of a peaceful world.

Prayer: Ever-living God, as I work with these soon-to-be leaders in our society, help me to pass on the hope we have from God for a more peaceful, hopeful and just world. May I choose my words wisely and passionately model my commitment to justice. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Peacemakers and Dreamers (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Provide markers and drawing paper for the children's project. Lead them in a short guided meditation about a vision of a peace and just world in the future.

Supplies:

- drawing paper
- markers or crayons

Invite the children to lie down on a carpeted floor or outside in the grass. Separate the children so there is enough space between them without crowding. Ask the children to lie very still and to take long, deep breaths. Have them close their eyes, try not to think about things, and let their minds go blank. Give the following directions, slowly.

- With your eyes closed, imagine what peace would be like.
- Try to picture what that would look like.
- Think about peace deep inside your own body—like when you feel happy and good inside.
- Think about peace among all different kinds of people.
- Think about a time when all those people truly care about one another and help one another.
- Think about peace in your neighborhood, when it is quiet and people are visiting over the fences, on the porches, or in the elevators, sharing vegetables and flowers from their gardens or cookies and other goodies from their kitchens.
- Now think about peace among countries, when they no longer have guns and bombs and feel free to help the people across the boundary lines between them.
- Try to imagine what it would be like to live in a family, a school, a neighborhood, or a world that is peaceful and calm, and where arguments and disagreements are talked out calmly and quietly around a big table.
- Imagine a time when all people have everything they need, and no one steals anything from another person.
- Slowly, open your eyes and tell one another about that peaceful world you just imagined.

Then have each child choose a piece of drawing paper and draw the images that came through his or her mind when lying down thinking about a peaceful world. Ask them to respond in their drawings to these questions:

- What is peace like?
- What things would be different in a peaceful world?
- Why is it important for peacemakers to use their imaginations?

Session Development

For each session leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities using at least one activity from each category.

2 Pay It Forward

Leader preparation: This activity is inspired by the 2000 movie *Pay It Forward*. The shaping vision of the movie is this: When eleven-year-old Trevor McKinney begins seventh grade in Las Vegas, Nevada, his social studies teacher gives the class an assignment to devise and put into action a plan that will change the world for the better. Trevor’s plan is a charitable pyramid scheme, based on good deeds rather than profit. He calls his plan “Pay It Forward,” which means the recipient of a favor does another favor for a third party rather than paying back the favor to the original helper. Trevor does a favor for three people, asking each of them to “pay the favor forward” by doing favors for three other people, and so on, along a branching tree of good deeds.

Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clip listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not assume all computers will communicate with all projectors or that problems can be remedied in just a few minutes.

Look at the listed websites. In the school kit, you may find other items that you’d like to use with this session.

Supplies:

- markers and newsprint or a whiteboard
- video: “Pay It Forward,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvbgetKzrmA>
- website: “Pay It Forward Programs,” <http://www.payitforwardmovement.org/programs.html>
- (optional) website: “Pay It Forward Day” (kit for use in schools), http://payitforwardday.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/PITD_Schools_Kit1.pdf

Ask if anyone has seen the movie *Pay It Forward*. If some have, allow them to describe the movie, if they are able. Otherwise, tell the children you will show them a clip from a movie called *Pay It Forward*. Remind them that when someone does you a favor or does something nice for you, you often plan to return the favor another day, when your friend needs help with something. Trevor, the boy in this movie, thinks up a better idea. Have them watch the video and see how his plan is different from just returning a favor.

After the video, ask the children to explain Trevor’s idea. You might draw it on a piece of newsprint or a whiteboard. Help them to understand that this plan grows, because each favor done is returned to three other people rather than to just one. If you draw on a large piece of roll paper on the table, the children could help you continue the pattern until the paper is filled up. Watch how it grows.

Ask: How might this plan change the world? How might this plan be a good way to spread peace and justice throughout the world? Could it work? Point out that if it didn’t reach all around the world, it could at least do a lot of good in the places it did reach.

Suggest to the children that the next time someone does something nice for them, they might choose to return the favor three times—to people other than the original friend. When someone says “thank you” to you, you could say, “You’re welcome, please pay it forward.”

Tell children that here’s a story of what one group of students decided to do after seeing the same video that they saw. Then read children the following.



Kimachipena (“Let’s all come together”) Students at Sauk Language Immersion School decided to “pay it forward” by achieving a better grasp of the Sac and Fox people, an Indian nation in Oklahoma. Once having become truly proficient in the language of their ancestors, these students will, through the use of language kits and workshops, help to pass on their skills to other Indian peoples in their nation. The declining use of the Sauk language has been detrimental to the history and culture of the Fox and Sac nation as a whole and not only a loss to the Indian nation, but to all Americans. At this time, only 10 individuals are fluent speakers of the Sauk language. These students have been raised with parents and grandparents who spoke Sauk and passed it on to these students. Now these students are trying, through hard work and study, to learn ways to teach others of their language and history. The ultimate goal will be that the Sauk language will be reintegrated into the Sac and Fox community as a whole as well as culture and history that may be lost once the elders have passed on.

Explain that the more people who practice doing positive and helpful things for one another, without caring about the reward to them, the easier it becomes to do good and positive acts all the time. As we look to the years ahead, we know that it will take the acts of many generous people to bring more justice to the world. This is another way for us to work together by spreading justice and respect.



3 Make a Balance Scale

Leader preparation: The use of scales is one way people decide about fairness. In the grocery and hardware stores, children see various things being weighed in the interests of determining a fair price. This activity provides two different sets of instructions for making a balance scale, one more simple than the other. You’ll need to decide if you want to make one group scale or have each child construct one. On the websites listed in Supplies, there are diagrams with the simple plan and photos with the more involved plan. Both websites provide a list of materials needed and step-by-step directions. Pre-cut and make ready as much as you can beforehand, because you will be busy helping with construction during the session.

If you are challenged in the area of constructing things, recruit a helper or two, one who is mechanically inclined and one a science buff. This is especially important if you decide to have each child make his or her own scale.

To avoid any unexpected surprises, it is critically important that you construct a sample ahead of time. If you have a see-saw in a playground nearby, you can use that instead to talk with the children about how difficult is the task of balancing goods, services, rights, wealth, water, and so forth among the world’s people.

Supplies:

- website: “Make a Balance Scale” (simple instructions for making a balance scale), http://www.campsite24.ca/balance_scale_eng.pdf
- website: “Two Types of Homemade Balance Scales from Recycling” (more involved, but still good), <http://www.filthwizardry.com/2009/09/homemade-weighing-scales.html>
- “Balance Scales,” Attachment: Activity 3
- (optional) take the children to a see-saw or teeter-totter in a nearby playground

Show the children the pictures of a balance scale on the attachment. Explain that balance scales have been used for hundreds of years for measuring all kinds of



things that are bought and sold. This assures customers that they have received a fair amount for a fair price. Today you can still see this kind of scale in some grocery stores and hardware stores (nails) and places where items are sold by weight. These scales may also be found on display at historical parks and museums. Ask if any children have seen a balance scale and where.

Show the children the materials you gathered to make scales. Use the downloaded instructions to make either one scale for each child or one group scale.

Once a scale is finished, demonstrate its use and let the children take turns experimenting with it. Have several small items of different weights available.

Ask: Will the scale balance if the items in the containers do not match? How easy is it to balance the scale? Can the scale be balanced if there is one item in one container and two items in the other? How might that work?

After the children have played and experimented, shift the conversation to justice issues. Mention how difficult it is to achieve a balance of goods and services among the peoples of the world. Ask the children which is easier to balance—a bag of apples on a scale or equal rights for people. Mention that human rights, medical care, and the chance to go to school are things that are much harder to measure because we cannot use just a scale. We have to find other ways to try to achieve justice and fairness, such as passing protective laws and sharing what we have.

Show the picture of the scales again. Tell the children that the picture of the scales is a reminder to us of the importance of working for justice, now and for the future. It reminds us that the task is not easy and sometimes requires a very delicate touch.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Ways to Be a Fair Person (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: In looking ahead to a better future where there is more justice for more of the world's people, it is helpful to have a vision of what that might look like and to have some strategies about how to reach that goal. The attachment offers some suggestions for children (and others) about how people and even young children can practice being fair and just in their relationships with family and friends as well as with new people they meet. Choose a few to use or create your own.

Supplies:

- “How to Be a Fair Person,” Attachment: Activity 4

Ask the children to describe what it means to be a fair person. *How might you act and speak in order to help others feel accepted and welcome and treated equally and fairly?* Using the attachment, choose four or five items from the “fair” list and two or three from the “unfair” list for a discussion about ways that children can be fair, even when they are little, in preparation for the rest of their lives. Or identify a list from your own life experience. Invite the children to role-play some of these situations demonstrating both fair and unfair responses.



Explain that when working for justice, it is good to have had some solid ideas of how to be fair and just before you find yourself in a challenging situation. These ideas may help as we move ahead on the journey for justice for all.

5 “Dream God’s Dream”

Leader preparation: The song “Dream God’s Dream” was written by Bryan Sirchio, a United Church of Christ minister from Madison, Wisconsin, who is a popular song leader at national and regional youth events. A prolific song writer, Sirchio wrote this song to invite people to dream along with God about a future where justice prevails. The verses may be difficult for young children to sing, so you may prefer to focus on the chorus. Visit the two websites in the Supplies list to become familiar with the tune and the words.

Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the YouTube clip listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not that assume all computers will communicate with all projectors or that a problem can be remedied in just a few minutes.

Put the words to the song on newsprint or a whiteboard. If you feel you need assistance teaching a song, invite someone with musical skills to visit and help with this.

On YouTube, hear a young woman and a few children sing the song. Invite the children to sing along softly while listening to the chorus. They can just listen to the verses.

Supplies:

- song: “Dream God’s Dream,” by Bryan Sirchio; video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19> ; lyrics, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19a>
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Tell the children that they will watch a video of a woman and some children singing a song about God’s dream for a just world. Read the chorus from the newsprint or whiteboard, one line at a time. Have the children read the line after you. Then read the whole chorus together.

Play the video. The children can try to sing along as the young woman sings the chorus. Invite them, first, to listen to the verses of the song and then sing again on the next chorus. (For the last verse, a little girl sings all by herself, and then there is one more chorus.)

Discuss the words and ideas in the other verses, if you have time. In this song God invites people to join in dreaming God’s dream for justice—and to use their energy and best gifts to spread God’s truth and love.



6 “The Sower”

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of “The Sower,” by Vincent van Gogh. Order early for timely arrival. For ease in display, pin it to a piece of foam core. A small easel or cork board would be useful as well. Notice the strong use of yellow and violet in this painting (on your computer, it may appear or print as yellow and blue). The yellow sun and grain suggest hope as do the seeds the farmer is sowing.

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
- dried lima beans
- website: “How to Grow Lima Beans in a Jar,” http://www.ehow.com/how_2223122_grow-lima-beans-jar.html
- shallow bowl
- quart-sized jar (preferably plastic for safety reasons)
- paper towels
- water

Gather the children around Van Gogh’s painting, and explain that Van Gogh is a very well-known painter all around the world. Ask the children what they think the figure in the painting is doing. *Is it a woman or a man working in the field?* Tell the children that the farmer is planting or sowing seeds that he or she is carrying in a bag. The name of the painting is “The Sower.” The sower doesn’t seem to be worried about the blackbirds that are eating some of the seeds as she or he continues to scatter the seeds.

Explain that planting seeds means that soon new plants will start to grow and new flowers, grain, or vegetables will become available to eat and sell. The farmer will take good care of the planted field and help the seeds to sprout and grow. Explain to the children that sometimes when people are learning new information, facts, and ideas, the new knowledge grows and grows as the person increases in understanding. So it is with seeds in a garden that grow into a plant, a bush, or a tree and produce some kind of useful food, flower, grain, or fiber.

Point out that justice is sort of like a seed at first. Once people learn something new about injustice in the world, they tell others about it and soon new ideas begin to spread around about how to correct, or at least improve, that injustice. As more and more people get interested in justice and fairness for the people of the world, justice begins to grow and grow and, people’s lives are changed for the better. God calls us to spread seeds of justice and to care for those “seeds” just as a farmer cares for the seeds in a garden. God expects us to help grow those new ideas about justice and to teach and act on justice ideas in our homes, our churches, our communities, and the world.

Plant some seeds or beans in a jar using the instructions from the website “How to Grow Lima Beans in a Jar.” Consider planting in plastic jars similar to peanut butter jars instead of glass jars (in the interests of safety). Over the next few weeks, invite the children to watch the beans sprout and grow.

Talk about what kinds of “seeds of justice” the children might sow. Working for justice can include caring for both of your growing projects.



Sending & Serving Activities



7 **Whatever You Do (Easy Preparation)**

Leader preparation: Review the well-known passage from the gospel of Matthew about sheep and goats, Matthew 25:31–46. People who perform acts of kindness and justice and help the needy are like the good sheep in the mixed flock of sheep and goats. Read the attachment, which is a litany based on verses 34–40. Make copies for the children, and be prepared to help nonreaders with the words.

Supplies:

- “A Litany Based on Matthew 25:34–40,” Attachment: Activity 7

Distribute the litany to the children. Invite them to sit in the worship/story area or around a table. Read the litany together. Explain that their part is printed in darker ink. Tell them you will read the lighter letters. Your not-yet-readers will need help, so go slowly, helping them along the way. The younger children will be able to pick up the exclamations at the start of each of their lines. Make it animated and that will help them remember the words. They will catch the pattern to the responses. Then read it again from the beginning. Discuss with the children the meaning of the last sentence. Help them by putting the story into your own words.

Option: Use the following sequence of ideas. These words may be too difficult for the group to read, but the ideas are easy enough for them to track the logic.

- I watched you feeding hungry people, and I watched you offering water to thirsty people.
- I watched you welcome strangers and give them clothing to wear.
- I saw you take care of sick people, and I saw you visit prisoners in jail.
- You thought you were just helping those people . . .
- But what you were really doing was helping me as well.
- When you help other people, it is as if you are helping me at the very same time.
- And you are helping God at the very same time.
- You helped those people as if they were just as important to you as God.
- This pleases God and is exactly what God wants you to do.

Conclude this activity by calling attention to the words in Isaiah 58, especially verses 9b–11, that explain how God loves and forgives people who used to make choices that hurt others.

8 **Superheroes**

Leader preparation: Review your superheroes! A superhero is defined as a person possessing extraordinary or superhuman powers and dedicated to protecting the public from crime and evil. Superman seems to be the favorite. Batman does not possess superhuman powers but relies on his superior brains and his physical abilities to fight for justice. Be sure the children discuss female superheroes like Wonder Woman, as well. This is an area where the children may have considerable more expertise than their leader!

Can someone who works for justice ever be considered a hero? If you are superhero challenged, invite a youth, young adult, or a comic-book collector to help you guide this session. Purchase a comic book about a superhero’s exploits.

**Supplies:**

- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- website: “Top 10 Cartoon Superheroes,” <http://www.kidzworld.com/article/8032-top-10-cartoon-superheroes>
- website: “Superhero” (Wikipedia information on superheroes), <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superhero>

Tell the children that the subject for today is superheroes. Ask the children to name their favorite superheroes and “superheroines.” List the names on newsprint or a whiteboard. Mark which ones are good characters. Invite the children to describe a super hero. *Are superheroes real? If they are not real, what are they? How is a superhero different from an everyday hero? Can you think of any everyday heroes or heroines?* See if the children might remember Capt. Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, who safely ditched his jet plane in the Hudson River after it was disabled by a flock of geese during takeoff from LaGuardia Airport. He saved the lives of all 155 passengers on January 15, 2009.

Ask: *What kinds of things do everyday heroes do? What other kinds of heroes and heroines can you think of?* (Prompt them to name both females and males.)

Explain that sometimes when people work for justice, the people who are helped think that the workers are real heroes, because the work they do makes such a big difference. *If you could be a superhero for one week, what problem would you try to solve?*

Tell children that someday someone may call each of them a hero because of some kindness and respect offered to another person and because of some assistance given to a person in need.

9 Listen to the Wind

Leader preparation: Obtain a copy of the children’s picture storybook *Listen to the Wind*, written by Greg Mortenson and illustrated by Susan Roth. You can find this book in your local library or order it, early, from www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Check for used copies in good condition, available at reduced prices.

Arrange to have a computer in your meeting space. Check to confirm Internet access and get necessary passwords. If your group is large, plan to use a video projector for viewing the video listed below. Plan to test out the connection between your computer and the projector far in advance of the showing. Do not assume all computers will communicate with all projectors.

Read this book and also view the photographs in “The Korphe Scrapbook” at the back of the book. This is a true story about a village in Pakistan, told simply for children. Mortenson’s premise is that in order to promote peace in this area of the world a systematic approach would work best. Mortenson began by building schools, particularly for girls at first because girls had been denied an education. Those girls would grow up to be mothers and teachers in the villages and would teach and empower boys and men to seek a future for themselves that stretched beyond being warriors. Visit the websites below to learn more about Mortenson and each of his books. The website about “Pennies for Peace” describes in detail a project of collecting pennies to help build more schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In the years since this project started, Mortenson has built over 145 schools and, to date, not one of them has been destroyed by terrorists.



Supplies:

- book: *Listen to the Wind* by Dr. Greg Mortenson and illustrated by Susan Roth (Dial Books for Young Readers, Penguin Group, 2009)
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- websites: information about Greg Mortenson, www.gregmortenson.com, www.threecupsoftea.com, www.stonesintoschools.com
- video: “Pennies for Peace,” www.penniesforpeace.org; detailed instructions for the Pennies for Peace project at the same website

Share with the children that you have a true story to tell them and that it takes place all the way around the world in a country called Pakistan. This story is about a hiker who was hurt and lost in the mountains of Pakistan and how the village people found him and nursed him back to health. They saved his life, so he wanted to do a favor for them in return and as a way of saying thank you. He promised to build them a school.

Ask the children what materials they think Greg Mortenson would need in order to build a school in Pakistan. List them on the newsprint. Now read *Listen to the Wind* to the children. Show the pictures and point out the collage nature of the illustrations.

After the story, show the children the pictures in “The Korphe Scrapbook” at the very back of the book. Check your list of building materials and compare it with what Greg Mortenson had to haul up the mountains. Were there any surprises as you compared lists? Lead a discussion of the story using questions such as the following.

- Ask the children what school was like for the students before Greg Mortenson came.
- How did Greg Mortenson and the village people help one another?
- Who was Haji Ali and what did he tell Greg Mortenson to do? (Listen to the wind)
- What did Greg Mortenson promise he would do? Do you think that was a hard promise to keep?
- After Greg Mortenson returned a whole year later, what problems did he have? How did he solve those problems?

Other children around the world who have heard this true story decided to help Greg Mortenson build more schools. Perhaps your group would like to collect Pennies for Peace. Show the video about Pennies for Peace. Get a large glass jar or a colorful small bucket and use the suggestions on the “Pennies for Peace” website to collect the group’s pennies. Your group could send them to Greg Mortenson to help him build even more schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Explain that working for justice in this story meant hard work. It meant building a school that girls could attend. That was a very new idea for these village people to accept. The girls were excited to learn and some will grow up to become teachers.

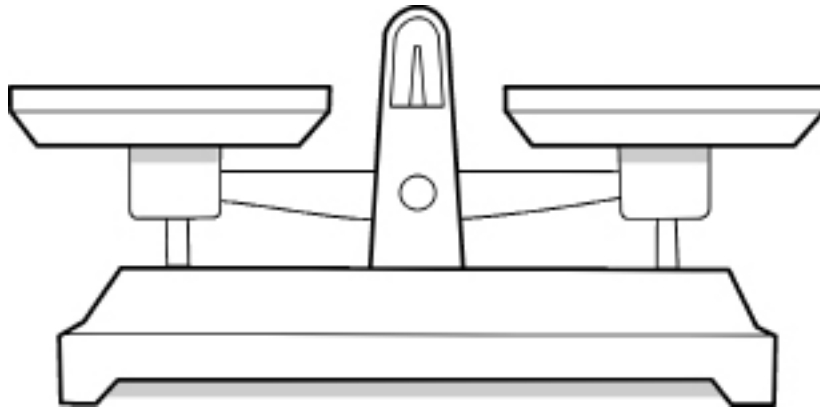
Reflect

How have you seen your learners grow in their awareness of the justice needs of the world? Pray for them as they grow and mature. Watch for the committed, passionate, and dedicated people they are in the process of becoming.

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Attachment: Activity 3

Balance Scales



Attachment: Activity 4

How to Be a Fair Person

Fair—Do This

- Treat all people fairly.
- Cooperate with one another.
- Work together.
- Listen carefully to others, and try to understand what they are feeling and saying.
- Be respectful.
- Admit when you are wrong, and correct your mistakes.
- Be willing to do what is best for everyone.
- Play to have fun.
- Play by the rules.
- Be a good sport.
- Include others in your games and sports.
- Understand that being fair doesn't always mean things are exactly equal.
- Be a good loser.
- Stand up for someone that's being treated unfairly.
- Tell the truth.
- Share.
- Take turns cheerfully.
- Think about how your actions might affect others.
- Think about how your words might affect others.
- Treat people the way you want to be treated.

Unfair—Don't Do This

- Don't take more than your fair share.
- Don't take advantage when someone else makes a mistake.
- Don't insist in having your own way.
- Don't think you have to win every game.
- Don't hold a grudge.
- Don't judge people by the way they look.
- Don't think you have to be first.
- Don't blame others for your mistakes.
- Don't play favorites.

Attachment: Activity 7

A Litany Based on Matthew 25:34–40

Leader: Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by God, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and You gave me food,

Children: **We did? We don’t remember a time when YOU were hungry.**

Leader: I was thirsty and You gave me something to drink,

Children: **We did? We don’t remember a time when YOU were thirsty.**

Leader: I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

Children: **What? YOU were never a stranger to us. YOU are our friend. We know YOU well.**

Leader: I was naked and you gave me clothing,

Children: **What? We never saw YOU without enough clothes to wear.**

Leader: I was sick and you took care of me,

Children: **Wait a minute! We don’t remember a time when YOU were sick.**

Leader: I was in prison and you visited me.”

Children: **Wait a minute! YOU were never in prison. We’d remember if that happened!**

Leader: And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”