

Working for Justice



Exploration: Discovery

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) experience increased mental and emotional development. This allows movement from concrete thinking to an ability to think abstractly. Discovery is part of their daily life. It is a time of forming ideals and testing limits. Out of this idealism, youth are often confused and disappointed by the injustice and hypocrisy they see in adults and the world. Harness their natural curiosity and creative energy. Facilitate their movement from distress to discovering a passion for working for justice.

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 whole and holy lives. These lives are 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

You are embarking on a remarkable journey with youth. You will explore and experience the amazing grace of God as you join together working for God’s justice. Begin your leading by taking an inventory of your own understanding of God’s justice and God’s call to faithful people to always be working for and enacting justice. Read Isaiah 1:1, 10–18. Consider the depth of God’s anger and despair at worship and at lives that involve going through motions without justice. Read Isaiah 1:16–17, which explains what God requires in place of empty actions. Go next to Luke 4:14–21 and read how Jesus takes up God’s words and makes them his own. Read the passage out loud, proclaiming with your own voice the good news Jesus shares. Consider how you will share this news with the youth in your care. Who modeled this news in your life? What injustices might your youth be facing? Whom do they know who needs to be set free? Conclude your reflection time with a prayer of your own or with this one:

Prayer:

God of the prophets,

Open my heart, eyes, and mind to receive your teachings and to share these with the youth [call them out by name] in my care.

Watch over us as we work for your justice.

Lead us by your Spirit to follow the ways of Christ Jesus, showing justice and love to all we meet.

Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities

1 Justice in Worship (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Isaiah 1:1, 10–18 is an explicit call from God for the faithful to live just lives. Speaking through Isaiah, God lifts up the example of worship without justice as empty and abhorrent. In this activity, youth will have a chance to explore the worship space and service in their community. The intent is not to pick apart worship or the sanctuary. This activity may, however, help open eyes to justice issues occurring right where worship happens. Encourage respectful dialog. You may wish to invite the pastor or adults in leadership roles to meet with the youth as a follow-up to this activity.

Supplies:

- Bible—Contemporary English Version (CEV) or New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
- access to your church sanctuary
- copies of the weekly worship bulletin

Gather the youth and read Isaiah 1:1, 10–18. Talk about God’s displeasure at empty worship. Youth will then tour the sanctuary and consider the physical arrangement of the space with regard to justice. As they look around, have them consider and answer the following questions:

- Is the sanctuary accessible to people of all ages, sizes, and physical abilities?
- If artwork is included in windows or paintings or sculptures, who is portrayed in the art? Are there women as well as men? Are other parts of God’s creation included, such as animals or nature? Do the people represented look only like the people who attend or live in the immediate neighborhood?
- In considering the bulletin, is it necessary to be able to see and to read to follow the service? How are those with hearing or sight difficulties included in worship? Are youth included in worship? How?

After the survey is complete, gather together to affirm ways justice is done in the worship space and service and to think about ways to make the space and service more just and inclusive. Share the thoughts of the youth with the appropriate adults and the pastor. If possible have youth involved in making changes.

2 “Guide My Feet”

Leader preparation: Learn the lyrics of this African slave spiritual. It is a hymn sung by people living in bondage and needing to know God is close by. The race mentioned in the song is a metaphor for a life lived in the face of injustice. This powerful yet simple lyric is a sung prayer for God’s guidance and protection and can serve as an anthem for youth to accompany them as they grow in faith and work for justice.

Supplies:

- song: “Guide My Feet,” African-American traditional (tune: Guide My Feet), <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>

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.

Lead the youth in understanding the song’s history and learning these lyrics. It was both a slave spiritual and a song of the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Once they have learned the lyrics, invite the youth to add lyrics to reflect their own situation. (For instance, the *New Century Hymnal* includes a fifth verse, “Wheel with me while I run this race.” This lyric was created by a fifth-grade church class to include persons who use wheelchairs instead of their feet in running the race.) You may wish to consider such verses as “Guide my mind while I study in school,” “Guide my feet while I walk in my neighborhood,” and “Guide my heart while I work for justice.” Sing each new lyric through all four verses so that youth experience asking for God’s guidance and being children of God in all aspects of their lives.

3 Youth Doing Justice

Leader preparation: Knowing stories of youth and adults who are faithful to God in the face of injustice can give youth a reference point as they make decisions in their own lives. Read the story of Daniel in Daniel 6:1–28 and the true life story of Ruby Bridges. Be able to paraphrase the story, emphasizing Daniel’s faithfulness to God and his prayers to God as a source of his strength. Note similarities in the character and action of both young people. Be prepared to talk about other youth or adults of faith who also worked for justice. Examples include Dorothy Day, Queen Liliuokalani, Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy, Fred Rogers, Jimmy Carter, Ebo Patel, and Marian Wright Edelman, all of whom can be researched ahead of time to add to the list the youth create.

Supplies:

- Bible—Contemporary English Version (CEV) or New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
- Internet access to view <http://www.rubybridges.com/story.htm>
- (optional) *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges (Scholastic Press, 1999)

Share the stories of Daniel from scripture and Ruby Bridges from her own testimony. Invite the youth to find similarities in the character and faith of each young person. Talk together about the injustices Daniel and Ruby faced and how their faith helped them. As you lead your group in noting similarities, they may name faith practices such as prayer that sustains one in times of injustice. Ask the youth if they or other youth they know are working for justice. Ask if they can name both contemporary and historical persons of faith who work for justice. Conclude with a prayer created by the youth in which they use their words to call on God, to name an injustice, to ask for God to work with everyone involved, and to ask for God’s strength to guide them. Conclude by thanking God for God’s call for justice.



Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Justice Brainstorm (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Adapt the reflection questions at the end of this activity to facilitate a meaningful conversation with your group. In order to do justice, one must be able to define or describe it. Youth may have ideas about justice in a criminal sense because of television and other media. God's justice is something more than and different from this one sort of justice. God insists that those with more must share and that whoever is being mistreated is to be helped and given a place in society and his or her dignity restored. Hebrew Scripture scholar Walter Bruggeman stated, "If you want to do the *work* of Justice, find out *what* belongs to *whom* and *give it back!*"

Supplies:

- Bible
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard for recording the conversation

Gather the group in a circle. Facilitate a conversation with the youth about justice. Ask: *How do you define justice?* (Expect answers to deal with criminal justice or the law.) Read scripture, such as the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25–37 or the Feeding of the Five Thousand from Mark 6:30–44. Ask the youth what they heard about justice in these passages. How is the justice enacted by Jesus on God's behalf different from their first answers?

Write the Bruggeman quote on newsprint or a whiteboard. Invite the youth to discuss this quote. *What would that kind of justice look like? What would that kind of justice require us to do?* Help the youth think in terms of land and property, water, and other natural resources.

Conclude with a reading of Isaiah 1:10–18 that describes both injustice and justice from God's point of view. Conclude the conversation by having each participant describe God's justice in his or her own words.

5 If Justice Was a Game, How Would You Play?

Leader preparation: Working for justice should be a joyful task for the faithful even as injustice is serious, often sad, and sometimes scary to think about or witness. In this activity, youth are encouraged to think outside the box to imagine what justice would look like if it were a game. You will help youth describe characteristics of justice, and then allow them to brainstorm a game. You may wish to gather supplies such as the ones suggested below that could be used as equipment in the game.

Supplies:

- assorted sports equipment
- assorted game pieces, dice, cards
- assorted objects such as cardboard boxes, paper tubes, or other building supplies
- markers and newsprint or a whiteboard

Gather the youth. Have a conversation about the characteristics of justice that God demands and Jesus enacts. List these characteristics on newsprint or whiteboard so that they can be used in the next step. Once the list is settled, ask: *How many in the group are game players? How many play online games?* Let the youth know that their next task is to imagine justice as a game and then to develop a



“justice” game. You might want to divide the group into teams of three or four persons to come up with more than one justice game. Have them work together to create the object of the game, whether there is one team or more than one, how to decide who goes first, and what has to happen to “win” the game. They may use any of the assorted objects as props or pieces in the game. Play the game that the youth create. After playing, consider how it went and how “justice” was present in the game.

6 Snapshots of Justice

Leader preparation: Round up some digital cameras in order to have one camera per youth. (Cell phones with photo apps work as well.) Note that dividing into teams and having youth share and take turns can be an act of justice in itself. If one of the youth or an adult is skilled at photography, you may want to have her or him share tips on taking pictures with the group. You will need to arrange transportation and additional adults to help. This activity provides an opportunity to directly engage with one’s context and to discern justice in daily life.

Supplies:

- digital cameras or cell phones
- transportation and additional adult chaperones
- computer or other device to download and display or print photographs

Give each youth a camera (or divide into teams if it is necessary to share). Instruct them that they will travel around the community. On the trip they are to take pictures of justice or injustice as they see it in people, signs, buildings, or nature. Then download the pictures and invite the youth tell about their pictures.

Alternatively, spread this activity over a couple of sessions by checking out the cameras to youth and giving them a week to shoot photos and then report back with their pictures.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Praying for Justice (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Prayer is an essential part of one’s life in working for justice. In prayer one can turn over difficult situations to God’s care. In working for justice, prayer lifts up both the victims of injustice and the unjust situations and turns them over to God’s care. Justice workers also pray to ask for God’s strength to support them and God’s wisdom to guide them. Finally and most radically, the faithful working for justice ask God to touch the lives of the perpetrators of injustice and to help heal them as well. Remind the youth that there are many ways to pray, including singing, as in the spiritual “Guide My Feet,” addressing God out loud, writing, or silent prayer.

Supplies:

- Bible

Gather the youth. Ask them about prayer. Do they pray? When do they pray? How do they pray? In what ways does prayer matter? Describe an unjust situation and ask them how they think they might pray about the situation. Will they ask for God’s help for themselves and the people affected by the injustice? What about the people who are perpetrating the injustice? It is an intuitive and biblical response to ask God to stop or do something violent to one’s enemies. Consider



Psalm 10 or Psalm 21. Perhaps youth can relate to this by how they feel about a bully at school, a strict teacher, or people who steal things, sell drugs, or participate in gangs. We wish for vengeance and for our enemies to be stopped. We can pray/talk to God about it. God shows that even enemies need grace. God also includes one's enemies at the feast; remember Judas was at the last supper. Christ Jesus showed that doing justice asks us to take our prayers a step further and to pray sincerely that God will forgive those who do injustice and bless them with a changed heart and with compassion. Read Luke 4:14–21 and notice who is included in this prayer. Then, consider Luke 23:32–43 for an example of Jesus' great act of forgiveness of those who crucified him and also for his compassion toward criminals seeking salvation. Have the youth think privately about someone they have a hard time dealing with or relating to, or whom they simply do not like. Ask them to pray for that person's health and well-being both in group time and for the rest of the week. Ask them to report back to the group about any change in their feelings for the person or changes in their interactions after praying for the person.

8 Justice Write Now!

Leader preparation: The youth in your group are probably able to attend school freely, but not every young person is so fortunate. Children living with HIV/AIDS have had a particularly difficult time going to school. They have been discriminated against out of fear and ignorance about the disease. Such children often feel alone and without friends or hope. Part of doing justice is to befriend those who have been outcast while working with them to change the situation. You are encouraged to read the story of the orphans with HIV/AIDS and to contact Sister Nguyen Tai Bao at Aidsmaihoa@hcmc.netnam.vn to see if you may send messages of friendship and hope to the children. Letters asking for justice can be sent to *Nguoi Viet Daily News* in care of news@nguoi-vet.com or to 14771-14772 Moran Street, Westminster, CA 92683. You may adapt this session and have the youth correspond with people in an HIV/AIDS support group or shelter in your local area and to write letters to local educators or lawmakers encouraging an end to discrimination or to enact rules to protect children from discrimination. You may also wish to share facts about this session with parents and have a health educator on hand to answer questions.

Supplies:

- fact sheet about HIV/AIDS from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, available free for printing or ordering preprinted at <http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/productDetails.aspx?ProductID=14622>
- Internet access to hear <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112345188> and to view the website of the Mao Ho Aids Center at http://www.thuongvevietnam.org/webseiten/aidsmaihoa/html/aidsmaihoa_en.html
- (option) visit the *New York Times* website to see pictures of the children and read the story <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/world/asia/14orphans.html>
- map of Viet Nam and a world map
- colored markers and paints
- plain 8½" x 11" paper
- tables and chairs
- large manila envelopes and postage

Have the youth sit around tables with supplies for writing and painting in easy reach. Talk to them about the injustice of discrimination in general and the discrimination acted out against children and youth living with HIV/AIDS in par-



ticular. Share the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services fact sheet with the youth. Create a space for them to talk about their understanding of HIV/AIDS and share about prevention of the disease. Next, share the story of the orphans in Viet Nam, either by listening to the story or reading the transcript. Have the youth locate Mao Ho Aids Center in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) on a map of Viet Nam and locate Viet Nam on the world map. Let them know that Jesus regularly visited with and lived with people with diseases whom other people in his community shunned or discriminated against. Share, too, that there is a long Christian tradition of writing letters to encourage fellow Christians and to share the love of Christ with those who are facing trouble. Invite the youth to divide into teams. One team will write letters or paint pictures to offer in friendship to the orphans. These letters will be sent to the orphans. The second team will write letters to the community with regard to their fears and offering facts about HIV/AIDS, lifting up the worth of every child, and asking for justice. These letters will be addressed to the editor of a daily Vietnamese language newspaper with offices in the United States. Mail the letters and share any response you receive.

Reflect

Consider this statement: “Working for justice is the way of life for disciples.” It is not “a” way of life but “the” way of life for those who follow Jesus. What is God’s justice that Jesus calls us to be a part of? How is it different than secular justice? How can all of us who are participating in this Exploration work for God’s justice in our daily lives? What injustices are faced by youth in the church, community, and world? Who are the oppressed, orphans, and widows where I live? How might I rescue or defend them? How might I plead for them? How might I lead youth to commit to lives of justice?

9 Communion on the Street

Leader preparation: Justice is symbolized in worship by communion. Jesus invites all who wish to come to his table. He makes no distinctions. Serving communion to one another and to whoever is hungry is an act of justice. Jesus fed people where they were in their own communities. In this activity the youth will prepare and serve communion to anyone who is hungry. You will need to locate an outdoor setting where people gather, and enlist the help of adults for transportation if the site is away from the church building. Consider offering communion at a food bank or at a community meal for the hungry. If you have time to expand the activity, involve the youth in actually baking bread both for communion and to give away.

Supplies:

- chalice, plate, and pitcher (or what is normally used for communion in your denomination or church)
- bread and juice for communion
- a portable table and cloth
- additional loaves of bread to give away

Follow the communion tradition of your faith community for the prayers and actions in communion. Talk to the youth about communion as an act of justice. At one time in the church, after communion was finished, the leftover bread was shared with the hungry. Give each youth a chance to participate in a portion of preparing, blessing, and serving communion to people who are not a part of the group. In the pattern of Jesus, the meal is to be freely offered to the hungry whether baptized or not. Conclude by having the youth serve one another. If you have prepared extra loaves, join with the youth to distribute the bread to hungry people.

Working for Justice



Exploration: Scripture

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) are able to question, discuss, and enjoy scripture. Do give any participant who wishes the opportunity to read scripture aloud. Activities in this Exploration invite youth to hear and absorb the texts. For hearing and knowing, they are then invited to experience scripture as a living word that inspires Christians to action.

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 did Jesus.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Micah 6:1–8
Amos 5:18–24

Leader Preparation

Scripture provides faithful people with marching orders and a road map for living a life in justice. There are a myriad of scriptures related to justice in the Bible. This practice lifts up twelve such scriptures in particular. Micah 6:1–8 and Amos 5:18–24 contain images of nature as witness to human sin and uses flowing water as a metaphor for how justice should spread. These images from scripture will inform working for justice in nature in this Exploration. You will lead yourself and youth to become advocates for nature and to attend to how justice at the source of neediness leads to justice flowing both in communities of abundance and communities of scarcity.

Spend time outdoors reading and thinking about Micah 6:8. Consider how you walk in the world. What does it mean to walk humbly with God? Have you gone barefoot recently? Try it for an afternoon. Note the different types of surfaces over which you walk. You may want to journal about your experience. Moses in Exodus is so moved by the presence of God in the burning bush that he takes off his shoes to indicate he stands on holy ground. How does wearing shoes in the industrialized world separate us from seeing creation as holy ground? What does it mean for children in the developing world to be without shoes in places where trash is dumped in the street and foraging for food often in-

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Barefoot Walkabout (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read the notes and questions in the Leader Preparation section for this entire Exploration. Think through your answers to the questions related to how we are in touch with or cut off from God’s creation by our shoes. Be prepared to lead the youth on a walk and to think about these questions. If possible, take the walk outside. If not, encourage the youth to walk through the church building and even around the building, weather permitting.

Supplies:

- (optional) an outdoor setting with various surfaces such as grass, a dirt path or trail, concrete, rocky ground
- (optional) towels and soap for washing after the activity
- Bible

Gather the youth at the location for the walk. Read Micah 6:1–8 and Amos 5:18–24 with the youth and take time to wonder about God’s call in Micah for people to state their defense with the hills and mountains as witnesses. Wonder about what it means in Amos for justice to flow like a river. Have all take off their shoes and take a quiet walk, paying attention to the different surfaces their feet touch. At the end of the walk, gather in a circle and invite everyone to describe something he or she noticed about being barefoot. Help the youth to think about how “shoelessness” is a choice for some people and not a choice for others. Talk together about the justice implications.

2 Humble Haiku

Leader preparation: In this activity you and your youth will create haiku poems inspired by scripture. Haiku is a poetry form from Japan in which the first line contains five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the last line again has only five syllables. These brief poems act as snapshots, catching a detail or a moment in just a few words. You may wish to look up haiku examples on the Internet or borrow a book of haiku from your public library. Practice writing one or two poems as samples for your group. It is an inherently humble form of poetry in which the poet uses all her or his skill to capture a moment in three short lines. Writing haiku takes discipline, encourages the poet to choose words carefully, and can create great beauty without using many resources. In this way it is a good practice for working for justice.

Supplies:

- 8½" x 11" plain paper
- colored markers or writing pens
- (optional) Japanese calligraphy paper, black paint, and brushes
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Gather your youth at tables with the supplies in the center. Take turns reading Micah 6:1–8 and Amos 5:18–24. Notice the images of nature, of God, and of people in each. Have a conversation about these images. *How might a mountain be a judge? What does God’s voice sound like? What would a river of justice feel or look like?*

volves going barefoot in a dump? Conclude your reflections and writing time with a prayer of your own or this one:

Prayer

God of all creation,

Thank you for water to drink, air to breath, food to eat, and shoes for my feet.

Guide me to be mindful of the source of all these necessities and to work for justice so that everyone has enough from the abundance you provide.

Help me to walk humbly in the world and to be loving kindness to those I meet each day.

*In the name of your son Jesus,
Living Water for a thirsty world,
Amen.*

Introduce the Japanese poetry form of haiku. On newsprint or a whiteboard write the form for haiku like this, where each line represents a syllable, not a word:

Invite the youth to write a haiku of their own that uses one of the images from the text as an inspiration. You might have the group write a poem together. Then have the youth work alone or with a partner to create another poem. After making a rough draft, they may transfer the haiku to a clean sheet of paper and use colored markers to decorate or illustrate their poems. Conclude by having everyone read her or his creations. Ask permission to print these poems in the church newsletter or worship bulletin. Or create a display of these poems in a prominent place in the church.



3 Sowing Justice

Leader preparation: This activity is the beginning of a longer project. Youth will interact with art and scripture. They will volunteer in a community garden or create a garden and share their harvest. This activity and project are designed for youth to experience sowing justice in concrete way. In the end when the youth share their harvest, they are sharing justice.

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
- Bible
- access to a community garden or cooperative farm where youth may volunteer and plant and harvest food or flowers
- (optional) copies of *Seed Folks* by Paul Fleishman, a novella that illustrates the themes in scripture and ties to “The Sower” by Van Gogh (the group may read this over the course of this project)

Invite the youth to look at the artwork “The Sower” by Vincent van Gogh without giving away the name of the painting. Ask questions about the painting. *What is the story? What do the youth notice in the picture? What is the person doing? What can they tell about or imagine about the person based on the picture?* Invite the youth to think about Micah 6:1–8 in relation to the picture. Do they see humility? Kindness? Justice? Next, share the title of the picture. Affirm their observation that the person is planting seeds or explain that in farming the way to grow things is to broadcast or spread seeds over the ground. Then the sower nurtures seeds with water and takes care of the field for crops to grow.

As the sower sows seeds in a field, Christians are to sow justice in the world and help grow it in their homes, communities, and the world. Read the parable of the Sower and its explanation from Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23. The activity may conclude here, or this may be the opening to their work in a community garden. Either close the activity by explaining the next steps and offering a prayer for the coming work, or turn the youth over to the garden coordinator to learn about and practice planting seeds. Then conclude with a prayer that the planted seeds will grow into good plants like our hope that acts of kindness and faith will grow into mighty works of justice.

If you choose for this to be an ongoing project: While waiting for the seeds to grow, the youth can meet and share their experiences reading *Seed Folks* or they

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may continue to think about food and justice by visiting a farmer's market or taking a survey of where people can buy fresh food or grow their own in their community. They can map these places and share the map with the public and the church. They may find places where there is no access to fresh food. Invite them to discuss this and take some action. When the seeds have sprouted and grown, have a harvesting party. If they grew flowers, they can cut them and share with persons in a shelter or senior home. If they grew vegetables, perhaps they can make a salad or a meal and serve it to the community. Invite the youth to leave some of their crop in the ground for the birds or other animals to eat or for people to harvest. Share scripture from Leviticus 19:9–10 and Ruth 2:1–9, which explain this justice practice called gleaning.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 What Does the Lord Require of You? (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Be familiar with Micah 6:1–8. You may want to help your group look for the ideas it contains in the other scriptures throughout all the Explorations. Familiarize yourself with the hymn “What Does the Lord Require of You?” by Jim Strathdee, which takes up the words of Micah 6:8. Another song based on Micah 6:6–8 can be heard at http://godlychristianmusic.com/GodlyChristianMusic_files/Believers_in_Grand_Rapids.htm. This song is repeated over and over so that a group could catch on to the words and the tune. Scroll down to the acapella section at the bottom of the page to find the link to the mp3. An mp3 and sheet music for a third version, written by Albert Bayly, can be found at <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/mlehr/reflec/whatdoes/whatdoes.htm>.

After sharing the full scripture with your group, you will lead singing of this hymn as a way for your group to commit scripture to memory using both their minds and bodies.

Supplies:

- song: “What Does the Lord Require of You?” by Jim Strathdee (tune: Moon); hear the song at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2OxgxMv2A&feature=related>, or other options as noted above
- Bible

Read Micah 6:1–8 with your group. Ask them if they know the story God speaks about in verse 4. What can they tell you about how God saved Moses and the Hebrew people when they were in slavery in Egypt? Explain that Micah was a prophet who followed God and lived after Moses and before Jesus. He was concerned because people had been forgetting all of God's blessing and justice. In this scripture God calls the people of Micah's time—and us today—to be responsible for how we live. Ask them about their understanding of verse 6:8. How would they describe doing justice? Loving kindness? Walking humbly with God? Teach them a song based on this scripture, and practice singing it several times. You may want to sing it quietly and grow louder and then grow quieter again. If you use the Strathdee version, try singing it as a round in three-part harmony. You may want to sing this song during other activities throughout this Exploration.



5 If Justice Were a River

Leader preparation: For this activity you will need a wall on which to tape the mural paper. First, tape up a piece of paper larger than the mural paper to protect the wall from paint. Cover it with a second sheet, which will be for the mural. Familiarize yourself with Amos 5:18–24. Think about the water imagery at the end of the text. Have all supplies on hand and ready at the beginning of the activity.

Supplies:

- two sheets of butcher block paper at least 3' x 5'
- painters tape
- watercolor paints
- brushes
- cups of water for cleaning brushes
- plastic lids or egg cartons for palates
- newspaper or other scrap paper for cleaning brushes
- Bible

Gather at the wall where you will paint. Read Amos 5:18–24 and talk about rivers and how they flow from a source or sources, are fed by tributaries, cross over the miles, and lead to the sea. Make connections with justice work. *What is the source of justice? What elements are needed (tributaries) to help justice flow? Where is justice needed in the world and in the immediate community? What issues concern you? How does justice in one place create more justice everywhere (the ocean or the sea)?* Invite the youth to create a river of justice mural.

Some youth will paint the river; others can paint pictures along the banks and in the water that reflect their answers to the questions. Conclude with prayers for justice in those areas and issues the youth have lifted up. If possible, arrange to share the mural with others in your community.

6 Picturing Scripture

Leader preparation: This activity allows the youth to use their imaginations to move scripture from words on paper to images and emotions. You may need to enlist help from someone with computer skills. The goal is for youth to see scripture move from text into art and then into everyday life. As they grow in their skill to “see” scripture in the world, so too they may grow in their ability to look for ways that justice is or is not present and for creative ways to work for justice.

Supplies:

- two Bibles
- at least one computer with Internet access and Microsoft PowerPoint or other presentation software
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard, or paper and pencils

Divide the group into two teams. Call one Micah and the other Amos. Give each team a Bible and have Team Micah find Micah 6:1–8 and Team Amos find Amos 5:18–24. Invite them to read the passages aloud in their group. Next, have each team brainstorm a list of concrete objects, such as rivers and streams, listed in their passage as well as a list of feelings or emotions that they get from the scripture. List these on newsprint or a whiteboard or on paper. The teams will use the computer to perform image searches for pictures of the concrete objects and others that symbolize the feelings and emotions. When they have gathered images and stored them on the computer, work with the youth to build a slide show, including the scripture text and arranging their pictures to tell the story of the scripture. When each group has finished, allow them to share their work. Invite



them to begin to look around in their own community to see scripture represented in everyday objects and situations. Encourage them to think about in what ways people walk humbly, do justice, and love kindness, what persons do these things, or in what ways justice is flowing in the community.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Lord, Wash My Feet (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Jesus modeled Micah 6:8 in his daily life as recounted in scripture. Jesus walked humbly with God when he served his friends by washing their feet. You will share this story with the youth and trace the practice from the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament to John 13:1–15 using a concordance. Examples include Genesis 18:4, 19:2, 24:32, 43:24, and 1 Samuel 25:41. Your church library, pastor's library, or public library may have a concordance you can borrow. You may also search online to find passages related to foot washing. Help youth understand that washing feet is an ancient practice in the Middle East. The Hebrew people, the ancestors of contemporary Jews, washed feet as a sign of hospitality. Muslim people of faith wash their own feet before entering a mosque to pray. Jesus did not invent foot washing, but he helped us see through his practice of this custom what it truly means to be humble.

Supplies:

- basin and pitcher
- cool water
- hand towels
- concordances for the version of the Bible you use with the youth
- Bible

Have a conversation with the youth about what it means to be humble. What are their thoughts? Read or tell the story of Jesus washing the feet of his friends in John 13:1–15. Explain that Jesus lived in ancient Israel and the practice of washing feet existed in his culture. In that culture in that time, people walked everyone on dirt roads. Their feet would be extremely dusty. It was a matter of hospitality and welcome to offer a way to wash the feet of those who came to your home. This service was often performed by a servant. (Some communions and denominations today practice foot washing.) Jesus demonstrated servant leadership by washing his friends' feet himself rather than just providing water and a servant to perform this action. Introduce the concordance as a tool for finding scripture passages. Demonstrate its use. Divide into small teams of two or three to look up passages listed in the concordance and share various passages about foot washing by reading aloud from the Bible. (If you have Internet access, you might also search online.) End the activity by practicing foot washing. As the adult, you demonstrate by washing the feet of one youth. Then have the group members take turns washing the feet of a friend. If the youth are uncomfortable washing feet, have them wash one another's hands. Today's hygiene relies on clean hands more than clean feet. Conclude with a prayer or a reading of Micah 6:8.



8 Guide My Feet

Leader preparation: Liturgical dance is a spiritual practice that combines physical movement and music to illustrate or bring to life scripture, prayers, or hymn texts. This is not always a literal representation of the scripture or prayer, though it may include literal elements. View the YouTube video of the Sarah Bush Dance Project to see liturgical dance based on the spiritual “Guide My Feet.” You may also wish to explore this practice by searching “liturgical dance” on the Internet. It is important to note that in liturgical dance one does not need to be a professional dancer or have any particular body shape to participate. Many churches now have praise dancers. If you have youth with physical challenges, be creative in ways for everyone to be a part of the dance.

Supplies:

- “Guide My Feet” liturgical dance, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiGX6VGg8P0>
- “Guide My Feet” music, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong20>; words and music, <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>
- Bible

In an open room or in the sanctuary, gather the youth together. Share the text of “Guide My Feet” and Micah 6:1–8. In the scripture passage, people are asked to walk humbly with God, and in the hymn the singer cries out to God for guidance for running the race of life. Explain that this spiritual was originally sung by African slaves in the United States who faced injustice and yearned for freedom. Explain that one way to illustrate scripture and worship God is through liturgical dance. Show the YouTube video of one example of liturgical dance to the song “Guide My Feet.” This is only one interpretation. Invite your group to create their own dance, which might show people asking God for help and helping one another to walk humbly and work for justice. Practice the moves with the music. Invite some youth to be dancers and some to sing the lyrics while waiting to dance. Be sure everyone has a part. Perform the dance as a group and consider performing it for your faith community.

9 Soles for Souls

Leader preparation: In this Exploration scripture issues a clarion call to justice for all who would follow Christ in loving God and neighbor. The emphasis so far has been on walking humbly and paying attention to where justice and injustice occur in the world. This final sending and serving activity invites youth to make a connection between abundance and scarcity and to make a difference in the lives of others. The founder of “Soles for Souls” gives powerful witness to how he used his talents and skills in the shoe industry to respond to a need and to change the root cause of neediness. Watch his testimony at the website ahead of time. Work with other adults to make this youth project a community or churchwide project. By practicing mindfulness about their own possessions, willingly giving up excess material goods, and considering how sharing means everyone can have enough, youth may experience working for justice in a powerful way. If you are working with youth in poverty, consider instead inviting youth to talk about their shoes and where their shoes carry them and work with them to create a shoe bank in your immediate community. Youth of any economic background can also practice advocacy by asking their local shoe stores for donations and inviting shoe manufactures to donate a pair of shoes to a shoe bank or to “Soles for Souls” for every pair purchased. In this way all are addressing the root cause of a need.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- empty boxes or bins for receiving shoe donations
- colored markers or paint and butcher block paper for making signs or decorating the donation bins
- paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps for advocacy letters
- a computer to view the “Soles for Souls” website and testimony at <http://www.soles4souls.org/>

Read Micah 6:1–8 and Amos 5:18–24, allowing youth to take turns reading to one another. Watch the testimony of “Soles for Souls” founder. Talk about how he used his own knowledge of a particular industry to address a need. Encourage the youth to think about their own skills and interests and how they might use them to help others.

Next have the youth make a list of all the pairs of shoes they own and talk about concepts of excess, enough, and scarcity. Share the biblical story of God’s provision of manna in the wilderness at Exodus 16:1–18, 35, as an example of using enough but not hoarding resources. Do they own shoes they have never worn? Ones that no longer fit? Ones they asked for because they were in style one month and out the next? Which shoes could they give up so that others might use them? Invite youth to bring in their unneeded shoes; work with the youth to invite the whole community to do likewise. Perhaps the youth can plan a barefoot Sunday in which everyone wears a pair of shoes they will donate to church and takes them off at the beginning of the service. The youth can decorate bins or boxes to receive the donations and be responsible for packing and shipping the donations.

Reflect

In the beginning of the Micah passage, God asks the people to plead their case before mountains loud enough so the hills can hear. In Amos 5:24, God wishes for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Consider that the writers of these verses lived in very dry climates. Water was a necessity and hardly abundant. Securing a water source would be important to people in those days just as it is today. If you have not done so, think about how you get access to fresh water. Do you know where your water comes from? If not, find out and consider what it means for people in developing countries to walk for miles each day to find water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. Justice too is a necessity and can sometimes seem quite scarce. Who models humility in your life? Who are the strong, faithful disciples who have helped you in your faith journey and who do justice with their lives? In addition to the prophets in scripture, who will you lift up as guides for your youth as they learn to work for justice?

In addition, invite youth to practice advocacy by writing letters to shoe manufacturers to encourage them to give shoes to those in need. Youth may also arrange a visit with local shoe retailers to see if they will donate to the cause to help local children have shoes for school. They may also wish to write to their local paper to encourage others to perform a shoe audit of their own closets and to be more mindful about those without shoes.

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Working for Justice



Exploration: Discipleship

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) may be approaching confirmation or baptism. Exploring what it means to follow Christ may be a major activity for youth at home and in their faith community. Others may be drifting away from their church because they have not experienced discipleship as relevant to their lives. Exploring discipleship as working for justice, youth will be empowered by hands-on activities and given fuel for faithful living into adulthood.

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
John 10:11-18

Leader Preparation

Following Jesus in justice work is an awesome journey with many dimensions. Youth may be inspired to continue to follow Christ by participating in justice activities. They face their own needs for justice in their daily lives. A crucial justice issue for many youth relates to safe schools, safe cyberspace, and safe communities in which bullying does not exist. Yet news reports and official studies indicate that bullying is a very real problem and goes deeper than mere name calling. Death and suicide resulting from vicious bullying are still too common among young people. Adults are complicit in bullying when they do nothing. In Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22, you can hear the pleadings of the ancient Israelites as they confess they have not acted justly and call on God to be present with them. Like the ancient Israelites, we adults must examine our own lives for times when we, too, were not actively just. When we confess, God can work with us to effect action. As part of your preparation for this Exploration, become familiar with <http://www.ucc.org/justice/children-and-youth/what-can-we-do-to-stop.html> and <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>; both sites provide resources to talk with young people about bullying and its prevention.

After you have studied the sites, read John 10:11-18. This gospel passage shows Jesus as a good shepherd who welcomes all to be his companions and

Exploring & Engaging Activities

1 Shepherd Living (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read John 10:11-18. Notice the qualities of care and compassion that Jesus exhibits as a good shepherd. He is constant, faithful, and true to all who already follow his teachings, and he extends his care to those whom he has not yet met. He is gladly willing to lay down his life for those in his care. He is the model for our discipleship. You will help youth to explore these qualities. You may need to aid youth to understand the shepherd metaphor, especially if you are living in an urban area. Be prepared to share some examples of persons in your community or the wider world who are good shepherds.

Supplies:

- Bible
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- (optional) pictures of a shepherd and sheep
- (optional) pictures of women and men who are good shepherds in your community and the world

Gather the youth around you in a semicircle. Check out their knowledge of shepherds and sheep. If available, spend a few minutes sharing a picture of a shepherd and sheep. Share with the youth the Gospel of John 10:11-18, in which Jesus describes himself as a good shepherd. You may wish to have the youth take turns reading the scripture a second and third time. Between each reading, ask questions such as those that follow and record their answers on newsprint or a whiteboard so all can see.

- What do you notice about how a good shepherd acts?
- What other image would you use in their world for the shepherd (for example, teacher, mentor, counselor, parent)?
- How would you be a good shepherd at home and at school?
- Who do you know, either a friend your age or an adult, who is a good shepherd? Share some examples.

Be sure to also ask about sheep as well.

- We are all the sheep in the story, but who do you know who is particularly vulnerable or lost? Can you name people or groups at school?
- What have you done or not done to make these young people feel welcome at school or church?
- If Jesus is our model, how or what might we do to extend welcome and friendship to those who appear alone or in need of companionship?

Close with a prayer blessing shepherds and the people who need care and asking Jesus to help everyone present to live like good shepherds.

to whom no one is a stranger. Youth can look to Jesus the Good Shepherd as their model for living a bully-proof life and helping their friends do the same. As you conclude your study and reflection time, close with a prayer of your own or this one:

Prayer:

God, you call us to justice work.

Through Jesus you showed us that justice is for all people.

I confess that I have not always acted justly or advanced the cause of justice.

Help me to be a good shepherd for [insert the names of the youth in your group].

Help us all to make visible your realm of justice by our faith and our works,

so that all people we meet shall know they are your beloved people.

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 Sounds of Justice

Leader preparation: An important part of Christian discipleship is singing hymns and songs of faith. Through singing and music, discipleship practices such as communion, baptism, and healing are ingrained in our memories. When we sing the songs, we can recall the sacraments, traditions, and story of God’s amazing love for the word made flesh in Jesus Christ. Learn the words and music to “Dream God’s Dream,” in which singers are invited to imagine what the world would look like if we all lived as God intends. Sing this song until it becomes “written in” your memories. You may wish to sing it often to start your activities in this Exploration and in the others for this faith practice. If we know something through singing, we can begin to live it in other aspects of our lives, and in times of trouble the words and music will help us overcome.

Supplies:

- video: “Dream God’s Dream,” <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19>
- lyrics: “Dream God’s Dream,” <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19a>
- piano and a pianist or a recording of the song; perhaps one of your youth can play

Gather the youth around a piano or music-playing device. Explain that a big part of discipleship is singing the songs of our faith. Introduce the song about the kind of world God dreams of and how the youth can help God make such a world. Play or listen to the song “Dream God’s Dream” one time. Next, teach the youth the chorus and sing it a couple of times. Then go verse by verse until the youth are comfortable with the words and music. Sing it all the way through. Conclude with a conversation with the youth about what the lyrics mean to them. What are their dreams and fears? Close with a prayer and a final singing of the chorus.

3 Bully Proof

Leader preparation: Bullying is a serious problem in schools and communities. It can even exist in the church. Study the resources from United Church of Christ staff found on the web at <http://www.ucc.org/justice/children-and-youth/what-can-we-do-to-stop.html> and the website for youth provided by the United States Department of Health at <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>. Check your denominational website to look for other resources. Read John 10:11–18. The good shepherd, Jesus, would not condone bullying and did act to prevent it in cases such as the Gerasene Demoniac, who is both bullied by an unclean spirit and shunned by his community (Mark 5:1–20). He also confronted injustice when he rebuked the disciples for wanting to send children away in Luke 18:15–17. Your task will be to help the youth know what bullying is and what to do about it and how to be good shepherds with one another at home, school, play, and in the faith community.

Supplies:

- Bible
- computers to access <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>

Meet with the youth at a location, such as a library or church, where they can access the Internet. Have the youth read the description of Jesus the Good Shepherd in John 10:11–18. Talk about what it means to be a shepherd. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be shepherds, too. Invite the group to share what they know about bullying. Explain that bullying is not a part of discipleship. Jesus invites everyone to be a part of the community regardless of differences. Encourage them to do likewise. Explore the website, play the games, and test one another’s



knowledge of bullying, how to prevent it, and what to do if it happens. Close with a prayer inviting the youth to be shepherds and to uplift those who have been bullied.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Prayer of Confession (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Working for justice sometimes takes a backseat to our regular routines. It is easy in the United States for many people to live sheltered from injustice. Yet inactivity or ignorance of injustice is not part of discipleship. Jesus calls us to follow God and to confront injustice. The practice of the prayer of confession in worship and our individual lives provides an opportunity to name injustice and to call on God for help and strength to move from inactivity to take action. Be familiar with your own community's tradition of confession in order to share it with your youth. You may use your local prayer or one of the simplified ones in the attachment to guide youth in learning this form of prayer.

Supplies:

- Bible
- "Prayers of Confession," Attachment: Activity 4
- (optional) copies of the prayer of confession used in your community

If possible, gather the youth outside of your normal meeting space or the church building. Do this to make the point that prayer is not just an activity that takes place in church on a particular day of the week, but also is a practice of discipleship that can happen anywhere and anytime. Ask them how their week has gone. What did they do for fun, or what was something new they learned at school? Ask them whether they had an opportunity to help out at home or at school. Thank them for their actions. Next, ask if anyone had difficulty being helpful or kind at home or school. If no one has anything to share, ask a broader question. Has anyone ever sometimes acted badly with a brother or sister or friend or parent? Let them know that we all have times when we do not always behave well or forget we are disciples. Read aloud Jeremiah 14:7–9 and reflect on the need for forgiveness. Assure the youth of God's love and Jesus' care. In our lives, as followers of Christ, we say a prayer of confession in order to say what we did and ask God to help us get back on the path of right actions and justice. Use the prayers of confession on the attachment.

5 Idol Justice

Leader preparation: In 2009 Susan Boyle was a contestant on the British version of "American Idol." On the surface, she appeared to be a plain or even homely person. The judges and stagehands made fun of her and made many unkind remarks about her looks; they belittled her behind her back. This is bullying of the worst sort. Then Susan took her turn in the singing competition and put all the bullies in their place by having one of the most beautiful voices that many people have heard. The bullies were forced to confess and admit their wrongdoing. Susan has gone on to inspire other people to have the self-confidence to follow their dreams. The clip you will watch with the youth is a powerful visual lesson about how awful bullying is regardless of whether or not the victim has talent. It also reminds us that when we belittle a fellow human being, we run the risk of missing a chance to see or hear Jesus.



Option: Invite the youth to watch film clips from the PBS film “People Like Us” about social class in America. This is another aspect of recognizing differences among people and the prejudices that people have about social class.

Supplies:

- computer and access to the Internet for viewing <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPZh4AnWyk>
- Bible
- (optional) “People Like Us,” <http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/>

Talk to the youth about similarities and differences in their friends. Are all the people they associate with just like themselves? Is there any one in their acquaintance at school or church who is different? If so, different how? How do they feel about people who are different? How do they think Jesus acted toward those who were different from his family? (He welcomed them, ate with them, healed them, and invited them to be his friends.) Invite them to watch the YouTube clip about a person who is being judged by others as being different. After watching, invite conversation about what they saw. *Who were you in the video clip? Were you tempted to join in the teasing? Have you ever been judged by others because of your looks?* Share Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:35–40 to the disciples about how they will find him in the least likely places. Encourage the youth to each think of a person whom he or she may have teased or ignored and invite each to enter into conversation with that person in the coming week and to become better acquainted.

6 Singing for Our Lives

Leader preparation: On November 27, 1978, San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by Dan White. Part of White’s motive was that Harvey was a homosexual and the mayor had openly supported the human rights of homosexuals. Their violent deaths stunned the gay community in San Francisco and in the world. Folksinger Holly Near was moved to write the song “We Are Gentle, Angry People Singing for Our Lives” as a memorial for the fallen men. It was sung in a candlelight vigil shortly after their murders and continues to be an anthem for gay rights and other justice movements today. The title can also describe how we are called to belike disciples working for justice. We are gentle as Jesus was gentle and angry as he was at injustice. An ancient practice of the Christian tradition, beginning with Paul from his jail cell in Acts 16:20–31, is singing our faith in order to save our lives. Learn the words of this song and watch the video clip so that you can share it with your youth.

Supplies:

- song: “Singing for Our Lives” by Holly Near; words on Holly Near’s website, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21a>; video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21b>
- computer with Internet access
- Bible

Talk with the youth about Jesus the Good Shepherd and his work to include all sheep or people in his mission to do justice and share the love of God. Discuss the injustice of excluding people because they are different. Tell them about Harvey Milk and Mayor Moscone, who were public servants who worked to include heterosexuals and homosexuals in one community. Talk about how one person’s fear and hatred ended their work. Share that a powerful song was written to capture the grief and heartbreak of both gay and straight San Franciscans at these deaths. Watch the YouTube video. Teach the words of the song to the youth and



sing it. Have them discuss discipleship and what it means to be both gentle and angry. Share the story of Paul, who was imprisoned for his faith but still managed to sing because he knew Jesus. Remind them that, regardless of one's sexuality, everyone is a child of God and loved by Jesus.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Bumper Stickers (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Bumper stickers are a part of American popular culture. Through short slogans, people advertise their views on faith, politics, and culture. In this activity youth will have a chance to create discipleship and justice bumper stickers that express their views on justice and faith. You may wish to collect some samples of bumper sticker slogans to inspire youth as they make their own.

Supplies:

- 8½" x 11" paper cut in half lengthwise to make strips
- colored markers
- Bible
- (optional) blank contact paper cut to the shape of a bumper sticker
- (optional) actual blank label paper and a computer and printer to make actual bumper stickers

Invite the youth to name their favorite bumper stickers and ones that disturb or annoy them. Give examples of different kinds of religious bumper stickers. Explain the need to offer some Christian messages that speak up for social justice. Have the youth brainstorm bumper stickers that proclaim God's love of diversity and call for justice. You may share scripture to serve as an inspiration for the bumper sticker slogans, or the youth may wish to design their own short pithy statements in support of justice causes that mean something to them personally.

Give the youth time to create and decorate their bumper stickers and to share them with the group. You may wish to vote as a group on one or two of the best ones, produce them on label stock, and pass them out to older youth and adults in the community to invite them to help spread the good news of God's justice by placing the stickers on their cars. Remind the youth that they may not place bumper stickers on any car (or anywhere else) without the permission of the owner.



8 Embrace of Peace

Leader preparation: In this activity you will invite youth to consider the painting "Embrace of Peace" by George Tooker. Tooker, a gay man, was influenced by the Catholic faith and named the picture after the part of the Catholic Mass when the priest invites people to exchange the peace of Christ. Be familiar with your own community's tradition of passing the peace in worship in order to share it with the youth. If you do not regularly pass the peace, you may read about the practice here: <http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Mass.htm>. The peace is passed during the portion of the service in which communion is taken. As you facilitate this time, it is important to be open and intentional; don't rush. There is no right or wrong answer for the youth to give. This activity is about noticing and making meaning for one's self. All the answers contribute to a greater understanding of the work.



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
- Bible

Gather the youth together, stand in a circle, and take time to breathe deeply. Explain that everyone is going to look at a picture and all will have a chance to talk about what they see. Invite the youth to sit down anywhere they like as long as they can see you holding the picture. Ask them to put all their senses to work silently. Then pose these questions. Remind the youth that there is no right or wrong answer. They are to answer from their own perspective, what they see, what they feel.

- What is the image about, or what is the story?
- Name a detail from the picture. What colors, shapes, or objects do they see in the picture?
- What does the picture make you feel?
- How do you relate to the picture? Where do you see yourself in the picture?
- What does it mean?
- What does this work of art call us to do? Are we moved to justice and compassion?

Thank the youth for their attention and good answers. Explain that the artist named this picture the “Embrace of Peace” after the part in the worship service in which we are called to turn to our neighbors and say “The peace of Christ be with you . . .” and to reply “. . . and also with you,” and to greet one another with a handshake, hug, or kiss on the cheek. Invite them to practice saying “Peace of Christ be with you . . .” and to answer “. . . and also with you” and to shake hands. Then, ask them to look at the picture again. *Is everyone included in the peace? Does knowing that the artist is a gay man who would not be welcome in many sanctuaries change how you think about the picture? To whom are you called to share the peace of Christ? What would it mean to you if someone they knew was not allowed to participate in the passing of the peace?* Close with a prayer thanking God that God in Christ does not exclude anyone from knowing the peace of Christ and calling for a day when no church excludes anyone who wants to be a disciple.

9 Marching Together

Leader preparation: Contact your local high school Gay Straight Alliance or PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) chapter to connect with adults and youth who are allies of gay, lesbian, and transgendered people. Find out when the local PRIDE march will occur, or if there is a homecoming or Fourth of July parade in which heterosexual allies and their homosexual family members and friends will be marching. Arrange for a representative from the group to speak with your youth about what it means as a heterosexual person to be an ally to the gay community. This person might also answer questions from the youth about how to thrive if one is of a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Do not assume all the youth in your group are heterosexual. Provide a safe environment for all the youth to ask questions. Build in some time for socializing and making connections.

The actual activity will precede the meeting in which your youth will join in a march of solidarity. Include your wider faith community in this activity by inviting all to participate with the youth. From a faith perspective, Jesus called his disciples to build community and restore relationships between people who

were different from one another. It is never too early to begin modeling Christian friendship and acceptance of persons who are different from oneself. By meeting heterosexual allies who are people of faith and actual gay and lesbian people, barriers of difference are broken down. There is a long tradition of Christians standing and marching in solidarity with people who have been marginalized by the larger culture. Unfortunately, in the case of gay and lesbian people, with some notable exceptions, the church and Christians have not shown up in significant numbers as allies. Marching together is a visible sign of support and can change lives.

Supplies:

- a banner with the name of your church
- white poster board and colored markers
- song: “Guide My Feet,” <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>
- song: “Gentle Angry People Singing for Our Lives,” <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21a>; and video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21b>
- picnic lunch for after the march

Facilitate a meeting of your youth with a PFLAG or GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) representative and/or with gay and straight teenagers prior to this activity. Have the youth make posters to carry in the march with slogans such as “Christian friends of gays and lesbians” or “Proud to be an ally” or with pictures of a rainbow flag or hearts. Practice singing “Guide My Feet” and “Singing for Our Lives” while working on the posters. Join the march and walk with others. While walking, sing “Guide My Feet” and “Singing for Our Lives.” After the march, share a picnic together and talk about the experience. Your youth might be encouraged to write letters to your local paper to talk about their experience from a faith perspective to serve as an additional witness or testimony to working for justice in the name of Christ.

Reflect

For some communities of faith, justice work is an essential part of their everyday lives. In others, justice work is seldom linked with discipleship, and justice is understood only as charity for people far away rather than as an active daily part of one’s faith journey. Reflect on your own and your communities’ involvement in justice work. Where are you on this spectrum? What are the injustices in your area that need a response? What would a faithful response look like? Does the call to justice arouse feelings of fear, discomfort, or excitement? How do you take the plunge despite fears? How do you invite God to guide you and Jesus to inspire your efforts or those of your community? How can you model justice for youth both personally and in community? Who are the shepherds of your life or in your community? Who would you point to as living shepherds to inspire your youth? Do you know youth who are shepherds?

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Attachment: Activity 4

Prayers of Confession

For Youth

*God who is ever present with us,
thank you for your love.*

*We know that this week we have not always lived
the way Jesus taught us.*

*Forgive us if we have caused hurt to others by what we have done
or by what we have failed to do.*

Give us help to take responsibility and to make amends.

Help us to live as your friends and to befriend the friendless.

We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Gentle and holy God, we acknowledge to you, to one another, and to ourselves that we are not what you have called us to be. We have stifled our gifts and wasted our time. We have avoided opportunities to offer kindness but have been quick to take offense. We have pretended that we could make no contribution to peace and justice in our world and have excused ourselves from risk-taking in our own community. Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and help us to live our lives differently. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose call to follow haunts our every prayer.

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God of love and justice, we long for peace within and peace without. We long for harmony in our families, for serenity in the midst of struggle, and for commitment to one another's growth. We long for the day when our homes will be a dwelling place for your love. Yet we confess that we are often anxious; we do not trust each other, and we harbor violence. We are not willing to take the risks and make the hard choices that love requires. Look upon us with kindness and grace. Rule in our homes and in all the world; show us how to walk in your paths, through the mercy of our Savior. Amen.

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Working for Justice



Exploration: Christian Tradition

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) are cognitively able to understand and appreciate the passage of time and to work with sequences of events from past to present and into the future. Actively participating in centuries-old faith practices and the traditions of the more recent past can ground youth in faith. Out of such grounding, they can imagine new traditions and practices of justice in a future beyond adult imagining.

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:

Psalm 34:15–22
Ephesians 2:11–12

Leader Preparation

Christian tradition is full of practices and events designed to tear down old ways of thinking and living and to build up new ways of being together in community. To prepare for this Exploration, take your Bible and go either to the site of a condemned building waiting to be torn down or to a fresh construction site in which the foundation is being laid and building is in process. In either spot, take time to read Ephesians 2:11–22, in which Paul describes the reconciling work of Christ and the building up of a united community of faithful followers. Consider your community and what attitudes or practices might have to change in order to welcome new people as brothers and sisters in Christ. Next consider Psalm 34. Hear in it God’s calling for and love of those who do justice and God’s disdain for those who do evil or hinder justice. What are some justice traditions of your faith community? What new traditions would you like to grow and nurture to support youth involvement in justice work in your community? Pick up a stone or scrap of building material from either site. Keep it with you as you lead activities in this Exploration to remind you of the need to break down walls between people and to build up community. Conclude your preparation time with your own prayer or the following:

Exploring & Engaging Activities

① Lectio Divina (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Lectio divina is an ancient tradition of spiritual scripture reading. You will invite the youth into a time of listening and studying God’s word in an intentional way. In overview, the scripture passage will be read three times with moments of silent reflection and brief sharing between each reading. It is important to stress that there are no right or wrong answers in this activity. Everyone’s understanding of the scripture contributes to the whole picture of what the scripture is about and what it calls you and the youth to do.

Supplies:

- Bibles, one for each youth
- paper and pens or pencils for the reflection time

Welcome the youth. Invite them to sit around a table and to take a piece of paper, a pencil or pen, and a Bible from the center. Invite them to experience an ancient Christian tradition of spiritual reading of scripture. They will hear the text three times and be invited each time to listen for something different. When the passage has been read, they will observe a time of silence in which they may write or draw a response. They will have a chance to share their response. Sharing will be brief. They will simply say the word or phrase they have written. At the end, there will be time for conversation. Then invite the youth to close their eyes. Ask them to take some deep, slow breaths in and out. Offer a prayer asking God to bless this reading time and to open everyone’s ears and minds to hear what the scripture says to us today.

Invite the youth to open their eyes and their Bibles to Ephesians 2:11–22. Ask them to read it silently. When they are finished, ask them to put a piece of paper into the Bible to mark the spot and close it. When all have read the text, invite them to close their eyes and listen to the text read aloud. They are to take note of any word or phrase that jumps out at them or catches their attention. Read the text. Ask them to open their Bibles and write on their paper the word or phrase that grabbed their attention. Invite them to simply share the word or phrase with the group. Next, ask one of the youth to be the second reader. Explain to all that this time they are to listen for emotions and senses in the text. What feeling does the text have or what feelings are expressed in the text? Do they notice details that relate to smells, sounds, textures, or sights? Again, take time for silence and writing answers. Invite sharing. Finally, invite another youth to read the third round. This time ask the youth to listen and discern what response the scripture calls for or, in other words, what they should do in response to the scripture. A final time of silent reflection and writing is followed by a final time of sharing. Thank the youth for their attention, and open the time up for reflection and discussion.

② Helping Out Around the Household of God

Leader preparation: In Ephesians 2:17–22 the Apostle Paul speaks of Christian unity through time and across national boundaries by describing the household of God as built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets who have gone before the present generations, with Christ as the main cornerstone. In this activity your youth may have fun working together to be a living dwelling place for God. Arrange ahead of time to help out at the home of one of your faith community’s senior citizens or families. This list of supplies that you need will be determined by whom you are helping.

Prayer:

Christ Jesus, cornerstone of the household of God,

I give thanks for all the brothers and sisters I have through faith in you.

Guide me as I lead [insert first names of the youth] to know you and one another.

Help us all to be faithful disciples,

Making your love visible to all the world.

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.

Supplies:

- tools such as hammers and screwdrivers
- cleaning supplies such as gloves, window cleaner, cleansers, paper towels
- garbage bags
- gardening and yard work tools such as mower, spades, hoes, or trowels
- Bible
- song: “Lord Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary,” words and music by John W. Thompson and Randy Scruggs, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxB9VH3cCN4&feature=player_embedded

Gather the youth and share Ephesians 2:17–22 with them. Talk about how we are all united in Christ no matter what we look like, where we come from, or any other factor. Assure them of God’s love for all people. Make a connection to the scripture by explaining that when you build a home, you use concrete objects such as bricks or lumber and tools. The household of God in the scripture is made up of people just like the youth. When your house is made of people, their hands and feet become tools to do God’s work. Share the traditional Amish saying of “Hearts to God and hands to work.” Explain that Christians use their hands and feet to help others. Invite them to work with a family to help around their house to weatherize and do simple home improvements. By helping in this way, they show compassion and make God’s dwelling place visible. Travel to the work site and engage in the home improvement activities, such as simple repairs, weatherizing, and yard clean-up. You may wish to begin the work and conclude the session by singing “Sanctuary.”



3 The Pineapple Seller

Leader preparation: A traditional justice issue for Christians is combating poverty and hunger. To begin to understand this issue, youth need to understand where the food they eat comes from and how many people take part in bringing it to their tables. They may have never thought about how people in other places help grow and sell the foods they eat. They may or may not have experienced hunger themselves. This activity combines art and the sense of taste to begin a conversation about food and justice. Display the artwork in your space ahead of time so all the youth can see it when they arrive. Keep the fruit hidden until after the art has been discussed.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Vendedora de Piña” by Diego Rivera, <http://tinyurl.com/fpart17>
- Bible
- a fresh pineapple
- a can of pineapple
- utensils: a knife and cutting board, can opener, tongs to serve the pineapple
- plates and napkins

Invite the youth to study the picture of the “Pineapple Seller.” Ask them to put all their senses to work silently. First ask: *What is the image about or what is the story?* Second ask: *Name one detail from the picture. What colors, shapes, or objects do they see in the picture?* Third ask: *Does the picture makes you feel something?* Fourth round: *How do you relate to the picture? Do you see yourselves in the picture? Where? How?* Fifth round: *What does it mean?* Final round: *What does this work of art call us to do? Are we moved to justice and compassion?* Thank the youth for their attention and good answers.



Explain that the woman in the picture is from Mexico and that it was painted by Diego Rivera. He painted pictures of ordinary people in daily life. *What do you imagine about the pineapple seller's life? Is she rich or poor, happy or sad?* Ask the youth if they have ever helped grow food by hand or been in a field where fruit or vegetables are grown. Perhaps they have been to an orchard to pick apples, or a pumpkin patch, or a strawberry field. If any have, allow them to share. *When you think of farming, do you only think of places with big combine tractors?*

Show them the fresh uncut pineapple. Let them hold it and smell it. Show them the canned pineapple, which was mostly harvested and prepared by machine. Cut up the fresh pineapple and open the canned pineapple chunks. Invite the youth to taste each kind. *What do you notice about the difference between the hand-prepared fresh pineapple and the canned variety?* There is a biblical practice called “gleaning” in which a farmer and his or her workers do not gather every edible item from the field. Rather, they leave some for hungry people and, in some cases, for hungry animals to eat. Read Leviticus 19:9, 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19–21; and Ruth 2:2–23. Invite them to take the pineapple that is left over and share it with another group. Close with a prayer thanking God for the pineapple, including the farmer who planted it, the woman in Diego Rivera’s painting who sells pineapples, the truck and driver who brought it to the supermarket, the man or woman who unloaded the truck, the grocer who displayed the fruit, and the cashier who sold the fruit so you may eat it today. Give thanks for the good earth that grew the pineapple. Ask that all be mindful of the whole web of people and nature needed to bring food to our tables and that everyone remember to share what they have with those in need.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Psalm Write Now! (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Calling on God for help and in thanksgiving is a long-standing faith tradition both inside and outside Christianity. The Book of Psalms is a collection of songs that we read today as prayers. Prayer is a regular practice for people working for justice. You may want to share the story of Ruby Bridges afresh or remind the youth of her story, which they may have heard in Discovery, activity 3. When Ruby was only a child she prayed—in an extraordinary act of compassion—that God would help the people who were prejudiced against her, and her prayers helped her survive. Your youth will work with scripture and then have an opportunity to compose their own psalm of lament asking for help or psalm of thanksgiving in gratitude to God.

Supplies:

- Bibles, one for each youth
- plain or lined paper for writing psalms—one or two sheets per youth or pair
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- pens or pencils

Share Psalm 34 with the youth. Invite them into conversation about what the text means. Explain that psalms are part of a tradition of asking God for help or giving God praise. Among all the kinds of psalms, there are two common ones. The first is a psalm of lament. The second is a psalm of thanksgiving. *What fears or concerns do you have for which you would like God to comfort them? What are their joys for which you would like to thank God?* Invite them to a time of writing their own



psalm or in working in pairs to write one. Ask them to choose either a lament or a thanksgiving.

If they are writing a lament psalm, some elements or parts to include are:

- an address to God, calling on God by name (“My Rock!,” “Creator,” “Mighty One,” and so forth)
- a description of suffering or the problem facing the psalm writer or the community
- cursing of the person, community, or institution responsible for suffering
- naming one’s innocence, or admitting one’s part in the problem
- a plea for God to help
- a statement of faith that God will listen to the plea
- a statement about how one anticipates a response (for example, “I will wait faithfully for your answer, God!”)
- an exclamation of thanksgiving

If they are writing a thanksgiving psalm, some elements to include are:

1. Introduction—State your intention to praise God, then briefly name a time or situation where you asked God for help or felt God’s presence, and briefly describe how God helped or what that presence felt or looked like to you.
2. Tell the story more fully. Fill in the answer to these three statements: “I cried/shouted/prayed for help (name the situation);” “God heard (me/my family/my community);” “God saved/helped/delivered (me/us/them, and state how God helped).”
3. Write a renewed promise to continue praising and thanking God.
4. Conclude with an exclamation of praise such as “Hallelujah!” or “Hosanna!” or “God is Great!”

When the youth are finished, invite them to share what they have written. Conclude the time by praying Psalm 34:1–10. As a follow-up, ask for permission from the youth to print their psalms in your community’s bulletin or newsletter, or on the church website.



5 Paying Attention

Leader preparation: In this activity, you will invite youth to consider the abstract picture “Kopf” by Joan Miro. As you facilitate this time, it is important for you to be open and intentional and not to rush. There are no right or wrong answers. This activity is about noticing and making meaning for one’s self. All the answers contribute to a greater understanding of the artwork. The link to Christian tradition is in the contemplative nature of the activity. God calls us to pay attention and do justice, and Jesus calls us to notice and care for the most vulnerable among us. Slowing down and taking time to observe emotions, people, objects, and events in our lives helps strengthen our ability to observe and take action with compassion when injustice occurs.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Kopf” by Joan Miro, <http://tinyurl.com/FPArt18>
- Bible
- stick decorated with ribbons tied to the end

Gather the youth together and stand in a circle. Take time to breathe deeply. Explain that all are going to look at a picture and have a chance to talk about what



they see. To give everyone a chance to be heard, introduce the talking stick. Only the person holding the stick may speak. When that person finishes, the stick is passed to someone else until all have had a turn. Invite the youth to sit down anywhere they like as long as they can see you holding the picture. Ask them to put all their senses to work silently. First ask: *What is the image about? What is the story?* Second ask: *Name two details from the picture. What colors, shapes, or objects do you see in the picture?* Third ask: *Does the picture makes you feel something?* Fourth round: *How do you relate to the picture? Do you see yourselves in the picture? Where? How?* Fifth round: *What does it mean?* Final round: *What does this work of art call us to do? Are we moved to justice or compassion?* Thank all for their attention and good answers.

Explain that some people see this as a picture of sadness or affirm their discovery of it as a picture of someone who is sad or worried. Invite them to listen to Isaiah 1:10–17. Then, ask them if there were parts of the scripture that sounded like this picture. While we can't see God, God knows emotions and feelings. *What made God angry or sad in the scripture? What are we called to do instead?* To conclude the activity, share words of wisdom from Psalm 34:11–32, in which the psalmist reminds those who are faithful to do good, seek peace, and pursue it and that God is always there to aid those who are righteous.

⑥ Gleaning—A Way to End Hunger

Leader preparation: Gleaning is part of our scriptural heritage. A part of gleaning is the tradition of leaving some edible foods in the fields, spoken of in Leviticus and Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus commands the disciples to feed hungry people in one lakeshore teaching. Five loaves and two fishes feed multitudes with some leftovers. The idea of gleaning runs counter to cultural messages of hoarding and greed. The practice of gleaning or food recovery is alive and well although underreported in most media. Make contact with the Christian-based gleaning mission called the Society of St. Andrew at www.end-hunger.org and search for local gleaning. You can also find food recovery missions in your area by performing a key word search on the Internet using the terms “gleaning” and “food recovery” and the name of your town or state. Arrange for your youth to learn about the mission and participate in gleaning. This can be a single activity or broken into three parts in which youth (a) learn about gleaning in scripture, (b) learn about the Society of Saint Andrew through Internet exploration, and (c) actually work on a gleaning project.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- access to the Internet
- additional adults to carpool youth to the gleaning site and to work alongside them in the project

Welcome the youth and explain that the activity will be about discovering the justice practice of gleaning. Explain that gleaning comes to us as a tradition from our Jewish or Hebrew heritage. While we do not have examples of Jesus directly gleaning in the fields, we have many stories of Jesus sharing food with those who do not have enough to eat.

Let them know that they will discover gleaning in scripture, in an actual ongoing mission, and by practicing it themselves. Invite youth to work in pairs and have an old fashioned scripture speed drill. Call out the scriptures one at a time and have them race to see which team can find it first. When they do, have them raise a hand or say “gleaning” or “justice” out loud. The team that finds the scripture first then reads it to the group. Repeat until all the scriptures (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22;



Deuteronomy 24:19–21; Ruth 2:2–23; and John 6:1–13) have been found and read. Ask if there are any questions they might have about the scriptures. Next, turn to the Internet or explain about the history and mission of the Society of St. Andrew or the gleaning project you have found in your area. Explain that gleaning is one way to address hunger. When we share, everyone can have enough to eat. We are called to share as people of faith. Finally, break into carpools and travel to work at the gleaning site. Conclude with some debriefing about the experience and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the youth and those whom their work will help.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Singing for Our Lives (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: The easy preparation version of this activity involves sharing the story of Paul singing God’s praises in jail in Acts 16:20–31. Then share the notes that follow this paragraph with your youth. You can have a conversation about the power of songs, particularly the power of hymns and spirituals to help people learn about the story of Jesus and to overcome oppression.

Option: If you have hymnals available, sing some hymns with justice themes. Ideally in this activity, you will be able to print out the lyrics to the three theme songs for this faith practice and share them with your youth. In doing so, youth will sing an African slave spiritual called “Guide My Feet,” a contemporary hymn of faith relating God’s dream of justice called “Dream God’s Dream,” and a song of community building from the gay and lesbian human rights movement called “Singing for Our Lives.” You may also include hymns related to justice from your faith community’s hymnal in the hymn sing. In this way, you will aid youth in using a hymnal and practicing the tradition of singing for our lives.

Singing our faith is as old as the psalms from the Jewish tradition. It has been an important part of Christian tradition beginning in scripture with Paul singing his faith while in prison in Acts. Justice movements, such as the Civil Rights movement, involved people of faith coming together to combat racism and poverty. One way the movement built community was through shared songs such as “We Shall Overcome” and the African American National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Prior to the Civil Rights movement, Africans who were brought to America as slaves learned about Christ and sang spirituals to help them persevere in bondage and to teach the faith to one another when they were not allowed to attend church. Today, new justice movements, such as those for human rights for persons who are homosexual or part of other sexual minority groups such as transgendered persons, also find songs and singing a community building agent.

One such song came in response to a vicious hate crime. On November 27, 1978, San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by Dan White. A part of White’s motive was that Harvey Milk was a homosexual and the mayor had openly supported the human rights of homosexuals. Their violent death stunned the gay community in San Francisco and in the world. Folksinger Holly Near was moved to write the song “We Are Gentle, Angry People, Singing for Our Lives” as a memorial for the fallen men. It was sung in a candlelight vigil shortly after their murders and continues to be an anthem for gay rights and other justice movements today. The title can also describe how we are called to be like disciples working for justice. We are gentle as Jesus was gentle and angry as he was at injustice.

**Supplies:**

- Bible
- hymnals
- (optional) song: “Guide My Feet,” <http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/PH/354>
- (optional) song: “Dream God’s Dream,” <http://www.sirchio.com/index.php?page=songs&category=&display=179>
- (optional) song: “Singing for Our Lives,” http://www.hollynear.com/and_still.html; YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbXq0oU5osg>

Use the leader preparation notes to explain the tradition of singing as an essential faith practice. Read Acts 16:20–31. Talk about the power of song in this scripture. *What happens to the people who hear Paul sing?* Then give the youth the lyrics to the three songs listed above. Introduce each one, using the notes in the leader preparation section to give a brief explanation of the origin of the song. The youth may have already sung each of these songs as part of other activities in this faith practice. If you are beginning with this Exploration, take time to read through the lyrics of each song as you introduce it. Sing each piece through once, and then after practicing all three, end the time by singing them again. You may wish to add justice songs from your own faith tradition. Take time to check with youth to see if they know how to use a hymnal and to find songs using the index at the back. If you are unable to access the lyrics recommended in the supply list, share the scripture passage as described and then share justice-oriented hymns from your community’s hymnal with the youth. Take time to sing at least two or three hymns. Conclude in prayer in which you and the youth give God thanks for the gift of music and singing for our lives.

**8 Taizé Worship**

Leader preparation: Taizé [tie-zay] is a special form of worship that originated with the Taizé community in France. It is led by an ecumenical community of Catholic and Protestant monks. Brother Roger, the founder of Taizé, believed in the power of young people and the importance of helping them follow Christ in their whole lives. He made a place for youth from all countries to come and worship together. These gatherings are true examples of the global household of God. The worship style is very simple and involves using easy-to-learn repetitive chants and songs to enter into a meditative state of worship. You may read more about Taizé at <http://www.taize.fr/en>. Brother Roger’s prayers are available in book form, and recordings of Taizé music are readily available for purchase and download.

For this activity you will work with the youth to design a simple Taizé service of singing, silence, and prayer. The activity involves designing the service, including setting up of the worship space and practicing the chants. Ideally the youth would then be able to lead a Taizé worship for your community and open it up to the public. If time does not permit, then you may wish to prepare the worship space ahead of time and lead the youth in a Taizé style worship experience. Either way, they will get a chance to be part of a newer prayer and worship tradition and one that might be different from their normal experience of church. Working together in worship is what sustains those who work for justice in the world.

**Supplies:**

- worship space such as a chapel or sanctuary or youth room
- recordings of Taizé chants and a music playing device, or sheet music and a piano or guitar player to accompany the chants
- candles and lighter
- Bible
- communion table or altar and a cross or other Christian symbols
- “Taizé Worship,” Attachment: Activity 8

Talk to the youth about Brother Roger and his mission and the work of Taizé. Share Ephesians 2:11–22; here we read that we are called to be united in Christ with all other believers from around the world. Brother Roger believed this with all his heart and started youth worship services to foster this attitude of unity and dedication to peace and justice. Either invite the youth to design a Taizé worship using the attachment, or lead them in a Taizé worship experience. If they are designing the service, some key decisions include how to dress the communion table or altar simply, where and when to use candles in the service, and choosing the chants to pray. If the youth help design the worship, include time to practice the chants and to run through the service in the worship space. Make sure the time of the worship service is advertised well in advance. Consider inviting the public as well as community members. End the worship you lead with a prayer of thanksgiving for the life of Brother Roger that his spirit may live on in those who are part of Taizé worship. Debrief with the youth about the experience.

9 Taste and See the Lord Is Good

Leader preparation: Christians eat together when they take communion. In Christian tradition and history, the faithful eat together and prepare community meals to feed those without food. Here youth will celebrate God’s gift of food by preparing a simple meal to share with hungry people in the community. You can arrange either for the youth to work at a local soup kitchen or other local site where a free community meal is served, or you can follow the activity instructions and prepare a meal with your youth. If you prepare a meal, the youth will then be involved in distributing or serving the food to people on the street or in a homeless shelter. Make arrangements for a location ahead of time. The ingredients listed below are merely suggestions of durable and nonperishable foods. If you have access to a kitchen, you may wish to make a hot meal with a hearty stew, bread, and fresh salad or vegetables instead of a sack lunch.

Supplies:

- Bible
- paper sacks, plastic zip-lock sandwich bags, napkins
- sandwich materials: bread, peanut butter, jam
- healthy snack food: apples, carrot sticks, cheese sticks
- individually wrapped cookies
- bottled water
- food service gloves

Lay out the ingredients in an assembly line for making sack lunches. Begin by decorating the lunch sacks. Have the youth write “Handmade for You with Love” on the sack or some other message of care and concern. Make sure that all participants wash their hands before handling the food. Provide food service gloves for them to wear while packing the sack lunches. Have each youth make two sandwiches and place those in plastic zip-lock sandwich bags. Add an apple, carrot sticks, string cheese, and cookies, and a napkin to the paper bag with the sandwiches. Keep the bottled water cold in the refrigerator. Share Psalm 34 with the



youth (the psalmist calls us to taste and see the Lord is good) and Acts 2:43–47, in which followers of Jesus eat together and share what they have with those in need. Ask a blessing on the food the youth have prepared. Travel to the place to distribute the lunches and invite them to share with those in need. If possible, have the youth eat with those to whom they have given lunches. Later, take time to reflect on the experience. What surprised them? What was difficult? What did they notice about the people with whom they interacted and shared a meal? Conclude with prayer, thanking God for the food and asking God to be with those in need.

Reflect

God in Christ breaks down barriers and establishes communities of love and care. Jesus was particularly interested in establishing community among and between unlikely neighbors. He ate with tax collectors and befriended widows and children. His disciples expanded the mission by inviting people from other nations to become disciples. Scripture tells us that there are no aliens or others among the followers of Christ. Who are your brothers and sisters in Christ that you know least about? What denominations worship in your area? Have you ever worshiped with believers outside your own local church or in a different denomination? Consider doing so in order to experience the breadth and depth of Christian witness and tradition. You may wish to take your group on a visit to a different Christian community or to a synagogue or a mosque so they may experience how people worship and live faithful lives in other ways. God created diversity in the world, and to be faithful to Christ and the vision of justice it is important to move outside one's own community and connect in friendship with others. How else is your local church or denomination connected to people in other countries? What does it mean thus connected, or how do you act out your kinship to other Christians in other places?

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Attachment: Activity 8

Taizé Worship

Prepare the place for worship space with low-level lighting, or use candles to illuminate the space. On the table or altar place an open Bible, a cross, a large pillar Christ candle, and a simple bouquet of seasonal or wild flowers. A small bell is needed for the time of silent meditation.

Prepare a simple order of worship such as the one below, and give it to participants as they arrive. The Bible passages listed are suggestions to fit the justice theme. Feel free to choose others to fit with the season or situation in your community. The Taizé Community website, www.taize.fr/en, provides many guides to worship design and links to music and lyrics. You may also choose simple hymns of one or two verses such as "Spirit of the Living God" (Iverson 7.5.7.58.7.5.) from your own hymnal. It is important that the learners take time to practice their assigned readings so that they can read in a measured pace without racing through their texts.

Order of Service

Welcome

Gathering Song or Hymn (sing twice)

Psalm 133—print text of psalm here; have a learner lead the psalm with the all participants saying or singing Alleluia after each verse.

Hymn—A Gloria or other song or hymn to Christ from the Taizé tradition

Lighting the Christ Candle—Remind participants that the candle is lit to symbolize Christ, who is always with us, making light in the world.

Reading from the Gospel—Luke 10:25–37 (divide the reading among one or two learners)

Hymn—Repeat the Gloria or hymn sung before the Gospel reading

Silence—Take this time to sit in contemplation and wonder at Christ's love for all people. This is a 3–5 minute period of silence that will begin and conclude with the ringing of a soft bell. Invite participants to close their eyes if they wish and to focus on Christ's love.

Prayer of Intercession—Ask your pastor, check your community's hymnal, or work with learners to write a simple prayer of intercession. After each section of prayer, participants should be led with singing or saying "Christ have mercy on us."

Prayer of Jesus—the "Our Father" printed using your community's words

Closing Song or Hymn—A simple hymn of blessing or thanksgiving to Christ should be used to close the service; this will be sung at least three times together. People can continue singing as long as the Spirit moves them and should be instructed to leave in silence. Singing continues by the learners as participants leave. The learners can then conclude the time with a brief prayer together.

Working for Justice



Exploration: Context and Mission

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) are old enough to assume more responsibility in worship and mission, to help outside the church walls, and to provide input or leadership for their own activities. In context and mission, youth will have opportunities to explore and name injustices in their own contexts and to brainstorm, plan, and take action to address these situations and issues.

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 world—and are called to action.



BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

**Proverbs 22:1-2,
8-9, 22-23
Romans 13:8-14**

Leader Preparation

Please read the “About This Faith Practice” statement in the “Getting Started” file that defines the faith practice of Working for Justice. The Exploration of working for justice through the lens of context and mission is captured in this statement. Justice requires us to be in active partnership with those in need. In the process we work to change both ourselves and the systems or institutions that perpetuate injustice. Justice can exist only by making these changes. In weeding a garden, one needs to get to the roots and pull out the whole weed in order to keep it from returning; in justice work we must go to the source of injustice and change the environment to allow justice to flourish. The result is not only justice for the oppressed, but also justice for the oppressors. Context is the ground in which either justice or injustice may grow. Mission is the activity that addresses the needs of those in the context. Sometimes, such as in a natural disaster, there is an immediate need for charity in the form of food and other basic necessities freely given directly to those in trouble. For chronic needs, such as poverty and homelessness, to provide only the occasional hot meal or shelter bed does not change the conditions of those suffering. Scripture for this Exploration, from Proverbs and Romans, clearly calls us to deeper action as disciples of Christ and believers in one God who loves all creation. Read Proverbs and consider how failing to address the root causes of poverty may

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Who Am I? Body Art Project (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: A critical part of understanding context is self-awareness. This activity will assist youth examine their own personhood and to reflect on what part “being a Christian” plays in their daily lives.

Supplies:

- Bible
- 8½” x 11” sheet of paper for each youth (if available, butcher paper makes this an even more interesting activity, but you will need enough for each youth to lie down on so another person can trace an outline of his or her body that will be cut out)
- markers for tracing an outline on butcher block
- scissors—at least one pair for every two youth
- colored markers with bold tips

Talk with the youth about context, using the notes from the Leader Preparation section at the beginning of this Exploration and the information in the Reflect section at the end to explain the concept of context and mission. In this activity, youth will have a chance to share who they are and more about their context. They will have a chance to think about what influence being a Christian plays in their daily lives.

If using 8½” x 11” paper, ask everyone to draw an outline of their whole body, wearing the clothes they have on today. If you have butcher paper, have the youth work in pairs. One person lies on the butcher paper, and the partner traces around the first person’s whole body using a marker. Then they switch places, and the tracer lies down on a fresh sheet of butcher block and has her or his body traced. Have them cut out their body outlines. They may use colored markers to draw in their faces.

On the stomach area of the body outline, have each youth write his or her name, age, who is in the family, where he or she lives (is it the city or the country? Apartment or house?), ethnic heritage, and three activities he or she enjoys. As they work on this, share scripture with them, explaining that scripture teaches some ways of being and actions that are pleasing to God and that bring justice to the world. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Matthew 22:34-40, Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23, and Romans 13:8-14. You may wish to read the first scripture passage and then ask up to five more youth to volunteer to read the others. On the arms and hands of their body outlines, have them write at least three ways they can use their hands to help others. Likewise, on the legs and feet have them list at least three ways their feet can help them serve others as they follow Christ. Have them draw a large heart on the chest, and in the heart have them write names of those they love and those they are called to love by Jesus. Finally, on the top of their heads, have them list things they can do with the brain, eyes, ears, and mouths to do justice and be loving to one another and their neighbors and creatures in the world. Invite everyone to stand with his or her cutout and share what is written. Attach the cut-outs (or post the smaller sheets) to the walls of the room where you meet.

indeed be robbing “the poor because they are poor.” Consider the hopeful news in Paul’s letter to the Romans. When we wake from sleep and see our context and those of others with clear awake eyes, salvation is nearer to us than even on our baptism day. We are ready to fully embrace Jesus’ actual great commission, which is to love your neighbor as yourself and thereby keep all God’s commandments.

Youth are ready, willing, and able to help in justice work. They have good ideas about how to address injustice and inequalities. Spend quiet time to open yourself to hear their thoughts and to partner with them in the activities that follow. Consider, too, how they might become more active participants in your faith community’s work for justice. You may wish to journal your reflections. Conclude your preparation time with a prayer of your own or this one:

Prayer:

*Lord God, maker of us all,
I give thanks for your wake-up call to live
a life of justice,
loving all my neighbors, both near and
far off, as myself.
Help me to clothe myself always in the
armor of light that is
Christ Jesus,
and to guide the youth [name them] in
my care to do likewise
so that your realm of healing and whole-
ness for all creatures
may be visible in this world.
In your holy name, I pray.
Amen.*

2 What Is Happening in the Neighborhood?

Leader preparation: To understand context and mission, it is important to look around where one lives and to see what is happening. Who needs help? Where is injustice? How are we called by Christ to respond? The youth will be invited to consider what’s happening in a neighborhood of Houston called the Third Ward. You’ll use the artwork called “Shotgun Third Ward” by John Biggers. After looking at the art, they will be asked to describe what they know about their own neighborhoods. Be open to their conversation. There are no right or wrong answers.

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

Have the youth stand in a circle and take time to breathe deeply. Explain that everyone is going to look at a picture and everyone will have a chance to talk about what they see. Invite the youth to sit anywhere they like as long as they can see the picture. Ask them to put all their senses to work silently. First, ask: *What is happening in the picture?* Second, ask: *Name one or two details from the picture. What objects or people do you see in the picture?* Third, ask: *Does the picture makes you feel something?* Fourth round: *How do you relate to the picture; do they see yourselves in the picture? Where? How?* Fifth round: *What does it mean? Final round: What does this work of art call us to do? Are we moved to justice and compassion?* Thank the youth for their attention and answers. Invite them to listen to the scripture Romans 13:8–14. Then use the following questions for discussion:

- Where do they see love in the picture, and where do they see works of darkness or injustice?
- Who has on the armor of light?
- Who is afraid in the picture?
- Who is joyful?
- Who is missing from the picture (the persons who set the fire, firefighters, helpers)?
- What would make God angry or sad in the picture?
- What justice issues exist in the picture?
- How do the youth imagine they might work with people in the picture to do justice in this neighborhood?

Finally, encourage the group to talk about their own neighborhoods or the town or city where you live. What issues exist in their local context at school or home?

3 Living in a Material World

Leader preparation: It is often easy to take our own context for granted and to assume that the way we live in our homes and families is the same or normal for our immediate neighbors and friends and for the rest of the world. When we encounter differences, we tend to think of them as abnormal or less than our own way of life. This is a human condition, yet Christ constantly calls us to move beyond our own comfort zone, to be in relationship with people who are different from ourselves, and to be always mindful that our possessions are on loan from God and meant to be shared with whomever is in need. This activity provides a visual lesson about the context and living conditions of people around the world. You will want to get a copy of the book mentioned in the supply list ahead of time. It should be available at your local library. Similarly, you will want to arrange to visit each of your youth at home and have them pose in their room with

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.

their favorite material goods on display or standing in their yard or in front of their apartment with their stuff. Print a picture of each youth on 8½” x 11” paper in portrait mode and bring it to the session.

Supplies:

- Bible
- book: *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* by Peter Menzel and Charles Mann (1995. ISBN: 0871564300). This book should be available in your local library.
- photographs of all the youth in their own bedrooms or outside their homes surrounded by their favorite stuff
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Share the leader preparation notes for this activity with the youth as an introduction. Invite them to look at the book and to note similarities and differences in the material goods and living conditions of people around the globe. Display the photos you took of them, and invite them to talk about how they compare to young people in other parts of the world and to one another. The point of comparison is not to make anyone feel bad or less than the others, but to be aware of how we are all similar and different. Read Proverbs 22:1–2, 8–9, 22–23 and the story of the first Christian community after Pentecost at Acts 2:1–13, 43–47. Ask the youth to think about what it might mean to know that their stuff is all on loan from God. How might they treat stuff differently? How much stuff do they actually need? Consider the difference between a need or necessity and a want. On newsprint or a whiteboard make a list of necessities for life and a list of wants. Conclude with a prayer thanking God for providing necessities and asking for wisdom in the use of and sharing of material goods.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Taking a Stuff Diet (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Though all your youth may not come from affluent families or even from middle class homes, most will still have and be exposed to more material goods than probably 90 percent or more of people in whole world simply because they live in the United States. This activity invites them to consider God’s provision of *necessities* as well as the *gift of stuff*. It invites them to consider how to know when enough stuff is enough and to leave some stuff for others to enjoy and or to share what they have freely. When we take a stuff diet, we gain freedom to move and work for justice in the world rather than worrying about hoarding or protecting our stuff. This activity involves a follow-up after a week or month, depending on the youth group’s decision about how long to take a stuff diet.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- lined notebook paper and pens
- business envelopes, three per youth

Invite the youth to listen to the story of the bread from heaven in Exodus 16:1–36. *What does God provide and how much? What do some people do with God’s command about how much to take each day? What happens to those who do not listen? How long does God provide the bread from heaven?* Talk to the youth about the idea of just taking enough for what one really needs and leaving enough for others. How do



they do this in their own lives? Talk about hoarding. Which behavior—sharing or hoarding—shows trust in God? Distribute paper and pencils and invite them to make a list of anything they have more than one of in their rooms, such as pairs of shoes, pairs of jeans, other clothes, music, movies, games, books. Make a list of how often they go to any store with their parents or on their own in a week. What do they buy with their own money? Invite them to take a stuff diet challenge in which they do not go to any store or make any purchases for a set period of time, such as a week. Have the youth decide whether they want to try this for a week or a month. Invite them to save the money they would normally spend for that time period in three envelopes.

Distribute the envelopes and ask the youth to mark them as follows: Spending, Saving, Sharing. They may distribute the money in the envelopes anyway they wish, but at least a tenth should go into the sharing envelope. Read Numbers 18:25–29, 1 Timothy 5:3, and 2 Corinthians 8:15. When they gather back together at the end of the challenge, have everyone bring their envelopes. Talk about what they did instead of shopping and what they noticed about being away from shopping. Did they have more time to do other things? What was easy or difficult about the process? Next count up all the shared money. Talk with the youth about justice needs in their community or the world and have them decide which cause or people will receive their tithe or shared money. You may wish to think about a Heifer Project donation; this will help youth to equate their tithe with what it will buy to help others and explain the Heifer Project (www.heifer.org/) is also based on sharing. One family receives the animals but shares the eggs or honey or milk or meat produced by the animals with other families where they live. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving for their efforts and to God, from whom all blessings flow.

5 Chariots of Fire

Leader preparation: A main component for understanding context and mission from a Christian perspective is to be self-aware and to remain true to the teachings of God in Christ. In the film *Chariots of Fire*, the youth will meet real-life Olympic athlete Eric Liddell, a Scottish son of missionaries who forfeited the opportunity to run in an Olympic race because it would be held on a Sunday, which is the Sabbath day for Christians. Today with twenty-four-hour supermarkets and shops and all sorts of sports played on Sundays, youth may never have experienced Sunday as a day set aside for God. They will appreciate or be able to converse about what it would mean to give up activities on Sunday. Some may come from families who do mark the Sabbath. Obtain the film from your local library or rental shop, or download it from an online source. You may wish to watch it ahead of time and make notes to answer the questions in the activity description so that you may guide discussion.

Supplies:

- Bible
- film: *Chariots of Fire* and a projection device and screen
- an image of Eric Liddell found on the Internet by searching Google images.
- (optional) popcorn and beverage

Tell the youth about Eric Liddell, using the leader preparation notes. Read Isaiah 58, focusing on verses 13–14 and 40:27–31, which help underscore Eric’s understanding of his duty. Invite the youth to watch the film and pay attention to Eric’s context and understanding of his faith. After viewing the film, lead discussion about what they saw.



- Who is Eric, and what is his context?
- What would they have to refrain from doing if they were to observe the Sabbath as a day to think about God and study scripture and be with their families?
- How might one still play on the Sabbath or do something joyful that still honors God and is justice oriented? (Play a cooperative game; make something by hand from scratch; play with younger children and take an interest in their games instead of one's own.)

If time permits, read 2 Kings 2:1–11. Elijah asks for a double portion of God's spirit and then is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot of fire. See if youth find a connection to Eric Liddell's conviction and joy in Christ to this double portion of Spirit.

6 Spare Change Offering

Leader preparation: Arrange with your faith community to gather a "spare change offering" in addition to the regular tithes and offering collected each Sunday. It would be ideal if this offering were a regular feature of worship on a weekly or monthly basis. If this type of offering is new to your faith community, ask if it can occur over the course of four Sundays. You will involve the youth in planning and gathering this offering.

Print the information from http://www.geography-site.co.uk/pages/citizenship/global_village.html to distribute.

Use the money raised to fund a microfinance activity to help a person or persons overcome poverty (see activity 8), or the group may brainstorm a local justice need and contribute the funds to an agency or organization such as Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project, a local shelter, or a food bank.

Supplies:

- metal pails for gathering the spare change offering
- hymnal or praise song book used in your church
- Bible
- computer with Internet access and a printer

Talk with the youth about spare change. Ask them to put on the table in front of them the change they have in their pocket, wallet, or purse. If they have spare change in their pocket, they are among the top 8 percent of the wealthiest people in the world. Distribute the information you printed from The Geography Site (source: 2005 statistics and thinking points about wealth and poverty at http://www.geography-site.co.uk/pages/citizenship/global_village.html). This report is an understandable way to think about global issues of economics, environment, and population. Ask the youth to add up all the change they already have on the table. What could you buy at a store with that amount of money? Even this small amount can change a life of someone who lives in poverty. Invite the group to use their spare change as the base for a spare change offering they will gather in the community in Sunday worship for a set number of weeks. Have the youth design the offering time for worship. Help the youth make the following decisions:

- Choose a hymn or song to be the theme song for the offering that everyone will sing as it's gathered
- Designate who will be the offering stewards
- Choose scripture and/or write a prayer to be given when blessing the offering.



Everyone should take a role in planning this offering moment or the series. Some will gather, some will lead singing, and some will ask the blessing. If you can take the offering more than once, everyone could switch roles at least once to try a different part. The youth may have a contemporary song of faith, or even a popular song, that speaks to offering and sharing, so let them choose something from their own context, if they wish.

Conduct the offering in worship. Gather the offering and count it. Decide to follow up with activity 8, or choose a local need or justice cause to fund with the offering. Be sure to follow up with the congregation by having the youth report the result in a moment for mission and in your church's newsletter, on the website, and via other communication tools such as Twitter or the pastor's blog.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: A hallmark of Christian life is the love we show to one another and to the world. In times or places of injustice, love is often absent. In this activity, youth will prepare valentines to share with persons in homeless shelters, emergency shelters, hospitals, or assisted living centers. Decide before you begin who the cards will be for based on your local need and situation. Sharing compassion and love is part of working for justice. This activity has a follow-up component in which the valentines will be distributed.

Supplies:

- construction paper
- scissors
- glue sticks
- ribbons
- markers
- Bible
- preprinted copies of John 13:34–35

Introduce the youth to the persons for whom they will make cards. Explain their context and the predicament or reason for needing care. God calls us through Jesus to love one another. Read John 13:34–35 and Romans 13:8–10. Lay out the craft supplies, and invite the youth to make valentine heart shapes or smiley face shapes and to decorate them with markers, ribbon, and glitter. Somewhere on the shape glue a copy of John 13:34–35. Have them show one another what they have made. Invite the group to make a plan for delivering the valentines.

8 Sharing All Things in Common

Leader preparation: This activity can be self-contained or can be a follow-up to activity 6. As a stand-alone activity, invite youth and their parents to save their spare change for a week and to bring the change to this session. The youth will see how “spare change” can change a life by addressing poverty at its root. Sharing what we have with one another in times of need is one of the first traditions of the early Christians recounted in the story of Pentecost in Acts 2:43–47. You may also want to create an account with a microloan bank ahead of time. This activity will require follow-up as the youth will be interested to see how their spare change helped someone change her or his life.



Supplies

- Bible
- bucket for gathering the spare change offering
- access to website www.Kiva.org or other microfinance site

Gather the youth and collect the spare change offering. Ask God's blessing on those who gave and pray that the money be used for good work. Count the money with the youth and talk about what they might buy with it if it were their own money. Explain to them that this money is meant to be shared and can help a person overcome poverty. Read Acts 2:43–47. Visit www.Kiva.org or a microfinance site sponsored by your denomination that you will use to share the money. Have the youth navigate the site and select a person to help. Deposit the funds and then revisit the website to learn what happens. Talk with the youth about how it does not take great wealth in order to share resources. Conclude with prayer.

9 Fair Trade Coffee House

Leader preparation: A huge justice issue is making sure local and global farmers are paid fair wages or fair prices for their crops. Coffee is a drink of choice for many teens and their parents. For a very long time, coffee growers were exploited by coffee companies; they did not even make a living wage for their efforts. All the profits stayed with the coffee companies, which often were owned by people outside the country where the coffee was grown. The fair trade movement exists to address this economic injustice by establishing fair prices and seeing that companies comply with payments. There are also fair trade chocolates and clothes and art. In this activity, youth will plan and host a fair trade coffeehouse event to promote the idea of fair trade goods. They may either make the event free or charge a small admission fee that can be donated to a local food bank or to Heifer Project or another cause.

Supplies:

- additional adult helpers both for the procuring of supplies and to assist the youth in making the evening a success
- start-up funding
- a location to host the coffee house (the narthex, youth room, or fellowship hall of your church, or the grange or other community space, such as a library meeting room)
- Bibles
- fair trade coffee, available in some grocery stores or through this ecumenical store <http://interfaith.equalexchange.com/>
- coffee or espresso makers
- cups
- sweeteners and dairy and nondairy creamers
- fresh fruit
- baked goods
- music, either karaoke or live
- board games, puzzles, card games
- a computer to make invitations and fliers for the church bulletin, schools, and neighborhoods
- a ream of recycled paper for printing the invitation fliers
- candles or white Christmas lights to decorate the space
- tablecloths
- recycling bins and garbage cans

Reflect

Context is a complex concept. We all exist in and are affected by multiple contexts, such as where we work, live, play, and worship or where we were born. Our experiences and attitudes are shaped by context. Yet context is so much a part of our everyday life that we do not always realize its implications. Context is often easier to see

as existing for other people; we tend to assume our own context is normal or typical. For instance, in Christianity the Western European understanding of church and Christ are assumed as normative by many in the United States. Yet Christianity in India predates Rome and Western Europe by centuries. Until recently, people in the West assumed that western views and traditions are correct and that Indian or South East Asian practices are somehow “less than” or more primitive. This view prohibits dynamic sharing among all God’s people. We are prevented from having an expanded view of Christ and enriching our faith. Such blindness to context also makes it possible to be blind to justice issues and to conduct charity projects for those who are “less fortunate” rather than working alongside our brothers and sisters for justice. Blindness to context also prevents us from receiving help and God’s good news from distant shores. It assumes that we only can be givers and have no need ourselves of justice, healing, and wholeness. Take time to reflect on your context. Make a list of concrete details to describe yourself and your roles. Consider how you know what you know about the world. Who told you or what authority guides your thinking? Consider the youth with whom you work in these activities. What are their contexts? How are they similar to or different from yours? Who in your community is poor or in need of help? Who are your neighbors, whom Jesus calls you to love? How can you work with them to address justice issues? What are your own needs for healing and justice?

Talk with the youth about the fair trade movement and economic justice. Invite them to plan a coffee house evening in which they will promote fair trade and have fun, too. Together decide on a date and location, and divide up the responsibilities for gathering the supplies and who will do what tasks (set up, serving, hosting, advocating fair trade goods, collecting money or selling fair trade products, and clean up). Design a flier invitation for the event and print copies and share in distributing it to the congregation and in the teens’ neighborhoods and to their friends, who may or may not be part of the youth group. Host the evening. As a follow-up, count their earnings and distribute to the group of their choice. (This activity could also be tied to activity 8.) Be sure to arrange for a clean-up crew so that you don’t leave a mess for someone else to clean up—another justice issue. In the planning, set-up, and follow-up, be sure to open with and close with prayer.

Working for Justice



Exploration: Future and Vision

About this Age Group

Youth (ages 11–15) have a growing capacity to express themselves and their imaginations through art, music, drama, and expressive or creative writing. They are also able to grasp metaphors and themes in art and to see links between artistic expression and events in their lives and the world. In this Exploration youth will have an opportunity to use the arts to imagine and celebrate the future that Jesus promises is near and not yet, a future in God's realm, the peaceable kingdom in which justice and love reign.

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 this 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

Working for justice is what followers of Christ are called to do. Justice work can be heart breaking, nerve wracking, and slow. There are often setbacks. In the midst of it, unexpected allies turn up in the nick of time, and sometimes trusted friends let you down. Yet, as we read in Isaiah 58:6–9, we discover that when one is dedicated to justice, one’s light shall break forth like the dawn and God will answer cries for help. Gloom will be cast aside and one will be hailed as a repairer of the breach and the restorer of streets to live in.

In Matthew 25:31–46, Christ Jesus promises eternal life to those who work for God’s justice. Read these texts as you prepare for guiding the youth in your care. How will you describe God’s vision or dream of a peaceful, justice-oriented city to the youth? How can they help God’s dream become a reality and bring about a peaceable city or realm where all people are free from violence, fear, and want? You may wish to journal your reflections. What do you imagine the “kingdom” or realm of God looks like? You may wish to sketch your ideas or search for art that reflects your imagination. When you have finished preparing, conclude with a prayer of your own or the following:

Prayer:

*Christ Jesus, light of the world,
 Help me meet you in the hungry, the
 thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the
 sick, and the imprisoned.*

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Prayer Flags (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: In this activity youth will make Christian prayer flags to hang in their bedrooms to remind them of their commitment to take care of “the least of these,” as Jesus does in Matthew 25: 31–46. Either print out copies of the symbols to go on each flag from the attachment, or invite the youth to draw them freehand onto the flags.

Supplies (for each set of prayer flags):

- Bible
- six sheets of 8½” x 11” construction paper in a variety of colors
- “Flag Symbols,” Attachment: Activity 1
- markers for drawing the symbols
- a 7’ length of twine or yarn
- scissors
- glue stick

Read Matthew 25:31–46. Have the youth name the activities that Jesus describes as helping those in need (feeding, giving drinks, welcoming, clothing, healing, and visiting). Invite the youth to make prayer flags to help them remember what Jesus asks us to do to help “the least of these.” They will cut out a symbol from the attachment for each flag, or draw the symbols directly onto the construction paper. Make sure the construction paper is placed horizontally (landscape mode) so that it is 11 inches across the middle. Once the symbols are on the flags, cut two 1 inch horizontal slits near the top corners of each flag. These are the holes through which they will pass the yarn or twine. Slide the flags onto the yarn or twine. Make slip knots on both ends to form loops. When the youth get home they can string up the flags using to nails or push pins spaced about 7 feet apart. The slip knots act as loops that can be hooked to the nails or push pins to hold up the string of flags. When all are finished with their flags, read Matthew 25:34–41 in unison.

2 I Am the Light of the World—Jam Session

Leader preparation: Youth enjoy music and will have their own songs that speak to them of justice, peace, and love. In this activity, they will have a chance to sing all the songs featured in this Exploration along with “I Am the Light of the World,” which fits in the future and vision motif. You will need a place to sing and some kind of accompaniment, either recorded or live. Use this activity as a chance for the youth to express themselves by playing their own instruments and providing additional songs of their own time and place that speak to justice themes. You might invite them to gather their songs and instruments sometime during the week and to come to a jam session.

Supplies:

- song: “I am The Light of the World,” words and music by Jim Strathtdee (tune Light of the World), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WA-upAEPIn0>
- song: “Dream God’s Dream,” by Bryan Sirchio; YouTube video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19>; words, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong19a>
- song: “Guide My Feet,” African-American traditional (tune: Guide My Feet), YouTube video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong20>; words and music, <http://www.hymnsite.com/fws/hymn.cgi?2208>

Do not let me turn away without offering food, drink, welcome, clothing, healing, and fellowship.

Keep my feet on the path and guide me and [insert the individual name of each child]

as we work for justice in order to bring you near

and make your love visible in the world.

Amen.

- song: “Singing for Our Lives” by Holly Near; words on Holly Near website, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21a>; YouTube video, <http://tinyurl.com/FPSong21b>
- music playing device
- CDs or downloads of songs selected by the youth
- water to drink
- (optional) piano and a pianist
- (optional) musical instruments played by the youth

Gather where you can jam with the youth. Go over the songs suggested above and sing them together. Then create an open mic atmosphere by inviting youth to play music and sing together and for one another. Alternatively, they may play the songs they have brought to the activity. Open and close the activity with thanksgiving to God for the gift of music and the power to sing together to change the world.

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.

③ I Have a Dream

Leader preparation: God dreams of justice and calls us to fulfill that dream. Jesus acted out a justice life. We are all called to dream and to act. Perhaps three of the most powerful dreamers in American and world history and culture were civil rights leader and faithful Christian the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.; rock musician and peace activist John Lennon; and Bono, the lead guitarist for the Irish band U2, with his high-profile campaign against Third World debt, poverty, war, and disease. While these men are still forces in our culture, for youth they may seem like ancient people from a previous century. In this activity, youth will watch the entire “I Have a Dream” speech, noting the scriptural images from Amos and other sources. They will listen to John Lennon’s song “Imagine” and talk about it. Encourage them, then, to name dreamers in their own lives and in the current culture. Encourage them to be dreamers with God.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- images of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and John Lennon
- “I Have A Dream” speech of Dr. Martin Luther King (DVD—available at public libraries or download); full speech plus video available for purchase at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>
- device to play and watch the speech
- “Imagine” by John Lennon; lyrics available at <http://www.lyrics007.com/John%20Lennon%20Lyrics/Imagine%20Lyrics.html>
- device to play the music

Gather where you will watch the film and listen to the music. Show the images and ask the youth if they can identify the people. Talk about the justice work of each man and give brief biographies of their lives and deaths. Explain that while one was an active Christian and the other a secular artist, they both wanted peace. Dr. King was working for racial and economic justice and John Lennon worked for peace and an end to war. Read Micah 6:1–8 and Amos 5:18–24. Watch the “Dream” speech. At the end, ask the youth what they heard and which parts of the dream seem to have happened and what justice still needs to be accomplished. Listen to “Imagine” and ask for reactions. Conclude by asking the youth to name other dreamers for local justice and those artists and leaders in their culture who are dreamers. Close with a prayer in which each youth lifts up a way to dream and take action to make the world more just in the coming weeks and years.



Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Sign of the Times (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Working for justice as a faith practice has as its goal helping bring to fruition God’s vision of a realm where justice exists for all creatures and parts of the natural world. A part of that vision includes a peaceful world in which creatures can share space with one another despite their differences, such as when the lion lays down with the lamb in scripture. In this activity, youth will hear about God’s realm and make a universal human symbol for peace—the peace sign.

Supplies:

- Bible
- “Peace Signs and Prayer,” Attachment: Activity 4
- paper plates or card stock paper cut in large circles
- markers or paints
- glitter and glue
- (optional) copies of the “Proposal for Action on Organizing the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church,” <http://www.ucc.org/justice/peacemaking/pdfs/Just-Peace-Church-Pronouncement.pdf> (or a similar document from your denomination)
- (optional) film: “A Circle And Three Lines,” <http://acircleandthreelines.com/>
- (optional) a device with which to play and project motion pictures

The simplest way to participate in this activity is to read scripture and to talk about God’s peaceable realm. What would such a realm look like based on the world the youth currently experience? Who are the opposing sides that need to lay down together in peace in their school, neighborhood, city, and world? Invite them to make peace signs using the basic craft supplies listed. See the attachment for several recognizable peace signs. On the back of their symbol, have the youth write the prayer of Benedictine Sisters, who pray every day at noon. This prayer has now become a world peace prayer.

Invite the youth to pray this prayer at least once a day either as a regular practice or at least until your next meeting. Conclude the activity with a prayer in which everyone stands in a circle and takes turn asking God to intercede with people or situations in their lives in need of peace and justice.

Option: Consider the seven-page United Church of Christ document (or a similar document from your denomination) about being a “Just Peace” church. “Just peace” is defined as the interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence. For many just-peace congregations, this identity has helped to underscore their ministries of direct service, legislative advocacy, and courageous witness. The approach has differed from place to place. Some became immersed in antiwar and antimilitarism issues, while some focused their energies on US policies affecting Central America. Others strengthened their multiracial, multicultural witness. Some developed neighborhood ministries, while others translated their just-peace identity to be a fitting starting place for eventually becoming “Open and Affirming” or “Whole Earth” churches

Invite the youth to discuss what it would mean for your church to adopt a policy to become a Just Peace church. *What new programs or ministries might be developed? What local or global issues would become a focus for the congregation? How would that be*



lived out week to week in worship, mission, fellowship, and education? If possible, watch the ten-minute film “A Circle and Three Lines” to introduce the peace symbol and peace movements. After or instead of the film, invite everyone to make her or his own peace sign to hang up at home or in a school locker. On the back of their symbols, have the youth write the prayer of Benedictine Sisters, which is on the attachment.

5 Revealing God’s Dream

Leader preparation: Read Revelation 22:1–5, where the writer expresses his vision of heaven. It is a beautiful passage that describes a peaceable city through which flows a river of life; the leaves of trees provide healing to all nations. In this city, the faithful will finally see Jesus and God face to face. There will be no more darkness and the Lord God will be their light. In this activity youth will make candles to represent God’s light in the world and to remind them of this vision of God’s realm. These may be taken home to remind them of God’s vision, or used in conjunction with activity 8. You can also include reading Isaiah 58:1–14 and ask the youth to create a personal checklist of the questions there and their own personal answers. If Revelation 22:1–5 is God’s picture of a just world, Isaiah is a “prescription” to bring heaven to earth.

For the candle-making activity, in the week before this session ask the youth to bring in odd candle pieces from home. You will also need to gather a small cardboard milk carton for each youth to use as a mold. These may be recycled from a school or hospital cafeteria. Be sure to follow safety procedures. See http://www.mycraftbook.com/Candlemaking_Safety.asp.

Supplies:

- “Milk Carton Candle,” http://www.mycraftbook.com/Use_Milk_Carton_As_A_Candle_Mold_2.asp
- milk cartons, candle wax, popsicle sticks, wicks
- (option) candle-making supplies and instructions available at craft stores
- a kitchen or craft room
- song: “Dream God’s Dream” by Bryan Sirchio; words, <http://tinyurl.com/FPsong19a>.
- Bible
- matches or a candle lighter

In the craft room or kitchen space where you will make candles, gather with the youth and read Revelation 22:1–5. Explain that Revelation is a book of dreams and imagination. In the passage they hear God’s dream of what a peaceful city looks like and what happens there. To remind them of God’s light in the world, which we Christians know as Jesus, invite them to make candles. When they use the candles at home, they can remember Jesus and remember that they are able to help make God’s dream a reality in their homes, schools, church, and community. They do this when they work for justice.

Candle making is one way to recycle the odd ends of candles laying around the church, such as those too short for the candle holders in the sanctuary, or those leftover from the Christmas Eve candlelight service. Proceed with making candles. When the candles are finished, you might dim the lights in the room or proceed to a chapel space where it is possible to dim the lights. Light the freshly made candles and sing “Dream God’s Dream” together. Close in prayer, thanking God for sending light into the world.



6 Tar Beach II

Leader preparation: In this activity, the youth will take time to explore a picture created by Faith Ringgold, which is an image from her series that became the book *Tar Beach*. After the youth explore the picture, they will create their own Tar Beach painting to depict their idea of what God's peaceable realm would look like using images of people and places that make them happy and remind them of justice. Hang up the artwork "Tar Beach II" ahead of time so all youth will be able to see it. You can set up the painting supplies at tables ahead of time.

Supplies:

- artwork: "Tar Beach II" by Faith Ringgold, <http://tinyurl.com/FPArt16>
- Bible
- water color paper and paints
- cups for water
- brushes
- paper towels

Invite the youth to study "Tar Beach II." They may be acquainted with the story from their younger days at school. Otherwise give a short synopsis of the story as follows:

Cassie Louise Lightfoot has a dream: to be free to go wherever she wants for the rest of her life. One night, up on "tar beach"—the rooftop of her family's Harlem apartment building—her dream comes true. The stars lift her up, and she flies over the city. She claims the buildings as her own—even the union building, so her father won't have to worry anymore about not being allowed to join because of his race. As Cassie learns, anyone can fly. "All you need is somewhere to go you can't get to any other way. The next thing you know, you're flying above the stars."

It is important to the story and for purposes of this practice to explore the injustice that existed in 1939 that blocked Cassie's father from joining the union because of his race. In Cassie's dream, she fixes this injustice by making her father the owner of the building. God calls us to work for justice, and God dreams of a just world. Invite the youth to explore this picture of Cassie flying over Tar Beach. Ask them questions such as: *What is happening in the picture? What people or objects or colors or shapes do you see? Who is in the picture? Where do you see yourself in the picture? What does it mean? How are you called to respond?* Read Matthew 25:31–46 with the youth. Where do they see peace in the picture? Where do they see justice in the picture?

Invite them to paint their own version of Tar Beach showing the people they love, where they would fly, and what they dream of seeing.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 A Peace Pledge (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:1–6, Jesus describes how blessed are people suffering from injustice and poverty of the spirit because they will be helped by God. In verses 7–9, Jesus describes the qualities and actions of faithful people who will be God's helpers in providing relief to those suffering from injustice. In verses 10–11, Jesus reminds the disciples that the way of justice is not easy, but that God will be with them even when other humans try to persecute or stop their efforts at being just. Help your youth to learn these verses and to pledge to do their best to be peacemakers.

**Supplies:**

- 8" x 11" pieces of card stock paper (whatever is available)
- scissors
- a one-hole punch
- glue stick
- ribbon or yarn
- colored markers
- Bibles

Use the leader preparation notes to talk with the youth about one of Jesus' most famous sermons, the Sermon on the Mount. The beginning of the sermon is a section called the Beatitudes, in which Jesus describes people who need justice and people who help work for justice. Jesus says that both those in need and those who help will be blessed by God. Read Matthew 5:1-10. Talk together about the scripture. Next ask each youth to take a verse and read it out loud. Invite them to cut a strip of card stock and write their verse on the strip to make a bookmark. Punch a hole in the top and have them use a ribbon or yarn to decorate the top. Invite them to use a marker to write a simple prayer on the back of the bookmark such as "Jesus, help me to be a peacemaker." Then have each sign his or her name to the peacemaker pledge or prayer.

8 Candlelight Vigil for Peace

Leader preparation: This activity will take several sessions to complete. In one session you will work with the youth to design the Candlelight Vigil for Peace. In another session you and the youth will carry out the plan. The candles for the vigil can be made by completing activity 5, or you may supply candles. You will need additional candles for all who come to participate. The youth will have designed a Candlelight Vigil for Peace ahead of time and worked with you to publish the date, time, and location in your community. They will need to meet about one-half hour before the vigil to set up and greet participants. You may need to reserve the space for the vigil ahead of time as well. A chapel or sanctuary are two places to consider for this vigil. Perhaps there has been an injustice in your community and the youth would like to gather at the site to hold the vigil, or perhaps there is justice work that can be celebrated in your location that would also be cause to hold a vigil in solidarity for the good works or to call for an end to an injustice. Decide ahead of time whether you are protesting in solidarity or celebrating in solidarity and have the youth design a service with scripture, prayer, and hymns/songs appropriate to the occasion. As much as possible involve the youth in all aspects of planning, serving, and sending.

Supplies:

- taper candles with paper drip catchers, or battery-operated candles
- matches or candle lighter
- access to a chapel or sanctuary or an outdoor space
- hymns and songs selected by the youth with lyrics printed to share with participants
- Bible
- recorded music to accompany the hymns or live music

Work with the youth to design a service or vigil. *What is the focus of the vigil? What is its purpose? How does this service or service relate to working for justice? How long will the service last? Will you invite dignitaries to speak? How will you promote this event?*

On the chosen date, the youth will gather with you to set up the space and greet participants. They will conduct the vigil, taking turns leading singing, candle lighting, praying, and reading scripture. One or two youth—or the whole group—may wish to give a short testimony about the event being protested or celebrated and to include their sense of Jesus’ call to help as disciples. They can greet people at the end of the vigil and be encouraging of others to be peacemakers. They will help with clean-up after the event. Then hold a short debriefing session with prayers of thanksgiving for each youth and their contribution to the whole group.

Reflect

Of all the various guises in which Jesus says we can meet him in Matthew 25:31–46, perhaps the most difficult one for many in the United States is to know that Jesus is to be found in prison and that the compassionate response is to visit him there. Our prisons are overflowing and we may have many stereotypes of the people who are behind bars based on the media rather than our own experience. As an alternative to reflection questions for this Exploration, you are invited to visit a juvenile detention center to discover what it is like to be there. As you tour the facility, what do you notice? Are there chaplains in the prison? Is there a worship service? Who else is visiting? What are the needs of the inmates? Is there a library or other place where they might be able to study scripture? Whom might you partner with to help the youth who are serving there? To offer comfort to them and to their visitors? How could you show them the same care you will provide to the youth in your group when you meet to do these activities? Go loose the bonds of injustice, for if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness. Go and let your light shine!

9 U2 Eucharist (U2charist) Intergenerational Worship

Leader preparation: Read the information at the website listed below to become acquainted with the U2charist worship. Meet with your pastor and worship team or other appropriate persons at least two months ahead of time to figure out a date and logistics of location, and secure adult help to publicize and help with the service. Next meet with the youth to teach about the U2charist and Bono’s campaign to wake people up to a life of justice work. They may wish to include images and art from their activities in the other Explorations of this practice in the service. If they have worked through the other Explorations, they have learned about environmental justice, racial justice, ending hunger, making a safe place without bullying, and other justice issues. If you have photos of them working on these issues locally, they may make the global U2 message more personal. Involve the youth in all aspects of this planning. If possible, have them included in the service as celebrants and or servers of the communion.

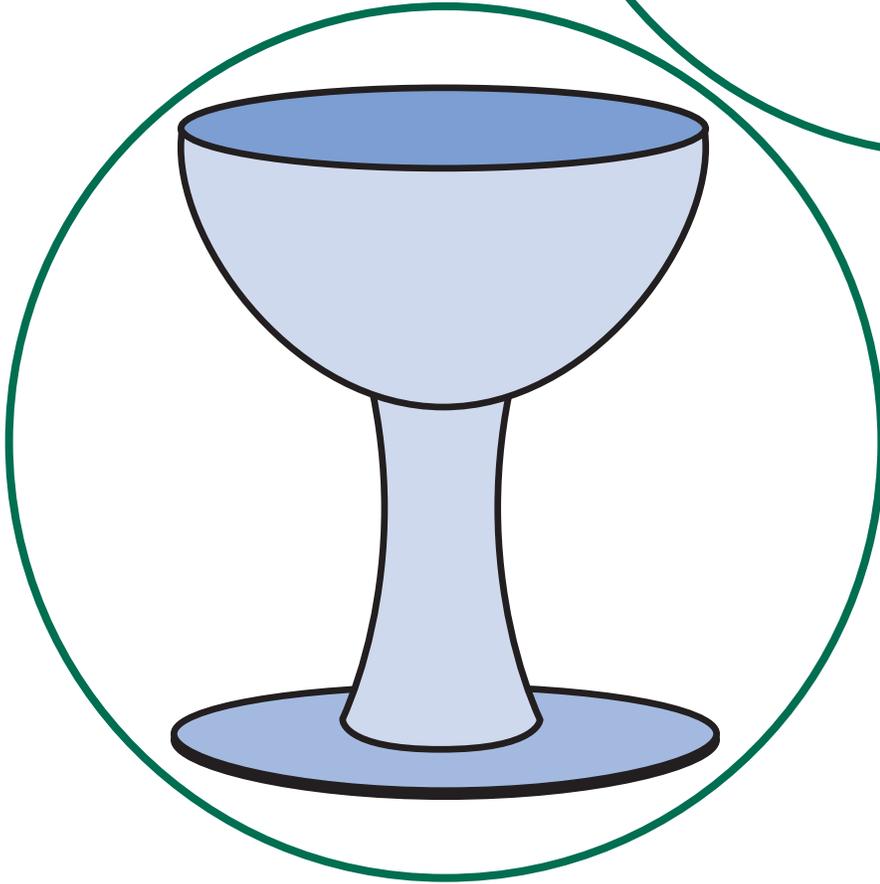
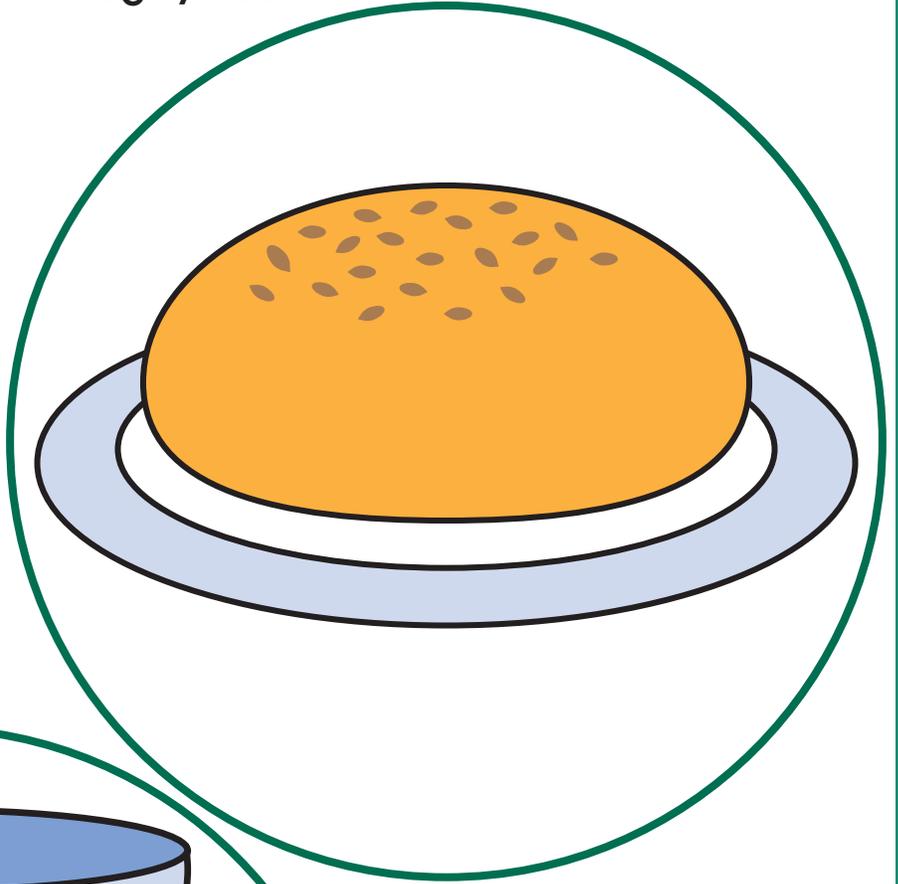
Supplies

- access to “The U2charist” <http://www.e4gr.org/u2charists/service.html>
- communion plate, chalice, bread, and juice
- Bible
- a sanctuary or outdoor space suitable for worship

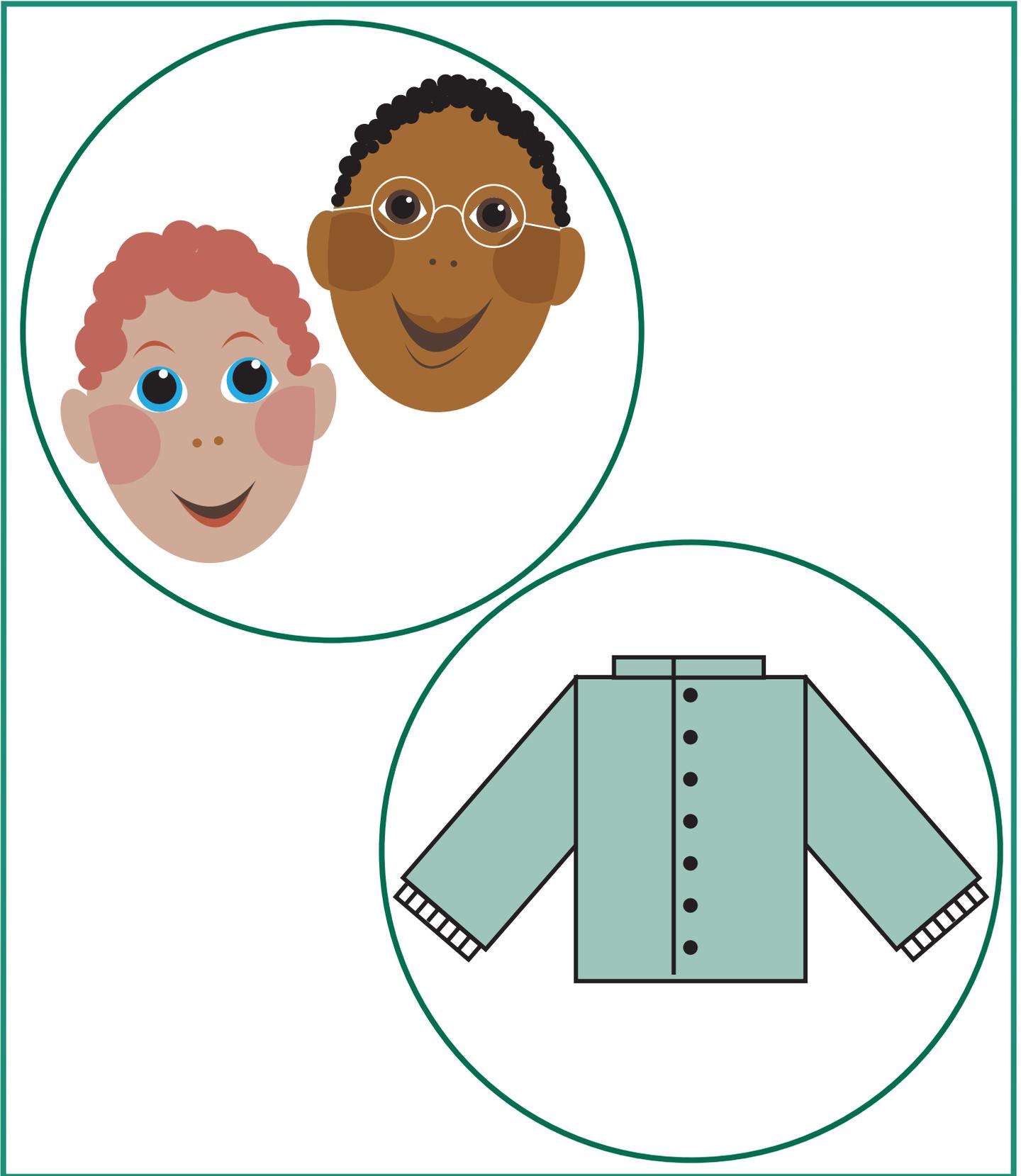
The youth will learn about the U2charist movement and plan and serve their own U2charist for their community. Certainly U2 songs will be important, but feel free to help the youth select some songs from their own culture that might also be appropriate. Before the service, gather with the youth for a time of prayer for them and for all who will be touched by Jesus’ presence in the service to come. After the service, gather with the youth to celebrate the gift of worship with prayers of thanksgiving.

Attachment: Activity 1

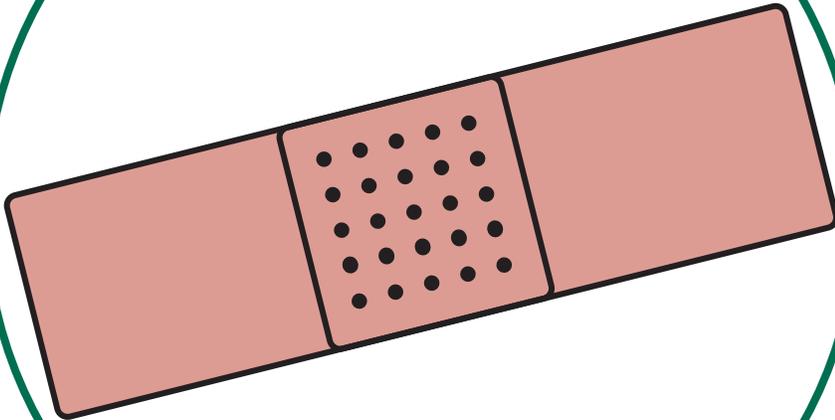
Flag Symbols



Attachment: Activity 1 (continued)



Attachment: Activity 1 (continued)



VISITOR

Attachment: Activity 4

Peace Signs and Prayer



Attachment: Activity 4 (continued)



ANCIENT ASIAN PEACE SYMBOL



Prayer of the Benedictine Sisters

Lead me/us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me/us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me/us from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill my/our heart, my/our world, my/our universe.