

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS AND JUSTICE

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 **Luke 4:16-21; Matthew 25:31-45**

The Bible says that people who follow God should act with justice, and Jesus showed his followers how to do it. In this session we look at some examples of how Jesus stood up for people who were often disregarded or outcast, or people who were treated unfairly by the people/leaders of the day, eg women, children, people with leprosy, people with disabilities/illness.

Luke 4:16-21 tells us about Jesus' reason for being on earth – he came for everyone, but especially for society's rejected people – the poor, prisoners, the oppressed. Matthew 25:31-45 encourages us, as disciples of Jesus, to take up that same call and continue with his mission.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper for drawing and for writing a prayer.

You will need:

→ To research some superhero poses – see Start It section (optional)

→ To create a display on the theme 'Live like Jesus' presentation – see Action It section

## Start It

Start with some warm-ups based on Superheroes.

🗨 **Say:** Superhero films are hugely popular these days, whether it's The Avengers or Justice League. We seem to enjoy seeing superheroes fight for justice.

### Option One: Superhero warm-ups

Choose your favourite Superhero and copy their movements – be prepared to get active!

**Screenshare:** *This or that: Justice League vs Avengers edition warm-up/brain break* by PE with Coach Shockley (5 mins 25 secs)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_26OPhCBuGI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_26OPhCBuGI)

### Option Two: Superhero Says ...

Some of the actions are quite challenging so you may want to give younger children an alternative option. Play a game of *Superhero Says*, similar to Simon Says.

🗨 **Say,** 'Thor says do this, do this ... do that', while striking some Thor poses, eg swinging a hammer, smashing a hammer, hands on hips. Repeat with other superheroes like Spiderman, Wonder Woman, Black Panther. Googling images beforehand will help you find familiar poses if you are unsure.

**Ask:**

→ Who is your favourite superhero?

→ How do they stand up for people who can't stand up for themselves?

## Sing It

● **Say:** This month we will be learning all about God's justice and the different ways we can show God's love for everyone in this world. In the Old Testament of the Bible a man called Micah was given a special task by God. Micah's job was to remind the people how to live their lives in a way that honoured God. He said these words:

**'The Lord has told you what is good.  
He has told you what he wants from you:  
Do what is right to other people.  
Love being kind to others,  
And live humbly, trusting your God.'**

— Micah 6:8 (ICB)

● **Say:** Each week we are going to learn a different song based around these words. At the end of the month, we will choose our favourite version to share with the rest of the church.

'Micah 6:8' by Wayner Finstad (2 mins 3 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdhHosAOma4>

● **Say:** In the *Explore It For Me* handout there is a copy of this verse. See if you can learn it by next week and you'll have a chance to share with the rest of the group.

## Tell It

● **Say:** Over the past few months we have been looking at the mission priorities of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Our final mission priority is 'Seek justice and reconciliation'.

**Ask:** What do you think of when you hear the word 'justice'?

● **Say:** In our starter activity we were reminded of the way that Superheroes seek justice for others. They may do wonderful things to help others, but their way of seeking justice isn't quite the same as the type of justice we see in the Bible.

## Video

**Screenshare:** *Justice - What's that word* by Crossroads Kids' Club (4 mins 21 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSBhsEoKYvY>

**Ask:**

→ How would you feel if your whole class took a test and the teacher gave everyone zero because one person cheated?

→ Why does that feel so unfair, and what would you want to do about it?

● **Say:** In Genesis 1:27 we read:

**'So God created human beings in his image. In the image of God he created them. He created them male and female.'**

— Genesis 1:27 (ICB)

**Ask:**

→ If we know that every single person on earth is made in the image of God, how should that change the way we see them?

→ How do you think God feels when he sees his people being treated unfairly?

● **Say:** The clip said: 'Injustice is whenever someone is not treated like a human being made in God's image.'

**Ask:**

→ What examples of injustice do you see in your everyday life?

→ How does it make you feel?

Read Luke 4:16-21 (ICB)

**'Jesus travelled to Nazareth, where he had grown up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue as he always did. Jesus stood up to read. The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. He opened the book and found the place where this is written:**

**"The Spirit of the Lord is in me. This is because God chose me to tell the Good News to the poor. God sent me to tell the prisoners of sin that they are free, and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly, and to announce the time when the Lord will show kindness to his people."**

**Jesus closed the book, gave it back, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue was watching Jesus closely. He began to speak to them. He said, "While you heard these words just now, they were coming true!"**

**Ask:**

- What kind of things did Jesus do to fight injustice?
- How can we follow the example of Jesus and show kindness and love to people who are treated unfairly?

## Action It

Create a 'Live like Jesus' presentation for your church either to see online or on a display board in your church. You can adapt this activity depending on your circumstances or the way your group is meeting.

Read Matthew 25:31-55 with the children and as a group jot down all the different examples Jesus gave for ways to stand up against injustice.

**The Son of Man will come again in his great glory. All his angels will come with him. He will be King and sit on his great throne. All the people of the world will be gathered before him. Then he will separate them into two groups as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The Son of Man will put the sheep, the good people, on his right and the goats, the bad people, on his left.**

**Then the King will say to the good people on his right, 'Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'**

**Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?'**

**Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.'**

**Then the King will say to those on his left, 'Go away from me. God has said that you will be punished. Go into the fire that burns for ever. That fire was prepared for the devil and his helpers. I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.'**

**Then those people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?'**

**Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here, you refused to do for me.'**

— (Matthew 25:31-35 ICB)

Give the children an opportunity to share and discuss what they have created.

## Picture

Depending on how you are meeting together, the children could work in pairs or individually at home to create a picture of each of the following:

- you gave me food
- you gave me something to drink
- you gave me something to wear
- you cared for me
- you visited me in prison

## Pray It

🗨 **Say:** One of the most important things we can do to support people facing injustice is to pray for them. Have a look at the picture you have created and think about people who are going through this situation. They may be struggling to pay the bills and feed their family, they may live in a place where there is no clean water to drink or have nowhere to live.

## Prayer

Ask the children to write a short prayer for people facing the situation shown in their picture.

Depending on the style of presentation the group has created, you could add the children's prayers to the display.

Explain to the children that one of the *Explore It For Me* activities this week involves finding out about people who stood up against injustice. There will be an opportunity for the children to share what they have discovered in the next session.

## Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It (For Me)* and *Explore It (Together)* ideas for children and families.