

October 2025 - Others and Inclusion

Please note Bible stories and themes may occasionally differ from this overview.

October is Black History Month, so this month we consider justice and equality in the Bible and learn about people who have made a big impact for Jesus. We explore how spiritual fruit such as **faithfulness**, **joy** and **love** can be shown in our lives as we seek justice and inclusion for everyone.

Session 1 4/5 October

Aim: To consider what the Bible says about equality and consider how our faith impacts what we do
Bible ref: Isaiah 61:1-2

Today's fruit

Knowing how God cares for others but at the same time seeing inequality in the world gives us opportunity to practise **faithfulness**.

A champion of justice

These Bible verses in Isaiah focus on a call to do good in the name of the Lord. The original description of 'the year of the Lord's favour' comes in Leviticus 25 and has significant meaning by way of a real event that would happen every seven years, when people would be given freedom and whole communities would be 're-set'. More broadly, Isaiah 61 can be seen as a message of hope, a message that says God cares about those who are suffering.

Sojourner Truth escaped slavery and became a strong voice in the abolitionist movement. She became a powerful voice in the fight against slavery through her relationship with Jesus. Her unwavering faith in Jesus gave her the strength to achieve great things, and she continues to offer hope to all who follow Christ.

For more information, please check out The Salvation Army's modern slavery / human trafficking resources:

- **Seasonal assemblies (Primary)**
- **True Story**

Think about

What do we already know about justice? How can we be champions of justice? What does a champion look like? How can we stand up for justice?

What do you think about the idea of 're-setting' things every seven years? What would that mean? What things are unfair that you'd like to make fair? Can we help make equality happen?

One champion of justice was Sojourner Truth, a follower of Jesus who spoke powerfully in the fight against slavery. What can we learn from her story? How did her faith help her to be a champion of justice?

In the 18th century there was a man called John Newton who was a ship's captain who took people from their homes in West Africa and sold them as slaves in America. On one journey home his ship was in a severe storm off the coast of Ireland, and Newton promised God that if his life was saved, he would change his ways. John Newton survived the storm and became a Christian. He eventually stopped his work as a slave trader, became a vicar, and wrote the hymn 'Amazing Grace'. He also became part of the campaign to abolish the slave trade in Britain.

Although slavery became illegal in Britain, it still happens today. It's called modern slavery, and The Salvation Army works to stop it happening and look after those who have been trafficked.

10 October: World Mental Health Day

Pause for a moment to pray for those who have suffered from modern slavery and for those who have escaped but are still suffering the mental effects. Pray for peace in their minds and heart.

Session 2
11/12 October

Aim: To explore the link between Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 and think about how it shows us an inclusive way to live

Bible ref: Luke 4:14-20

Today's fruit

The promise of God's hope allows **joy** to grow in our lives. As we share hope with others, we experience joy.

A trailblazer

In Luke 4:19 (NIV) Jesus states, 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' This is a quote from Isaiah 61:2, and in this passage Jesus is announcing that this time of God's favour is now present in his ministry. Some people understand it as a time of spiritual freedom, forgiveness and blessing, offered by God through Jesus and received through faith. It's a time when God's grace is freely available to those who believe, echoing the themes of the Year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25.

While the year of the Lord's favour in Isaiah was referring to a regular event, Jesus may have been suggesting that the 'jubilee' was going to set people free spiritually and for good. God offers freedom and forgiveness for those who ask.

Jarena Lee was the first woman authorised to preach in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She walked thousands of miles on foot to preach the gospel and authored the first published autobiography by an African American woman. She is a testament to obeying God at any cost.

Think about

Jesus returned to the place he grew up and went to a synagogue – the place where Jews gathered to be taught about Scripture and God. Where are the special places we learn about God? Who teaches us about the Bible?

Jesus would have known the scroll of Isaiah well. The passage he quoted was about the Messiah being anointed to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captives and healing to the sick.

Who do you think Isaiah was writing about in his scroll? Who do we know who brought good news to the poor, set people free and healed the sick?

Jesus was reading about himself! He wanted to let people know by reading the ancient scroll that God promises to save us, free us and heal us. Jesus wanted people to know that through his life, people could be close to God again, because God loved them.

Luke 4:19 encourages us to recognise and know God's grace and to share the good news with others.

One trailblazer was Jarena Lee. She knew and felt the love of Jesus and felt called to share that love with others. She had to wait for approval to be given to her, but eventually she was allowed to travel around America and tell people about Jesus. What can we learn from Jarena's life?

Session 3
18/19 October

Aim: To think about the needs of others and consider how we can stand with them

Bible ref: Philippians 2:1-4

Today's fruit

As we choose to put the need of others before our own, we are showing the fruit of **love**. We share God's **love** with others as we help and care for them.

A voice of freedom

'Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.'

(Philippians 2:4 *ESV*)

This verse encourages us to think the way that Jesus thought about other people. These verses remind us to live in unity and love through the power of the Holy Spirit. It's about showing kindness, consideration and respect for others.

This Bible passage reminds us of the importance of humility and empathy. When we love and follow Jesus, we must try to be aware of how other people are feeling and what they might need. It's not about putting ourselves down or not wanting to have good things in our lives, but more about being ready and happy to share, show kindness and compassion. Sometimes that feels like a sacrifice for us.

Harriet Tubman escaped slavery in 1849, but she was not satisfied with just her own freedom. She said the voice of God helped her lead as many as 300 slaves to freedom. Her commitment to living out God's calling is an inspiration and an example for us as Christians.

Think about

Have you ever tried to walk in someone else's shoes? Were they too big? Too small? Was it easy? Did it feel different from your shoes? Have you ever heard the expression 'walking in someone else's shoes'? What do you think it means?

When Jesus asks us to think about what other people need, we must try and put ourselves in their shoes – it means imagining how they might be feeling.

I wonder how we can put ourselves in someone else's shoes? I wonder if by doing that it might help us understand people better?

One person who loved God and loved others was a woman called Harriet Tubman. She was born into slavery. When she became free, she wanted to help others who were still being forced into slavery. Because of her faith and her love for God, she found the courage to fight against slavery and save many people.

What can we learn from Harriet's life and story? How did she put the love of God into action? Can we use our voices to bring freedom?

18 Anti-Slavery Day

How might Harriet Tubman view the fact that today there is an Anti-Slavery Day?

18-26 International Development Week

Spend time praying for The Salvation Army's international projects which aim to bring clean water, food security, education, gender justice and aid during disasters. It is also aiming to prevent and protect people from trafficking and modern slavery.

Session 4
25/26 October

Aim: To explore equality and understand the power of our own faith in Jesus
Bible ref: Galatians 3:28

Today's fruit

The fruit of **faithfulness** grows as we continue to put our faith in God, even when there are challenges. **Faithfulness** grows as we do what is right.

A dreamer and doer

Galatians 3:28 (NIV) reads: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' This verse helps us to think about unity and equality in God's eyes.

Status and power have been something that some human beings have desired, and it wasn't different in the Bible. We know from reading the Bible that many kings held on tightly to their power and position, and we know that different nations believed that they were the most important, or their ideas were the ones that were right.

In this letter to the Galatians we can understand more of what God wants for us – for us all to understand that we are each loved equally. We are each considered as one of God's children, part of his family through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Martin Luther King Jr is a global icon and a true hero who changed the world. His family were Christians and he became a Baptist preacher, and his faith helped him to lead the civil rights movement. He formed an interracial and interfaith alliance that demanded that the United States live up to its promises of freedom and equality for all.

Think about

Who do you think has a lot of power? How do you know they are powerful? How do they use their power? What do you think it would be like if they didn't have that power? Would it be good? Why?

When the Bible was written, many people had no power at all. Often women, children, poor and sick people were powerless. They weren't allowed to make decisions and weren't seen as important. What do you think about that?

If God sees us all as his children, is anyone more important than anyone else?

This part of the Bible is from a letter which Paul wrote to the followers of Jesus in Galatia. Paul was teaching them about the importance of their faith in Jesus – faith wasn't just about what they believed, it was also about what they did and how they treated people who weren't like them. It reminds us that when we follow Jesus, he helps us to be more open and loving towards other people even if they're different from us.

A Christian in the United States called Martin Luther King Junior worked hard to make the world a more equal place for people of different heritage and faith. His love of Jesus helped him to fight for the rights of people who weren't being treated fairly by society. What can we learn from him?