

A champion of justice

**Bible verses:**

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Lord's message of freedom

**Aim:**

To consider what the Bible says about equality and consider how our faith impacts what we do

**Today's fruit:**

Faithfulness, joy and love



In today's session we will explore Isaiah 61:1-2 and what it teaches us about taking a stand against injustice.

As part of Black History Month, we'll hear about Sojourner Truth, who bravely spoke out against slavery and injustice, and John Newton, whose life was changed by God's amazing grace. We will discover that God's Spirit helps us live with faithfulness, joy and love as we stand up for what's right.

God cares for others, and seeing inequality in the world gives us opportunity to practise faithfulness.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- *Amazing Grace* handout
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- A chair for each child - except for one - and some fun worship music
- An image of Sojourner Truth (eg from commons.wiki.org)
- Fruit of the Spirit posters: *Faithfulness, joy and love* - download from **Salvationist**
- *Prayer Prompts* poster

 Start it

Before the children explore what the Bible says about injustice, they're going to play a game of *Musical Chairs* – with a twist! The rules are going to be a little unfair.

Set up the chairs in a circle, but leave out one chair so there aren't enough for everyone. Play some fun worship music and ask the children to walk around the chairs. When the music stops, everyone should find a seat. With a chair missing, one child will be out of the game.

In the next round, secretly decide to give one child an advantage. For example:

- Let them sit on a chair that is already taken, so another child has to move or
- reserve a special chair just for them.

Keep the unfair rule in place for the next few rounds. Then stop the game and bring the children together to talk about what happened.

Ask:

- How did it feel when (insert name) was always given a chair?
- Was the game fair? Why or why not?

Say:

Sometimes in our world, people don't get the basic things they need to live, while others have far more than enough. That's called injustice, when things aren't fair. Some people even use their power or money to keep things unfair. But the good news is that the Bible tells us God cares about fairness and justice. God wants everyone to be treated equally, and he wants us to play our part in making his world fairer.

 Sing it**Say:**

Our song for today played a very special part in the life of a man we'll discover more about later. As you sing, listen carefully to the words and think about what they might tell us about his story. All will be revealed in the Action It section!

Song

'Amazing Grace' (power lab music video) by Lifetree Kids (2:28)





Share it

Say:

The Bible has a lot to say about justice. As we celebrate Black History Month, we're going to hear stories of men and women who trusted God and stood up for what was right. Way back in the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah spoke these words, and hundreds of years later Jesus read them and said they were about him.

Read:

'The Lord God has put his Spirit in me.

This is because he has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken.

He has sent me to tell the captives they are free.

He has sent me to tell the prisoners that they are released.

**He has sent me to announce the time when the Lord will show his kindness
and the time when our God will punish evil people.**

He has sent me to comfort all those who are sad.'

(Isaiah 61:1-2 *ICB*)

Say:

As followers of Jesus, we are also called to look after those who are poor and broken-hearted. Our memory verse for this month will help us remember the importance of Isaiah's words.

Give each child a memory verse wristband and read the verse together.

Memory verse

'The Lord God has put his Spirit in me.

This is because he has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken.'

(Isaiah 61:1a *ICB*)

Say:

Isaiah was talking about the way God gives his people strength to bring hope and justice. Hundreds of years later, Jesus said these words were about him. Jesus came to bring freedom, healing and good news, and because we follow Jesus, his Spirit gives us the power to do the same.

Say:

During Black History Month we're celebrating people who lived out Isaiah's words, who trusted God and stood up for justice, even when it was hard.

Show the children a picture of Sojourner Truth and ask them if they know who she is. Read the following story to tell the children all about Sojourner Truth.

Read:

Sojourner Truth was a woman who lived in America a long time ago. She was born at the end of the 18th century and her real name was Isabella Baumfree – and she was an enslaved person. That meant she had to work very hard, but she wasn't free to make choices about her own life. Things were very unfair for her.

Isabella had children of her own, but because she was enslaved, they were not free either. One of her little boys was taken away and sold to someone far away. Isabella was heartbroken, but she was also brave. She went to court and fought for her son, and she won! She became one of the first black women in America to win a case like that.

Later, Isabella found freedom when she escaped and met a family who offered to buy her, so that she could be free. With her new freedom, she chose a new name, Sojourner Truth. A 'sojourner' is a traveller, and she wanted to travel around and tell the truth about God's love and justice.

Sojourner gave speeches to big crowds about freedom, equality and God's care for everyone. At that time it was very unusual for women to speak in public, and even more unusual for a black woman. Some people argued with her, tried to stop her speaking, and even threatened her with violence. Despite all this, Sojourner stayed faithful to God and kept speaking out for justice.

She reminds us of Isaiah's words, that God's Spirit gives us strength to bring good news, to comfort people who are hurting, and to stand up for what's right.

Ask:

- What was the most amazing part of Sojourner's story for you?
- What do you think gave her the courage to keep speaking out, even when people tried to stop her?
- Isaiah said that God's Spirit gives us the strength to speak out against injustice. How did Sojourner Truth live out those words?
- How can we be brave and stand up for justice like Sojourner did?

**Action it****Say:**

Sojourner Truth trusted God and stood up for justice. But not everyone did the right thing. Some people made bad choices. One of those people was John Newton, but God's grace still changed him.

Read:

John Newton was the captain of a ship that sailed the oceans in the 1700s. Sadly his job was to take people from Africa and sell them in America. One night, as he was transporting another

group of enslaved people, his boat hit a terrible storm. Afraid of what might happen, John prayed with all his heart, 'God, if you save me, I'll change my life.' That night, God saved John's life and also began to change his heart.

John became a Christian and later refused to be involved in the slave trade. In fact, he became a vicar and joined the fight to get rid of slavery altogether. In the year that John Newton died, it became illegal to buy and sell slaves in the British Empire.

Ask:

What is the most amazing part of John Newton's story for you?

Say:

John Newton's story shows us that God's grace is life-changing. God used John Newton to help change the lives of thousands of people and save them from slavery.

Give each child an *Amazing Grace* handout and ask the children to use colouring pencils to decorate over the top of the words with pictures from John Newton's story. They could include the storm, broken chains, people singing, the cross etc. The aim is to show the amazing change in John Newton's life that took him from participating in the slave trade to fighting for its abolition.

When the children have finished, they can share their pictures together.

Say:

John Newton's story shows us that God can forgive and transform anyone, no matter what they've done, while Sojourner Truth's life shows us how God can use our voices to stand up for others with love and courage.



Pray it

Say:

Today we've heard how God's Spirit gave Sojourner Truth the courage to be faithful and keep speaking up for justice, even when it was hard. We've also heard how God's love and grace transformed John Newton's life, giving him a new start.

Say:

At least three of our fruit of the Spirit can be found in the stories of both Sojourner Truth and John Newton.

Display the *Faithfulness, joy and love* signs.

Display the *Prayer Prompts* posters and discuss them with the children.



Prayer prompts

Dear God, thank you for your **love**, that is bigger than our mistakes.

Dear God, thank you for Sojourner's **faithfulness**. Help us to be faithful in standing up for justice.

Dear God, thank you for the **joy** we find when we see lives changed by your grace.

As the music plays, the children can use these prompts as they pray.

Listen

'Isaiah 61:1 – The Spirit of the Lord' by Melody of Lilies (2:50)

Bring the session to a close in prayer.

Key dates (optional)

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.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



A champion of justice

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Isaiah 61:1-2



Aim:
To consider what the Bible says about equality and consider how our faith impacts what we do



Today's fruit:
Faithfulness, joy and love



Create

Create your own version of our memory verse for this month and display it at home.



Share

Find out three additional facts about either Sojourner Truth or John Newton and share their stories with the people at home.



Song for the week

'Amazing Grace' (power lab music video)
by Lifetree Kids



Memory verse

'The Lord God has put his Spirit in me.
This is because he has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken.'

(Isaiah 61:1a ICB)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

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Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children
& Youth