

SMALL  GROUP

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

One Step / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Where can you move toward justice?

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:34-39 NIV

Matthew 25:40 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students begin to recognize and learn about where justice is needed in the world and to encourage them to see they can take a step toward helping in those areas.

THINK ABOUT THIS

As you dive into leading a conversation about justice in this series, be mindful of the different backgrounds, perspectives, and circumstances represented in your group. While many of your middle schoolers may already know about, recognize, or even be experiencing a need for justice in the world, others may be seeing it in a new way or even for the first time. Consider your context as you lead this conversation. Be sensitive to what your students recognize and understand, what they've already experienced, and what they're learning when it comes to both justice and injustice. Keep the conversation inclusive and open to all your students, no matter where they're coming from on the topic. But, at the same time, be mindful to keep the conversation from turning into an unhealthy or unhelpful debate. This week's goal isn't to argue, offend, or debate on what is or isn't necessary for justice. Rather, it's to help students see the need for justice around them in a new way and to find the courage to take even one step toward meeting that need. Finally, keep in mind that you likely have students living in real injustice every single day. Be careful to choose examples that don't make them feel singled out or embarrassed because of what they've experienced.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the content as needed, and don't feel like you need to complete everything listed.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSS THIS

1. When you hear the word "justice," what comes to mind?
2. What's one example of an injustice a middle schooler might see or experience . . .
 - a. At home?
 - b. At school?
 - c. In their friend group?
 - d. In their community?
 - e. On TV or social media?
3. How do you think it feels to see or experience an injustice?
4. Why do you think we should learn to see where we can move toward justice in the world?
5. What does Jesus' example tell us about how God feels about justice?
6. Why do you think moving toward justice is an important part of our faith?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Divide a poster board into three columns. At the top of the left column, write "Small Step," in the middle column, "Next Step," and in the right column, "Big Step." Pass out sticky notes to your students, ask them to write ideas for each step based on this week's conversation, and then stick them on the poster board. Consider saying something like, *"Think about injustices in the world and write down ways a middle schooler could take a small step, next step, and big step to help move toward a better tomorrow."* When everyone is done, prompt them to read through the sticky notes and select one thing they'll do this week to step toward justice and a better tomorrow.

TIP: Save the poster board for next week. You'll use it again!

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

Give each of your students a notecard and ask them to anonymously write down how experiencing injustice has made them feel or how they think it would make them feel. Feel free to use the provided Feelings Wheel to help your students put words to what they've experienced. Gather their responses and give them to your Ministry Leader after group ends so they can share them during next week's talk.

