



Small Group Resource:

Joy-The Flip Side of Justice

3 weeks

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Introduction to the Format

There is a pattern for each week. The times are suggestions and are loosely based on an hour timeframe. The times should be modified, as needed. Each session will consist of the following elements:

Fellowship – Snacks or a Meal (10 minutes with snacks; longer, obviously, if there is a meal)

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). Each session will begin with an opening question to foster dialogue and help the participants settle in to the theme for the week. These questions are meant to be done in micro groups of two or three people.

Optional Exercises. Weeks 2 through 4 contain an optional exercise that bridges the ending exercises from the week prior. If the group chooses to use these exercises, which will help the ideas from the lessons become more practical, the facilitator will need to adjust the time accordingly, as they are not figured into the timeline.

Group Dialogue (Approximately 30 minutes). This guide does not include a lot of questions. The intent is for group dialogue and not merely giving the correct answer. During the dialogue sections, you will see guidance and possible answers to the given questions with brackets []. These are only possible answers and are not meant to be exhaustive of other answers. It is a helpful practice to allow participants plenty of time to process these questions internally. Don't be afraid of silence.

Prayer (10 minutes). Allow each participant who would like to do so to lift up a person or situation he or she would like the group to be in prayer over. Following each request, the leader will pray, "Lord, in your mercy...", and the participants will respond, "Hear our prayers." If the situation is warranted and if the participant is willing, surround the participant and lay hands on him/her and allow those who are willing to do so to pray for this person and/or situation.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). Ask for a volunteer to send the group out with the printed blessing; or read the prayer in unison.

Week 1

[Luke 12:32-40](#)

Fellowship – Snacks (10 minutes)

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have each participant finish the following statement: “I experience joy when...”

Group Dialogue (Approximately 30 minutes)

Read [Luke 12:32-40](#)

- Which command of Jesus do you find to be a bigger challenge: “Do not be afraid?” or “Sell your possessions and give to the poor?” Why?
- Why do you think Jesus addressed the people as “little flock,” while also noting that the Father will give them the kingdom (v. 32)? [Kingdom is royal language, while flock is language of agriculture. Royal language is the language of elites; whereas, agricultural language is of the working class. This disparity highlights the greatness of what God gives and the kind of people (humble) that will receive it. It also illustrates the type of kingdom God gives—abundance—not wealth or land.]
- What should we make of Jesus’ command to “sell your possessions” in verse 33? How might Jesus’ follow-up instruction about creating wallets that endure give some guidance for how we understand selling our possessions? [If we sold everything, we’d have no need for a wallet.]
- What might it mean to have treasures in heaven?
- Who is the thief in verse 39? [Jesus] What does it look like to live with this sort of waiting and watching?
- If you knew Jesus would return in 48 hours, what would you do differently?
- How can joy be the flipside of doing justice?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (1 minute). Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of justice, we long for the day when “righteousness is at home” (2 Peter 3:13). Enlarge our imagination to glimpse a vision of what your justice will mean for us as individuals and for people of God. Help us experience joy at the vision and as we work toward your vision of justice. Amen.

Week 2

[Luke 12:49-56](#)

Fellowship – Snacks (10 minutes)

Gathering and Opening (10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Do you find silence awkward or uncomfortable, or do you welcome it? Why?”

Group Dialogue (Approximately 30 minutes)

Read: [Luke 12:49-56](#)

- Do you find Jesus’ words in verses 49-53 startling? Why or why not? [It is a common assumption that Jesus speaks only words of “love” and “peace.” Here, we see something different. Jesus is presented as a fiery prophet.]
- How does this passage fulfill what Simeon prophesized about Jesus in Luke 2:34-35 and what John the Baptist believed in Luke 3:16?
- Read [Isaiah 5:1-7](#). How is the story of the beloved and the vineyard like the story of God and Israel? [Israel is God’s beloved that God has nurtured and protected and expected the fruit of righteousness, yet found wickedness.]
- What did the beloved expect? What did the beloved find? What will be the result? [Judgment]
- What does the Lord expect of the people of God (v. 7)?
- How is Jesus’ ministry similar to what we find in the prophets (especially as we see in Isaiah 5:1-7)? [There are expectations of God’s people doing justice and living righteously. Failure to be obedient to God’s ways brings judgment upon God’s people.]
- How can your church be more attentive to God?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). Before ending in prayer, spend at least one minute in silence:

Ever-present God, we confess that we have not been the people of righteousness and justice. Individually and as the church, we have failed to glorify you or make your name and character known to the nations. Forgive us for our disobedience. By your Holy Spirit, place within us new desires for obedience, righteousness, and justice. Amen.

Week 3

[Luke 13:10-17](#)

Fellowship – Snacks (10 minutes)

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Have you ever experienced or witnessed an act of healing?”

Read: [Luke 13:10-17](#)

- Read [Luke 4:18-19](#). How are Jesus’ actions an extension of his mission that he states in the Luke 4 passage?
- Read [Luke 13:18-21](#). How are the two parables in this passage related to the prior passage (vv.10-17)? (Notice the “therefore” in verse 18, which links these passages.) [Healing is a sign of the kingdom coming through the ministry of Jesus. The kingdom is coming in surprising, almost hidden ways, not through the religious leaders, but it is found in the healing of a crippled woman who is not named in the passage.]
- Often in Jesus’ ministry, healing comes about because a person is seeking it. In this passage, not only did the woman not ask Jesus, Jesus didn’t even ask the woman if she desired to be healed, as he asks others. What does it say about Jesus’ intentions that Jesus “saw her, he called her over” and announced healing over her? [He intentionally healed on the Sabbath.]
- How do [Exodus 20:8-11](#) and [Deuteronomy 5:12-15](#) provide biblical justification for the leader of the synagogue?
- Read [Luke 11:42](#). How is the religious leader a hypocrite like the Pharisees in Luke 11:42?
- What does this say about the importance of justice work for Jesus and those seeking the kingdom of God?
- How can you and your church work for justice in your community?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). End by praying the following or similar prayer:

Lord, we confess that we have placed our need of being “right” before our love for others. Forgive us our pride and arrogance. Through your Holy Spirit, give us a new heart of compassion for all your people. Help us to seek first your kingdom in all that we do. Amen.