

SEEK JUSTICE | FIND JOY

Justice Sunday

A Curriculum for Middle School Students

Learning Objective

Students understand biblical justice by studying the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and make it personal by giving examples of how to love God and love their neighbor. Students will learn that they should show compassion, mercy and restoration towards their neighbors

Teacher Prep

Pray and seek the Lord. Ask Him to reveal and make His word come alive in this lesson. Read Luke 10:25-37. Examine your heart, and apply God's truth to your life.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

Welcome!

Introduce yourself, and give the students a warm welcome. Open with prayer.

Key Focus: Understanding and applying God's desire for justice.

Last year many of you have heard people talking about the word injustice.

What do you think injustice is? (Allow several responses)

What's the opposite of injustice? (Justice)

So, what are some of your ideas of what justice is? (Allow several responses)

Say: Justice simply means "to seek to make right what is wrong". Our God of justice desires His people to live in a right relationship with Him, and with one another.

Today we'll look at God's definition of justice (the only one that truly matters!), and how we should "make right" both our relationship with God and our neighbors. Let's start by reading together our memory verse for the day! (share on screen or poster)

Luke 10:27: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* (read it together 3 times-- once in a regular voice, once in a whisper, and once really loud)

Now, I need your help coming up with some hand motions. What should we do for love? God? Heart? Soul? Strength? Mind? Neighbor? Self?

Great! Now let's do it all together!.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Luke 10:27



What is love?

That verse from Luke tells us a lot about love. But what is love? Who would you say that you love?

(Allow several responses)

How would those people know that you love them?

(Allow several responses)

Why do we love? Let me read a verse from 1 John 4:19, from a letter written by John to a church, and think about that question. (Read and ask them to answer)

Right. God loved us first. That means before we even knew what love was he showed us.

What did God do to show His love toward us? How do we know he loves us? (Allow responses)

Right. God gave His son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so that we would be saved and in a right relationship with Him.

What is sin? (Allow several responses)

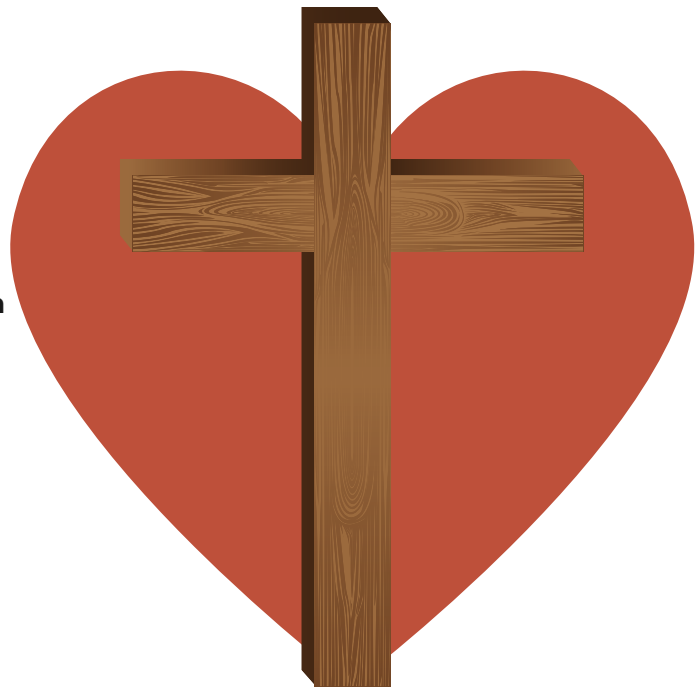
Sin is very time we decide to do things our own way instead of what God would want us to do.

The bad news is that sin makes a separation between us and God. Our sin puts us in a wrong relationship with God. In fact, Isaiah tells us that because of our sins, God has hidden his face from us so that he does not hear!

The good news is that God showed us his love in Jesus who “makes right our wrong (our sin)” by taking our punishment. Jesus was buried and rose to life defeating death to make us right with God for eternity. In fact, when we confess and believe in him, we are washed clean of our sins and called sons and daughters. He makes us family! God is our great Teacher. He shows us how to love, and how to “make things right” with Him and our neighbors (others). Since God so loved us and showed us his justice, we ought to show others both love and justice.

*We love
because he
first loved us.*

1 John 4:19



Lesson and Video

Explain how God's love makes us people who love others, and how God calls us to seek justice for others.

We've talked about why we should love God with all our heart and soul and strength and mind, We love because God loved us first! We also know that God's love "seeks to make right the wrong", to make right the wrong that comes from sin in our lives. And then, God calls us to follow Jesus and love our neighbor like we love ourselves.

Who do you think God means when he says to love our neighbors? (Allow several responses)

Loving your neighbor isn't just for our family and friends. God made all people in His image, and His love is available for all people in the same way, God's Justice "seeks to make right what is wrong" and it is also for everyone no matter what.

So when we see people being hurt or mistreated we should seek to make right the wrong in their lives like we would do for ourselves!

God tells us in His word that His love is patient, that love is kind. Listen to how he describes love: *Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. Love does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.* We must always seek to love God and love our neighbors because our great teacher God, never fails. He shows us how to love Him and our neighbors (others).1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Let's see what our friends are doing in our video!

What were some of the ways that love for God and love for others were shown in the video?



Scan the QR Code
to see the video.

Bible Storytime

Look at the parable of the Good Samaritan to understand what God means when he calls us to love others.

Now we finally get to dive into the Bible and hear what God has to say to us! We're looking at a parable that Jesus told. A parable is a simple story Jesus used to teach us big lessons. Listen carefully as I read the Bible--these are God's words to us! This is from the gospel of Luke, chapter 10.



On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’[c]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii[e] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” [Teacher Note: Visit bit.ly/justicesundayforkids for a video]

Bible Story Q & A

Let's see what the students remember from the parable as you explain it.



1. What is a simple story that Jesus often told in the Bible called? A parable.
2. Who stood up and asked Jesus a question? An expert in the law.
3. What two questions did the expert in the law ask?
4. Why (according to the Bible) did the expert in the law ask Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
5. What happened to the man who was traveling? He was attacked, stripped of his clothes, and left injured on the side of the road.
6. Who were the two men who decided not to help the man? The priest and the Levite
7. What did the priest and Levite do when they saw the man on the road?
8. Why do you think they didn't help?
9. Who decided to help the man? Why is that surprising?
10. Jesus asked, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" What's the answer given?
11. What did Jesus say to the expert in the law at the end?
12. So from the parable, what's the answer to the question, who is my neighbor?

Great work with the review questions! We thank Jesus for teaching us to love even our enemies through this parable. When we see our neighbors hurting, and needing help we should be quick to make the wrong we see right.

Summary & Application

What does it mean for us that God loves justice?

How does that change how we treat others?



Today we learned that God is a lover of Justice. Justice means “to make right what is wrong, or to restore.” The Samaritan man saw that the man lying in the road was in bad shape. The Samaritan took pity and showed the man love and compassion.

Today we realized that our neighbors can include our family and friends, but also people who are from different races, live in different places, people who are hurting, the poor, the hungry, the sick, the homeless, people who think differently than we do, and the list could go on and on.

The Samaritan in today’s Bible story would have been considered an outcast, and enemy of the Jewish people. Yet God uses this story to show us an example of His love that didn’t come from who we would expect. As religious leaders, the priest and the Levite, should have been the first to come and restore the man on the side of the road. They could have wanted to help, but they chose not to. James 1:22 says, “That we should not just listen to the word, but do what it says.”

When we see anyone who needs to be restored, or “to make right what is wrong” we should help them. The Samaritan came to where the man was, when he saw the man he took pity on him. He bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then, he put the man on his own donkey, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, and gave it to the innkeeper. He told the innkeeper, “Look after him, and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”

Take five minutes to think of some ways you have acted like the priest and Levite when you saw something wrong. Allow children to share. Now, let’s think about how we could have helped in that situation. Allow children to share.

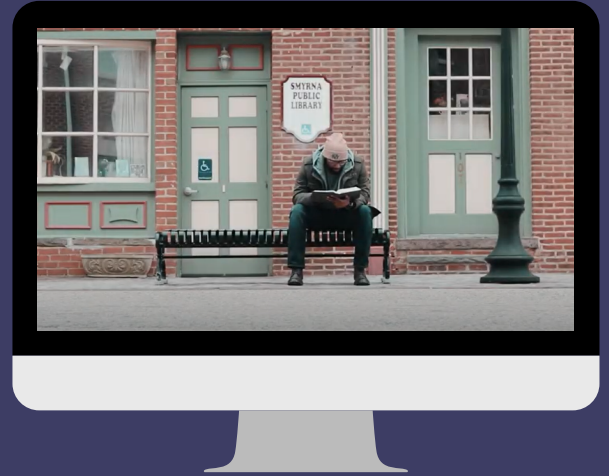
When we tell the truth about what we’ve done wrong, God will make it right in our hearts toward Him. James 5:16 says: Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Respond through Prayer

Thank you Jesus for patiently loving us. Thank you for your example of perfect love. Lord we pray, that we will love you with all of our heart and with all of our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind and that we would love our neighbors as ourselves.

When we see things that are wrong, help us to be like the Samaritan. We pray that when we see wrongs, that we would make things right. We pray that we would know you, that we would know justice and know your peace. Forgive us for how we handled injustice in the past. Please give us a mind like Jesus. Help us to love you God and love our neighbors. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Spoken Word Video on Loving our Neighbors



Visit
bit.ly/love4neighbors

