**Justice**

Leader’s Guide

**Opening Activity**

Split into two separate groups. Set a timer for 3 minutes and tell the groups they have to write down as many songs as they can think of that have the word LOVE in the title or in part of the lyrics. After 3 minutes is up, bring everyone back together. Tally up the number of songs each group comes up with. Any answer the groups have in common cancel out – points are only scored for unique answers.

**Stories That Shape Us**

This week’s topic was about justice and how it’s deeply connected to the greatest commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Despite all of the songs about romantic love (some of which they may have listed in the game), love is more than just a romantic feeling. It’s deeply tied to justice and our responsibility to help make things right in the world. History is full of people seeking justice in the world – some we are familiar with and others may be less known. We’re going to watch a reading of another story book that highlights the stories of people who have pushed and fought for justice in the world. And this book in particular connects the work and lives of those people to the Beatitudes on Matthew 5:1-12.

Have someone read Matthew 5:1-12 and then watch the video below:

[**Reading of The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14n1sd9IFnI)

**Questions for Conversation**

* Before hearing the reading of this book, how much did you know about some of the people who fought for justice and equity?
* Just like there were people working and fighting for justice as recently as the Civil Rights era, there are people today doing that same work. So who are the people you see standing up for change or demanding justice today? What kinds of things are people demanding justice for?
* Draw up a list of the things for which people are demanding justice today. Split up into two groups. For each thing that is listed, imagine encountering a group of people leading a demonstration demanding justice for that “thing” (ie. environmental destruction, education equality, etc). As you hear the chants and shouts crying out for justice, imagine that suddenly you hear the voice of God over all the noise, telling you why you should listen to these demands for justice. What would God say? Why would God care?

**Bring It Together**

* If you’re struggling to think of examples, take a look through some of these protest signs and art throughout history. Do you notice any connections between the protest signs and what you read in this week’s reading? (<https://www.artsnwct.org/the-art-of-protest>)
* What was a question or section of this week’s reading that you’d like to talk about further as a group?

**Sending Activity**

 Provide everyone with a piece of cardboard and some markers. Have everyone reflect on one of the Bible passages on justice from the lesson (Amos 5:14-15, Micah 6:8, and James 2:1-9). Think of an injustice in the world and write your own slogan on how you think God feels or has to say about this particular injustice.