

JOY: THE FLIP SIDE OF JUSTICE

Week 1: August 11 – Isaiah 1:1,10-20, Luke 12:32-40

Note to the Teacher

The key emphasis for this week (for this lesson from Isaiah 1 and Luke 12) is that God is a faithful God of love and of justice, and desires that humanity genuinely love God. That involves also seeking justice. Joy is found when the people of God put faith into action and pursue justice to seek to help the oppressed. The Ice Breaker plays upon the word “flip” in this series giving youth the chance to share their physical talents. The Discussion encourages students to reflect on what justice means and to contrast empty words versus impactful actions. The Activity allows youth to take time to decide what their most important “treasures” in the world are.

Times are based on a 50-minute lesson period, but can be adjusted.

10 min. 1. Ice Breaker – Become a Machine!

Remind the students the name of this series is “Joy: The Flip Side of Justice,” then say: “While I’m not going to ask any of you to do a flip, I do have a physical challenge for you. You are going to break up into groups (ideally around four to five students per group) and your groups are going to use your bodies to collectively become a machine and then act out the machine’s function. The rest of the class then has to guess what machine your group is. You have five minutes to come up with an idea and practice, then one by one each group will act out their machine for the group.” (If you’d like you can have a simple prize for the best machine.)

5 min. 2. Read Scripture

Explain before reading that Isaiah was a prophet (explain what a prophet is if necessary), and you are reading from the beginning of the book of Isaiah.
Read Isaiah 1:1, 10-20.

15 min. 3. Discussion

- In verse 13 how does God describe the people’s offerings? (Meaningless) Why do you think God feels they are meaningless?
- If we are being honest, are there ever things some of us may do in church that God might find “meaningless”?
- How does verse 15 describe God’s response to these disappointing practices?
- What could make God not truly listen to these people’s prayers?
- In verse 17 what does God recommend the people more rightly should be doing? (Learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed.)
- Can someone define the concept of justice?
- What is the difference between meaningless prayers and actions of justice?
- What does verse 20 say can be a result of being willing and obedient?

20 min.4. Activity and Discussion: What Matters Most?

Take this lesson to the next level by getting student's imaginations involved using this activity from the Youth Worker Collective. You can find more activities like it at youthworkercollective.com

SUPPLIES - Give each student something to write with and either eight note cards or a sheet of paper they are to tear up into eight sections.

Ask the students to then write down the eight most important things in the world to them (don't put limits on what they can write, the point is that hopefully there will be a mix of answers from material items to important relationships to perhaps for some expressions of faith), one on each piece of paper. Give them 2-3 minutes to write down their answers.

Then have all the students sit in a circle, or collectively around a table, or whatever creates a sense of community in your space with a common accessible space in the middle.

Tell the students you have bad news, they have to choose one of their items to give up, and to place one of their cards in a pile in the center. Go around in a circle and ask each student to briefly share what they dropped in the middle and if necessary why they chose that.

Continue this process four more times until each student only has three of their eight cards remaining.

Now ask each student one at a time to share what is written on the cards they held onto and why they chose to hold onto those – most students will have likely chosen to hold onto cards representing people they care deeply for, or perhaps cards representing God and their faith.

To conclude remind students that Luke 12:34 states, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Conclude by asking, "What does this activity reveal that each of us treasures the most?" Hopefully they will see that joy is found more in people and meaningful relationships than in material things.

Close in the manner that is typical for you. Consider taking joys/concerns from the students, then asking for a volunteer to close in prayer.

50 min

NEEDED RESOURCES:

Either eight index cards for every student or a normal sheet of paper that can be divided and torn into eight pieces.

Pen or pencil for every student