



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Do Something / Week 2

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SERIES SUMMARY

A 4-week series on injustice.

WEEK 1: Before you do something about injustice, you have to see it.

WEEK 2: When you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.

WEEK 3: God is doing something about injustice.

WEEK 4: When it comes to injustice, never stop doing something.

SCRIPTURE

But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!"

Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire. Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke! (Daniel 3:24-27 NLT)

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Tell a personal story about a time you or someone close to you experienced an injustice (preferably in middle school).
- Injustices are things in our world that are unfair, unequal, or not right. And they make us feel like something should be done about them.
- Some of us have seen injustices, some have heard about them, and some of us have experienced them firsthand.

TENSION

- For some of us in this room, injustice isn't just something that happens to someone else. It's something we've experienced or are experiencing.
- No matter what the injustice, it can feel really unfair, painful, and hurtful when we go through it.
- For those who haven't experienced injustice, this is an opportunity to hear what it feels like to be on the other side of injustice.
- When we've experienced injustice, we may wonder, "What do I do about injustice when it's happening to me, not just around me?"

TRUTH

- We are all made in God's image, and no one deserves injustice. We are all made to be treated with respect.
- Injustice says a lot more about the brokenness and hurt in the people who are causing injustice than it does about us.
- In the book of Daniel, we read about King Nebuchadnezzar who ordered everyone to worship a statue whenever they heard music playing. The punishment for not worshipping the statue was death by fire.
- Three Jewish leaders named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the statue and, as a result, were thrown into the fire by the king. But they weren't harmed and weren't alone in their situation. Scripture states that there was a man in the fire with the three Jewish leaders. They weren't alone in their injustice. (Daniel 3:24-27)
- The same is true for us. When we experience injustice, we don't have to face it alone. God is with us.

APPLICATION

- The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego offers different views of injustice.
- Maybe you relate to the three guys in the fire because you've experienced the suffering that goes along with injustice. If that's you . . .
 - God is with you.
 - You have value, worth, and are deserving of respect because you are made in His image.
 - You can share what you've experienced with God, a friend, your Small Group Leader, or a trusted adult.
 - Keep fighting and doing something about the injustice.
- Maybe you relate more closely to King Nebuchadnezzar or even to the people in the crowd in the story. Maybe you've participated in injustice against someone else.
 - Just because you were that person before doesn't mean you have to stay that person.
 - You can change and be the person who doesn't contribute to injustice.

LANDING

- When you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.
 - Your Small Group is a great place to see and care about injustice happening right in front of you. You can . . .
 - Open up about injustice you've experienced yourself.
 - Listen and genuinely care for someone in your group.
 - Talk to your Leader privately.
 - What's one injustice that you or someone you know has experienced?
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THINK ABOUT THIS

Most middle schoolers see the world in two categories: fair and unfair. That can make a conversation about injustice tricky for them. Some may see things like, "My mom won't let me get a dog," or, "My parents won't let me date," as very real injustices because they simply feel unfair. Be careful not to shut those things down completely as they are very real to your students! Instead, help redirect the conversation. You may have students who open up about big and difficult injustices like, "I'm treated differently because of the color of my skin," or, "My family can't afford to eat," or, "I'm being abused by someone in my home." Be quick to thank students who share about those things, acknowledging the bravery it takes to open up. Let them know that you recognize what they're experiencing isn't right. In a conversation like this one, you'll be managing a lot of emotions. So, it's your job to create a safe space for your students by handling those emotions and experiences shared in a healthy, safe way. Remember that if something is shared that brings to light a dangerous or harmful situation one of your students is in, you need to take it to your Ministry Leader for further help and action as soon as possible.

INTERACTIVE 1: RAISE YOUR LIGHT

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll ask students to close their eyes and raise a light (finger light or phone light) if they've experienced any of the injustices you list.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A finger light for each of your students. If your students have smart phones, their phone flashlights will work as well!
- A volunteer to turn off the lights when cued
- All of your middle schoolers

NOTE:

In the Tension section of your Teaching Script, you'll be prompted to ask students to close their eyes for this Interactive. Due to the sensitive nature of what you'll be asking students to respond to, we strongly suggest that you have Leaders in the room monitor students to ensure they're keeping their eyes closed. We also recommend that you prep Leaders to connect one-on-one with students who respond to an injustice that needs an adult's attention.

INTERACTIVE 2: REAL JUSTICE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, students will listen to a story about a real-world injustice to help them relate to or notice injustice around them.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Someone from your youth ministry (like a Small Group Leader) who is willing to share their story of experiencing injustice. (If you don't have anyone who would like to share, you can select a real-world injustice to share with the group.) The injustice that is shared could relate to race, socioeconomic status, gender, or any other injustice that would resonate with your group.
- Optional: If the person from your ministry who is sharing about injustice doesn't want to speak live in front of the group, you could record a video of their story and play it during your talk.

HOW-TO

- Select and prep the person who will be talking to your students. Ask them to talk about their experience and how it made them feel. Be sure that the example they share is age-appropriate and doesn't last longer than about 2 minutes.
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TEACHING SCRIPT

Do Something / Week 2

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

BOTTOM LINE

WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE INJUSTICE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .

- Tell a story about a time you or someone close to you experienced an injustice that was unfair, preferably in middle school.
- Whatever it is, make sure to land on what it felt like to personally experience or witness an injustice up close.
- Make sure the story you share is age-appropriate for middle schoolers.

Now, I don't know if you've ever experienced something like what I just shared, but what I experienced was totally unfair! It was an injustice I experienced, and I knew it wasn't right. We're in a series called *Do Something* where we're talking all about **injustice**. We've said that injustices are the things in our world that are unfair, unequal, or not right.

So, when we see someone bullied at school for the way they look or talk? That's an injustice. Making assumptions about someone based on the color of their skin? That's an injustice. Students that go to sleep hungry or don't have enough to eat? That's an injustice. People stuck in a lifetime of poverty? That's an injustice.

Injustices are the kind of the things that, when they happen, make us stop and say, "*Wait a minute! That's not right. Somebody should do something about that!*"

Some of us know injustice because we've seen it. Some of us know injustice because we've heard about it. And others of us? Well, we know about injustice because we've experienced it.

TENSION

6 MINUTES

Maybe that's you. Maybe you were here last week and thought, "So we need to see injustice before we can do anything about it. That's great and all, but what about me? I'm living in the middle of injustice. It's happening to me. What am I supposed to do?"

Unfortunately, I think that's a question we have to ask. Because for some of us in this room, injustice isn't just something that happens to somebody else. It's something that we've experienced before or are experiencing now.

INTERACTIVE: Raise Your Light

This is where you'll ask students to close their eyes and raise a light (finger light or phone light) if they've experienced any of the injustices you list.

To show you what I mean, I'd like everyone to get out your finger light/phone. Close your eyes and listen to the injustices I'm going to list. As I read off each one, I want you to raise your light if you've experienced that injustice. But keep your eyes closed as we go! *[Ask your volunteer to turn off the lights.]*

- Raise your light if your school can't afford to give students laptops or tablets, but other schools can.
- Raise your light if you don't have access to a tutor, but your friends do.
- Raise your light if you have to wear the same clothes every day, but it seems like all the other teenagers you know get new clothes all the time.
- Raise your light if your family can't afford for you to play sports or participate in a hobby.
- Raise your light if your family is struggling to pay their bills or provide food for everyone.
- Raise your light if you've been taken away from your parents and placed into the care of someone else.
- Raise your light if you've been abused, or mistreated, or hurt.
- Raise your light if you've been made fun of because of the neighborhood you live in.
- Raise your light if you've been bullied in person.
- Raise your light if you've been bullied on social media.
- Raise your light if you've been the victim of racism. You've had people say awful things to or about you, judge you or the people you love, or discriminate against you just because of your race.
- *[List any other injustices that may resonate with your students.]*

No matter what the injustice is, if you've experienced it then you know how unfair, and painful, and hurtful it feels. And you're not alone. Everyone, open your eyes and look around. **So many of us here have experienced injustice in one way or another.** So many of us have gone through something that was unfair or not right.

And if you haven't? Well, then I want to help you understand it. This is a super rare opportunity for you to hear what it's feels like to be on the other side of injustice. So, I want to challenge you to not check out for the next few minutes. Remember, part of doing something about injustice is learning to see it. Listening to those who have experienced it. Taking on God's care and compassion for those who are experiencing it. To help us do that, let's look at a real experience from a real person who has experienced real injustice.

INTERACTIVE: Real Injustice

This is where students will listen to a story about a real-world injustice to help them relate to or notice injustice around them.

Maybe you can relate. Maybe you've experienced an injustice similar to what was just shared. Or maybe it's been something totally different. Either way, you know the feeling. And it probably has you wondering, "**What do I do about injustice when it's happening to me, not just around me?**"

TRUTH

8 MINUTES

Before we go on, I want to say this: **You don't deserve the injustice you've experienced.** All the way back to the very beginning when God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, God tells us that we, humans, have value because we're made in His image. We might not be able to see God to know what He looks like, but we were created by Him to show others more of who He is.

And because of that, you have value. Nothing will ever change that. You were made to be treated with respect. And it's not your fault that you were born into a broken world with rules, traditions, and ideas about people. Those injustices you've experienced? They say a lot more about the brokenness and hurt in the people who are putting you in that position than they do about you.

That being said, let's take a look at some people who experienced injustice together.

In ancient times, there was a crazy king named **Nebuchadnezzar**. This powerful guy had conquered and captured God's people, and let's just say he was used to getting his way. He decided to build a giant, golden statue that stood 90 feet tall. And then, he ordered everyone to bow down and worship the statue whenever they heard music playing. If they didn't? They would be thrown into a blazing fire!

That's a lot, right? Well, there were three Jewish leaders named **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**. These guys worshipped God and because of that, they refused to bow down to the statue. Good for them, I say! But people who were loyal to Nebuchadnezzar had other things to say about it. They plotted against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and basically snitched to the king.

You can probably guess that the king wasn't thrilled by this news. Actually, the author of the book of the Bible where this story is found wrote down that in a furious rage, the king ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be captured. He gave them one more chance to bow down and worship when the music played, or they would be thrown into the fire. But even in the face of that punishment, these three guys stood their ground and refused to worship anyone other than God Himself.

So of course, the king was in full rage mode and ordered them to be thrown into the fire. Just like that, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown in. The flames were so hot, the soldiers who threw them in the fire died from the heat!

Insane, right? Now, can we all agree that this situation is totally and completely unfair? What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego wasn't fair. It wasn't right. And it certainly wasn't something they deserved. So, what happened?

Let's read:

But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!"

Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire. Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn’t even smell of smoke! (Daniel 3:24-27 NLT)

Now, we’re not entirely sure who was in the fire with the men. Was it God? Was it Jesus? Was it an angel or someone else? I don’t know, but one thing is clear: God did not allow them to be alone in their situation. He didn’t leave them in the fire to burn by themselves. He didn’t let them suffer or experience the injustice by themselves. And that’s a big deal! Because it shows us that the same is true for us. We don’t have to experience injustice alone. In other words, **when you experience injustice, you don’t have to face it alone.**

You’re never alone when you face injustice. In fact, Jesus demonstrated that when He came to Earth. He came to be God here with us. He could have come as a king or a powerful person, but instead, He came to this world as a baby. He came as a person who would experience all the things we experience, including injustice. Scripture tells us that He understands how we feel when we are treated unfairly, and He stands with us in it. He goes into the fires of injustice right beside us so we don’t have to do it alone.

When you experience injustice, you don’t have to face it alone.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

I love that story about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because when you take a closer look, every person in it gives us a different view of what injustice may look like.

Maybe you totally relate to the three guys in the fire. You’ve experienced the suffering that goes along with injustice. Maybe you’re experiencing it right now. If that’s you, I want you to remember a few things.

1. **Know that God is with you.** He hears you. He made you in His image and that means no matter what injustice you’re experiencing, you have value, worth, and are deserving of respect. And God doesn’t want you to walk through what you’re experiencing alone.
2. **Share what you’ve experienced.** If you’re experiencing injustice right now or are dealing with an injustice that’s happened to you in the past, I’m so glad you’re here. Because we want this to be a safe space for you to process that. We want to be people who stand up for you and stand beside you. So today, I want to encourage you to begin by sharing what you’ve experienced. Maybe for you, that means sharing it with God in prayer, asking for Him to remind you that you are not alone. Maybe for you that means sharing with a trusted friend, Small Group Leader, or other adult in your life who can help you. They’re with you in this and don’t want you to be alone. So, take the step to talk to them about what you’ve experienced. They just might be the very people God has sent to your life to stand in the fire with you.
3. **Keep going.** The guys in the fire never stood down. They didn’t give up. And I don’t want you to either! If you’re experiencing an injustice, I want you to do something. Maybe that something is opening up to an adult. Maybe that something is standing up for yourself. Maybe that something is creating a group chat for friends to brainstorm ideas on how you can make a positive change. Maybe that something is joining with an organization who is already working against that injustice. Whatever it is, take a step to keep going.

Of course, there's the other character in this story: King Nebuchadnezzar. Now of course, none of you are throwing people into a raging fire because they won't worship your statue. At least I hope you're not! But I think there have been times when, if we're honest, we could admit that we've participated in an injustice against someone else. Maybe we're more like the people in the crowd in this story. We've stood by and watched as an injustice happened to someone else. We didn't speak up or speak out.

Maybe for you, that was . . .

- Laughing along when your buddy made a racist joke.
- Standing back while somebody got bullied at school.
- Being the bully.
- Listening to music that disrespects women.
- Watching comedians who make fun of people from other cultures.
- Allowing other people to take the blame for your mistakes.
- Making fun of the girl who can't afford new clothes.

If that's you, I want you to know this: Just because you've been that person before doesn't mean you have to stay that person now. You can change. Maybe the best step you can take against injustice is to **make the change to be the person who doesn't contribute to injustice**. You can talk to God about that, too. You can ask Him to help you see the places you've participated in injustice. You can ask Him to give you the courage to make it right. And maybe, once you find that courage, you can become the person in the crowd who is brave enough to speak up and speak out when someone is about to experience injustice! You can be the voice that stands up to injustice when you see it.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **when you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.**

That's why we have Small Groups. Of all the people in the whole world, your Small Group should be FOR you and listening TO you. They should be praying WITH you and learning FROM you. And they should be encouraging you and cheering FOR you.

Listen, tonight has the potential to be one of the most honest, raw, personal, and important Small Group conversations you've ever had. You have the opportunity to see and care about the injustice happening right in front of you, within your Small Group. I want everybody to show up to that. If you've experienced injustice, how can you let the group know you need support? If you haven't (or don't often), how can you listen and genuinely care for someone in your group? Maybe the first step is letting your Leader be that person for you. Maybe all of that sounds like too much right now. If that's you, I get it. Even if you don't talk to your whole group tonight, I hope you'll talk to your Leader. They signed up to do this because they want to be here for you. And maybe tonight, they can be a real human reminder that **when you experience injustice, you don't have to face it alone.**

So, as you head to Small Group now, I want you to think about this question: **What's one injustice that you or someone you know has experienced?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
