



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Do Something / Week 3

[PRELUDE](#) [SOCIAL](#) [WORSHIP](#) [STORY](#) [GROUPS](#) [HOME](#)

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

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness (Matthew 9:35 NLT).

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:36-37 NLT).

"For I, the Lord, love justice" (Isaiah 61:8a NLT).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Some things in our world make us pause and wonder why they are the way they are. We wonder why they happen or who decided they should be that way, especially when it comes to things that don't seem fair or right.

- In this series, we're talking about how we can see and respond to the injustice happening around us. Those things that are unfair, unequal, or not right.
- We can all agree that we want to do something about injustice.
- Seeing injustice can make us feel something deeply or cause us to react.

TENSION

- The more we begin to see injustice around us, the more opportunity we have to ask questions and learn about the injustice we see.
- There are a lot of questions we can ask about injustice, but sometimes one of our biggest questions is this: "If God is so great, and so loving, and so powerful, why isn't He doing something about this?"
- Maybe we ask this question and . . .
 - Feel nervous because we think we aren't supposed to question God.
 - We're not sure what to think because we've seen or experienced injustice firsthand.
 - Feel God is silent or not there.
- It's okay to ask questions; God can handle them. Questions help us discover more about God and get to the truth.
- The reality is, there are no easy answers to this question.

TRUTH

- We don't have to assume or guess about what God is like or what He thinks about injustice. We can find those answers in the Bible!
- Matthew hung out with Jesus and wrote down what He saw in what we call the book of Matthew in the Bible.
- We read that Jesus spent a lot of time traveling and telling people about God. He shared that God cared about injustice and Jesus actually acted on injustices He saw. He helped and healed those in need. (Matthew 9:35)
- When Jesus saw injustices, He didn't just move on; He helped because He cared. (Matthew 9:36) He showed us what God is like when it comes to injustice: that He sees and looks for it and that He cares.
- God loves justice. (Isaiah 61:8) But we still may question why He doesn't do anything about injustice.
- Jesus explained that there is a lot of work to be done with injustice, and God's plan is for all of us to take action. (Matthew 9:36-37)
- What if we're the plan and we're the answer to all of the questions we have about what God is doing in the face of injustice?
- God opens our eyes to see injustice, gives us compassion to care about it, and calls us to act in response. He's working through us to see wrongs being made right in the world.
- God is doing something about injustice.

APPLICATION

- If we want to be part of the solution to injustice in the world, where do we begin? We can start by:
 1. Asking God to help us change our mind about who He is, what He thinks about injustice, what it looks like to follow Him, and how we see others.
 2. Asking different questions that will help us join in God's work against injustice.

LANDING

- What injustice in the world do you want to do something about?
- Use your Small Group to talk about the injustices you see and encourage each other to see that God cares, too.

- God is doing something about injustice.
 - What's one injustice you see and care about?
-

THINK ABOUT THIS

This week's conversation may be especially difficult for your middle schoolers to grasp. For starters, it requires some abstract thinking to look for a God at work who we can't actually see. That's an ability they're still developing. In addition, it asks them to step up and take responsibility. How will they be a part of the solution? This might be hard for some of your students who feel too young, too powerless, or potentially even too unmoved to act in response to injustice. They may not see themselves as people who can do anything or even want to do anything about injustice. And finally, for those experiencing injustice themselves, this conversation may leave them with more questions than answers at first. They may struggle to see how God is at work when the injustice they're experiencing is still very real. No matter where your students come from in this conversation, it isn't your job to necessarily change their mind. Instead, it's your job to be a safe space where they can process honestly and maybe... just maybe... begin to consider the good God at work against injustice in the world.

INTERACTIVE 1: NAME NONSENSE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll list and show things that have names that don't make sense.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Digital photos of the following:
 - A hamburger
 - A Guinea Pig
 - A hot dog
 - A pair of pants
 - A butterfly
- A computer and screen large enough for everyone to view the photos

INTERACTIVE 2: QUESTIONS ABOUT INJUSTICE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, students will brainstorm questions they have about a particular injustice to help them practice learning more about injustices in the world.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A large white board, chalk board, or poster board placed on stage
- A bold writing utensil

TIP

- In the Tension section of your talk, you'll ask students to shout out injustices they've seen in the world so that they can brainstorm questions they have about it. Consider asking a Small Group Leader to suggest a specific injustice so that you can tailor your talk to your particular group.

INTERACTIVE 3: WORKING TOGETHER

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll show a video clip, use dominos, and have your students physically form a chain to illustrate that's God's plan for injustice relies on people coming together to make a difference.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A video clip of a human chain saving drowning people in Panama City Beach, Florida in 2017. We found that searching the words "human chain Panama City Beach rescue" resulted in great news coverage of the event. Just be sure that the clip you select is appropriate for your students.
- A computer and screen large enough to show the clip to your students
- The table and multi-colored (not black and white) dominos from Week 1 of this series. You'll need to have a line of approximately 6 dominos set up on the table on stage before your talk.
- All of your middle schoolers.

SAFETY TIP:

- If your ministry is currently practicing social distancing due to Covid-19, we recommend that you do not conduct the "human chain" portion of this Interactive.
-



TEACHING SCRIPT

Do Something / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

GOD IS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT INJUSTICE.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Have you ever had a question that nobody could seem to answer?

INTERACTIVE: Name Nonsense

This is where you'll list and show things that have names that don't make sense.

Like, why is it called a hamburger when it's not made out of ham? *[Show photo of hamburger.]*

Or, why is this critter called a Guinea Pig when it's a rodent and clearly not a pig? *[Show a photo of a Guinea Pig.]*

Or, why is it called a hot dog when they're not made out of dogs? *[Show a photo of a hot dog.]*

Or, why is it called a pair of pants if it's only one item? *[Show a photo of a pair of pants.]*

Or, why it is called a butterfly when they have nothing to do with butter? Or flies? *[Show a photo of a butterfly.]*

See what I mean? Sometimes we see things in the world around us that make us pause and wonder why things are the way they are. We wonder why those things happen or who decided they should be that way.

Now, I know things like the names of hamburgers, and Guinea Pigs, and hot dogs aren't life's biggest questions. There's so much happening in the world that can cause us to ask even bigger questions than that, especially when the things we see don't seem right. That's why we're in the middle of a series right now called Do Something. In it, we're talking about how we can see and respond to that kind of stuff. What we can do about the injustice happening all around us.

Injustice is anything in our world that is unfair, unequal, or not right. And it's something I think we can all agree we want to do something about, right? But while the feeling of wanting to help is a really good thing, I think it's important to remember this: Seeing injustice may make you feel something that you aren't exactly sure what to do about.

TENSION

6 MINUTES

Maybe you know what I mean!

- Maybe you've seen photos of animals kept in cages or treated poorly, and you wondered, "*Who would do something like that?*"
- Or you've seen videos on the Internet of people being hurt or mistreated because of the color of their skin, and you asked, "*Why would somebody treat that person like that?*"
- Maybe you've heard someone make fun of another person because of the neighborhood they live in, and you stopped to think, "*They can't help where they live, so why is that okay to make fun of?*"

No matter what the injustice is, I think that the more we begin to see it happening around us, the more opportunity we have to ask questions about what it is we're seeing.

INTERACTIVE: Questions About Injustice

This is where students will brainstorm questions they have about a particular injustice to help them practice learning more about injustices in the world.

Here's what I mean. Without saying anyone's name, shout out an injustice that you've noticed in your school, community, or even the world.

[Pause to let students respond.]

I can tell you all have been opening your eyes to injustice around you because you yelled out all kinds of ideas. Let's think about one that I heard a few times:

[Name an injustice and write that injustice on the board.]

I want you think about this injustice. For the next 30 seconds, turn to the person next to you and brainstorm questions you have about that injustice together. Ready? Go!

[Give students 30 seconds to chat with each other.]

Okay, what questions did you come up with? Shout them out!

[As students shout out questions, write them down on the board.]

I think we can all agree that we probably had a lot of the same questions when it comes to *[name of injustice]*. Having questions is such a good thing because it encourages us to find answers and learn more about what's unfair or wrong in the world.

In addition to all of these questions we came up with here *[motion to the board]*, when it comes to injustice, we may also ask things like:

[Select a variety of questions from this list that you didn't write on the board.]

- *Why is this happening?*
- *Why is this happening to me?*
- *Why is this happening to people I love?*
- *Why would someone do that?*
- *What's wrong with them?*
- *Why can't they just get a job?*
- *Why don't they just leave if they don't like it here?*
- *What can be done to stop it?*
- *Why isn't anyone doing anything to stop it?*
- *Is there anything I can do to help make this better?*

To be honest, I've asked all those questions, too! But when it comes to injustice, my questions always seem to come back to one huge question. The hardest question for me to understand or find an answer to:

“If God is so great, and so loving, and so powerful, why isn't He doing something about this?”

Can you relate?

Maybe you feel nervous that I even said that out loud! I mean, we're at church. We're not supposed to question God here, right? After all, He's God! Even if we don't understand what He's doing, we just have to accept it, right?

Or maybe you're like, *“Yeah! That's what I keep asking!”* You've never said it out loud, but you've wondered the same thing in your mind. How can things like racism, and poverty, and animal abuse, and hunger, and crime, and discrimination exist in a world that God has power over? If He can do anything He wants, why wouldn't He just do something about all the wrong we see in the world?

Maybe you're new to this whole faith stuff, so you're not really sure what you think about this question. But you do know that there are injustices happening all around the world, in your community, at your school, or even in your own life or to your family. If that's you, I am so sorry that you are experiencing this. It matters a lot and we're going to keep talking about it. But today, I'd say that for some of you, it may be the reason that you aren't sure about God. After all, He seems silent or like He isn't there as these injustices are happening all around the world or in your own life.

No matter how this question makes you feel, here's one thing I want you to be sure of: **It's okay to ask questions.** In fact, God can handle your questions. He isn't afraid of them. And honestly, I think He wants us to ask them. Because asking questions is part of what helps us discover more about who God really is. It's what helps us get to the truth.

And trust me, we're not the only ones asking big questions about God and injustice. Believers, thinkers, writers, experts, and scholars have been trying to answer these questions for a long time! And the truth is, there are just no easy answers to any of this. Because once we've seen injustice, we know somebody needs to do something! But **why does it sometimes feel like God is doing nothing?**

TRUTH

10 MINUTES

Maybe you've assumed God doesn't care. Maybe you've assumed certain people just have things easier than others. And maybe you think that's because, somehow, God let it happen that way. Maybe some people just have a harder time in life, and God says, *“Oh well, good luck out there! Not much I can do about it.”*

Thankfully we don't have to guess or assume where God stands on all of this. We don't have to wonder how He feels about injustice. We don't have to guess at what God is really like. We can look at His Son, Jesus, who is the best way to see what God is really like.

Several people who knew Jesus personally and hung out with Him took the time to write down what they saw and heard so that people like me and you, the ones who *didn't* get to see it with our own eyes, would know what happened.

Today, we're going to take a look at the eyewitness account of **Matthew**, a book written by one of Jesus' closest followers. Sometimes in church, we call this the “book” of Matthew or the

“Gospel” of Matthew. No matter what you call it, Matthew hung out with Jesus and knew what He was about. Maybe that’s why he took the time to write down the things he saw. In this story, here’s what he said:

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness (Matthew 9:35 NLT).

So, during His ministry on Earth, Jesus spent a lot of time traveling around to tell people about God. And in doing that, Jesus talked about a lot of different things that God cared about. Things like people being rescued from captivity, the hungry being fed, the poor being served, and the children being cared for. In other words, Jesus was talking about justice.

But Jesus didn’t stop there. He also did a lot of different things to help those who were in need around Him. He healed and helped people who were sick and suffering all the time. It’s almost like everywhere He went back then, Jesus had something to say (and do!) about injustice.

The Scripture continues:

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36 NLT, emphasis added).

This is so important! Jesus didn’t just see the people around Him and move on. He did things to help them! But He didn’t just act to help them because He had to. He helped them because He cared. He had compassion for the people around Him, and that compassion motivated Him to act. To help. To do something. And that’s what He wants us to do, too. He wants us to respond and act not just because we *should*, but we because we *care*.

See, Jesus showed us what God is like when it comes to injustice. He gave us a model to follow.

- First, Jesus **saw** the injustice. What’s cool is that He didn’t just see it. He looked for it wherever He went. And He helped others see it, too.
- And when He saw injustice, Jesus **cared**.

So, if you’ve ever wondered, God is PRO justice. In fact, hundreds of years earlier, He said so through the prophet Isaiah:

“For I, the Lord, love justice” (Isaiah 61:8a NLT).

So, we know that God loves justice. We know that He sees it, and we know that He cares. But that still doesn’t totally answer our question, does it? I mean, if He cares so much, why isn’t He stopping it? Why doesn’t God just do that whole miracle thing He was so good at and fix it all? Why doesn’t He do something?

Well, I think our answer is actually in that last part of the verse we just read in Matthew. Look at what Jesus said one more time:

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:36-37 NLT).

So maybe you don’t talk about the harvest a lot in your day-to-day lives, but back then, it made a lot of sense. Jesus lived in a community that depended on farming for food, so when He talked about planting and harvesting, He was using that as a way to talk about the work that needed to be done. When He said that the “harvest is great,” He meant that the work to be done to make the world more like God intended is big. There’s a lot of it to do! And the people to do that work? Well, there are few of them. Because the work isn’t easy, and it isn’t always fun, and it isn’t over and done with quickly. The work to help those who are hurting, and struggling, and facing

injustice is big. But here, Jesus reminds us that there's a plan to see that work done, and it's in the workers. The people like you and me!

INTERACTIVE: Working Together

This is where you'll show a video clip, use dominos, and have your students physically form a chain to illustrate that God's plan for injustice relies on people coming together to make a difference.

Let me show you a really cool example that illustrates God's plan for injustice in action. *[Show the video clip of the human chain.]*

I think this is such an incredible story. A group of total strangers saw a need and came together to literally save lives. Like we just read in Matthew, there are big injustices in the world, and God wants people to unite and act on what's unfair and not right.

Remember the dominos from a few weeks ago? We said that before an action can happen, we have to see the injustice. *[Motion to the dominos.]* And now, we've learned that God is doing something about injustice by using each of us! *[Place more dominos in the line.]*

You know what? Forget the video! Forget the dominos! Everyone stand up and grab the hand or arm of the person next to you. I want everyone to connect to someone else so that we form a giant chain! *[Give students a minute or so to do this.]*

Look at us! Together we have so much power to be part of the action. To make a difference. As you look around this room and at the giant chain we've formed, I want you to think about this:

What if we're the plan? What if we're actually the answer to all the questions we have about what God is doing in the face of injustice? What if it was you and me working on behalf of Jesus to take care of the things He cares about? When it comes to what God is doing about injustice, I think the answer is us. **God is opening our eyes to see it, He's giving us the compassion to care about it, and He's calling us to act in response to it.** He's working through us to see wrongs being made right in the world. And I don't know about you, but I think that's pretty cool.

In other words, **God is doing something about injustice.**

What is He doing? Opening our eyes to see it. Changing our hearts to care about it. And using us, His followers, to do something about it.

The good news is God is still doing something about injustice even thousands of years after the events we read in the Bible! Movements that have helped animal rights, women's rights, and voting rights are just a few results of God's followers all around the world opening their eyes to injustice and choosing to help others! *[Ask everyone to stop holding hands and sit back down.]*

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

So where do we start? If we want to be a part of the solution to injustice in the world, where do we begin? How do we change the way we see what God is doing so that we can do something with Him? I think we can do two main things:

1. We can start by asking God to help us change our minds.

Maybe you need God to help you change your mind about who He is. For so long you've thought that He doesn't care about injustice. You've believed that He was silent or only blesses

certain people while others suffer. For you, a great first step would be to **ask God to help you change the way you see Him**. Ask Him to show you that He not only sees injustice, but He cares a lot about it and the people who are hurt by it. Ask Him to show you where He's at work when it comes to injustice and how you can be part of what He's doing, too. And the truth is, when we ask God to show us how we can be part of what He's doing about injustice, He'll show you something in the world that just might move you to action. By figuring out what injustice in the world breaks your heart, you'll move one step closer to being part of God's plan to do something about injustice.

Or maybe for you, you need God to help you change your mind about what it means to follow Him. You thought faith was about singing songs, or showing up at church, or praying a lot. While those are all good things, part of following Jesus also means caring about what He cares about. A great first step would be to **ask God to help you see more of what it looks like to follow Him**. To help you start caring about what He cares about.

Maybe you need His help to change your mind about other people. You need Him to help change the way you see other people. Because if you're honest, sometimes you struggle to care about the injustices you see happening around you. You struggle to have compassion for others who are different than you. A great first step for you would be to **ask God to change the way you see others**. To help you see them with His compassion and heart.

2. And then, I think we need to **start asking different questions**. Instead of asking, "Where is God?" we can ask things like,
 - "What does God think about this person or this situation?"
 - "What are God's people doing to right this wrong?"
 - "Who do I listen to in order to learn more about this injustice?"
 - "What is God calling me to do to help?"
 - "How can God use me?"

God is doing something about injustice. And questions like these will help us join in that work with Him. It will help us be part of the answer.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

So let me close by asking you this: What injustice in the world do you care about? Which one moves you to want to act? What do you see in the world around you that makes you want to do something to make it right? Is it racism, untreated illness, unequal treatment of women, animal cruelty? Is it the student who is bullied? The homeless population in your area? The middle schoolers whose families can't afford Christmas presents?

Whatever it is, I want to encourage you to share it with your Small Group today. We created Small Group to be a safe space for you to talk about what's happening in your life and encourage each other to grow in your faith. So today, talk about the injustices that you see. Share what you care about. And then, encourage each other to see that God cares, too. And He created you to be part of the answer. What if the Christians at your school or in your neighborhood were the most compassionate, and kind, and brave, and vocal about injustice? What would happen at your school, in your Small Group, and in your town? I don't know for sure, but I have to imagine the people you know would be more willing to believe God is doing something when it comes to injustice because they see you doing something.

Because **God is doing something about injustice**.

Now as you go, I want you to think about this question: **What's one injustice you see and care about?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
