



SEEKING JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

MISSION PRIORITIES

PREPARATION

- Ask members to bring a symbol of a social justice issue that they are passionate about - eg a toy dog representing guide dogs for people who are blind
- Check out information and resources about the current [Helping-Hand Appeal](#)
- Research information about The Salvation Army's social work during Victorian times - [William Booth and The Salvation Army lesson resources](#) may help; or bring in some props to represent different aspects, eg a matchbox, a mug, a pillow ...
- Prepare to use the song '[Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly](#)' by Pat Barrett

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

This session helps us explore one of The Salvation Army's five Mission Priorities: 'Seek Justice and Reconciliation'. God longs for justice and reconciliation for all people - but it can feel overwhelming for us to know what part we can play in this.

Let's reflect on The Salvation Army's origins of seeking justice and reconciliation, as well as God's calling to us. We are thankful that God is with us and gives us what we need to make a difference.

ACTIVITIES

SHARE

Invite members to bring an item/symbol that represents something they feel deeply passionate about changing or supporting in the world. Ask members to share what this passion is, how they have been involved in supporting it, and why it is so important to them.

SERVICE

Some examples of justice issues include, but are not limited to:

- * Racial or gender justice, including the high number of women who experience domestic abuse and other gender-based violence
- * Income inequality between men and women, and different types of jobs

Connect



- * Freedom from violence and exploitation
- * Access to resources - eg food insecurity for a lot of children and families who can't afford nutritious food
- * Environmental justice, and the fact that some countries will be disproportionately affected by climate change
- * Challenges faced by immigrants or refugees, including discrimination, legal barriers and access to services

Discuss with the group if there is more that they could be doing. Or is there a different way that they could respond to an issue they feel passionate about?

This could include:

1. Spending time exploring what motivates us to change an injustice - a sense of right and wrong? A desire for all people to know joy? The innate desire to help others? A sense of obligation because of our own situation?
2. Forming friendships/connections with people that are outside of our 'in-group' - eg someone from a refugee background, someone from a different socioeconomic or cultural background
3. Volunteering our spare time
4. Finding out more about the justice issue to educate others
5. Making life choices that promote justice: using our consumer power!

FUNDRAISE

Check out all the [Helping-Hand Appeal](#) information, resources and fundraising ideas, and consider how you as a group could engage with this campaign.

HISTORY

William and Catherine Booth both cared deeply about helping to make people's lives fairer. Even as teenagers they demonstrated this, with Catherine protesting against the exploitation of workers in sugar farms, and William and his friends fundraising and finding accommodation for a woman who was homeless. With such beginnings, it is no surprise that The Salvation Army today is passionate about justice and reconciliation.

Ask members to share what they know of The Salvation Army's social work in the early days. Perhaps bring in a range of props to inspire the conversation, eg a matchbox, a mug, a pillow ... Discuss with members what has changed - or what hasn't.

More information about the different types of social action can be found in the [William Booth and The Salvation Army lesson resources](#), eg the lesson plan for slides 6-16.



BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

God longs for justice and reconciliation for all people. The Salvation Army has a historical and theological remit to address issues of social justice. William and Catherine Booth grew up in Victorian England, at a time when life was very difficult for many. People were unable to pay for medical treatment that they needed, children as young as eight were forced to work long hours, and people were paid little or nothing for their work. It was hard for anyone to see a way out of poverty. Yet at the same time, the richer were getting richer. It seemed it was a world full of injustice. A critical part of the formation of The Salvation Army was the desire to unite to fight against the evils in the world.

As The Salvation Army grew, so did its practical responses for those living in poverty. Cheap food stores were set up, shelters for people who were homeless and cheap breakfasts for children who needed food. Members of The Salvation Army would visit the elderly and sick in their homes.

In the 1880's match factories were paying very low wages, not giving workers breaks and using dangerous chemicals that caused disease and death among workers. William Booth saw an opportunity for systemic change. In response to the issue, in 1891 Booth set up a match factory himself addressing all of the above issues. He campaigned the government to change laws, and urged shopkeepers to buy only ethically produced matches. The result was that all other match factories were forced to change their formulas and improve their conditions.

We celebrate the early achievements of The Salvation Army and are thankful to God in the knowledge that significant transformation occurs because of God. We are co-workers with God, who himself chooses to work first in us and then through us, to bring about his Kingdom on earth.

We see in the following verses that we do not need to accept injustice; instead we are called to seek change and work with God to bring justice and healing:

📖 'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

'Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Connect



‘Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.’

(Isaiah 58:6-8)

📖 ‘What good is it ... if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? ... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.’

(James 2:14,17)

📖 ‘And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’

(Micah 6:8)

Seeking justice and reconciliation however is a huge topic, so overwhelming that it can be paralysing. Everyone has different justice issues burned on their hearts, and this is important to recognise if we are to cover them all. God holds the bigger picture.

As we respond to the call to ‘seek justice’, challenge yourself to find the justice issue that calls you and let yourself be pulled towards this by God.

Reconciliation allows us to respond to these injustices. It calls us to:

- * Acknowledge the issue and the harm that’s caused
- * Love without discrimination
- * Love our neighbours
- * Repair relationships and seek forgiveness
- * Repair unfair and broken systems
- * Be peacemakers
- * Change behaviours
- * Engage in dialogue that allows for open and honest conversations, to understand each other
- * Practice empathy so that we can try to understand and share the feelings of the person or people experiencing injustice.

REFLECTION

These verses will help to reassure us that we have the resources we need for seeking justice and reconciliation.

📖 ‘The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?”’

(Exodus 4:2)

Connect



📖 'Elisha replied ... "What do you have in your house?"'

(2 Kings 4:2)

Both verses are examples of how God has already given us the resources we need, as well as resources for those we would like to come alongside to support. Let our eyes be open to these resources and our hearts and minds actioned to use them.

We don't need to be overwhelmed by the huge task. We do what we can in an area that we feel strongly about in the sure and certain knowledge that God is with us.

As we watch the video of the Pat Barrett song 'Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly', we pray that God will help you discern just how he wants you to engage with his justice agenda.

- ♪ 'Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly'
[Official lyric video](#) by Pat Barrett (2:47)

SONGS

- ♪ 'God of justice [We must go]' by Tim Hughes
[Lyric video](#) uploaded by spschofield (5:19)
- ♪ SASB 258 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun'
[Lyric video](#) (tune: Truro) by Chet Valley Churches (2:45)
[Lyric video](#) (tune: Duke Street) by TriCounty Bible Church (3:08)
[Lyric video](#) (tune: Rimington) by Metropolitan Tabernacle, London (3:54)
- ♪ SASB 998 'Beauty for brokenness'
[Lyric video](#) feat Ann Stewart by Regent Hall (5:09)
[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by Kelston Stanford (4:37)
[Congregational lyric video](#) by BBC *Songs of Praise* 2013 uploaded by Praise Hymns (3:53)
[Congregational lyric video](#) feat Graham Kendrick by BBC *Songs of Praise* 2023

Connect



WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Emails: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone