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JUSTICE
and the
PROPHETS
The Combined Teacher’s Guide

SPRING QUARTER 2020

MARCH • APRIL • MAY

Christian Education Department
Rev. Garland F. Pierce, Executive Director
Bishop David R. Daniels, Chair

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## BASIC SUPPLIES

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- **BASIC SUPPLIES**
Lesson 1  

March 1, 2020

Called to Accountability

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Key Verse: Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream. Amos 5:24

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand advocacy for the poor and oppressed as a commitment to divine justice and righteousness.
2. Desire fairness for the disadvantaged.
3. Become activists supporting the cause of the poor and oppressed.

Teaching Strategies

a. General

You can enhance your preparation by anticipating the “tough questions” on justice which will come from keen students. A suggestion is to keep current with the news reports. Note any controversial matter relating to justice, and seek out appropriate texts to support the positions you take.
b. Specific

For this lesson you can read one of the Internet’s accounts on Caroline Ochieng. Such reports emphasize the cost of standing for justice. They explain why many persons keep silent on matters of injustice.

These activities will help to bring out key points in the lesson:

1. Use pictures that demonstrate the power of flowing water (waterfall, flood, hydroelectric dam, etc.) to aid reflection on the Key Verse (v. 24).

2. Discuss what people are doing or failing to do that might invite God’s judgment against us. How might we change that? Here you can look at matters like the treatment of undocumented immigrants, and the public’s attitude to the death penalty.

3. Divide a piece of paper into a flip chart into two columns. Put the heading for the columns as: “Reasons why the Day of the Lord excites me” and “Reasons why the Day of the Lord frightens me." Then brainstorm ideas for both columns.

4. Review brochures and/or websites for ministries that serve disenfranchised people in some way. Make a plan for the class to participate in one of these ministries. Let the class select the ministry or ministries that excite them.

5. Take the opportunity to introduce the words orthodoxy and orthopraxy. These may not be familiar. Then have the class list examples of each.

Closing Devotions

The Closing Song: “I’m Amazed” by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

(When we reflect on God’s amazing love for us, it promotes humility in our hearts.)

Prayer: Dear God, I thank you for your perfect demonstration of
humility through Jesus Christ. I know I need your Holy Spirit to help me to walk in such humility. Strengthen me in this aspect of my life, so I may please you. This I ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Resources: Flip chart, markers; device with Internet connection to access YouTube “I’m Amazed” by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPphAxsnlzw)

Lesson 2            March 8, 2020

A Prayer for Justice

Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 1
Focus Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Key Verse: Why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? Habakkuk 1:13b

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Explain the justice of God in contrast to present human injustice.
2. Aspire to the establishment of justice and fairness for all.
3. Celebrate God as the source and model of justice.

Teaching Strategies

In this lesson, try to get students to look at the frustrations they might feel when God seems to be ignoring their prayers for relief from any act they consider an injustice. Be prepared to explain why God often does not act as fast as we would like.

Case Study: If you can find similar stories, use them to reinforce the points made in that section. Also, spend some of your preparation time getting familiar with the original proclamation for the National Day of Prayer. This story emphasizes that the USA
has a heritage of looking to Almighty God for a sense of justice. That is a far cry from what we hear sometimes.

1. Discuss: “When have you shown indifference to sin?” Let participants say how they could you have shown God’s love and mercy to those who suffered violence, or even to those who caused the suffering.

2. Ask the class to identify some of the problems that their communities, or the world, are facing today. Discuss possible ways to ease or solve the problems identified.

3. Lead a discussion about how God is just, in spite of the prevalence of injustice.

4. Compare and contrast Habakkuk’s words with the lyrics of Longfellow’s “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.” Get the class’ reactions with minimal prompting.

5. Brainstorm a list of circumstances to which one may respond with the words, “It’s not fair!” Then, help the class to categorize them as either injustice or justice. Bear in mind people will answer out of their own experiences.

6. Get participants to complete this sentence in as many ways as possible: “When I am tempted to complain about injustice, I will __________.”

**Closing Devotion**

**Prayer:** Dear Father, I see you as the provider of all good things and the fountain of true justice. Give me the patience to follow your plans to bring justice to those situations that concern me. And when I am to be part of the solution, guide me in what I have to do. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

**Resources:** Flip chart; markers
2. List the blessings from today’s text that God gave to God’s people. Allow volunteers to share specific ways they have received those same blessings in their own lives.

3. Encourage learners to report stories of good parents they have known, and compare these characteristics to the qualities of God in today’s text.

4. Discuss various ways that material prosperity goes hand in hand with unbiblical views of self and others.

5. Debate the following resolution: “The best way to avoid the self-delusion that accompanies prosperity is to take a vow of poverty.”

6. Have students write a prayer of confession, asking God’s forgiveness for pursuing prosperity instead of love, justice, and righteousness.

**Closing Devotions**

**Prayer:** Dear Father, we recognize that all we have is worthless unless we have you. And, with you we lack nothing.

Pray Psalm 23.

Amen.

**Resources:** Paper, pencils

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The Senior Quarterly Teacher’s Guide

Lesson 1 March 1, 2020

**Expulsion From the Garden**

**Focus Scripture:** Genesis 3:8-24

**Key Verses:** The Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to farm the fertile land from which he was taken. He drove out the human. To the east of the garden of Eden, he stationed winged creatures wielding flaming swords to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:23-24 (CEB)
Bible Background

- The name of the Book of Genesis comes from the Greek word meaning “origin.” The Hebrew name for the book is Bereshit, which translates as “in the beginning.”
- In Genesis 3:20, the name Eve means “mother of all living.” She was given her name by Adam after the Fall, when they were expelled from the garden.
- While the forbidden fruit eaten by Adam and Eve is often depicted as an apple, trees with apples are not indigenous to the Middle East. Instead, the fruit was more likely a pomegranate or fig since both are present in the region.
- Traditionally, authorship of the Book of Genesis, along with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, has been credited to Moses. However, it is more likely that the stories of Genesis were passed down as part of an oral tradition until they were recorded at a later date, likely in the sixth century BC.
- Adam and Eve were banished from the garden of Eden, but they were not abandoned by God. God provided clothing and protection for them.

Take-Away

Suffering is the result of sin, but God still cares for us despite our sin and suffering.

Lesson 2 March 8, 2020

Jesus in Gethsemane

Focus Scripture: Matthew 26:36-46

Key Verses: When he took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, he began to feel sad and anxious. Then he said to them, “I am very sad. It’s as if I’m dying. Stay here and keep alert with me.” Matthew 26:37-38 (CEB)
Bible Background

• Gethsemane is an urban garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

• The name Gethsemane is Aramaic and means “oil press.”

• Similar accounts of Jesus’ time in Gethsemane are described in Mark 14:22-32 and Luke 22:39-46.

• Jesus was familiar with the garden. He left eight of the disciples at the gate and took Peter, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, further into the garden with him.

• Judas was able to find Jesus for the betrayal because the garden was a place Jesus and the disciples frequented.

• Gethsemane was a focal site for early Christian pilgrimages and is about 1,200 square meters in size.

• According to the National Research Council of Italy in 2012, several olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane are in excess of one thousand years old and may be offshoots of trees that sheltered Jesus in the garden.

• The grotto of Gethsemane, a small picturesque cave, was about 190 square meters and is likely where Jesus and his disciples spent the night.

Take-Away

Even God, through Jesus’ experience, has felt suffering and identifies with our experiences of suffering.

Be a Friend

Have the students in each group work together, each bringing his or her own viewpoints and ideas to the paragraph’s composition.

Pray Without Ceasing

While the students are in groups, ask if they want to share one or two personal concerns and invite them to pray- either silently or as a group- for these concerns.
The Teacher’s Guide
Intermediate Lessons
Lesson 1

March 1, 2020

Called to Accountability

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Key Verse: But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream. Amos 5:24

Vocabulary

• Day of the Lord – The day of God’s judgment.
• Despise – Hold deep contempt.
• Solemn – Not cheerful, gloomy.
• Remnant – Whatever is left.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between just and unjust actions using God’s word.

2. Desire God’s requirement of fairness and accountability in one’s interactions with others.

3. Develop strategies that prevent bullying of peers.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc) as youth come into the classroom.

2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.

3. Activity #1: Stop, Look, and Listen. Discussion
   a. How does it make you feel to know that there is still a lot
of injustice around you?

b. Name some things that you know are unfair in your school.

c. Who in your community do you feel is trustworthy on issues of injustice?

d. How does it make you feel when you see someone mistreated?

4. **Activity #2: Intentional Living.** Divide the class into two groups. Create a plan for ways to practice righteous living (Being Good) and generous living (Doing Good). Play YouTube music: “Intentional” by Travis Greene (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0ellNv8) as youth work on plans. Regroup and share plans. Develop a plan for the entire class, combining the groups’ plans. Post it in your youth area, and on index cards to distribute to class.

5. **Activity #3: With Liberty and Justice for All.** The U.S. Pledge of Allegiance includes these words, “With liberty and justice for all.” This has had many meanings throughout time. What do those words mean to you in the 21st century?

**Closing Devotion:** In a circle, connect with each other and recite these words:

God, as we stand here today, we ask you to strengthen us to be your hands and feet. Give us boldness to stand for what is right, faith to stand alone, compassion to expand our embrace and grace, just as you have shown us. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

**Resources:** Computer, speaker, projector, large post-it paper, index cards, internet connection for YouTube music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0ellNv8 “Intentional” by Travis Greene
Lesson 2

March 8, 2020

A Prayer for Justice

Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 1

Focus Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Key Verse: Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing. Habakkuk 1:13a

Vocabulary

- **Oracle** – A response or message or the person who gives such a message.
- **Contention** – Heated disagreement.
- **Treachery** – Guilty of being disloyal or unfaithful.
- **Perverted** – Corrupt in all ways.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand why Habakkuk prayed to God for an immediate end to injustice.
2. Empathize with those who are treated unjustly.
3. Be motivated to initiate a project that will alleviate injustice.

Teaching Strategies

1. Play YouTube music: “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc) as youth come into the classroom.
2. Have students write prayers to God as they wait for class to start.
4. **Activity #2: Why Is God Silent Now!** Use this list of words to
fill in the blank of the **Bible Story.** Once the puzzle is solved, discuss the magnitude of what the prophet is asking. Word List: cry, eternity, swimming, righteous, listen, Babylonians, swallow, justice, murder, discipline, silent, break, rescue, serious, do, trouble. See answers below.

5. **Activity #3: Project Injustice/Justice.** Divide the youth into two groups. Have group one design a poster board about injustices that concern them in their community, and have group two design a vision board of how they would like to see the world. Once completed, post their project on a bulletin board to display in their church. This may take a couple of weeks to complete.

**Closing Devotion:** In a circle, connect with each other and recite these words:

God, as we stand here today, we ask you to strengthen us to be your hands and feet. Give us boldness to stand for what is right, faith to stand alone, compassion to expand our embrace, and grace just as you have shown us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Activity #2: Why Is God Silent Now! Answer Key**

1-4 The problem as God gave Habakkuk to see it:

God, how long do I have to **cry** out for help before you **listen**?

How many times do I have to yell, “Help! **Murder**! Police!” before you come to the **rescue**?

Why do you force me to look at evil, stare **trouble** in the face day after day?

Anarchy and violence **break** out, quarrels and fights all over the place. Law and order fall to pieces. **Justice** is a joke.

The wicked have the **righteous** hamstrung
and stand justice on its head.
God says, “Look!”

God, you’re from **eternity**, aren’t you?
Holy God, we aren’t going to die, are we?
God, you chose **Babylonians** for your judgment work?
Rock-Solid God, you gave them the job of **discipline**?
But you can’t be **serious**!
You can’t condone evil!
So why don’t you **do** something about this?
Why are you **silent** now?
This outrage! Evil men **swallow** up the righteous and you stand around and watch!
14-16 You’re treating men and women
as so many fish in the ocean,
**Swimming** without direction,
swimming but not getting anywhere.

**Resources:** Computer, speaker, projector, large post it paper, pencils, index cards, internet connection for YouTube movie clips and music:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YkmZBV6AXc “Already Here” by Brian Courtney Wilson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3f0eILNv8 “Intentional” by Travis Greene


**Lesson 3**

March 15, 2020

**Consequences for Injustice**

**Lesson Scripture:** Habakkuk 2
The Teacher’s Guide  
Junior Lessons  

Lesson 1  
March 1, 2020  

A Call to Please God  

Lesson Scripture: Amos 5  

Focus Scripture: Amos 5:18-24  

Key Verse: Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. Amos 5:23  

Word Power!!!  

• Lament – An expression of grief, sorrow, or mourning.  
• Forsaken – Abandoned, left behind.  
• Exile – Place where people go for retreat/safety.  
• Solemn – Formal, serious.  

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:  
1. Distinguish just actions from unjust actions.  
2. Encourage students to develop their own definition of justice.  
3. Understand the purpose of Amos’ message.  

Teaching Strategies  
1. Watch the YouTube video about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Allow time for students to discuss how they can be champions of justice in their community, school, and church.  
2. Create a large poster board with the word justice in the center. Surrounding the word, have the students write/draw pictures of their definition of the word.  
3. Recite the YPD Pledge (see below). Allow time for the students to explain what it means to them.
4. Allow time for students to share their experience of seeing someone being bullied.

5. Have students create songs or poems about anti-bullying, justice/God’s love. Record songs and encourage students to share their writings/songs, also post them at church.

Animated Video: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: https://youtu.be/PyurjhRN0mw

**YPD Pledge**

_I pledge my willing and untiring service to all efforts of the Young People’s and Children’s Division to aid the needy and suffering people, regardless of race, color, or creed. I further pledge to take the Bible as my guide, to aid my church, and to attend meetings regularly. In all these tasks I seek the Savior’s guidance._

**Answer Key for Questions**

1. Name a way that you can be an advocate of justice at school and church. **After students’ answers, share your example of one way you have been an advocate of justice to encourage the students to share.**

2. What was the famous scripture in today’s scripture lesson that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared in his speech? **Amos 5:24**

3. What does the word _justice_ mean to you? **Ask students to share their definition and write it on the poster board.**

**Resources:** Electronic device to view the video, the YPD pledge, poster board, paper, pencil/crayons

**Lesson 2**

**March 8, 2020**

**Make Things Right, God**
Lesson Scripture: Habakkuk 1

Focus Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

Key Verse: Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing. Habakkuk 1:13a

Word Power!!!

- **Oracle** – A person giving wise decisions and opinions.
- **Contention** – A disagreement or dispute.
- **Treachery** – Dangerous, untrustworthy.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the message of Habakkuk.
2. Encourage students to remember that God is more powerful than anything.
3. Explore a different version of the scripture passage using *The Message* translation.

Teaching Strategies

1. Give students time to choose a partner and draw a group picture or write a poem recreating the scripture passage.
2. Allow time for sharing of drawing or poem with the class. Encourage class appreciation by applause, etc.
3. Have each student create an acronym for the word *justice* on an index card. Give time for students to share with the class.

Answer Key for Questions

1. What does Habakkuk’s name mean? **The name means “to wrestle.”**
2. What does justice look like to you? **Encourage students to describe a time of unity or peace in their community.**
3. God is more powerful than anyone or anything. (True or False) **TRUE.**

4. What is one way we can talk to God? **We can talk to God in various ways. There is no right or wrong way to talk/pray to God.**

   **The Message**

   **Habakkuk 1:1-4; 12-14**

   God, you’re from eternity, aren’t you?  
   Holy God, we aren’t going to die, are we?  
   God, you chose Babylonians for your judgment work?  
   Rock-Solid God, you gave them the job of discipline?  
   But you can’t be serious!  
   You can’t condone evil!  
   So why don’t you do something about this?  
   Why are you silent now?  
   This outrage! Evil men swallow up the righteous and you stand around and watch!  
   You’re treating men and women as so many fish in the ocean,  
   Swimming without direction, swimming but not getting anywhere.

**Resources:** The Message Bible, drawing paper, pencils, crayons (for drawing activities), index cards

**Lesson 3**  
**March 15, 2020**

**Rewards for the Just**

**Lesson Scripture:** Psalm 37  
**Focus Scripture:** Psalm 37:1-6, 12-13, 27-28, 34  
**Key Verse:** Trust in the Lord and do good. Psalm 37:3