



Small Group Discussion Guide

Your small group is a great place to share your sponsorship story. It's a small community of Christians who know you and will encourage you as you speak. We've put together three Bible studies you can use as a platform to unpack your sponsorship journey and invite people to sponsor a child.

You can also order a free copy of the beautiful Justice Bible by contacting our office at volunteers@compassionuk.org.

Bible Study One

“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” is the heartfelt cry from Amos 5:24. We all know how important justice is to God.

In the Bible, there are more than 2,000 verses which refer to issues of injustice and taking care of the poor.

It's so integral to our faith that if you were to cut all those verses out of your Bible, it would fall apart completely.

It's that important.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT JUSTICE

It's important to note that the subject is justice, not injustice. In some circles the word “justice” brings to mind all the terrible wrongs of the world—economic inequality, legal injustice, governmental corruption, human trafficking, abuse and violence.

These are great concerns of justice. But they are negative; and justice is positive. It's a gleaming vision of how God intended his creation to be; and how it will be in the end, when he completes his work.

Justice is founded in God's love for the world and His desire to see humanity set free from sin. It's impossible in a single study to discover the full depth and nuance of justice in the Bible but this serves as a starting point to understanding more of God's heart.

EXODUS

[Read Exodus 3:1-15]

Justice is not necessarily something that human beings apply consistently. We tend to care about it when it's convenient, or when the victims are lovable. The God of the Bible is consistent: he always cares about justice.

That's why we need his Spirit, which comes to us with his Word. The passage in Exodus is a classic example of God's Spirit invading the life of a person.

1. From your knowledge of the world through the media, what group of people seems to be most oppressed?
2. From your personal experience, what group of people whom you have actually seen or known seems to you the most oppressed?
3. Moses was in the wilderness, herding sheep, because his attempts at bringing justice to his people failed, and he ran for his life. In this passage, what gets Moses' attention?
4. Justice and righteousness are two words that are often found side by side in the Old Testament. Reflect on what they mean to you. Are they attractive words? Why or why not?
5. Can we as humans imitate God in His way of showing attention to those who are suffering? What actions would be necessary?

Despite the injustice we witness around us, we can refuse to accept that poverty is an inevitable part of our broken and hurting world. Instead of viewing poverty as something that's

too complex, through Compassion we can focus on tackling it one child at a time.

Throughout the Bible, God demonstrates His desire to be in relationship with us. Compassion's model of linking one child with one sponsor is a reflection of this and it's how they seek to release children from poverty in Jesus' name.

SHARE YOUR STORY

I want to share about my own experience in sponsoring a child through Compassion... *[share your story including an invitation to sponsor]*

[Suggested video: Stop for the One (3 minutes) – Danielle Strickland, a Major in The Salvation Army, discusses what justice and love really mean in this thought-provoking short film. You can find this video at www.youtube.com/compassionuk]

There's no quick fix to global poverty. But by changing the life of one child, we create a ripple effect in their family, community and nation.

Bible Study Two

When we think of the biblical prophets, we tend to think of them prophesying the future. That was one of their tasks, but they actually spoke much more into the present. And what they spoke about, nearly always, was justice.

Prophets held no constitutional office. Their credibility rested on their truthfulness to speak for God—not telling people what they wanted to hear, but what God wanted them to hear.

[Read Isaiah 58:1-12]

Isaiah prophesied in a time of great insecurity and national turmoil. People clearly wanted God's help but they wanted it on their terms. Isaiah reminds them—forcefully—of God's terms.

1. What is the Israelites' motive for fasting, according to verse 3?
2. What is the problem with the kind of fasting they are doing?
3. According to verses 6 and 7, what kind of fasting does God want to see?
4. Have you ever prayed or fasted for something important for what seems like forever? What were you waiting for, and how did the waiting affect you?
5. How do you think it feels to be trapped in poverty, longing for an opportunity to escape?
6. Isaiah speaks of breaking the yoke of oppression and loosing the chains of injustice. Can you name some ways in which yokes and chains operate today?

Giving to the poor is an act of worship. Throughout the Bible we see God's love for the poor and His heart in seeking justice for them. We believe that when we share God's heart, we display our devotion to Him.

Isaiah 58 is a call to take practical action against the injustices we witness around us. We believe coming alongside a child in poverty through sponsorship is one of the practical ways we can each respond. Because when we give to the poor, it's like we are lending to the Lord.

SHARE YOUR STORY

I want to share about my own experience in sponsoring a child through Compassion... *[share your story including an invitation to sponsor]*

[Suggested video: Richmond's Story (approx. 5 minutes) - Growing up in one of Uganda's largest slums, Richmond's journey is an extraordinary testimony of the transformational difference that sponsorship makes. You can find this video on your USB stick.]

Together we can break the yokes of oppression and loosen the chains of injustice, starting with a child in poverty.



Bible Study Three

The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us to live with the kind of radical compassion that Jesus shows. It demonstrates to us that no person is undeserving of grace and that compassion can dissolve barriers between us.

[Read Luke 10:25-37]

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Have you ever been helped by a 'Good Samaritan'? Share your experience with the group.
- Have you helped someone who you found it difficult to get along with or was very different to you? How did this feel?
- How do you think the Samaritan felt when he saw the Levite?
- Can you empathise with that?
- What kind of person needs to hear the story that Jesus told?

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

It was Martin Luther King Jr. who commented that the first question both the priest and the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But the Samaritan asked, "If I don't stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

Ask the group to take some paper and write down their answers to the following questions:

- What is the difference between those questions?
- Why is that difference critical to this story?

If appropriate, ask individuals to share their answers with the group.

The purpose of parables in Scripture is to influence how we live our lives. It's important that we think about how these teachings impact our daily actions and guide us as we live out our faith. At the end of the Good Samaritan parable, Jesus challenges us, "Go and do likewise."

Challenge each member to love people as outrageously as they can. Think about the barriers that can divide us and how to overcome them.

- How would you apply this story to your own life?
- What can you do to love someone this week in a way that would be surprising?
- What would be the kindest deed you could do for your work/family/ community?
- How does sponsoring a child tie into this kind of love?

Why not reach out to someone in need just like the Good Samaritan did and sponsor a child today?

CLOSE

Pray that we would be people who show compassion and love others outrageously. Pray that we all have encouraging testimonies of our faith in action. Close by thanking God for his son Jesus who taught us this kind of love and how we can discover true compassion through him.

