

Day Two

JUSTICE AND MERCY

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Facilitator articles (read before starting the day’s activities with children):

They’re not too young to talk about race: <http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>

How to talk to your kids about protests and racism: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/health/protests-racism-talk-to-children-wellness/index.html>

Day Two Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Hi Allies! Welcome to day two! Today we are learning about how to live with justice and mercy. God calls us to live with justice and mercy in Micah 6:8 (NIV) which says, “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

So, what does this mean? First, let’s talk about how God shows us what is good. God shows us what is good by sending messages right to our hearts! When I experience something good, my heart feels like a warm, shining light and that shining light spreads all the way from my nose to my toes and makes me smile and I feel happy. When God shows me that something is good, my heart feels like sunshine on a sunny day. An example of something that fills my heart with this feeling is friendship. Think of a time when God showed you something good. How did it feel?

When we see something wrong, God tells us about that too. For me, the feeling is like a storm. My heart feels dark, and dreary, and cold. Sometimes it feels like loud wind and thunder are pounding so hard in my heart that I want to explode. And sometimes tears fall like rain from my eyes. Sometimes I feel like I want to run away from this feeling. When I feel like this, I know it is God showing me that something is wrong. I feel like this when I see people of color being hurt and killed because of their skin color. I also feel like this when I see the environment being hurt or destroyed. Think of a time when God showed you something wrong. How did it feel?

So, what does God want us to do when we experience something that is wrong? God wants us to act with justice and mercy.

One way we can describe **justice** is love in action. We can think of **mercy** as helping someone, or something, who is hurt or in danger. We can think of mercy like someone helping you get a Band-Aid after you trip and fall over a rock and scrape your knee. Justice is then moving the rock out of the way so you, nor anyone else, gets hurt by it again. Acting with justice and mercy towards others is being an **ally**. An important part of being an ally is listening to the needs of the people we are trying to help.

The last phrase in the passage says, “walk humbly with your God.” To be **humble** means that we don’t need to call attention to ourselves as we work for justice and mercy. Allies work to lift up others because that is what God calls people to do, not to get praise and glory for their actions.

Today you are going to explore some examples of justice and mercy happening in the world.

Before we begin today’s activities, we are going to read a book together. This book is called *Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard. The book is illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin and is being read with permission from American Psychological Association. In this book, a Black man is killed by the police and the children in the book, one Black and one white, want to understand why. This book will help us think more about justice and how to identify injustice.

reading of Something Happened in Our Town

Now that we read that we finished reading *Something Happened in Our Town*, think about how the book made you feel. What messages did God send you about the killing of the Black man in the story? Did you feel any of the feelings we talked about for when God shows us that something is wrong? How about

when Emma and Josh stood up for Omad? Did you feel any of the feelings we talked about for when God shows us that something is good?

I invite you now to work through today's activities exploring concepts related to justice and mercy.

Day Two Role Models (Written for Primary Grades K-2)



Figure 5 Photo by Liz Ferguson/Rainforest Alliance

Isra Hirsi

Isra Hirsi, born Feb. 2003, is an American **social justice** and **environmental justice advocate** from Minneapolis, Minnesota. This means that Isra speaks out and works to change things for people who need help (social justice) and to make sure that all people have access to a safe and healthy environment (environmental justice). Environment refers to nature. **Nature** includes plants, animals, air, water, and more! Isra parents taught her about how problems in our country affect different groups of people. They encouraged her to **advocate**, or stand up, for people who are being **harmed**, or hurt, and told her that she could make a difference in the world.

At the age of 12 Isra became active in the Black Lives Matter movement, sometimes called BLM. The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in response to police brutality, and calls attention to way Black people in the US experience systemic racism, which means not just people being mean to each other, but systems like schools, and legal courts that operate unfairly. BLM works to change those things. Isra also got involved in groups that worked to keep people safe from gun violence.

In high school, Isra joined her school's environmental club. Before this, environmental justice was not something she had thought much about. She thought the movement was about saving natural places that were **distant**, or far, from where she lived and spent time. BLM and gun violence felt more personal to her.

In the club, she learned that about how environmental causes affected her directly, too. Environmental justice involves the quality of our air, land and water and how these things affect people everywhere. She learned that people have affected the climate (weather patterns), which is referred to as climate change. Isra learned that climate change and environmental issues such as **pollution**, or dirty air, and problems with drinking water are hurting people of color and people with very little money the most.

Isra knew how to stand up and speak out so she used her skills to advocate for environmental justice. In 2019 (at age 15) she helped start the U.S. Youth Climate Strike, and went on to become the **Executive Director**, or leader, of the group. The U.S. Youth Climate Strike is part of a world-wide movement, led by kids, that works to get governments, people who make laws and rules, to quickly make new laws to protect the environment.

Isra uses her voice to tell people how problems with environment are connected to other issues such as race and poverty. Her main goal is to get people of all races involved in the movement and to **advocate**, or speak up, for people who are most hurt by problems in the environment.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_WRe-9ArNI



Figure 6 Photo by Isthmus <https://isthmus.com/news/news/vic-barrett-is-at-center-of-lawsuit-to-force-action-on-clima/>

Vic Barrett

Vic Barrett is from White Plains, NY. When he was 12 years old his home was hit by **Hurricane Sandy** (a huge storm that caused lots of flooding and damage to people’s homes). Vic and his mother spent time huddled in his mother’s bedroom. They lost electricity and water. Some of Vic’s friends lost their homes.

After Hurricane Sandy, Vic became aware of how climate change had a bigger effect on some people than others. Climate change mostly affected people who were already **vulnerable**, or in danger of being hurt in other ways. When Vic was 14, he got involved in an afterschool program that worked for **environmental justice**. (Remember that environmental justice is making sure that all people have access to a safe and healthy natural world.) It was through this experience that he really learned the connection between climate change and **human rights** (things that every person should have).

Vic also saw the effects of climate change and rising sea waters where his mother’s family lives in a town in Honduras near the ocean. His mother and grandmother told him stories about how different the area looked now and how much closer the water is to his grandmother’s home than it was when his mother was young. Vic learned how pollution from his home country, the United States, affected his family’s community in Honduras. This made Vic take action!

Vic uses his own experiences, and the different parts of his **identity** (who he is), to show how climate change and environmental issues are connected to **race** (what a person looks like), **class** (how much money a person has), **immigration** (going from living in one country to living in another) and **war** (violence between two or more groups of people). He is a powerful speaker and organizer. He has given many speeches including one to a crowd of at least 60,000 people at the NYC Climate Strike in 2019. He has also spoken to world leaders at the United Nations in 2015 (at the age of 15) and 2016.

Vic is among a group of American youth who are suing the United States government. That means they think the government is breaking the law. Their lawsuit says that it is the government’s job to protect the environment for future generations and to protect public land in the United States and that the government is not doing their job.

Vic’s story written in his own words: <https://www.ourclimatevoices.org/2019/vicbarrett>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8APYUL6ANMc>

Food for thought:

Vic and Isra have a number of **intersecting identities** that they use to see and understand climate change and how it affects different people. That means that they understand climate change using more than one story. For example, Vic and Isra both identify as people of color so they understand climate change from the **perspective**, or story, of people of color. They are also both first-generation US citizens (their parents were born in different countries) so they understand climate change from the perspective, or story, of people from other countries. Vic and Isra are also able to share their experiences and observations with others who may not be able to see the issue from different perspectives.

During this pandemic we have seen that people are impacted differently based on who they are as well as what their resources are. For example, a child in a family who has easy access to a computer and internet has had a different experience of learning from home than a child who does not have these resources. Families who are healthy have had different experiences than those who have family members who have health risks. Families who are able to stay at home have had different experiences than those who have had to continue to go to work outside of the home. Some people have lost their jobs or income and others have not. These are things that are not isolated experiences. A family can have a computer and internet, members with health risks, and someone who has a job that they have to leave the home for. Or any combination of these things. There are many different ways in which people have experienced this same pandemic.

Day Two Role Models (Written for Upper Elementary Grades 3-5)



Figure 7 Photo by Liz Ferguson/Rainforest Alliance

Isra Hirsi

Isra Hirsi, born Feb. 2003, is an American social justice and environmental justice advocate. Conversations regarding social issues were commonplace in Isra's family. Her parents instilled in her that she had the ability to change the world and encouraged her to stand up and speak out for justice. Isra had been attending marches and rallies and using her voice from as young as 6 years old. At the age of 12 she became active in the Black Lives Matter Movement and in the fight for gun violence prevention. The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in response to police brutality, and calls attention to way Black people in the US experience systemic racism, which means not just people being mean to each other, but systems like schools, and legal courts that operate unfairly.

As a freshman Isra joined the high school environmental club. Prior to this, environmental justice was not something she had thought much about. Her perception was that the movement concerned pristine areas that were distant from her own life experience. In the environmental club she learned more about how environmental issues and climate change intersected with other social issues and discovered the disproportionate effects of climate change on communities of color.

Isra went on to use her well-practiced skills in activism to advocate for environmental justice. In January 2019 (age 15) she co-founded the U.S. Youth Climate Strike, and is currently executive director of the group. The U.S. Youth Climate Strike is the American arm of the International Youth Climate Movement; a global youth driven movement with the aim of bringing attention to the urgency of climate change and affecting change in government environmental policy. Isra uses her voice to bring attention to the many ways in which environmental issues intersect with other social issues. She is particularly focused on diversifying the movement and advocating for those who are disproportionately affected by environmental issues.

“ . . . knowing that I have the power to inspire so many other young black girls and so many other like Muslim girls within the movement . . . gives me the motivation and joy to keep doing the work that I do.”

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_WRe-9ArNI



Figure 8 Photo by Isthmus <https://isthmus.com/news/news/vic-barrett-is-at-center-of-lawsuit-to-force-action-on-clima/>

Vic Barrett

Vic Barrett is from White Plains, NY. White Plains is a low-lying community near the Atlantic coast and as such, in recent years it has experienced more frequent storm surges due to climate change. When Vic was 12 years old, he experienced the potentially devastating effects of this firsthand when his home was hit by Hurricane Sandy. Vic and his mother spent time huddled in his mother's bedroom. They lost electricity and water. Some of Vic's friends lost their homes.

As a result of Hurricane Sandy, Vic became aware of how climate change had a bigger effect on some people than others. It particularly affected those who were already vulnerable. At the age of 14, he got involved in an afterschool program where he learned more about environmental justice. It was through this experience that he really began to understand the connection between climate change and human rights.

Vic also saw the effects of climate change and rising sea waters where his mother's family lived in a coastal town in Honduras. His mother and grandmother told him stories of how the landscape had changed and how much closer the water is to their home than it was when his mother was young. Vic was impacted by the understanding of how emissions from his home country, the United States, affected his family's community in Honduras.

Vic has used his own experiences to frame conversations about how climate change and environmental issues relate to other things such as race, class, immigration and war. He is a powerful speaker and organizer. He has given many speeches including to a crowd of at least 60,000 people at the NYC Climate Strike in 2019. He has also spoken to world leaders at the United Nations in 2015 (at the age of 15) and 2016.

Vic is one of the youth plaintiffs in a youth climate lawsuit against the United States. Their lawsuit claims that the governments' actions (and inactions) in regards to the environment violate the human rights of future generations and fail to protect essential public lands.

If you want to learn more, here is Vic's story written in his own words:

<https://www.ourclimatevoices.org/2019/vicbarrett>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8APYUL6ANMc>

Food for thought:

Vic and Isra have a number of intersecting identities they use to view and understand climate change and how it affects different people. What that means is there are different aspects of who they are that are each impacted differently by climate change. For example, Vic identifies as Hispanic, Black, transgender, and a first generation US citizen. Isra identifies as Black, female, Muslim and first generation US citizen. These are aspects of their identity that are marginalized in our society and experience social and environmental issues in different ways. Vic and Isra are able to share these experiences and observations with others who may not have considered these perspectives. As first-generation US citizens, Vic and Isra also have had the benefit of hearing stories from their parent's home countries and how communities there have been impacted by climate change.

During this pandemic, we have seen that people are impacted differently based on who they are as well as what their resources are. For example, a child in a family who has easy access to a computer and internet has had a different experience of learning from home than a child who does not have these resources. Families who are healthy have had different experiences than those who have family members who have health risks. Families who are able to stay at home have had different experiences than those who have had to continue to go to work outside of the home. Some people have lost their jobs or income and others have not. These are things that are not isolated experiences. A family can have a computer and internet, members with health risks, and someone who has a job that they have to leave the home for. Or any combination of these things. There are many different ways in which people have experienced this same pandemic.

Food Insecurity

(See Casey Davis, Executive Director, and Gabrielle Catton, Executive Assistant, at Edmonds Food Bank video

<https://www.communityalliesvbs.com/>)

Food insecurity is when a person does not have the consistent access to quality food needed for their bodies and minds to be fully active and healthy. Food insecurity occurs when an individual or a family makes so little money that they struggle to pay for basic human needs such as food and shelter (a condition called poverty). In the US, some common factors that lead to poverty are **unemployment, high housing cost, low wages, medical expenses, and low access to assistance**. Some groups are at higher risk of experiencing poverty than others due to systemic social issues such as racism, gender inequality, and climate change.

Food insecurity can lead to physical and mental health problems in both children and adults. In children, going hungry can interfere with their ability to grow and learn. Kids who are consistently not getting enough to eat may also exhibit more behavior problems than their peers.

654 students in the Edmonds School District are homeless.

7074 students in the Edmonds School District qualify for free and reduced lunch.

In 2018, 804,080 people in the state of Washington were food insecure.

In 2018, 11.1% of households in the U.S. experienced food insecurity at least some time during the year.

You can use this map to explore how areas in the United States and your own state are affected by food insecurity. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

Today we heard from the Edmonds Food Bank and learned how they are helping people have access to food. As a VBS community, we are going to work together this week to see how much food we can collect to donate to our local food bank!

Donating to the food bank is an example of an act of charity. Charity is when you provide someone with something that they need right now, but that they can't get for themselves (like food). Often, a charity provides a service that the person will likely need again unless something changes in their situation. Charity is good because it helps people to get something that they really need right now to live, but it does not solve the problem of why they had this need in the first place. Charity doesn't address the root problem that causes the need.

So, we have to combine our acts of charity with work to change the problems that prevented people from meeting their own needs. It's called walking with two feet: charity (one foot) and change (the other). **What are things that need to change so that people who are experiencing food insecurity can be able to afford to buy enough food?** *Hint: see the bold text in the first paragraph above for some ideas.*

The idea of solving big problems can feel overwhelming, but the good news is that there are organizations out there that are working to change some of these big root causes of poverty. CARE and

The Hunger Project are examples of organizations that are working to address hunger and poverty globally. Here in the US, there are organizations such as the National Alliance to End Homelessness. We can also encourage our lawmakers to support laws that address hunger and poverty—in our neighborhoods and cities, our states, and in our nation as a whole.

CommUNITY Food Drive Challenge (Community in Action)



This week, you are learning about how to love others and walk alongside them as an ally. Today, you have learned about food insecurity, how hunger affects people, and how you can pair acts of charity with longer term solutions to address it. Donating to the food drive is one way you can put what you are learning into action!

Collect as many donation items as you can throughout the week to drop off at the location and times below! The items have varying point levels, based on cost and need. Aim for around 15 points for each family to help us reach our collective goal. We will track this throughout the week on the website and reveal the grand total at the end!

Individual family goal: 15 points

<u>1 point</u>	<u>2 points</u>	<u>3 points</u>
Canned corn	Mac and cheese	Fruit snacks
Pasta	Canned meat chili	Pasta sauce
Canned tomatoes	Canned tuna	Rice
Canned green beans	Canned chicken	Canned fruit

Drop off Location:

Edmonds United Methodist Church
828 Caspers St Edmonds, WA 98020

Drop off days/times:

Wed-Fri 9am-noon

***Join us for a Celebration Parade at EUMC Friday, 7/17/20 12pm-1pm! ***

This will be a socially-distanced event, either on foot or in vehicles, according to State and County safety guidelines in place at the time.

(If you are not local to Edmonds, please contact your own food bank to find out what items they need most.)

Day Two Activity- OBSTACLE COURSE



With adult supervision, use the space inside and/or outside your home to design an obstacle course. Use items you have around the house to create a path with obstacles to move through, under, over or around. You can work together with everyone in your family or household to create different types of challenges throughout the course. Other than that, there are no rules. Be creative! How you navigate the course is as big as your imagination. Will you walk, run, jump, crawl? Forward? Backward? On wheels!?

Take turns with your family members or friend group going through the course as many times as you want.

Follow up with the discussion questions below.

Discussion Questions

1. DID YOU HAVE FUN!? What was your favorite part?
2. In going through the course, what parts were challenging for you? What was easier? Was it different than you thought it would be before you did it?
3. Were certain parts easier for you, but harder for someone else? How does your perspective on the obstacle course differ from others?
4. What different methods did people use to get through the course? Did they all achieve the same goal (getting through the course)?
5. How did it feel to work together to create the obstacle course? How did you make decisions about what to include in it and how to move through it?

Notice how each person's perspective may be different in how they experience the same thing and in how they approach achieving the same goal. What is true for you may not be true for someone else, and each person has their own set of unique challenges and strengths. When trying to work together with others, sometimes there can be challenges we have to navigate, and there are different approaches we can take to achieve the same goal.

How can you put yourself in others shoes? How can you appreciate the differences?

Day Two Activity- CHARITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE (2 Feet) MEMORY GAME
(Found in Student Activity Pack)

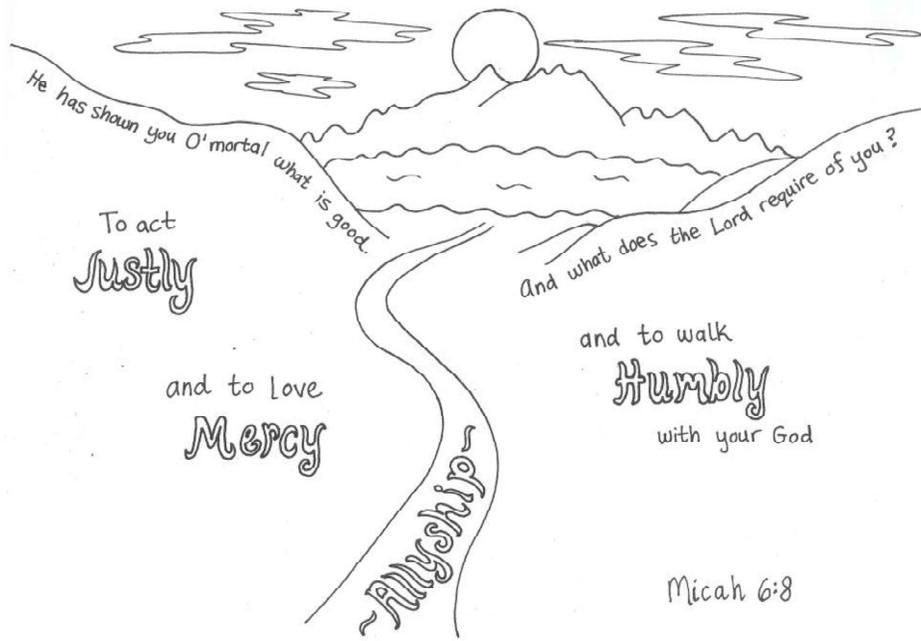
HOW TO PLAY!

1. Mix up the cards
2. Place them face down in rows
3. Pick 2 random cards and look at them
4. If they match, keep them. If they don't match, put them back.
5. Take turns turning the cards over 2 at a time until you have matched all of the pairs
6. Remember the color/picture and location of the cards you draw and pay attention during others turns
7. Read and talk about the charity and social justice pairs

Example of game pieces:

<p>HOMELESSNESS</p>  <p>Homeless care kit</p>	<p>HOMELESSNESS</p>  <p>Affordable housing</p>
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Day Two Coloring Sheet
(Full Sheet Found in Student Activity Pack)



Day Two Closing Discussion

Today we learned that God wants us to act with justice and mercy. We learned that justice means love in action and mercy means helping someone, or something, who is hurt or in danger. We read a book called *Something Happened in Our Town* that described an injustice. We explored the messages God was sending us about that injustice.

We learned about examples of people who are working for justice and mercy in their communities and around the world. People who work for justice and mercy on behalf of others are allies. We learned that Isra Hirsi and Vic Barrett are seeking justice by working to change environmental laws. They are allies to the Earth and those affected by climate change. We learned that Casey, and the Edmonds Food Bank, act with mercy to provide food to people in the community who cannot afford to buy it at the store. Casey, and the people who support the food bank are trying to act as allies to low income people in the community. We also began our community challenge to collect food for the Edmonds Food Bank. Our food bank challenge gives us an opportunity to work together as we act with mercy. We can also use this opportunity to practice how to be allies as well. We also learned that allies listen to the needs of the people they want to help before working to help them.

The 2 Feet – Charity vs. Social Justice Memory Game showed us that we need both justice and mercy together because mercy helps people who are suffering, and justice works to make changes so people stop getting hurt.

Our obstacle course activity showed us that seeing differences among people, and listening to the **perspectives** and **identities** (or stories) of others, helps us understand our different needs. If we understand our different needs, then we can act in a way that is just and merciful to all. I now invite you to go to the Padlet message board on our website to share an example of a problem you have seen or heard about and how we can respond to the problem with both justice and mercy.

[Discussion Board Day 2](#)

Remember, if you are participating in this program during the week of July 13-17, 2020 and you are in the Edmonds area, your food drive donation can be accepted Wednesday through Friday 9am-noon at the Edmonds United Methodist Church. If you are not in the Edmonds area, we encourage you to still participate in this community activity by donating to your local food bank. Please share your donation amounts with us—no matter which food bank you donate to—so that we can include you our community challenge event. If you are participating at another time, we still invite you donate to your local food bank.