



Liturgy Materials

on **fairness** and

JUSTICE

If you are planning a service on the theme of fairness and justice, we hope these materials will be a useful guide.

Many of the churches that use the CMSI teaching resource for children and teens hold a special All-Age Worship Service as part of their programme. This gives the whole congregation a chance to find out what the young people have been, or will be, learning about and it provides an opportunity for everyone to get involved.

The following suggestions might be helpful as you put together your service. Even if you aren't able to dedicate a whole morning service to the **Fair Play** Teaching Resource, perhaps you could incorporate one or two of the ideas in the morning services on each of the four weeks.

(Note: The text is available as a Word Doc to enable easy incorporation into your service materials, whether digital



All-age service material

Introductions

It's worth including a few brief sentences of background and introduction to this year's resource which looks at **Micah 6:8** "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" With the focus of the resource being on the need for God's people to go beyond equality for individuals when pursuing fairness and justice in the world, the global church gives us a wider perspective from which we can consider these issues.

This all-age service will allow for the adults in the congregation to learn from and listen to their children and young people. As a church family, both globally and locally, this demonstration of learning together should help all of us take more seriously our role in its wider sense. We would encourage you to work with some of the older children to write a few sentences of introduction that they can then read out.

Film Clips

If you're able to show videos in your church, why not use one or more of the films from the **Fair Play** series to introduce folk to the theme and hear directly from our partners in other parts of the global church? The four topics considered are **1. The role of church in community life; 2. God's generosity; 3. Partnership and walking together; 4. CMSI's partners pursuing justice for everyone.** Each film lasts approximately 5 minutes and can easily be included at any point of the service.

Opening/Bidding

A sentence to introduce the service:

In our worship today we will hear stories from our brothers and sisters in the global church. Stories of hope in difficult times. Stories of lives changed because of God's love. In situations of oppression and injustice, God's people are called to speak out and be the face of God's love in action. To gently and graciously resist the pull of an easier, quieter, safer life. Instead, we must act justly, and we must love mercy as we walk humbly after our generous God. As we sing God's praises, hear from God's word and pray for our world, may this time together help all of us to see God better so that we can participate in God's expansive justice both here, at home, and around the world today.

Prayers and Acclamations

*These prayers and acclamations have been inspired by the writings and work of Frederick Buechner
One or more of the following could be included:*

Call to Worship

Walking in God's Justice

The world is not always fair. Some have much, and some have little. But God's justice is different.

Congregation: We Walk after justice!

Jesus saw the ones no one else noticed – the hungry, the hurting, the left out – and he called them blessed.

C: We Walk after justice!

When we see someone treated unfairly, God asks us to do something, to speak up, to help.

C: We Walk after justice!

This is the heart of worship – not just words but love in action. So come, let's praise God who makes things right!

C: We Walk after justice!

Building Justice

Come, all who seek to serve, all who long to build something lasting and good.

Congregation: We come to worship the God who is the foundation of love and the shelter for all.

God calls us to raise up walls of hope, to hammer out justice, and to open doors of kindness.

C: With willing hearts and ready hands, we come to answer his call.

Together, let us dream of a world where everyone has a place to rest, to thrive, and to call home.

C: Together let us worship the God who makes that dream possible.

Let us worship with joy, as co-builders of his kingdom!

C: Amen

Confession

O God, you are justice and mercy, light and truth, the voice calling in the wilderness, the whisper in the silence. We confess that we have heard you – but we have not always listened. We have seen the suffering of the world – but we have not always acted. We have known what is right – but we have found it easier to walk away. Forgive us, Lord, for the ways we have turned our backs on the poor, for the times we have closed our hearts to the hurting, for the moments we have chosen comfort over courage, silence over speaking, indifference over love. And yet, you are not done with us. You see us, not just as we are, but as we could be – redeemed, restored, made new. So, take our hands and lead us, take our hearts and break them for what breaks yours. Take our lives and use them until justice is not just a word we pray, but a way we live. In the name of Jesus, who saw us in our sin and loved us still. **Amen.**



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Collect

Living God, you call us to care for one another in your name. Forgive us when we are more concerned with ourselves, looking inward rather than out. Empower us, through your Spirit, to open our hearts to people around us who need help, to open our ears and listen when struggles must be shared, to open our mouths and speak out when others will not. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

God of the lost and the found, the broken and the mended, the silenced and the singing — hear our prayers. For the weary, whose strength is spent, whose burdens are too heavy to carry alone, whose nights are long with worry — be their rest, their refuge, their hope.

For the oppressed, whose voices are ignored, whose dignity is trampled, whose cries for justice rise like incense before you — be their defender, their deliverer, their freedom.

For the leaders of nations, of churches, of homes — for those who hold power in their hands, and for those who feel powerless — give wisdom that does not seek its own gain, courage that does not shrink in the face of truth, compassion that is not just spoken, but lived.

For the peacemakers, who refuse to settle for silence when justice is crying out — strengthen their hands, steady their hearts.

For the indifferent, whose eyes have grown dim to the suffering of the world — wake them up, shake them, stir them to love again.

For the Church, your restless, beautiful, imperfect people — teach us what it means to be the body of Christ, to carry his cross, to live his love, to pour ourselves out until all that is left is you.

And for us, O God, for the wounds we carry and the wounds we have caused, for the prayers we struggle to pray, for the justice we long for but too often delay — forgive us, renew us, send us.

We ask all this not because we are worthy, but because you are faithful. Not because we understand, but because we trust. Not because we have done enough, but because grace is always more than enough.

In the name of the One who knelt to serve, who wept for the world, who rose to make all things new — Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

Go now, knowing that the God of justice walks before you — not as a distant judge, but as a Friend who weeps for the world's wounds and calls you to weep too.

Go, knowing that the kingdom is both already here and not yet, that mercy and righteousness are not distant ideals but the very breath of God moving through your life.

Go, and let the broken places of the world break your heart, but not your hope. Let love be stronger than fear. Let courage be greater than complacency. Let the cross remind you that justice is not power but sacrifice, not revenge but redemption.

And as you go, may you find Christ not just in the heavens, but in the eyes of the poor, the hands of the oppressed, the laughter of the children, and in the face staring back at you in the mirror.

Go in peace — not the peace that comes from staying comfortable, but the peace that passes understanding,

the peace that stirs you to action, the peace that comes from knowing that love, in the end, has already won. Amen.

Benediction

Leader: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he fill you with courage to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. Go in peace, to love and serve in the name of the God of justice.

People: Amen.

Bible Readings

Any of the verses that feature in the **Fair Play** teaching materials could be used in the service. The memory verse for the series is **Micah 6:8** "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?". Every session draws upon this verse in some way.

Session 1 focused on cultivating a living faith that impacts all of life (**Mark 12:29-31 Love your neighbour as yourself**); session 2 focused on God's generosity (**Matthew 20:1-16 The Workers in the Vineyard**); session 3 focused on partnership and friendship as going beyond mere charity (**Proverbs 31:9 and Isaiah 1:17 Stand up for the oppressed and seek justice**); and session 4 focused on God's justice and fairness for everyone (**1 Corinthians 12:14-20 one body many parts**).

Preaching on God's Justice

Biblical foundation: Micah 6:8 and Deuteronomy 10:12-22

"The Justice of God: A Call to Action": reflections on how God's justice is both a promise and a challenge to the church today

Sermon ideas can draw upon the following points:

- The challenge: justice is not an optional extra but a requirement; avoid religious performative – through Micah, God reminded the people that true faith is about action not just rituals.
- We are individually challenged – as part of global church we all have a responsibility to be part of bringing about justice.
- Walking humbly after God and serving God means living justly. Justice is more than fairness – it is actively standing up for what is right. While it means behaving differently to those around us, it very much means living in the world – where do we see injustice in the world today and what might actively engaging in change look like?
- CMSI's partners face many of the justice issues referenced in Deuteronomy 10:12-22- justice for the fatherless and the widow, loving the sojourner, giving food and clothing. Our partners live out the challenge to walk with one another, enduring these struggles together as a means of bringing about God's right living in their own communities. Our partners exemplify what loving the sojourner looks like. Please contact us for information on our partners that will help you share this idea with your congregation.
- Mercy is not something we do, it is something we love. Mercy is about forgiveness, compassion, kindness, even when it is undeserved. This is difficult because our

Sermon continued

natural inclination is revenge, resentment or indifference. Mercy goes beyond justice activities – it is grace in action.

- **The promise:** humbly following God is the way to truly live. When we glorify God in our merciful pursuit of justice, God promises to walk with us. Jesus literally walked with us and his Holy Spirit empowers us to live this way today.
- There are many examples of how CMSI partners' active engagement in mission has brought flourishing and life to individuals and the church more widely.

Possible music

Hymns

- For the Healing of the Nations (Fred Kaan)
- God of Grace and God of Glory (Harry E. Fosdick)
- Let Justice Flow Like Streams (Jane Parker Hube)
- Beauty for Brokenness (Graham Kendrick)
- The Kingdom of God is Justice and Joy (Bryn A. Rees)

Children's songs

- God's Love Is Big (Vineyard Kids)
- Love the Lord (CJ and Friends)

Contemporary worship

- A Place at the Table (Shirley Erena Murray)
- He Has Told You (The Worship Initiative)
- Build Your Kingdom Here (Rend Collective)
- God of Justice (Tim Hughes)
- We Are Called (David Haas)

Getting the children involved

As well as inviting children to write or read prayers and Bible stories, the following suggestions will ensure that the service has lots of involvement from the children.

- We would encourage you to invite any older children who have worked through the teen material to share some of their ideas on what it means to have a faith that is lived out in practice. How might this change our choices in life? What are the practical implications for individuals and church communities?
- Do an interview with a couple of older children about what they've learned or what activity they have enjoyed. The 'Privilege Walk' activity from session 2 **Fair Play** purple teens materials would be good to share with the congregation as a challenge to our limited perspective when we consider things only from our own point of view. This activity is available as part of a prayer station/prayer event that you can use in your own church. Please contact us for more information on our prayer resources and the support CMSI can offer in curating interactive prayer spaces. Please email us on info@cmsireland.org if you would be interested in exploring this further.
- The 'Peers in other places' activity from session 2 **Fair Play** blue and red materials would also be good to share. This activity helps us imagine life in other place – both the challenges and the positives of people's lives. You could show a few of the images and have your children share some of their learning with the congregation. Walking with CMSI partners as a link

congregation is an excellent way for your community to continue this journey in a much deeper, personal and lasting way. Please contact the office info@cmsireland.org if you would be interested in exploring this further.

- Have children up front to sing a song that ties in with some of the themes in the **Fair Play** resource.
- Have one of the Sunday school groups recite the memory verse that they learned together for the congregation.
- Invite some of the children to explain how the memory verse underpinned the learning across the **Fair Play** series. This could lead into one of the videos or spark discussion on how to connect with justice groups in your locality. CMSI partners with ANM (All Nations Ministries) which is a group reaching out to people seeking refuge here in Ireland. If you would like to explore joining with them, contact Gillian Maganda on info@cmsireland.org
- Some 'show and tell' – get the children to walk around the church showing pictures and crafts they have produced during **Fair Play**. You could even divide the children up so they each 'show and tell' to a pew/row or two.

CMSI Speaker

You may want to request a guest speaker from CMSI to come and speak at your All-Age Service or to speak to the adults on one of the Sundays when the children are doing their project in Sunday school.

In addition to staff members, CMSI has a team of volunteers who speak on behalf of the Society at Sunday services and midweek gatherings. Visit the CMSI website or contact the offices for more information or to request a speaker. (The earlier you can make the request, the better).

Other Ideas

- Interview someone from the parish who is involved in mission at home or overseas.
- Share with the congregation about CMSI's local mission partner programme. Information is available in session 3 of the **Fair Play** resource or on our website. This is the fundraising focus for this resource. Here are some fundraising ideas:
 - Organise a simple pot-luck lunch for after the service, where everyone brings something to share, as a fundraising event for our local mission partner programme. Encourage people to bring food from around the world to reinforce the idea of the global church as the body of Christ.
 - Host a mission quiz / trivia night about global cultures, world mission or church history.
 - 'Giving challenges' – encourage people to give up something (eg coffee/take aways/sweets/eating out) for one month and donate the savings to CMSI's local mission partner programme.
 - Encourage people to give through a retiring offering.

For further information, contact CMSI's offices or visit www.cmsireland.org

We'd love to see more churches developing a partnership link with our global partners. These links are a really effective way to connect with the global Church and to play an active part in global mission. They also provide a means of breathing new life into the mission activities within your own community.



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