



## We Belong Together

This lesson is designed to bring youth awareness to injustice in the world.

## ENHANCER OF JOY

Belonging

## DURATION

60 minutes

## LESSON DEVELOPED BY

Rev. Rubén Ortiz

## GOAL

The Forgotten Billion

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## TIPS TO PREPARE

Review the session ahead of time. Other than that, there is nothing else that requires preparation.

## MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- 3 X 5 Cards
  - Pencils and/or pens
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## SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

Make sure that there's room for young people to mingle throughout for Activity 1.

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## Purpose

The purpose of this session is to bring awareness to the student of injustice in this world. More specifically to help address the issue of poverty which is almost always a symptom of injustice.

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## Objectives

In this session, youth will engage each other on how to address the issue of poverty, both in a practical as well as in a more strategic long-term way.

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## Gather

### **Gather (5 minutes)**

- Opening Prayer
- Greeting One Another
- Introduction of Session: Begin the session by identifying one item from each student and complimenting it. Try to identify something of material value such as a cell phone, a necklace, sneakers, etc. Then say that most of us in this country are well off. We have not only the basic necessities of life, we also have more than what we need. State that some of us carry more material things of value every day, than some in this world see or handle during their lifetime. Today's session is about doing what is right. Actually, its about understanding and doing what is righteous (right-eous). Today's Bible passage was written by a prophet whose name means "God remembered." We will consider how to remember those that may be in more challenging circumstances than we are. Those that the Bible identifies as "the least of these." Let's begin by playing a game something like the old musical chairs.

## Engage

### **Engage (30 minutes)**

#### **Activity 1: Fruit Salad:**

- Have the students introduce themselves. The facilitator should make clear that this activity will require that they know each other's name.
- Chairs will be placed in a circle. There will be one chair fewer than the number of students.
- Students sitting to the right will be called oranges, and to the left, mangoes. The leader will point at a student and say orange, the student will have to say aloud the name of the person to their right; if the leader says mango then the participant will have to say the name of the student to their left.
- Whoever gets the name wrong will move to the center and start the game again.
- The twist is that when the person in the middle says fruit salad everyone will get up, leaving an empty chair and the person left without a chair, continues the game. No one is allowed to take the chair next to them.

#### **Activity 2: One Foot, or Two?**

- Ask for two volunteers who are in good physical health to come to the front of the room.
- Tell the volunteers that they are going to race one another to the other side of the room and back. However, there are certain rules each will have to follow. One volunteer will only be allowed to use one foot: s/he must hop to the other side and back. The other volunteer can run or walk, using both feet. (Variation: you can alternately have all participants form a circle and hop clockwise on one foot until they are back to their starting place.)
- Then do the same thing walking, using both feet.)
- Ask everyone, based on the illustration, whether it is better to hop on one foot, or to walk on two. Refer back to the issues of concern that participants mentioned at the beginning of the session and explain that in order to effectively address these issues, we must walk with both feet, not only one, so we do not have to hop or walk with a limp!

## Reflect

### **Reflect (20 minutes)**

#### **Activity 3: The Least of My Brothers and Sisters:**

- Say the following: In your social studies class one day, your teacher tells you about the poverty that exists across the world. You learn that nearly half of the people in the world live on less than \$2 a day, and that about 30,000 children die each day due to poverty. Shocked by these statistics, you and some friends in class decide that you want to do whatever you can to help combat poverty.
- Break the larger group into two smaller groups. The first group will focus on individuals affected by abject or extreme poverty. They will primarily focus on their immediate needs. The second group will focus on systems, policy and laws.
- Then say: as a group, think of a way to respond to this situation. The following are some questions to get you started:
  1. How could you work in your school to make a stand against poverty?
  2. What would you do first?
  3. How could you respond as a youth ministry?
  4. How might you learn more about poverty and other related issues as individuals and as a group?
  5. How could you get more people involved in your efforts?
  6. Who in the school's or church's leadership would you talk to or partner with?
  7. How would you do it?
  8. How could you raise awareness of the issue?
  9. What kinds of activities could you plan, to address the issue? Whatever you plan, be specific and think creatively.

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## Send Forth

### **Send Forth (10 minutes)**

- Sum-It-Up: Have a representative from each group share with the rest of the group what ideas they came up with. Encourage their work and affirm those ideas that can have a lasting impact on the student's lives. Once they have reported to the entire group, state that

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world... over 400 million people speak Spanish. In the Spanish language, justice and righteousness are not separate words, but a single word. It is not two separate ideas. Share that this has many implications for the world and that in America we are beginning to grasp this idea. The idea that justice and righteousness go hand in hand. That living rightly before God involves doing justice. And that doing justice is in part, living righteously. Our posture with those that need justice is with "mercy and compassion." And, it usually costs us something. Maybe sacrifice, maybe pride, may be ridicule from our friends. The ideas you came up with today can change someone's life. It can change yours as well. This is an indicator of whether or not you've done justice or if you've just done a good work. Let's encourage each other to walk in justice and righteousness.

- Closing Prayer