

Worksheet #1: Exploring the News

After you have selected a news story that the group finds compelling, read through it together. Choose one person to be the leader to move the group through answering the questions on this worksheet. Choose another person to be the “scribe” and write down the group answers on this sheet. It is OK if you do not have enough information to answer all the questions. Take note of where you might need to do more research to understand the situation better.

Who is suffering? Is it a group of people or an individual? What do we know about the person/people suffering (their race, religion, age, gender, political affiliations, class, etc.)?

What is the particular kind of suffering taking place? (list everything you can think of, including direct and indirect forms; e.g. if someone is killed, it is the person who is killed but also the loved ones who are affected, etc.)

When is this taking place? How long has it been going on?

Where is this taking place? What do we know about this location, the culture, the political situation, the economic situation?

Why is this taking place? Is religion a factor? Is politics? Is money or power? Are there particular individuals, groups or institutions that are causing the harm? What about indirectly, if not directly?

Are there groups, individuals, or organizations/institutions that might be benefiting from this situation? (e.g. able to hold onto power, able to make money, able to defend interests, able to protect others or self)

Worksheet #2: Exploring the Bible

After you have selected a Bible story that the group finds compelling, read through it together. Choose one person to be the leader to move the group through answering the questions on this worksheet. Choose another person to be the “scribe” and write down the group answers on this sheet. It is OK if you do not have enough information to answer all the questions. Take note of where you might need to do more research to understand the story better.

Who are the characters in this story? Who is suffering or experiencing harm? Is it a group of people or an individual? What do we know about the person/people (e.g. their race or ethnicity, religion, age, gender, political affiliations, economic position or class status, ability/disability, immigrant status, etc.)?

What is the particular kind of suffering or harm taking place in this story? (list everything you can think of, including direct and indirect forms; for example, if someone is killed, there are also those who loved that person who are affected indirectly)

When is this taking place? How long has it been going on? (e.g. years, months, days?)

Where is this taking place? What do we know about it?

Why did this take place? Is religion a factor? Politics? Money, power or other limited resources? Are there particular individuals, groups or institutions causing the harm? Are they causing it indirectly or directly? Are there groups, individuals, or organizations/institutions that might be benefitting from this situation? (e.g. able to hold onto or gain power, able to make money, able to defend their interests, able to protect themselves or others?)

Where is God in this story? Is God directly or indirectly involved in this story?

Worksheet #3: Exploring Bible and Newspaper Together

Now that you have looked at both a news story and a Bible story related to suffering or injustice, how might these stories shed light on each other? Discuss the following questions:

Where do you see similarities in the two stories?

Where do you see differences?

What do these two stories tell us about the nature of suffering or injustice?

If we named the causing of unnecessary suffering or harm as demonstrated in these two stories as “sin,” how does this challenge, deepen or confirm our understanding of what “sin” is? How is injustice “sin”?

Returning to the newspaper story, where do you think God is involved?

How should Christians respond to what is going on in this newspaper story?