

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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JUSTICE ISSUE: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, POVERTY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Luke 1:46b-55
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	¶163 Government Responsibilities, C; ¶161, Economic Challenges, BOR 2101 Global Debt Crisis: A Call for Jubilee, ¶163 Basic Rights and Freedoms, BOR 2103 “Globalization and its impact on human dignity and human rights”
OBJECTIVE:	To help students see that Advent is a season that calls us to action, action to work for justice in the world.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	Pens/pencils, paper, bible or copies of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), copies of the Social Principles ¶163 The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, C.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: Today is the Third Sunday of Advent. And the focus of this week is Joy. Joy is a deep, lasting happiness that comes from God being with us. As we breathe, we are going to focus on inviting that joy into our hearts.

Say: Find a comfortable seated position. Place your hands out in front of you with your palms facing up. When you are ready, gently close your eyes. Now let’s take a breath together. Inhale for three counts ... 1, 2, 3. Hold for three counts... 1,2,3. Exhale for three counts... 1,2,3.

Say: Now, as you breathe in, imagine breathing in God’s joy like a warm light filling your chest. As you breathe out, imagine sending that joy out into the world- in your home, school, and community.

NOTES

Ask students to sit comfortably. Guide them to place their hands out with palms facing up and gently close their eyes. Lead the group in breathing together: inhale for three counts, hold for three counts, and exhale for three counts. Repeat this cycle at least three times, offering additional rounds if the group seems to need more time.

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Repeat at least three times, offering more rounds if needed.

Say: Take one final deep breath in and slowly breathe out. When you are ready, gently open your eyes. Remember, this week of Advent reminds us that God's joy is always with us, even when things feel hard."

Pray: God of Justice, invite us into the work of restoring your world. Help us to find injustice and stand up for the broken-hearted of this world. Amen.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say: "Today we're going to look at something called *The Magnificat*. The Magnificat is a very old hymn- almost 2,000 years old. Hymns like this, called canticles, use words straight from Scripture. The Psalms are another example of canticles- they are full of songs that show human emotions like fear, hope, longing, and joy. Mary's song- the Magnificat- focuses on something specific: God's justice. She sings about how God is breaking broken systems, lifting up people who are hurting, and giving those who need it most exactly what they need. This type of justice is called restorative justice. Mary is singing to her cousin Elizabeth and Elizabeth recognizes that the Spirit of God is within Mary, and she sees that through Mary's child, Jesus, God will bring great things to the world. And it's important to know that the Spirit of God is still working in us."

(Pass out Bibles or the handout with the Magnificat.)

Say: "Let's read Mary's song together. This is from Luke 1:51-55, we can take turns reading a verse each.

Read Luke 1:51-55.

Discussion Questions:

- (Verse 51) Where do we see proud or arrogant people fall in history? Today?
- (Verse 52) Who do you think of when you hear the word 'lowly' in our world today? What would it look like for the 'lowly' to be lifted up in ways that restore dignity and wholeness?

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- (Verse 53) Where do we see hunger or deep need around us? How can we help bring 'good things' to those who need them most? In what ways might restorative justice be about redistributing resources so everyone has enough?

(Pass out copies of the Social Principles and read the ¶163 The Political Community, Government Responsibilities, C.)

- (Verse 54-55/Social Principles) Our Social Principles emphasizes the need for restorative justice over retributive justice. The Magnificat also speaks of justice that is about healing and making things right, instead of just punishing people which is retributive justice. How do you think Mary's song shows this kind of healing justice, and what might it look like in our world today? How might we, as individuals, as a church, as a community, help fulfill those promises?
- The Magnificat has been banned in some countries during times of oppression because it talks about God bringing down the powerful and lifting up the lowly. Why do you think leaders felt threatened by Mary's song? What does that tell us about the power of faith and justice when they come together?

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

(Pass out paper and writing supplies.)

Divide your youth into groups of two or more, depending on your group size. Give them a copy of the Magnificat for reference as they write.

Say: "Think about the injustices you see in our world today- maybe in school, in the news, or even in your community. Then imagine what God's justice would look like in those situations. In your groups, write a canticle- your own song of hope and justice."

Let them take their time, but if they finish quickly, invite them to share.

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CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN)

If you haven't had time to share your canticles, invite your students to share as a closing prayer. If no one feels comfortable doing so, you can close with the following, or pray your own prayer:

God of justice and joy, this Advent season, fill us with the joy of Mary, that we may go into the world prepared to do the work of the Gospel. Help us to find the strength to be like Mary, and work for a world filled with your eternal joy. Amen.