



7. Justice (Matthew 25)

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we are reflecting on some important words of Jesus in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’, which Christians call the ‘Beatitudes’. We are using some of the wider themes in Jesus’ words to help us to think about the attitudes we have towards each other – and the ways in which your own school’s vision and values helps to shape this into your community.



How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?

Many of the qualities expressed in Jesus’ words will be familiar values for your school community, so we encourage you to link each week’s collective worship to your school vision – and the way that you live this out through your values. Today we are thinking about Jesus’ words about acting with justice. Children are often quick to say ‘It’s not fair!’ but in this week’s materials, we want to dig down into what we really mean by ‘injustice’.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today’s script, but you could quite easily use this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- There is an optional section [slides 5&6] following up the ‘unfair school rules’ introduction, which you may want to include / exclude according to time constraints or the age of your pupils. Use the words under the slides to help you explain.
- **You will need.... some simple props to help with the reflective reading (see p. 4 for list & script)** which is taken from Jesus’ words in Matthew 25. If you prefer, there is a video version of the reflective story, but do consider doing it live if you can!: <https://youtu.be/DpChhrPjFcY>
- You will also need some paper to make either paper chains or ‘people chains’, or a chain of hearts for the reflective activity. You can see how in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPU1VxqFifM>
- **There are also some ideas for reflective activities / ideas to ponder for use in your reflective areas for this term, listed at the end of the script along with a handy wall chart to print each week for your reflective area. You can find all these as a separate file in our resources area, which may make it easier for teachers to print and use in their classrooms.**
- **Reflective prayer activity:** this week, you will need a set of balance scales and weights, with cards listed on p.6

Gathering:

Slide 1: Use these gathering words, which will be the same each week.

- **Leader: We are here together**
- **ALL: May our attitudes make our school community a happy place today.**



Engaging:

- **Slide 2:** Show children the speech bubble, asking for a show of hands to establish who’s said those words at some time or another, or allowing children time to talk to a partner. *[If time allows, you might want to find out some of the things they’ve said.]*
- ‘We’re thinking today about things that are not fair, and to start with, I’m going to be **very** unfair (which I hope you’ll agree, isn’t like me!).’
- **Slide 3:** I’ve got some very different – and **very** unfair – school rules. They are not real, so we won’t be changing what our school rules really are, but for a few moments now I want you to imagine how you’d feel if my rules actually *became* the school rules. *[Read them out, leaving a short pause after for children to think, then invite a few responses]* ‘It seems really mean, doesn’t it, to be telling children they can’t do certain things just because their eyes are a different colour to everyone else’s. It really wouldn’t be fair.’
- **Slide 4:** In many parts of our world, there are some really, really unfair things happening, just because you’re a child, or a girl, or from a certain place. Although you might just sometimes moan about going to school, many children around the world don’t ever get the chance to go to school, which means they can’t get a good job – or even any job! – later in life. So actually, in some places, my mean school rules might be a bit more real.....



[Optional section: Listen to these stories: [share pictures on next 2 slides and use the photos script. You may need to re-interpret these in language that suits your age range]



- **Slide 5: Sometimes, you don't get to go to school simply because you are a girl!** In Sierra Leone (a country in Africa) 73% of girls don't get to go to secondary school, because they live too far away, or they have to get married. In some parts of Uganda, almost half the girls can't read. Although the Ugandan government introduced free schooling in 2007, the cost of uniforms, transport, books, stationary and school lunches mean that many girls can't stay on at school. Often, their families decide that it's more important that the boys get an education.
- **Slide 6: Many families simply can't afford to send their children to school.** 25 million children in Pakistan don't get to go to school, because their parents need them to work to earn money to help support their family. Many of you will know about the war in Syria that's forced millions of people to leave their homes and their country. Refugee children are permitted to attend Egyptian schools, but going to school costs money. A third of refugee families struggle even to pay for food and shelter, and simply cannot afford the extra cost to send their children to school.
- **Slide 7:** It probably won't come as a surprise that Jesus had something to say about injustice (that's a grown-up word for things that really aren't fair) in the Beatitudes. Actually, justice – being fair, especially to those who were poor and under-valued – was one of the things that he spoke about the most in his time on earth.
- **Slide 8:** Let's hear his words: **'Those who want to act justly more than anything else are truly happy. God will fully satisfy them.'**
In these words, Jesus was talking about showing justice, being fair, standing up for people who are being treated unfairly. But how might we do this? Well, Jesus himself showed how in the way that he lived his life, but also in what he said to others.
- **Slide 9:** People often asked Jesus questions about God's Kingdom, and how to live, and in these words from the book of Matthew, we will hear how important Jesus said it was to care for others, and make sure that they have what they need, especially those who might get overlooked in our world *[use script and objects p.4, or video linked from Resources section]*
- Afterwards, talk together about how each of the actions demonstrate acting justly / making things fair. Can children think of other examples where people are being treated unfairly? (you could reference the examples on slides 5&6)

Slide 10: Responding and words for worship

So now let's bring our thoughts together and reflect on what we might have learned from the words of Jesus about showing justice – our 'How-to-be-attitude' for this week.....

....I wonder which words we've heard today stand out for you?.....

....I wonder how they might help us to know how to live justly and treat others fairly?....

....I wonder what opportunities we might have to do this in our school community?....or in the world?

[Give pupils some time here to talk or to think]

I'm going to use some words from a Christian song about living in this way now, but as a prayer. The words talk about showing justice. [You could also play the song for children to use as a prayer. *Original word in the prayer was 'singing'.]

Slide 11: Prayer

God of Justice, Saviour to all,

[You] came to rescue the weak and the poor,

Chose to serve and not be served.....

We must go – live to feed the hungry, stand beside the broken.....

Stepping forward keep us from just *talking**

Move us into action

We must go!



Slide 12: Amen

Sending: Slide 13

Leader: As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

All: May we live justly and treat others with fairness today.



To listen to / sing:

[Chain of love](#) or [When I needed a neighbour](#) (BBC)

To listen to: God of Justice by Tim Hughes: [God of Justice by Tim Hughes \(Lyric\) \(youtube.com\)](#)



Slide 14: Reflective areas

Put a set of balance scales in your reflective area. The bucket balance scales that can be found in infant classes are ideal. You will also need some blocks or weights with injustices written or stuck on them. There are some examples provided on p.6. Also provide some small pieces of paper and pens, for children to write / draw on. If you want to, you could also feature some pictures and case studies of social justice issues, e.g.

[Tearfund](#)

[Christian Aid](#)

[Traidcraft](#)

[Hope.co.uk](#)

[Unicef Rights of the Child](#)

Choose case studies to suit the age of the pupils.



When I was.....

Gather the objects listed below to use this reflective reading together.

You will need:

a plate & some food [real or role play]; a glass of water; a chain of paper people (which you can re-use in the reflection!); some dolls' clothes (or a small item of clothing such as gloves); a 'thermometer' from a role play first aid kit; a large bunch of keys.

People were always asking Jesus, 'What's important in God's kingdom?' so Jesus spoke these words:

I was hungry	<i>[lay plate of food]</i>	You shared your food
I was thirsty	<i>[lay glass of water]</i>	You gave me a drink
I was alone	<i>[lay people 'chain']</i>	You kept me company
I had no clothes	<i>[lay item of clothing]</i>	You gave me something to wear
I was ill	<i>[lay thermometer]</i>	You looked after me
I was in prison	<i>[lay keys]</i>	You visited me

Whenever you helped someone in need you helped me.

The people who do these things are the people of God's kingdom.





...Jesus said to the people **'Those who want to act justly more than anything else are truly happy.'** Some people in the world are treated unfairly in a way that makes a big difference to their lives.

Acting justly means standing up for them!

Scales are often used as a symbol of justice. Look at the scales, one side is weighted down with things that aren't fair. What do you think about these things?



Talk about how we might act justly and stand up for people who are being treated unfairly.



On a piece of paper write a thought, prayer or action that you will do to help bring fairness to our world. Add it to the other side of the scales.



Injustice labels for blocks on the scales

Lack of clean water	Lack of food	No education
No home	Unfair pay	Lack of medicine
No dignity	No hope for a better future	No one to care



Ideas for actions to fight injustice, could be used as labels on the prayer station

Compassion	Fair Trade	Campaigning
Volunteering	Fair Pay	Prayer
Fundraising	Free Education	Giving

