

# STAND UP for JUSTICE

## WELCOME

Hi Kids! Welcome! Are you having a good time? I hope you're ready to dive in! Let's get started by playing a game!

## PRE-TEACH

This game is called "Stand Up." I'll let you know who gets to stand up, so listen carefully: (If you have kids who can't stand, encourage them to raise a hand! Kids remain standing until the game ends.)

- STAND UP if you ate breakfast this morning.
- STAND UP if you like pizza.
- STAND UP if you have a brother or sister.
- STAND UP if you have a pet.
- STAND UP if you have a middle name.
- STAND UP if you like to dance and sing.
- STAND UP if you have ridden a horse.
- STAND UP if you take music lessons.
- STAND UP if you hugged someone today.
- STAND UP if you are wearing clothes. =0)

**SLIDE:** Stand Up theme slide

## THEME INTRO

Wow! We were able to get everyone to stand up! That's great, because our theme for this unit is STAND UP. But I'm not going to make you stand up any longer. You can sit down now. (*Allow kids to sit.*)

Now, as a theme, STAND UP sounds pretty simple, right? Well, yes and no. See, I'm not talking about when you stand up after sitting down or when you stand up after laying down in your bed. I'm talking about standing up FOR something. When you stand up FOR something, you're saying that you believe in it, that it's

important to you. Hopefully that makes a little more sense. So, we're going to be looking at a few of the things Jesus stood up for. And if we want to be followers of Jesus, we should be standing up for the same things He stood up for, right? Right!

**SLIDE:** Stand Up for Justice

## DAY'S TOPIC INTRO

Today, we're going to discover how Jesus stood up for justice. Understanding what we mean by "justice" is a little tricky because the word has many meanings. Justice can mean making sure people who break the law are punished. Justice can mean making sure all the laws in the city are enforced. And justice can mean making sure that things are made right for people who have had wrongs done to them.

Because we're interested in standing up for the same things Jesus stood up for, we're going to be looking at Biblical Justice, what God meant when He talked about justice.

**SLIDE:** Justice definition

The definition of justice we're using is doing the right thing for people. So in our day-to-day living, justice would be treating EVERYONE - family, friends, enemies(!) - equally with dignity, and generosity. It doesn't matter if they're younger or older, richer or poorer, have disabilities, dress differently, speak differently, or have a different color of skin. Whew! (That's a lot of ways people are different, right?)

It means if there are people who aren't getting justice, we'll help them. We'll stand up for them.

Isn't that how Jesus treated people? He didn't treat rich people better than poor people. He didn't refuse to help people who looked different or acted different. He always did the right thing. And we want to be like Him, and Stand Up for justice, too.

Let's take a moment to pray that God would speak to us today as we learn more about the kind of justice God wants us to stand up for!

*Pray.*

## BIBLE STORY

The Bible is the story of how God loves the world and how God loves us. Let's check out how Jesus taught us to treat others. If you have your Bible or Bible App, you can look with me to Matthew 22. In this verse, someone asks Jesus what the Greatest Commandment was. See, back in Bible times, there were a set of rules everyone had to follow called the Ten Commandments. The person asking Jesus this question wanted to know which was the most important rule, so he could be sure to follow that one rule better than the others. Jesus tells him that the greatest commandment is **"Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself"**.

What does "love your neighbor as yourself" mean? It means treating people the same way you would like to be treated. In this verse, Jesus uses the word 'neighbor' but He's not just talking about the people who live next door, He's also talking about the other people you see everyday: classmates, teachers, parents, siblings, and all the people in your community!

Let's think about this a minute. How do you like to be treated? Do you like it when people share their things with you or when they say kind words to you? Do you like it when people help you when you make a mistake? Yeah! We all like it when people are kind to us, or share their things

with us and help us fix our mistakes in a loving way. When we treat other people the way we would like to be treated, we're treating them with fairness, dignity, and generosity. That's JUSTICE!

But remember, it's also about helping people who aren't being treated with justice, especially people who don't have anyone else to stand up for them. Jesus talked a lot about the importance of taking care of people who don't have families and taking care of people who don't have a lot of money. When someone doesn't have money or when someone doesn't have a family to help them out, they can become targets of injustice. Just think about all your parents do for you. They provide you with food, clothing and shelter. And if someone treats you badly, your parents stick up for you or to help you stand up for yourself. Now imagine you didn't have your parents to look out for you. If your shoes got too small for your feet, what would you do? If an adult was treating you unfairly, what would you do?

The truth is, all over the world there are kids and adults who get treated poorly and don't have someone to STAND UP for them. As God's kids, as God's people, how should we respond? How should we respond when people make fun of the kid in our school who never has nice or clean clothes? How should we respond when we see a homeless person? How should we respond when we learn that there are kids in other parts of the world who don't get enough to eat?

## HOW CAN YOU STAND UP FOR JUSTICE?

Kids, I believe Jesus wants US: YOU, ME, and all His followers in churches around the world to STAND UP for justice. But what does that even look like? It looks like you being friendly

to kids who aren't like you, and sticking up for the "different" kid that everyone makes fun of. It looks like me buying food and giving it away to a local food pantry. It looks like the church giving time, energy and money to make sure that homeless people have a place to stay at night. It might look like marching in a demonstration to show your support for people who are asking for justice. It looks like all of us taking care of our older neighbors by making sure they aren't lonely and have enough food in their pantries. Can you imagine yourself doing those things? You would be following Jesus' example of standing up for justice.

*Pray and release kids to groups for discussion.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Today we talked about standing up for justice. What do you think "justice" means?
2. Have you ever been treated unjustly? What happened? How did it make you feel?
3. Have you ever seen anyone else being treated unjustly? What happened? How do you think the person felt?
4. I'm going to give you some examples of how people might be treated unjustly, and you tell me how you could follow Jesus' example and stand up for justice for that person.
  - a. Two kids get in trouble with the teacher for passing notes during a test, but one of them was not passing notes.
  - b. Several kids are making fun of a boy who has trouble behaving.
  - c. Your friend is having a birthday party, but doesn't want to invite a classmate who's "not the same color as us."
  - d. A kid who is still learning to speak English is told by a classmate to "go back where you came from."

*Pray that the Holy Spirit would empower kids to be like Jesus and Stand Up for JUSTICE.*

## GO LIVE IT OUT CHALLENGE

Here's something for you to do at home, and talk about with your family!

## CHANGE FOR CHANGE

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Shoe box, wrapping paper, scissors, tape, markers.

What would you like to see changed so that people can experience justice? Is there an organization that is working toward that goal? You can support that work with your donations.

Create a Collection Box to help you save change to donate. Upcycle a shoe box by covering it with paper or paint, and cutting a slot in the lid big enough for coins or dollars to fit through.

Whenever you receive money, put some of it in your Collection Box. Encourage your whole family to participate! When the box is full, donate the money to the organization of your choice. Here are some organizations for you to consider:

- World Vision: **[www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)** A Christian organization that helps support health, justice, and equal opportunity for people in developing nations.
- Convoy of Hope: **[www.convoyofhope.org](http://www.convoyofhope.org)** A faith-based, humanitarian organization that helps empower others to live independent lives free from poverty, disease, and hunger.
- Autism Speaks: **[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)** Enhancing the lives of people on the autism spectrum.
- Sojourners: **[sojo.net](http://sojo.net)** Working to help church and community leaders take a stand against racial injustice.