YOUTH LED 3/6 – WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

This lesson is made up of 5 sections: Ice Breaker, Pose the Problem, Scripture, Looking at a Person or History, and So What. Take turns reading and leading; some of you may need to go twice!

Students: try not to read ahead, there are some questions and answers that will be more fun to leave until you gather.

ICE BREAKER

[ASK] With your phone, pull up a picture from the camera roll on your phone of someone who is your neighbor. If you don’t have a phone, think about a person who you would pick.

[SHARE] Give the group 2 minutes is done or when everyone is ready, take turns sharing with each other.

[LEADER ONLY] Show a photo of Breonna Taylor

[SAY] When we think of ‘neighbor’, our first instinct may be to think of people who live next door to us, those who we live with, or see at Kidd Valley or Starbucks. Do we think about Breonna Taylor, or a refugee, or George Floyd’s family? Even though they may not be close by, they are our neighbor.

POSE THE PROBLEM

[RECAP – SAY] We are looking at DEEP JUSTICE so we can go beyond NOT-SO-DEEP SERVICE. DEEP JUSTICE involves 3 responses: physical, relational, and systemic.

Here are some examples of not so deep service:
  - We go to a march on Saturday and then don’t do anything else.
  - We post on Social media and that’s it.

The problem is homelessness, police brutality, and racism exist and “othering” keeps us divided. Many white people have the chance to leave the protest and go home to a safe place and after feeding the poor, go home to a stocked pantry. If we don’t see others as our neighbor, there’s no reason to help them.
SCRIPTURE

[ASK] What are the 3 commandments in this? (answers at the bottom if you get stuck)

What are some examples of each of these?

[SAY] We want to see 2 important things from this, first is the difference between COMPASSION and JUSTICE. Think about what the difference may be. If Christ calls us to do both as we Love Others, it’s good to understand the difference. Simply put, compassion ‘brings the Samaritan there’, and justice ‘keeps him there’.

In other words, compassion is what makes us look at someone, and justice is how we respond.

[ASK] Does the Samaritan do the 3 layers of DEEP JUSTICE? (you may have to make some assumptions)
If he didn’t do all 3, how could he do the other layers?

LOOKING AT PEOPLE OR HISTORY
[SAY] You may be familiar with St. Francis of Assisi; he’s who the pope is named after. St. Francis lived in the 1200s and is known for giving sermons to the birds and for selling all his possessions and living with the poor. – But since he’s dead, lets look at someone who is still alive and may be easier to follow and learn from… Afterall a few things have changed, minus the plague that started in the 1300s...

There is a man named Shane Claiborne. He grew up in East Tennessee and he went to college at Eastern University in Philadelphia. While he was there he heard about this community of 40 poor and homeless people living in an abandoned church that were going to be evicted by the denomination that owned the building. Hearing about this and being moved by compassion, he acted and created a sign that he placed outside of the church. It said “How can we worship a homeless man on Sunday and ignore one on Monday?” [you may want to say that again] And he didn’t just stop there, he goes back to the school and gathers up 100 people to help. Those 100 people reach out to newspapers, and radio stations, and to the news and raise awareness around the issue. In the end, these 100 college students, not much older than you, go the attention of the area and were able to find housing for all 40 of the people living in the church!

Now days, Shane lives in Philadelphia in a community called “Simple Way”. It’s a community built around the ideas of the early church – to make sure that communities care for each other and help each other meet the needs of their neighbor.

Shane in an interview was asked about "Love your neighbor as yourself", and this was his response:
   “In the south, this was the same as southern hospitality and sharing sugar with the person who lived next door. That’s beautiful, but it’s not enough. Our neighbor is also the person who is sleeping on the streets. Our neighbor is the refugee in Iraq. Our neighbor is the person who is deeply suffering in this world.”
SO WHAT (RESPOND)
[SAY] The Samaritan, Shane, and St. Francis didn’t just do single moments of service, they did DEEP justice. For Shane, he had to redefine who his neighbors were. Maybe we also need to think more broadly about who our neighbors are so we can see people in compassion and act in justice; otherwise, we’ll only look at people that have been beaten up on the side of the road.

[ASK] How do you get to know your neighbors?
How can we better hear about our neighbor’s needs?
How can we love our neighbors impacted by Police Brutality? How can we do DEEP JUSTICE?
How can we love our neighbors who experience homelessness? How can we do DEEP JUSTICE?

CHALLENGE:
[SAY] Each week we want to make sure we’re not just becoming a justice-on-Sunday people and we’ll have a take-away challenge each week:

Go to your family this week. Is your family COMPASSIONATE about any topic or group of people who experience oppression? Are there any topics that you could be more compassionate about by redefining who your neighbor is?

Finally, as a family, how can you do DEEP JUSTICE together? Is it supporting organizations that promote Justice, is it feeding the poor this week, is it going to a BLM march and intentionally talking to people at the march?

As you conclude your time, be sure if you haven’t done so already to check-in with each other, and we encourage you to end your time in prayer.

Answers to Read Scripture:

 Love God, Love Others, Love Yourself