

# JUSTICE (LARGE GROUP)

## Lesson 3: Beyond Justice to Grace

Objective: Students will learn that privilege is something that some have more than others. They will learn that grace goes beyond justice in terms of generosity and will hopefully break down the idea of meritocracy (you get what you earned and worked for) in the faith



### GAME/ ACTIVITY:

Privilege Activity ([www.paulkivel.com](http://www.paulkivel.com)) under Resources-named Examining Class and Race. There are over 40 statements. You DO NOT have to read all of them. 10-15 would be more than sufficient.

Line up students shoulder to shoulder in a big space at the same starting line. If the statement read matches their life experience, then tell them to move forward. If it does not, tell them to stay in their position or step backwards. Read the statement aloud and have students move accordingly. Once all statements are read, what students should observe is that not everyone is in the same position that they all started in. Have students take a seat and ask them to answer some of the following questions with 2- 3 people nearby. After each question is asked and time given to answer, ask some groups to share some of their answers to the whole group.

1-Where did you wind up compared to where you started? Why do you think you went as far as you did?

2-How did you compare to people that are different than you? Why do you think that is?

3-What did you think about this activity? What did you learn about yourself? Others?

4-In America, many people believe that your success is directly related to your effort and hard work. Based on this activity, do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

5-How would you make the activity more fair if you believed it to be unfair? Give some examples.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Leader: Living in America, if you did not already know, is more difficult for people of color than it is for those that are not. Watch the following video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX\\_Vzl-r8NY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY)

There are many obstacles for people of color in this "Race of Life". What were some that you saw? Who had the hardest time running the race? Why? Who had it the easiest? Why? We saw the white males have a huge head start. This is one example of privilege.

What does the Bible have to say about privilege and justice? Let's find out. Listen to a story that Jesus told in Matthew 20. I think it will help us know clearly how we can deal with this idea of privilege.

**Leader:** Read Matt 20. If you can put Bibles in their hands, do so. Or place Scripture up on PowerPoint.

After reading the story, ask students to summarize the story highlighting characters involved and basic plot.

**Leader: Who was in the story?**

Students: master of the house, laborers who worked all day, laborers worked half the day, laborers worked for one hour of the day

**Leader: How much did they all get paid?**

Students: One denarius (one day's pay back in Bible times)

**Leader: How would you describe the master of the house?**

Students: Crazy paying everyone the same, Generous, Stupid (responses will vary)

**Leader: Why were the laborers who worked longest so upset?**

Students: They did not feel that they were being treated fairly by the master of the house. They were getting paid less even though they worked the most.

**Leader: How did the master of the house respond to the grumbling workers?** Read v. 13 out loud after receiving some student answers.

**Leader: What is Jesus, who told the story, trying to teach us here in the Bible?**

Students: Being generous is important, complaining isn't helpful, get your payment beforehand. Responses will vary.

**Leader:** Jesus told us that the kingdom of Heaven is like this story. Remember all throughout the book of Matthew, Jesus is King. If He is, then He has a kingdom and followers/disciples that are a part of that kingdom. What kinds of traits do people in the kingdom have to have in order to be a part? I want you to think. Of all the workers that worked for the master, which group received what they deserved? (The first group of laborers that worked the entire day.) Now, if they got what they deserved, then we call that justice. It is right and fair that they got their wage for the work they performed for the master of the house. Look back in the story, what was the agreed upon wage in verse 2? (a denarius for a day's work) They received just that. No more, no less. Fair, right? No problem. No disappointments. No tricks or injustice. They worked and the master paid.

Now, let's think about the other workers. Did they get what they deserved? (No, they received more than what they deserved.) They worked less and should have gotten paid less. That is how it works in schools and in businesses. You get what you work for. But, in this story, it DOES NOT work that way. These workers received something more, something beyond justice. They received GRACE. They did not work the same amount of time as the other workers but got the same amount of pay; the denarius. GRACE is when we are given something as a gift because of the generosity of the giver and not the work of the receiver. GRACE changes things and it is the opposite of how the world works. If you work for half a day, you get paid for half a day. If you are a hard worker, you will succeed. We see that it is not a true statement in the world we live in. People of color don't have the headstart; don't have special privileges; don't get a boost to start off with. What did the workers who waited all day in the marketplace until the eleventh hour (they only worked one hour) receive that day? Make no mistake, They were not lazy. They wanted to work. No one was hiring, They could do the work and they were ready to provide for themselves and/or their families. The desire to work was there. They received GRACE. They were given a gift and they knew it. Notice they ARE NOT COMPLAINING. I am sure you would see a big grin on their face and look of surprise in their eyes. GRACE does that. It catches you off guard and amazes you in the most wonderful ways.

There is no special privilege in God's kingdom. He pays all the same. See the Bible is clear, the wage that we all earn is spiritual death according to Romans 6:23. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* If God were to give us what we deserve, what would be just, then we would all be on a one way trip to Hell forever and always; separated from Him eternally. See God, through His Son and because of His deep amazing love, gives us a gift of GRACE instead. If you and I put our trust in Jesus and what He did on the cross, then we can receive, not earn, life forever with Jesus in Heaven and become a part of this upside-down kingdom that can change the world. If you wondered who you were in the story, let me make it clear, you are one of the workers standing in the marketplace waiting; doing nothing. The master of the house, Jesus, is rolling up to you and saying, "You wanna come and be with me?" There has to be a response. No response is a response. That means you are still standing around waiting. But if you say Yes to Jesus, then because of His gift of GRACE your world is about to change.

**Pray**



## **Breakout questions**

1-Who are you in the story that Jesus told?. (early worker, late worker, still waiting at the marketplace, at home not wanting to come to work)

2-How do you feel about a child rapist or murderer finding Jesus in prison? Why do you feel that way?

3-What do you learn about Jesus from this story? What do you learn about yourself?

4-What do you learn about justice? About grace? From this story?

5-How can you become a person of generosity and grace in this world of racism and bigotry? Be specific.