

“Global Neighborly Love”

A lesson about how our decisions for comfort and convenience affect others.

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

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Key verses/text:

Mark 12:31, Proverbs 31:8, and part of the Baptismal Covenant

Objectives: To help students consider how their actions affect others, even people they never meet. Also, there is a specific call to action in fighting human trafficking though speaking out against drug use.

The Set up: Minimal to Moderate

The Plan:

- Hook: Comfort Equation (10 mins): An active, possibly messy game that illustrates how one person’s comfort is sometimes at the cost of another person.
- Book: Loving through Justice (5 mins): Identifying God as an artist who creates things with intentionality and as a reflection of his love.
- Look: Global Decisions (15 mins): Listing ways that our actions affect others, and learning specifically about how American’s use of cocaine causes the death of children in Colombia.
- Took: Loving your Global Neighbor (10 mins): Brainstorming ways to strive for justice.

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- 3 buckets (one should be smaller than the other 2) and water
- larger cups (solo size), 1 cup each for half of your group
- spoons OR tiny cups (mouthwash cup size), 1 each for half your group
- Bibles
- Book of Common Prayer
- Whiteboard or Flip Chart/ markers
- Paper
- Pens/pencils

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions)

Comfort Equation (Hook, 10 mins)

We are opening with an active game that is supposed to illustrate how sometimes our comfort comes at someone else's expense. It is intended to be unfair. The game is easy once it has been communicated, but the description might seem a little confusing... but it will be worth it once you understand it!

Directions are at the back of the lesson.

Possible processing questions following the game:

- Who was the winner of this game?
- How did it feel to be playing? (ask kids from both groups)
- How do you think that God would have responded if he had been playing the game?

Loving Through Justice (Book, 5 mins)

In this section we are looking at some verses and concepts that shouldn't be new ones for your group, but we will use them as a reminder that we have to be intentional. This section shouldn't take long- it's a pretty straightforward concept, and you will need the extra time for the remaining lesson.

- Invite 3 students to look up verses/text and have them ready for when you call on them.
- After each verse/text, you will ask the students to think about how those verses applied to the game that you just played...
- The verses are listed here for your planning purposes:
 1. First Verse: **Mark 12:31**: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."
 - Was it easy to "love your neighbor as yourself" in the game we just played?
 2. Second Verse: **Proverbs 31:8**: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. (NLT) (I like the NLT version, because the word "crushed" fits well with what we are discussing)
 - Did anyone speak up for the losing group in the game we just played?
 - Do you think God would have said anything?
 3. Third Text: **Page 305, BCP**: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?... Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
 - Was everyone respected in the game we just played?
 - How could you have "strived for justice" in this game?

Mini-Lecture:

Give a quick, mini-lecture, saying something like:

Most of us have heard the verses about “loving your neighbor as yourself,” and may even be familiar with the call to strive for justice. But these things can be tricky!

It may not be too difficult to identify when we are being good to people who are directly in front of us- the follow through may be hard, but identifying out behavior is fairly easy! What is harder is thinking about how our actions affect people that we don't see, and will very likely never even meet. But God has asked us to love those neighbors as well!

Let's take a closer look at how our actions play a role in the lives of our neighbors across the globe.

Global Decisions (Look, 15 mins)

In this section, we will be making a list of the ways our actions adversely affect people that are strangers, but are still considered our neighbors. We will be paying specific attention to how American's use of cocaine causes the death of children in South America. This is obviously a heavy topic and you will need to use discretion in deciding how to present it to your students, but this is part of a campaign that some of our church leadership has connected with after a plea has come from the Episcopal Bishop of Colombia. We are looking to our young people to be an agent for change... which we all know they can be!

- You may want to start this piece by letting them know that the intention is not to guilt anyone into changing their actions, but to raise awareness and motivate a loving response.. God doesn't ask for us to live a certain way to place a burden on us, but to guide us towards a place of peace and love. We will have the same intention in this conversation...
- Set up your flipchart or whiteboard by putting a line down the middle. On the left hand side, write “action” at the top, and on the right, write “effect on strangers”
- Ask the students to brainstorm thing that they do to make their lives more comfortable that may have an adverse effect on people that they don't even know. List them on your board as you go.
- This is a little bit abstract, but you can probably help them along by offering a few examples. For example, I get to wear really inexpensive clothes that are *sometimes* produced by children in another country. Or, many of us enjoy the convenience of having our own cars to drive instead of carpooling, which is causing climate change...
- You may also want to encourage them to get out their phones to help them add on the list. Tell them to start their search with words like, “global impact of...”

- Once you have a pretty good list, introduce the action of “using cocaine” (unless they have already listed it, of course!). Allow them to think about the global impact there is on saying “yes” to drugs!
- They will likely be able to list some things, but push them to think globally. Add some of the facts that you can find at helpusprotectourchildren.com. Here are the is a piece of the data offered on the website:
 - the US Government estimates that the drug cartel generates approximately **\$63 billion in revenue** per year. **Americans are the largest consumers** of cocaine worldwide.
 - **95 percent** of the cocaine seized in the USA is produced in Colombia.
 - there are approximately **443,000 users of cocaine in the State of Georgia.**
 - **3 out of 4 individuals** who experiment with any form of cocaine will develop a cocaine addiction.
 - **the demand for cocaine**, created by the users of cocaine in the USA, that is driving the kidnapping and execution of innocent children and their parents. If the demand for cocaine were reduced there would be fewer children in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras being kidnapped and their parents killed.
 - **9 out of every 10** children kidnapped in Colombia by the cartel will die while in captivity?
 - kidnapped children in Colombia are **as young as 12**, and as old as only 19?

***again, the intent of this information is not to shame anyone, but instead to make them aware of the bigger picture. This is something that breaks God’s heart and there is no way to change things if we are unaware of them.

Transitional Statement:

The good news is that everyone in the room has a voice and some degree of authority in which they can affect change. All we have to do is be intentional about creating that change...

Loving Your Global Neighbor (Took, 10 mins)

The students will now brainstorm ways that they can take action this week to create positive change in the areas we listed on the board

- Have the kids form small groups of 2-4 people each and give each group a piece of paper and something to write with.
- Ask groups to choose one action and “effect on strangers” from the list that you generated and think of something that they can and WILL do this week to be a catalyst for change. It is okay if groups choose the same item.
- You may want to make sure someone takes the “cocaine” action since there was a lot of conversation around it- you don’t want to leave that hanging!

- Give them 2-5 minutes, and as they work, go around and help them out. Make sure that they come up with valid ideas- ideas that will make a difference, but that they can actually accomplish. For example, on the cocaine piece, they shouldn't state, "don't use cocaine." Unless they are already using cocaine, that doesn't change the problem at all. What IS helpful is participating in the "did you know" campaign, and posting things on social media to make other people aware. More details can be found here:
<http://helpusprotectourchildren.com/youth-group-overview/>
- If they feel discouraged and wonder if they can really make a change in the world, remind them that just a few short years ago, a single man dumped a bucket of ice water on his head, which led to a greater awareness of ALS and \$115 million dollars to be raised. They have a voice in social media, with how they spend their money, and in any other number of actions they take... they just have to use it!

Close in prayer, praying the part of the Baptismal Covenant, Page 305, BCP:

Leader: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of Christ?

Youth: I will, with God's help.

Leader: Will you seek and serve Christian all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Youth: I will, with God's help.

Leader: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

Youth: I will, with God's help.

Comfort Equation

This game is designed to be unfair, so go ahead and brace yourself for some complaints!

The setup: There is a visual at the bottom to help, but basically,

- you are setting up 3 buckets in a row, each are at least 15 feet away from each other.
- The first bucket should be the large and be filled with water.
- The second bucket is smaller (but not tiny), and about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way filled.
- The last bucket is about the same size as the first and is filled about $\frac{1}{2}$ way.

The team set up:

- Break the kids into two groups that are about equal size. It doesn't have to be exact. Green Group and Blue Group
- Give the Green Group one spoon or tiny cup per person and have them stand by the 2nd bucket.
- Give the Blue Group the larger solo cups and have them stand by the 3rd bucket.

The Explanation and Play:

- Tell the groups that their comfort is determined by the amount of water that they have in their team bucket (the one they are standing next to). The more water they have in their bucket, the more comfortable they are.
- In order to fill their buckets, they must use their cups or spoons and scoop water from another bucket and put it in their own. BUT...
- The Green Group can ONLY scoop water from the 1st bucket and
- The Blue Group can scoop water but NOT from the 1st bucket... don't tell them they have to scoop from the 2nd bucket (the Green comfort bucket), but they will likely ask if they can, and the answer is yes... that will be the most likely place they would look to scoop water from.
- Have them play the game, stopping them after a few minutes, when the point has been made. What SHOULD happen is that the 3rd bucket fills very quickly, and the 2nd bucket is almost completely depleted. In other words, the Blue Group comfort comes at the cost of the Green Group.

Other game things to consider:

- If the Blue Group finds another water source (like a faucet) to collect water from, they are allowed to do so, just don't make the suggestion yourself.

