

**Wisdom Circle - Justice
January 2015**

PREPARATION

Words of Wisdom

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

There is no crueler tyranny than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice.

~ [Charles de Montesquieu](#)

Charity begins at home, and justice begins next door.

~ [Charles Dickens](#)

Let me put it autobiographically and say that in Nazi Germany I soon came to the question, "What is it in my preaching and my political action that would stop this?" . . . It is a liberal attitude to say that we keep ourselves informed and read the best papers on these matters, and perhaps join a voluntary association now and then. But to be involved with other people so that it costs and so that one exposes the evils of society . . . requires something like conversion, something more than an attitude. It requires a sense that there's something wrong and I must be different from the way I have been.

~ James Luther Adams

Spiritual Exercise –

Do one justice-making activity this month. You choose what to do. You can take part in the church's service project. Check the Window and Order of Service announcements for details. You can be part of a Martin Luther King commemoration. You can participate in a demonstration. You can write a passionate email to a legislator about an issue you care about. If nothing else, you could write a check to a cause or organization that is slightly larger than what your first impulse would be. There are many opportunities and many possibilities.

After the experience, reflect. How do you feel about it? What did you notice about your experience? Did it change you in any way? If the experience was in a group, what did you learn, positive or negative from the other group members?

Questions for Reflection:

- What is a justice issue that you feel passionate about? What experiences in your life led you to care about that particular issue?
- Recall a time when you witnessed an injustice occurring, and you spoke out against it or acted against it. What gave you the courage to do so?
- Recall a time when you witnessed or participated in an injustice, but you did not speak out against it or act against it. What prevented you?

Video:

This is a TED Talk by Bryan Stevenson, called “We Need to Talk About an Injustice,” in which he talks about several intersecting justice issues in America – race, class, and incarceration. It is a good introduction to the issue of systemic injustice. The video is a few years old, but still very relevant.

http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en

Wisdom Circle – Justice Session Plan

This session plan is a suggested guide, not a rigid set of rules. You may adjust this plan as you feel is appropriate in your group.

Gathering & Welcome (~5 min)

Chalice Lighting (~2 min)

By Edward Everett Hale

*I am only one
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.*

Check-In (20-30 minutes)

As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that is lifting your spirits, and one thing that is weighing you down. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.

Business (10 minutes)

Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...

Discussion (60 minutes)

Introduce Topic. Take Turns Reading aloud the “Words of Wisdom.”

- What is a justice issue that you feel passionate about? What experiences in your life led you to care about that particular issue?
- Recall a time when you witnessed an injustice occurring and you spoke out against it or acted against it. What gave you the courage to do so?
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Silent Reflection (~2 minutes)

First Responses (Share in the order you feel moved)

Cross-Conversation (Ask questions that invite deeper reflection; Speak from personal experience, and use “I statements”; Avoid explaining or judging)

Final Thoughts (Share in the order you feel moved)

Gratitude (5-10 minutes)

Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session.

Closing

Optional Closing Song:

"One More Step" by Joyce Poley

One more step, we will take one more step, 'til there is peace for us and everyone, we'll take one more step.

One more word, we will say one more word, 'til every word is heard by everyone, we'll say one more word.

One more prayer, we will say one more prayer, 'til every prayer is shared by everyone, we'll say one more prayer.

One more song, we will sing one more song, 'til every song is sung by everyone, we'll sing one more song.

One More Step

$\text{♩} = 48$ *Smoothly, Unison*

1. One more step, we will take one
 2. One more word, we will say one
 3. One more prayer, we will say one
 4. One more song, we will sing one

more step, 'til there is peace for us and
 more word, 'til ev - ery word is heard by
 more prayer, 'til ev - ery prayer is shared by
 more song, 'til ev - ery song is sung by

ev - ery - one, we'll take one more step.
 ev - ery - one, we'll say one more word.
 ev - ery - one, we'll say one more prayer.
 ev - ery - one, we'll sing one more song.

Words & music: Joyce Poley, 1941- , © 1986 Joyce Poley,
 harmony by Grace Lewis-McLaren, 1939- , © 1992 Unitarian Universalist

ONE MORE STEP
 Irregular