

Junior Soldiers

UNIT 15 : LESSON 7



Grace VS Justice

PURPOSE: For the children to explore and understand that we experience both grace and justice in God.

Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Romans 3:24 (NLT)

Consider & Prayer

Read:

Proverbs 17:15-24

Justice is vital for our society to function well. It is about doing what is right and fair. It is our responsibility to contribute to justice in our world. All around the world, even in our own country and community, people are facing situations that are not fair just because of where they were born or other circumstances out of their control. Try to imagine what our world would be like if everyone acted with justice. Take some time to pray for insight into the injustices in our world and guidance for how you can contribute to justice.

Read:

Romans 5:12-21

By grace we have been made right in God's sight. Even though we sin and make mistakes, God forgives because of what Jesus has done on the cross. No matter what is going on for us, God's grace wins every time!

The grace of God exceeds our sins. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God made it possible for grace and justice to work together. By grace Jesus paid the penalty for sin – satisfying justice and setting us free.

We are also called to respond to others with a balance of justice and grace. This lesson will help our children to explore this difficult and complex challenge.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Whiteboard or poster and markers (optional)
- For Option 1 or Option 3 - Device to play music
- For Option 3 – four sheets of different coloured paper or four sheets of paper with a different colour written on each one
- Piñata & stick/hitting utensil
- Small treats – e.g. lollies, novelty erasers, stickers etc. (enough for one or two per child)
- Additional bag of treats for topping up
- A container to use for the 'penalty box'

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- Print out the passages and questions (page 8-9)
- Large sheets of paper, whiteboard, masking tape or chalk depending on how you set up your Venn diagram.
- Tape or blu-tac

For 'Memory Verse'

- Print sections of the Bible verse (page 10) - print multiple copies if you have a large group.

For 'Prayer Activity'

- Print out one copy of each of the prayer walk posters (page 11-15)
- White board
- Whiteboard markers
- Whiteboard erasers or tissues
- Pens/pencils/crayons/markers
- Paper
- Post it notes
- Notebooks (optional)
- Cross or heart (optional)
- World map
- Rulers
- Erasers
- Newspaper clippings about social issues around the world (E.g. slavery, unfair wages or working conditions, and education being restricted/not everyone allowed to go to school etc. - choose articles that are suitable for your group or use headlines only.)
- Tape or blu-tac
- Bibles
- Print image of scale from appendix

For 'Home and Beyond'

- Print enough copies of the Home and Beyond cards for each child

Connecting In

Imagine that your family has a rule that says if you are late for school you are not allowed to watch television that afternoon. One afternoon you find out that your brother or sister was late for school and they are still allowed to watch television. How do you respond?

- When have you heard the word 'justice'? *Allow for responses.*
- How would you define justice?

Record all the ideas on a white board or large sheet of paper.

Justice is about fairness. It's about following rules and getting what you deserve.

Activity

Choose one game to play – ensure that you explain the rules before you begin playing and emphasise the rules when someone is out. For example: "The rules of the game say that the last person to freeze is out – so Harry, you are out!"

- *Option 1: Musical Statues – play some music. When the music stops everyone must freeze. The last person to freeze is out.*
- *Option 2: Simon Says – leader must say 'Simon says...' then choose an action for the children to do. For example, 'Simon says turn in circles.' The children must all immediately do the chosen action. Occasionally, the leader must give an instruction without first saying 'Simon says'. When this happens the children must continue doing the previous action. Any child who begins to do the new action is out. Speed up instructions for more challenging play.*
- *Option 3: Colours – label four walls/spaces/corners four different colours. A child or leader turns around and covers their eyes while the children move to a colour. Without looking, the leader calls out a colour. All of the children who have chosen that colour are out. You could add music to this and when the music stops the children have five seconds to choose their colour.*

Link

When we started the game everyone knew the rules. You knew what you had to do to stay in or to get out. The game was fair and just because the same rules applied to everyone.

Now, let's think about another word... 'Grace'.

How would you define 'grace'?

Record all the ideas on a white board or large sheet of paper.

Grace doesn't concentrate on following all of the rules. It doesn't depend on what we earn or on what we deserve.

Piñata Activity

Explain to the children that the Piñata is full of treats. Once it bursts open everyone can run in and collect as many treats as possible. The fastest children will receive the most treats.

Allow the children to take turns hitting the Piñata until it opens.

The children will then run in and grab as many treats as they can.

At the end, count up how many treats everyone received and find out who has the most.

Explain to the children that you have another bag of treats. Remind them that these are your treats and that everyone has already received what they deserved – the fastest children got the most treats. Then begin to hand out additional treats until everyone has the same amount.

Link

While you each deserved to only keep what you retrieved, I chose to give up my treats so that you could each have the same amount. This is a small example of grace.

Replay Game

Replay the game you played initially – Musical Statues, Simon Says or Colours. This time, explain to the children that instead of being 'out' they will continue to play but they will have to place one of their piñata treats into the 'penalty box'. Play a few more rounds. Occasionally, when a child is out, give them one of your treats to place in the 'penalty box' instead of their own.

Link

Sometimes it seems that we must always choose between justice and grace but sometimes we can find a balance. In this game the rules said that the person who was out had to give up a treat. But there were times when I chose to give up one of my treats instead.

Ask one of the children whose penalty you paid...

- How did it feel to receive grace?

The rules were kept because the person who was out put a treat in the penalty box. However, that person was still able to keep their treats. I paid the penalty instead. This is an example of how justice and grace can work together.

The Main Thing

Read Matthew 20:1-16. You might like to ask volunteers to act out the story as you read it.

Discuss:

- How do you think the workers who were hired at the beginning of the day felt?
- How do you think the workers who were hired at the end of the day felt?
- What options do you think the landowner had at the end of the day?
- Do you think his choice to pay everyone the same, no matter how much work they had done, was fair or unfair?
- How did the landowner show justice?
- How did the landowner show grace?

Link

In this story, the landowner showed justice by paying his workers the agreed amount. He also showed grace because he paid all of the workers for a full day of work even though some of them had not earned it.

God told humans right from the beginning that the penalty for living life our own way is death. In order to earn eternal life we must live according to God's rules – all of his rules all of the time. Break a rule then pay the penalty – this is justice! But God loves us enough that he made another way. He sent Jesus to pay the penalty. We deserve death but through Jesus we receive life. This is grace. Jesus wants us to follow his example and show grace to others as well.

Tying In

Let's have a look at some other verses that talk about grace and/or justice

Divide the children into small groups and pairs. Distribute the verses (page 8-9) amongst the groups/pairs.

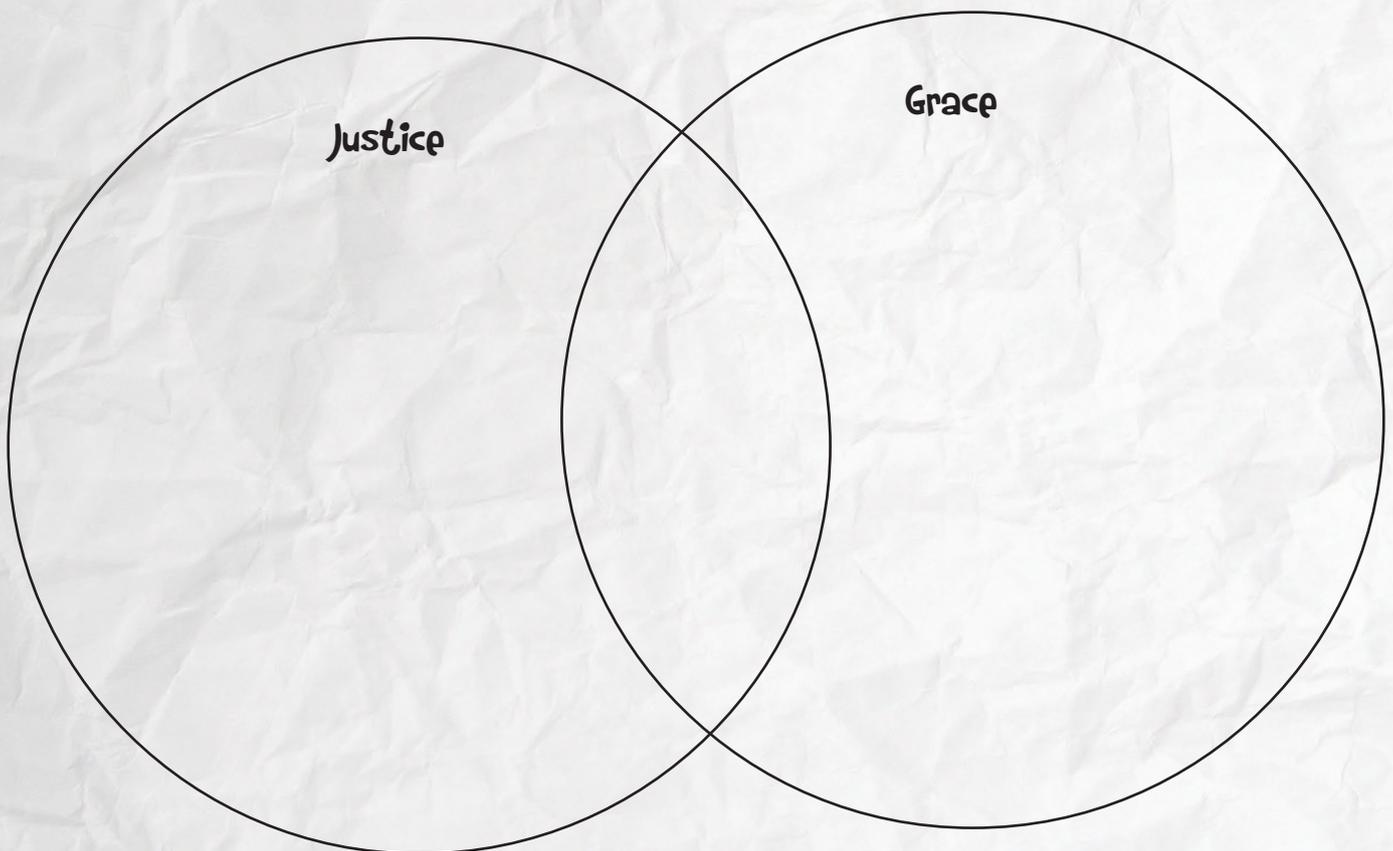
Ask the children to look up each verse in their Bibles then answer these questions:

Questions:

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Draw a Venn diagram on butcher's paper or a whiteboard or set up a Venn diagram by using chalk or masking tape on the floor.

When the group has decided which category each Bible verse fits into (grace, justice or both) have them place it in the correct location on the Venn diagram.



Memory Verse

Romans 3:24 (NLT)

Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Ask the children to work together to place the pieces of the memory verse (page 10) into the correct order. Ask each child to then take a turn reading it aloud. If you have a large group then print two or more sets of the memory verse and do this activity in smaller groups.

Prayer Time

Prayer Stations

Each of the prayer stations has a poster that goes with it. Stick these up on the walls around your space and allow your children to move around to them.

1. Thank You for Your Grace

At this station supply pens/pencils/markers and paper/notebooks/post-it notes (optional additional items e.g. small cross, love heart etc.)

- » *Think about a time where God has shown you grace (e.g. Jesus dying on the cross to pay for our sins).*
- » *Write/draw the situation and how you felt.*
- » *Write/draw a prayer or pray quietly thank God for his grace.*

2. Help me to show grace when...

At this station supply pens/pencils/markers, and paper/notebooks/post it notes or large paper/poster with the words "Help me to show grace when..."

- » *Think of a situation where you could show more grace (e.g. when someone pushes in front of you in line).*
- » *Think about and write/draw practical ideas of how you can do this.*
- » *On the paper below, write a prayer asking for God's grace in this situation.*

3. The gift of grace

At this station supply a whiteboard/a few small whiteboards, whiteboard markers, and whiteboard erasers or tissues.

- » *Draw an outline of a person.*
- » *Inside the outline, write the things that you would like grace for. For example: selfishness, greed etc.*
- » *Pray for this and then erase it! God gives us grace and erases our sins/the things we do wrong.*

4. Pray for those treated unfairly

At this station supply post-it notes, pens/pencils/markers, poster or a large world map, blu-tac or tape, newspaper clippings of social issues around the world.

- » *Write or say a prayer for people in your community, country or the world who are treated unfairly (stick the prayer on the poster below).*

5. Pray for balance of grace and justice

At this station, place an image of a balance scale, rulers, erasers and Bibles.

- » *Look up the verses in the Bible, and think about some of the others we have looked at today.*
- » *Place the ruler on top of the eraser to make your own balance scale and place your hands on either end of the ruler. As you pray, push down either end of the ruler thinking and praying about the times you show more of grace or justice.*
- » *Ask God to help you to show a balance of grace and justice when responding to situations.*

Home & Beyond

This week write or talk with your family/big bud about a time when you showed grace or justice. What did you choose? How did you feel about it? If you did it again would you choose differently?

RESOURCES / HAND OUT

John 1:17 (CEV)

The Law was given by Moses, but Jesus Christ brought us undeserved kindness and truth.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Psalms 33:5 (CEV)

He loves justice and fairness, and he is kind to everyone everywhere on earth.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Ephesians 2:8-9 (CEV)

You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve. This is God's gift to you, and not anything you have done on your own. It isn't something you have earned, so there is nothing you can brag about.

- What do you think these verses mean?
- What do you think is important in these verses?
- Do you think they are about grace, justice or both?

Romans 2:2 (CEV)

We know that God is right to judge everyone who behaves in this way.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Titus 2:11 (NLT)

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Psalms 9:8 (CEV)

You judge the world fairly and treat all nations with justice.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

2 Thessalonians 1:5 (CEV)

All of this shows that God judges fairly and that he is making you fit to share in his kingdom for which you are suffering.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Psalms 89:14 (CEV)

Your kingdom is ruled by justice and fairness with love and faithfulness leading the way.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Deuteronomy 32:4 (CEV)

The Lord is a mighty rock, and he never does wrong. God can always be trusted to bring justice.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Ephesians 6:14 (CEV)

Be ready! Let the truth be like a belt around your waist, and let God's justice protect you like armour.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

2 Thessalonians 2:16 (CEV)

God our Father loves us. He is kind and has given us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Colossians 1:6 (CEV)

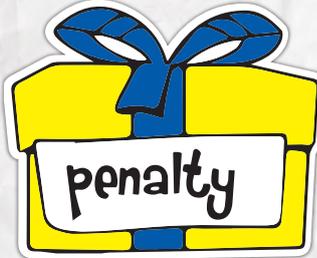
The good news is spreading all over the world with great success. It has spread in that same way among you, ever since the first day you learned the truth about God's wonderful kindness.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?

Psalms 40:10 (NLT)

I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart; I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power. I have told everyone in the great assembly of your unfailing love and faithfulness.

- What do you think this verse means?
- What do you think is important in this verse?
- Do you think it is about grace, justice or both?



Thank You for Your Grace

*Think about a time where God has shown you grace
(e.g. Jesus dying on the cross to pay for our sins).*

Write/draw the situation and how you felt.

Write/draw a prayer or pray quietly thank God for his grace.

Help me to show grace when...

**Think of a situation where you could show more grace
(e.g. when someone pushes in front of you in line).**

Think about and write/draw practical ideas of how you can do this.

On the paper below, write a prayer asking for God's grace in this situation.

The gift of grace

Draw an outline of a person. Inside the outline, write the things that you would like grace for. For example: selfishness, greed etc.

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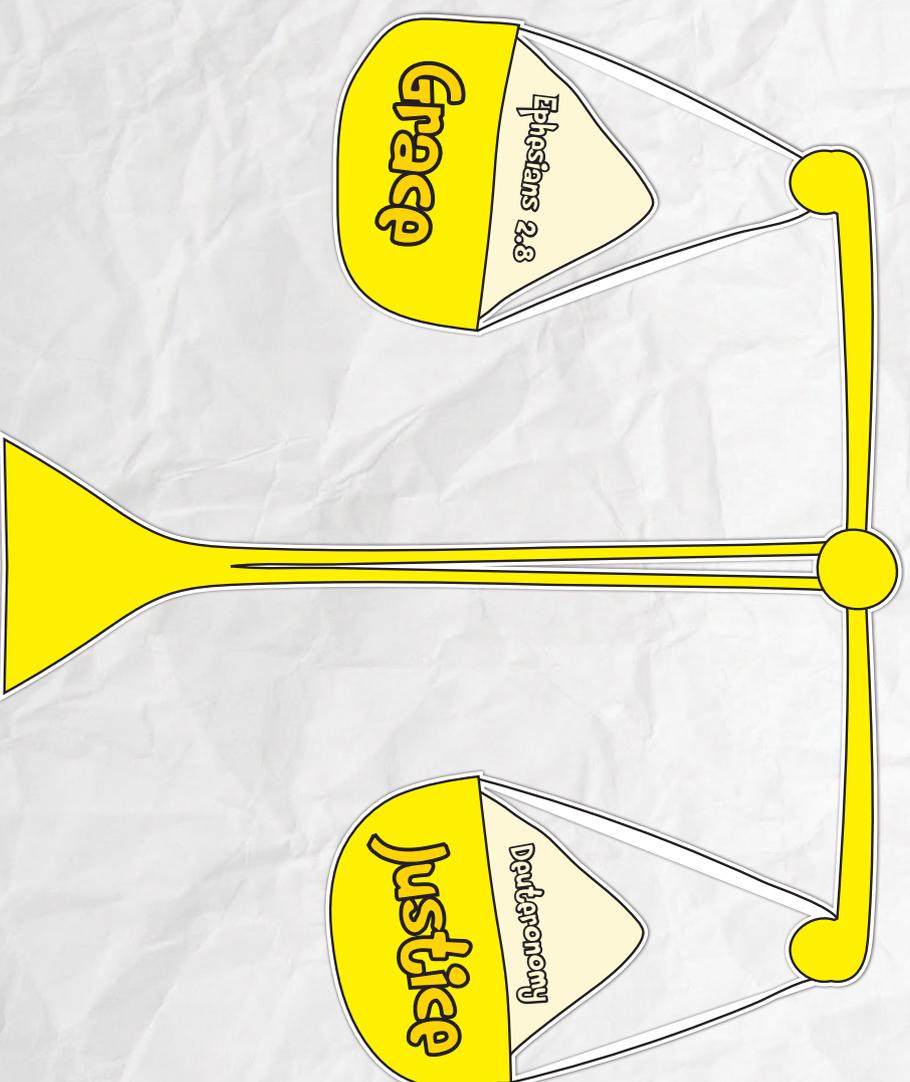


Pray for balance of grace and justice

Look up the verses in the Bible, and think about some of the others we have looked at today.

Place the ruler on top of the eraser to make your own balance scale and place your hands on either end of the ruler. As you pray, push down either end of the ruler thinking and praying about the times you show more of grace or justice.

Ask God to help you to show a balance of grace and justice when responding to situations



Home & Beyond

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