

HELP CHILDREN RESPOND TO INJUSTICE

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If you had a dime for every time you heard “Not fair!” in your house, how rich would you be? Children seem to have a keen sense of injustice when it comes to not getting their way, but they may have little understanding of how to recognize or confront real injustice. Defining injustice is crucial because if we don’t have the correct definition, we can’t possibly arrive at the solution.



God is the righteous judge (Genesis 18:25), and justice is the accurate reflection of God’s character in our dealings with people. Injustice is any principle, policy, or practice that does not result in people being treated with the respect and fairness that God would employ.

Unfortunately, many of us fail to understand justice this way. We tend to see it only from our own point of view, or in theoretical terms if we have not personally experienced injustice on a regular basis. The challenge is how do we teach this important—but sometimes very nuanced and complex—principle to our children?

Let me suggest four steps:

1. Help them to **KNOW** truth. Introduce them to scripture that teaches them that God is just and expects them to live the same way. As a family, talk about justice all the time. God expects us to love one another in the same way that Christ loved the church. Some good choices beyond Micah 6:8 are [Psalm 82:2-4](#), [Isaiah 61:1](#), and [James 1:27](#).
2. Help them to **FEEL** empathy. Put your child in a position to “experience” injustice. The goal is to create a level of empathy for others who are treated unfairly, disrespectfully, or unlovingly. For example, “discriminate” against your child by giving a treat to everyone in the family, except him or her on the basis of some physical feature (hair color, eye color, freckles, etc.). Debrief this experience, asking questions like, “How did that make you feel to be treated that way?” and “Was it fair of me to treat you that way? Why or why not?”
3. Help them to **SEE** problems. It is natural to want to shield our children from ugly aspects of life. However, by doing so, we lose the opportunity to teach them how to identify and properly respond to injustice. Don’t be afraid to talk about the things they see on the news or hear adults talking about. Don’t underestimate what your kids can handle or what they have already seen. Define words like “racism.” Ask them where they have seen injustice. Talk about how they think God would respond.
4. Help them to **ACT** justly. [Matthew 9:35-38](#) talks about the scarcity of workers to do God’s work. Micah 6:8 lays out the *requirements* for the workers. These aren’t merely suggestions! Talk with your child about ways they can respond when they see unfair treatment of others. For example:
 - Call out all forms of bullying and get others to join in. (Act justly)

- Be a safe person for others. (Act justly)
- Do what's right even if there's something for you to lose. (Act justly)
- Sit with or play with a child who is alone, and encourage others to join. (Love mercy)
- Choose to point out the positive things about people when others are negative. (Love mercy)
- Learn more about God's justice from the Bible and talk about it. (Walk humbly)
- Pray for people who experience injustice or engage in unjust behavior. (Walk humbly)

How do we help children respond to injustice? By helping children know God's expectations, feel empathy, see injustice, and act as God would so that they are prepared to live responsibly in a world full of injustice.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Become an Agent of Justice](#)

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