

AS YOU GO

IJM Mission Training Devotionals



The IJM Mission Training Devotional materials are intended to assist you and your group or team on the journey of engaging the Spirit of God and the Word of God. The goal of these IJM Mission Training Devotions is that you will draw near to God and closer to God's heart for the oppressed. A natural byproduct of this journey into God's heart will be that you will draw near to people who are suffering from injustice and, in doing so, you will grow in the desire to reveal God's love to them through seeking justice. The following devotionals can be used as a way to prepare before you depart on your mission trip and/or as a way to focus as a team while in the field. The devotionals are geared to be used within a group context, but can be used as an individual exercise as well.

There are four IJM Mission Training Devotionals:

- God's Heart for Justice (Psalm 10, Luke 4:10-21)
- The Price of Injustice (2 Samuel 11-12, Isaiah 58:1-12)
- The Call to Justice (Exodus 3, Matthew 5:14-16, Micah 6:6-8, Matthew 23:23)
- The Action of Justice (Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 14:13-21, 17:14-20)

THE GOAL OF THESE IJM MISSION TRAINING DEVOTIONS IS THAT YOU WILL DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND CLOSER TO GOD'S HEART FOR THE OPPRESSED.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Each devotional will last 60 – 90 minutes and is organized as follows:

1. Prepare (5 minutes)

Gather as a group and set the stage with a few words introducing the theme of the devotional and explaining how the time will be spent. Provide encouragement and direction for the time of Receiving and Individual Reflection. Feel free to use some of the questions provided in the Individual Reflection section as a way to set the theme and offer direction. Spend some time in prayer together before dispersing into the individual time.

2. Receive (15 – 20 minutes)

This is a time intended to sit (... or stand ...or walk) with God in silence and stillness. Silence and Stillness are not spiritual ways of saying that you're doing nothing. Rather this is a time of active engagement with God's Spirit and Word. The goal of this time is exactly what the title implies: You listen and read in order to "receive" whatever it is God's living and loving presence desires to give you.

3. Individual Reflection (15 – 20 minutes)

Thoughts:

This Individual Reflection is a time for you to consider and reflect upon what you are hearing from God. Questions will be provided to help guide the reflection, but the most important thing is for each individual to reflect on what God is sharing with them. After you have spent time listening to what God desires to give, you will spend time considering, contemplating and reflecting. One of the best ways to do this will be through journaling. Writing down your reflection may help you to better integrate and personalize what God is giving and what you are seeing and experiencing in the field. This guide provides space for written reflection, or you may want to create your own IJM Mission Training Journal.

Horizontal lines for writing reflections.

4. Group Reflection (20 – 25 minutes)

Doing justice always needs to be understood as the community action of God’s people. The suffering of people and the challenges faced in serving people are too big and too risky to go it alone. Your group will spend time sharing together what you have heard from God during the individual portion of the devotional and how you are integrating your hearts and minds with your experience and everyday living. Feel free to utilize questions from the Individual Reflection section as a way to direct your sharing.

Horizontal lines for writing reflections.

5. Action (15 – 20 minutes)

God is always sending his people into the world to be active agents of his love and transformation. Doing justice is an action that we seek to take in the name of Jesus for the sake of the poor and oppressed. Each IJM Mission Training Devotional will conclude with two specific actions.

First, as a group, identify and share one or two actions that you feel led to take over the next day.

Second, pray together! Prayer is too often seen as a separate component to the “real work” of doing justice. This is a time of doing justice through advocating before God on behalf of the suffering. Depending on the size of your group, you can do this by breaking into small groups of three to five or you can conclude as a large group.

Horizontal lines for writing reflections.

These four IJM Mission Training Devotionals were contributed by:

- Brian Cress, Development
- Laurel Henshaw, IJM Institute
- Mark Kirchgastner, Church Mobilization

Horizontal lines for writing reflections.

PREPARE

As an individual follower of Jesus and as a team that is serving together as the body of Christ, you are entering a time devoted to the purpose of drawing near to God. During this time, our hope is that you would gain a deeper sense of God's heart for justice and that you would be changed by it. To prepare for this journey, we encourage you to come together as a team and ask God for the gift of his guidance, wisdom and love. This time of prayer can be an opportunity to tell God about your hopes, fears and/or expectations for this experience.

RECEIVE

Drawing near to God's heart is an act of receiving the good things God has to give. This is best accomplished by becoming still and silent for a long enough period of time to actually listen to God. Stillness and silence are not spiritual ways of saying that you're doing nothing. Rather they are ways to actively engage in listening and submitting to God's Spirit and God's Word. The object is not seeking to hear the audible voice of God or to come up with a new brilliant idea, but to be open to whatever God wants to communicate to you.

Stillness, silence and reading God's Word help us to receive from God. We encourage you to use whatever pattern that may help you in this journey. The following pattern is a suggested guide.

- Find a place to sit alone. Take a deep breath and after a moment simply ask God to draw near to you. Spend the next three to five minutes being still and silent as God answers your prayer. If it helps you to focus, concentrate on your breathing. Imagine that you are receiving God's love as you inhale and that you are giving thanks as you exhale.
- If you need to move, feel free to stand or walk slowly to a new spot. You can imagine that Jesus is walking with you as you prepare to listen and receive.
- Now ask the Lord to share with you his heart for those who suffer at the hands of others and his passion for justice.
- Slowly read Psalm 10 and make a mental note of any words, phrases or verses that especially resonate in your heart and mind.
- After reading, pause and ask God if there is anything he especially wants you to notice.
- Now repeat the reading and notice what comes to your heart and mind this time. Is it the same or something new?

**YOU HEAR, O LORD,
THE DESIRE OF THE
AFFLICTED; YOU
ENCOURAGE THEM,
AND YOU LISTEN TO
THEIR CRY,
DEFENDING
THE FATHERLESS
AND THE OPPRESSED,
IN ORDER THAT
MAN, WHO IS OF THE
EARTH, MAY TERRIFY
NO MORE.
PSALM 10:17-18**

GOD'S HEART FOR JUSTICE

GROUP REFLECTION

When God shares his heart with his people, he never intends for it to be a solo experience. The suffering we see in the world and the challenges we face in serving people who suffer are too big and too risky to go it alone. As your team gathers, your team leader(s) will facilitate a time of group reflection and mutual encouragement. You will be asked to share what God has given you and/or what you found compelling or challenging in your reflection.

Note: If you are by nature an extrovert who likes to talk, make sure to be sensitive to allow others in the group time and space to share. If you are more introverted and usually reluctant to share, we encourage you to find at least one thing you can share during the group reflection. The body of Christ is made up of many parts and not all have the same function. Your team needs the uniqueness and diversity you bring, but everyone also needs to have the opportunity and courage to communicate in order for the whole body to be encouraged.

ACTION

God is always sending his people into the world to be active agents of his transformational love and truth. Doing justice is an action that we seek to take in the name of Jesus for the sake of the poor and oppressed. These IJM Mission Training Devotionals will always conclude with action. There are two parts to this last movement of your devotional time.

Thoughts:

1. We encourage you to identify and share one or two action steps you feel God would prompt you to take in the next 24 to 72 hours so that you can continue to hear from God and/or so that you can begin serving others with what he has given you. (If you did not have time to identify these during your individual reflection time, make sure to ask your leaders for a couple minutes before sharing.)

2. Justice originates from God's heart, so it follows that prayer is a central action in the work of justice. As you engage in prayer, you are engaging in the direct work of doing justice through advocating before God on behalf of those who suffer. You can use the following template for your time of prayer.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that he would remember his love for them and his promise of deliverance.

 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that he would restrain the hand of the oppressor and the powerful dynamics of oppression.

 - As you lift to God those who suffer, pray that truth would overcome the deception of lying lips and that people of powerful influence would rise up on behalf of those suffering to stop the hand of injustice.

 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that the perpetrators of injustice would be held accountable for their actions so that they cannot harm others.

 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that God would draw you ever closer to his heart and grant you wisdom and courage to become the answer to these prayers

PREPARE

As an individual follower of Jesus and as a team that is serving together as the body of Christ, you are entering a time devoted to the purpose of drawing near to God. During this time, our hope is that you would gain a deeper sense of God's heart for justice and that you would be changed by it. To prepare for this journey, we encourage you to come together as a team and ask God for the gift of his guidance, wisdom and love.

During this time of preparation, take a moment to recall what you learned about God's heart for justice along with the action steps you were prompted to take after the first devotional.

RECEIVE

Drawing near to God's heart is an act of receiving the good things God has to give. This is best accomplished by becoming still and silent for a long enough period of time to actually listen to God. Stillness and silence spiritual ways of saying that you're doing nothing. Rather they are ways to actively engage in listening and submitting to God's Spirit and God's Word. The object is not seeking to hear the audible voice of God or to come up with a new brilliant idea, but to be open to whatever God wants to communicate to you.

Stillness, silence and reading God's Word help us to receive from God. We encourage you to use whatever pattern that may help you in this journey. The following pattern is a suggested guide.

- Find a place to sit alone. Take a deep breath and after a moment simply ask God to draw near to you. Spend the next three to five minutes being still and silent as God answers your prayer. If it helps you to focus, concentrate on your breathing. Imagine that you are receiving God's love as you inhale and that you are giving thanks as you exhale.
- If you need to move, feel free to stand or walk slowly to a new spot. You can imagine that Jesus is walking with you as you prepare to listen and receive.
- Now ask the Lord to share with you his heart for those who suffer at the hands of others and his passion for justice.
- Slowly read 2 Samuel 11-12:25 and make a mental note of any words, phrases or verses that especially resonate in your heart and mind around the theme of injustice.
- After reading, pause and ask God if there is anything he especially wants you to notice.

**IS NOT THIS THE
KIND OF FASTING
I HAVE CHOSEN:
TO LOOSE THE
CHAINS OF
INJUSTICE AND
UNTIE THE CORDS
OF THE YOKE,
TO SET THE
OPPRESSED
FREE AND BREAK
EVERY YOKE?
ISAIAH 58:6**

THE PRICE OF INJUSTICE

GROUP REFLECTION

When God shares his heart with his people, he never intends for it to be a solo experience. The suffering we see in the world and the challenges we face in serving people who suffer are too big and too risky to go it alone. As your team gathers, your team leader(s) will facilitate a time of group reflection and mutual encouragement. You will be asked to share what God has given you and/or what you found compelling or challenging in your reflection.

ACTION

God is always sending his people into the world to be active agents of his transformational love and truth. Doing justice is an action that we seek to take in the name of Jesus for the sake of the poor and oppressed. These IJM Mission Training Devotionals will always conclude with action. There are two parts to this last movement of your devotional time.

1. We encourage you to identify and share one or two action steps you feel God would prompt you to take in the next 24 to 72 hours so that you can continue to see and confess your own acts of injustice and/or the consequences of injustice in the world. (If you did not have time to identify these during your individual reflection time, make sure to ask your leaders for a couple minutes before sharing.)
2. Justice originates from God's heart, so it follows that prayer is a central action in the work of justice. As you engage in prayer, you are engaging in the direct work of doing justice through advocating before God on behalf of those who suffer. You can use the following template for your time of prayer.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that he would remember his love for them and his promise of deliverance.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that he would restrain the hand of the oppressor and the powerful dynamics of oppression.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, pray that truth would overcome the deception of lying lips, and that people of powerful influence would rise up on behalf of those suffering to stop the hand of injustice.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that the perpetrators of injustice would be held accountable for their actions so that they cannot harm others.
 - As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that God would draw you ever closer to his heart and grant you wisdom and courage to become the answer to these prayers

Note: If you are by nature an extrovert who likes to talk, make sure to be sensitive to allow others in the group time and space to share. If you are more introverted and usually reluctant to share, we encourage you to find at least one thing you can share during the group reflection. The body of Christ is made up of many parts and not all have the same function. Your team needs the uniqueness and diversity you bring, but everyone also needs to have the opportunity and courage to communicate in order for the whole body to be encouraged.

Thoughts:

PREPARE

As an individual follower of Jesus and as a team that is serving together as the body of Christ, you are entering a time devoted to the purpose of drawing near to God. During this time, our hope is that you would gain a deeper sense of God's heart for justice and that you would be changed by it. To prepare for this journey, we encourage you to come together as a team and ask God for the gift of his guidance, wisdom and love.

During this time of preparation, take a moment to recall what you learned about the price of injustice along with the action steps you were prompted to take after the second devotional.

RECEIVE

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Stillness, silence and reading God's Word help us to receive from God. We encourage you to use whatever pattern that may help you in this journey. The following pattern is a suggested guide.

- Find a place to sit alone. Take a deep breath and after a moment simply ask God to draw near to you. Spend the next three to five minutes being still and silent as God answers your prayer. If it helps you to focus concentrate on your breathing. Imagine that you are receiving God's love as you inhale and that you are giving thanks as you exhale.
- If you need to move, feel free to stand or walk slowly to a new spot. You can imagine that Jesus is walking with you as you prepare to listen and receive.
- Now ask the Lord to open your heart to respond to his calling to do justice for the sake of those who suffer from oppression.
- Slowly read Exodus 3 and make a mental note of any words, phrases or verses that especially resonate in your heart and mind.
- After reading, pause and ask God if there is anything he especially wants you to notice.

**HE HAS SHOWED
YOU, O MAN,
WHAT IS GOOD.
AND WHAT DOES
THE LORD REQUIRE
OF YOU?
TO ACT JUSTLY
AND
TO LOVE MERCY
AND
TO WALK HUMBLY
WITH YOUR GOD
MICAH 6:8**

PREPARE

As an individual follower of Jesus and as a team that is serving together as the body of Christ, you are entering a time devoted to the purpose of drawing near to God. During this time, our hope is that you would gain a deeper sense of God's heart for justice and that you would be changed by it. To prepare for this journey, we encourage you to come together as a team and ask God for the gift of his guidance, wisdom and love.

During this time of preparation, take a moment to recall what you discovered regarding God's call to justice along with the action steps you were prompted to take after the third devotional.

RECEIVE

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Stillness, silence and reading God's Word will help us to receive from God. We encourage you to use whatever pattern that may help you in this journey. The following pattern is a suggested guide.

- Find a place to sit alone. Take a deep breath and after a moment simply ask God to draw near to you. Spend the next three to five minutes being still and silent as God answers your prayer. If it helps you to focus, concentrate on your breathing. Imagine that you are receiving God's love as you inhale and that you are giving thanks as you exhale.
- If you need to move, feel free to stand or walk slowly to a new spot. You can imagine that Jesus is walking with you as you prepare to listen and receive.
- Now ask the Lord to open your heart to respond to his calling to do justice for the sake of those who suffer from oppression.
- Slowly read Luke 10:25-37 and make a mental note of any words, phrases or verses that especially resonate in your heart and mind.
- After reading, pause and ask God if there is anything he especially wants you to notice.

**AND HE DIRECTED THE PEOPLE TO SIT DOWN ON THE GRASS. TAKING THE FIVE LOAVES AND THE TWO FISH AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN, HE GAVE THANKS AND BROKE THE LOAVES. THEN HE GAVE THEM TO THE DISCIPLES, AND THE DISCIPLES GAVE THEM TO THE PEOPLE. THEY ALL ATE AND WERE SATISFIED, AND THE DISCIPLES PICKED UP TWELVE BASKETFULS OF BROKEN PIECES THAT WERE LEFT OVER.
MATTHEW 14:19-20**

THE ACTION OF JUSTICE

Thoughts:

- Now repeat the reading and notice what comes to your heart and mind this time. Is it the same or something new?
- Spend a few final minutes in silence asking and allowing God to guide your thoughts and feelings. Do you notice anything that makes you uncomfortable...anything that is refreshing or disturbing...anything that you are particularly excited about?
- Share these things with God before moving to the next step.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

You have spent time receiving what God has given to you – now spend time considering, contemplating and reflecting on these things. Writing down your reflections will help to personalize what God has given you, as well as to integrate this time with what you are seeing and experiencing in the field. Another benefit of writing during this time is that it will help you to remember what you have experienced or learned for future reflection and for sharing with your team.

Feel free to use the space provided for your written reflection. Here are some questions to consider as you reflect on the scriptures.

Luke 10:25-37

1. What does God say we must do to inherit eternal life? (v. 26-28)
2. Why does the expert in the law ask Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Do you ever find yourself asking similar questions of God?
3. How does Jesus reply? (v. 30-36)
4. Who are our neighbors? What would it mean for you to “Go and do likewise?”

The action of justice can be challenging, even overwhelming. When you think about the action of doing justice in the world what do you feel? It is important to remember that this work happens out of God’s heart and passion for the weak and oppressed, and he promises to do it through us.

THE ACTION OF JUSTICE

GROUP REFLECTION

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ACTION

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Thoughts:

Horizontal lines for writing thoughts.

- 1. We encourage you to identify and share one or two action steps you feel God would prompt you to take in the next 24 to 72 hours so that you can begin to engage in the action of justice. (If you did not have time to identify these during your individual reflection time, make sure to ask your leaders for a couple minutes before sharing.)
2. Justice originates from God's heart, so it follows that prayer is a central action in the work of justice. As you engage in prayer, you are engaging in the direct work of doing justice through advocating before God on behalf of those who suffer. You can use the following template for your time of prayer.
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- As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that the perpetrators of injustice would be held accountable for their actions so that they cannot harm others.
- As you lift to God those who suffer, ask that God would draw you ever closer to his heart and grant you wisdom

Get involved at www.ijm.org where you can:

- Invite an IJM speaker to your church.
- Involve your youth group in the work of IJM through *The Justice Mission* curriculum.
- Learn more about the work of justice by studying *Good News About Injustice* and *Just Courage* by IJM President Gary Haugen.
- Invest in the work of freedom through financially supporting IJM.

International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM lawyers, investigators and aftercare professionals work with local officials to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to promote functioning public justice systems.



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