



STORY 48

Let Justice Roll Down

AMOS 5

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Amos 5.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

The Bible teaches us so many truths about God. God is holy. God is love. God is just (or fair). God is great! The Bible also teaches us a lot about ourselves. We are born sinners who are not holy, loving, and just. Yet we think we are great! We are filled with pride. But when God's Spirit enters into our hearts, he changes us from the inside out. With new hearts we can think, talk, and act like God wants us to. But how does God want us to think, talk, and act? Like God! Because God is holy, he wants us to be different from the evil in the world. Because God is loving, he wants us to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. Because God is just, he wants us to treat others fairly. The prophet Micah put it this way:

[God] has told you . . . what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you

1
Read

2
Teach

but to do justice, to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8)

The prophet Amos couldn't agree more! Like most of the prophets he tells God's people about God's gracious rescue plan that the Snake Crusher will usher in. But also like most of the prophets, he tells them that they are really big sinners who need to start thinking, speaking, and acting like God. And today, we're going to focus in on one of the ways Amos called people to reflect God.

TELL THE STORY

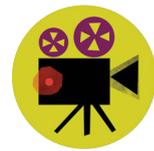
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God wants his
people to hate
evil, love good,
and seek justice.

Have you ever had someone (maybe a big brother!) steal a piece of pizza from your plate? Or, worse than that, has anyone ever pushed you to the ground on the playground and called you names? People around the world experience lots of injustice. “Injustice” is when people are treated in a way that isn't right and wouldn't please God. Like when someone is robbed or when a rich person can get out of trouble just because he is rich.

Amos called God's people to “seek the LORD and live” (Amos 5:6). They needed to seek God because they had stopped listening to the prophets who spoke God's words to them. They also needed to seek God because they had forgotten that he was a just God who required them to seek justice. Amos sighs, “You turn justice to wormwood!” (see 5:7). Wormwood is a plant that has an awful taste. It's like Amos is saying that they are turning sweet justice into a sour, moldy, and stinky sandwich. Yuck!

Now, get this! God’s people were gathering together for religious feasts—they sang praise songs and offered sacrifices—but then they would leave worship and act in unjust ways. The rich and powerful treated the poor and powerless unfairly. They stole land from them. They used their power to push people down instead of picking them up. How foolish! You cannot worship and love God and *not* love your neighbor! God hated what they were doing. “I hate your feasts,” he said, “and I take no delight when you gather for worship. Your songs are noise in my ears and your sacrifices are yuck in my mouth” (see 5:21, 23).

God’s people had made the land dry and dark through their injustice. Amos called them to repent. Turn around! Turn back to God. “Hate evil, and love good, and start acting justly” (see 5:15). Then he gives this beautiful image of the rushing waters of a waterfall flowing into a never-ending river of goodness: “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (5:24). Instead of drying up the people and the land by taking away what is good, God wanted Israel to be like those waters—pouring justice and love over everyone.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

From the beginning God made man to be like him, perfect and good. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God and evil entered the world. People were no longer holy and just and loving like God. And yet God promised that one day he would destroy evil and bring about a perfect world again. And he did so through Jesus, the Snake Crusher. When Jesus came to earth, he announced that the perfect kingdom of God had come near (Mark 1:14–15). And then Jesus showed us what that perfect kingdom looks like. The Snake Crusher lived as the prophets asked God’s people to live. He always obeyed God. He was kind and loving. He was just and fair. He lifted up the poor. He was humble.

Jesus was so humble that he sacrificed his body on the cross so people like us—who aren’t loving, just, and humble—might be part of God’s perfect kingdom. Right now, the earth is full of injustice. Sin. Death. But one day, when Jesus returns to earth, he will make everything new and perfect. Then there will be more than a river of righteousness. The whole “earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14). Come, Lord Jesus, come! We want to live in that perfect kingdom.

3

Engage

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What had God's people forgotten in Amos's day? What is God like? And what does he want his people to be like?

TAKEAWAY: God is holy, loving, and fair, and he wants his people to be holy, loving, and fair.

Memory Verse

Let justice
roll down like
waters.

AMOS 5:24

2. **QUESTION:** If we love God, how should we treat the people that God made? How does God feel when we come to worship him and say we love him but then act in unfair and unloving ways to our neighbors? Why?

TAKEAWAY: We can't love and worship God and not love our neighbor.

3. **QUESTION:** Whom did God send to destroy evil and begin his perfect kingdom? Why was Jesus able to destroy evil on the cross? How do sinful people like us get to be a part of God's perfect kingdom?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus was perfectly holy, loving, and fair, and he died so that we could be part of God's perfect kingdom.

4. **QUESTION:** Why is Jesus coming back to earth someday? What will he do?

TAKEAWAY: When Jesus returns, he will make the whole world perfect and new.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Caterpillar Relay

Supply List: plastic toy hoops (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Assign leaders to hold a plastic toy hoop in front of each team so children can walk through it.

Divide the class into teams of eight to ten children. Each team should line up behind a hoop with their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them. When the leader says “Caterpillars, wiggle!” the teams must go through the hoop, travel to the opposite end of the room, come back through the hoop, and return to the start line—all while staying connected. If a team breaks apart, they must stop and reconnect before continuing. The first team to get all players across the line wins. Remind children that we are to care for those around us and seek justice.

Option 2: Keys Game

Supply List: one set of keys, chairs

Before Class: Gather supplies. Scatter chairs randomly through the room (one chair less than the number of children).

Have everyone sit on a chair. The child that does not have a chair is the leader. Give the leader a large set of keys that jingle. Have the leader grab the hand of someone and lift that person up to join as the leader walks through the chairs. That person then grabs another child’s hand and does the same. Children continue to join the train until the leader drops the keys. When the keys drop, everyone standing runs to sit in a chair. The child who does not get a chair is the leader for the next round. Remind children that as God’s people we want to lift other people up and make them feel welcome.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Jump the Stream Challenge

Supply List: two long strings

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place two strings on the ground parallel to one another, about 1 foot apart.

Explain that between the two strings is a stream that the children need to jump over. Once everyone has jumped over the stream, widen it. If a child lands in the stream when she jumps, that child is out. After each jump, widen the strings until only one child remains. Remind children that God wanted Israel to be like a stream that flowed with justice.

Option 2: Keys Game

Supply List: one set of keys, chairs

Before Class: Gather supplies. Scatter chairs randomly through the room (one chair less than the number of children).

Have everyone sit on a chair. The child that does not have a chair is the leader. Give the leader a large set of keys that jingle. Have the leader grab the hand of someone and lift that person up to join as the leader walks through the chairs. That person then grabs another child's hand and does the same. Children continue to join the train until the leader drops the keys. When the keys drop, everyone standing runs to sit in a chair. The child who does not get a chair is the leader for the next round. Remind children that as God's people we want to lift other people up and make them feel welcome.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Sun Visor

Supply List: paper plates, hole punch, yarn, markers, foam pieces, stickers, jewels, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut paper plates into a crescent shape (one per child). Punch one hole at each end of the crescent. Cut 8-inch pieces of yarn (two per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child a prepared paper plate and two pieces of yarn. Place markers, foam pieces, stickers, jewels, and glue sticks on each table. Have children decorate the top side of the paper plate. Then help children attach a piece of yarn to each hole and tie the two pieces of yarn together to fit their head. Remind children that just as visors help us see things when it's sunny, the Lord helps us see how to live justly.

Option 2: Doorknob Hanger

Supply List: cardstock, colored pencils, markers, scissors, glue sticks, sequins, jewels

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a simple doorknob hanger on cardstock. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a doorknob hanger. Set remaining supplies on each table. Have the children write “Let justice roll down” on the hanger and cut it out. Then have them decorate it using the provided supplies.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Paper Wreath

Supply List: 9" x 18" construction paper (one per child), scissors, pencils, stapler, rulers, string

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on each table. Have children fold a piece of construction paper lengthwise, then draw a line lengthwise about 2 inches from the edge that is open (not the folded, creased side). This is the “no cutting zone.” Have children cut slits from the folded side to the marked line every inch or half inch. Have them open up the paper, flip it over, and roll it to make a tube shape. Help children staple the tube closed and then staple the two ends of the tube together to form a circle. Have children cut out flowers, shapes, or bows and write words like *Welcome*, *Love*, and *Justice* on the shapes. Then glue the shapes to the wreath and tie a string to the top for hanging. Remind children that through Jesus, God welcomes us into his kingdom of perfect love and perfect justice.

Option 2: Give Generously Bank

Supply List: cardstock, scissors (one per child), tape, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a cube template on cardstock (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Give each child a cube template. Set markers, scissors, and tape on each table. Have children cut out the template, then write “Be Generous” on one face of the cube. Next, have them cut a slit in the center of what will be the top section of the cube. Help them fold the sides up and tape the sides together to form a cube-shaped bank. Remind children that God’s justice includes giving generously to those in need. Encourage them to collect money in this bank to give to someone in need.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.