

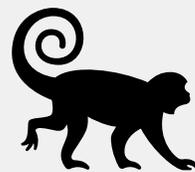
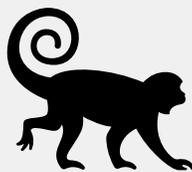
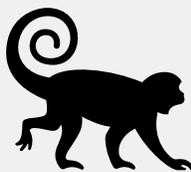


WILDERNESS FAITH: JOURNEYING WITH GOD IN THE WORLD

Family Sunday School
“Life Can Be Hard” Series
Lesson 2 - How to deal with... unfairness

Introduction: Our series on handling tough times continues with this lesson on dealing with things that seem unfair. As always, we look to the Bible for wisdom in dealing with life’s ups and downs. We will be using the Bible stories assigned for our Sunday worship. You will be able to hear them during the Kitchen Table Gathering (Sundays at 10:30am on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/elcserver>) and revisit them during the week with your family.

Start the Fun!



Have your child(ren) watch this video where capuchin monkeys are paid unfairly for the same task.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meiU6TxysCg>

Discuss why the monkey who got cucumber was unhappy.
(Important: he was fine with receiving cucumber until he saw the other monkey was getting grapes.)

Read together

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard **Matthew 20:1-16** (*New International Version*)

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. “He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’



Discuss:

Ask: Does the employer seem to be treating his workers unfairly? How could you look at this a different way so that his paying everyone a day's wage seems fair?

Some talking points for parents: 1. Who spends the whole day waiting to be hired but doesn't find success until the end of the day? In Jesus' time, these would be the weak, infirm, and disabled. Maybe the elderly, too. And other targets of discrimination. The employer realizes that all of the workers would need a full day's pay to feed their families. 2. The people hired early in the day received the wage they were promised. Yet they felt envious and jealous of the other workers even though they would have been satisfied had they not known about the group hired later. It is easier to be happy if you don't compare what you have to what others have.

Ask: Now think of the landowner as Jesus, and the workers as us people. What could the story be telling us about earning a place in God's Kingdom?

Talking points: This parable stresses God's unmerited **grace**, rather than any sense of "earning" God's favor. There is no way we could earn a place at God's table, but we are all welcome anyway. What a wonderful gift!

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Related verse:

"You must not keep back the wages of a man who is poor and needy, whether a fellow-countryman or an alien living in your country in one of your settlements. Pay him his wages on the same day before sunset, for he is poor and he relies on them: otherwise he may appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin."

Deuteronomy 24:14-15 (Revised English Bible)

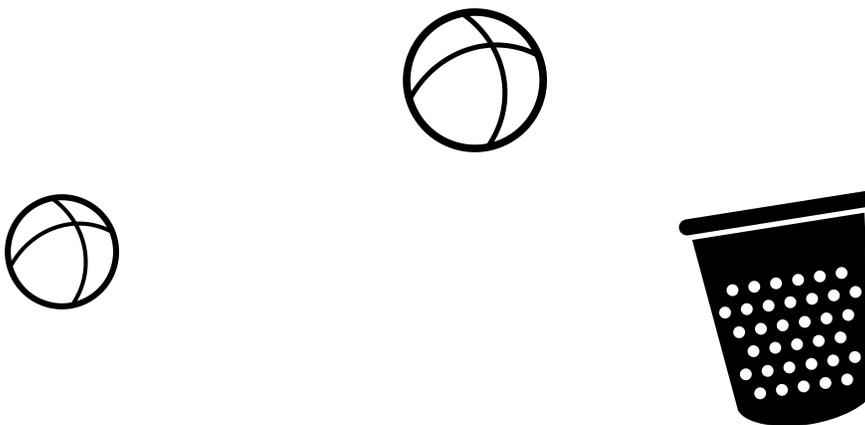
Pray

Name something that you think is unfair to you. Ask God to help you see how this challenge might be part of God's purpose for you. Think about people in the world who are treated unfairly. Ask God to help you find a way to help them.

Participate

Make it Fair! Create a Game

Imagine a 10-year-old and a 5-year-old want to play a game similar to basketball, where players take turns throwing a ball or another object into a container. How could the rules or equipment be modified so that the game gives each player a fair chance of winning? (Where do they each have to stand? How high is the container placed? Let the children get creative with making up rules that make the game fair for the different ages.) Try your game out with players of different ages. If two players with similar abilities want to try this activity, have one player play on their knees. The purpose of the activity is to illustrate that fairness doesn't always mean everyone gets the same rules and that it's fun to make a game fair for everyone.



Note about losing: Although the goal of creating new rules is to make this game fair for all ages and abilities, that doesn't mean the youngest player should always win. Even preschoolers need to learn to lose gracefully and it helps if you don't let them win all the time. When children do lose, instead of focusing on who lost and who won, smile and say, "Well, that was fun!" If they ask, "Did I lose?" say something like, "Yes, but that's OK. We'll play again soon and maybe you'll win that one." Focus on how fun it was to play together. If they are still upset about losing, teach them that it's OK to sit in sadness and live with pain and defeat without being rude or outwardly angry towards others. Show them how to overcome overwhelming emotions and stand back up. Loss brings growth and a chance to start again. Use losing as an opportunity to teach your kids how to reflect, come up with points of pride that they can hold on to, and objectively see their gaps or areas that need practice.

Wrap Up

God loves us. When we trust that God is giving us exactly what we need, including challenges, how does that help us find peace?

Take a Moment to Breathe

The Balloon (*You can do this standing or seated*).

Relax your body and begin to take deep inhales and slow exhales through your nose.

Start to take a slow, deep breath to fill your belly up with air, as if you're trying to blow up a big balloon. Expand your belly as much as you can.

Slowly let the air out of the balloon (through the nose) as you release the breath from the belly.

Try to feel your entire body relax each time you exhale, each time air is slowly being released from the "balloon." You can even make a "hissing" noise to help you slow down the exhale even more, "Like letting air out of the balloon."

Continue for several minutes.

For the younger kids, you can add a little more detail and fun to the exercise to keep them engaged. Young kids, especially under the age of 6, love the extra movement when they're learning to bring awareness to their breath. Encourage them to stand up in a relaxed way and follow these steps:

Ask them to think of their favorite color and picture a giant balloon of that color in their mind.

Then have them take a slow, deep inhale through the nose, filling up their tummies with air as if trying to blow up a giant [their favorite color] balloon. As an option, you can also have them stretch their arms open and overhead to represent expansion and the big balloon.

When their balloon is totally full, have them hold their breath at the top, and then you can "pop the balloon" for them (gesture finger to belly) and they can fall down as they exhale.

This one will likely elicit giggles and awareness of their breath.