

SABBATH SCHOOL

Jr. High School Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level J • Unit 4 • Week 3

FAIRNESS

OBJECTIVE:

To learn that God wants us to be fair and just.

DEFINITION:

To be fair: Play by the rules. Take turns and share. Be open-minded; listen to others. Don't take advantage of others. Don't blame others carelessly.

INTRODUCTION:

"It's just not fair!" How many times have we heard—or said—that statement? How many of you have ever been treated unfairly? Raise your hand. Today we are going to learn about fairness.

LESSON:

Fairness is one of the most basic character traits—and one of the qualities we most care about—yet, in many ways, it is one of the most illusive.

The terms "fairness" and "justice" are often used interchangeably. We generally use "fairness" when talking about personal situations, and "justice" when speaking of the broader community.

God requires us to be fair. The New Living Translation often uses word "fair" rather than "justice."

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 (NLT): "Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in all the towns the LORD your God is giving you. They will judge the people fairly throughout the land. You must never twist justice or show partiality."

Deuteronomy 1:16 (NLT): "I instructed the judges, 'You must be perfectly fair at all times, not only to fellow Israelites, but also to the foreigners living among you.'" In other words, be fair to everyone.

Isaiah 56:1-2 (NLT): "Be just and fair to all," says the LORD. "Do what is right and good, for I am coming soon to rescue you. Blessed are those who are careful to do this."

Proverbs 16:11 (NLT): "The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard."

Fairness is a basic biblical concept—eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2)—is based upon justice and fairness. However, we live in a world that is not fair and just.

Isaiah 59:13-15 (NLT): "We know that we have rebelled against the LORD. We have turned our backs on God. We know how unfair and oppressive we have been, carefully planning our deceitful lies. Our courts oppose people who are righteous, and justice is nowhere to be found. Truth falls dead in the streets, and fairness has been outlawed. Yes, truth is gone, and anyone who tries to live a godly life is soon attacked. The LORD looked and was displeased to find that there was no justice."

Upon what criteria should justice be based?

Do: Break the class into small groups. Distribute "Competing Theories of Justice" handout. Assign a different theory to each group. Ask them to:

- 1) Evaluate each theory and discuss whether it is a godly theory.
- 2) Why or why not?
- 3) Give examples from the Bible to support your conclusion.

Discussion:

- Have each group present its findings.
- As they present their viewpoint, ask if there were opposing opinions in their group.
- Ask the other groups if there are other ideas or exceptions to what was presented.
- If the students do not come up with questions, pose some yourself.

[The idea is to show that God deals fairly with all, but He considers **all** circumstances. We tend to view fairness simply from our own viewpoint. Before we judge something to be fair or unfair, we must consider many circumstances.]

1. **Merit**—a person is entitled to whatever he or she can earn or acquire based on skill, talent and/or hard work. Persons with little skill, talent or hard work are not entitled to anything. However, as a matter of charity and caring those who have earned benefits may give to the less capable.
 - Parable of the talents. Matthew 25:14-30: Those who **produced** were given greater reward.
 - 1 Corinthians 1:19-21 (New International Version): "For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"
2. **Need**—a person is entitled to whatever he or she needs. In a just system, everyone will have what he or she truly needs and it is the responsibility of a just society to see that this happens.

- Pro—Proverbs 25:21 (NIV): “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.”
 - Con—2 Thessalonians 3:10: “. . . **We commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**”
3. **Might**—a person is entitled to whatever he/she can acquire or is given irrespective of merit, need, or effort. Power is the basic determinant of what a person deserves.
- Romans 9:10-13 (NLT) “This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he grew up, he married Rebekah, who gave birth to twins. But before they were born, **before they had done anything good or bad**, she received a message from God. (This message proves that God chooses according to his own plan, not according to our good or bad works.) She was told, ‘The descendants of your older son will serve the descendants of your younger son.’ In the words of the Scriptures, ‘I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.’ What can we say? **Was God being unfair?** Of course not! For God said to Moses, ‘I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.’”
4. **Equality**—a person is entitled to an equal share of whatever is available irrespective of merit, need, power or effort.
- Ecclesiastes 9:11 (NIV): “I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.”
5. **Seniority**—a person is entitled to benefits such as a job and compensation based on seniority or title and how long he or she has been working for an organization irrespective of merit, need, power or effort.
- Leviticus 19:32 “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.”
 - Exodus 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother.”
6. **Effort**—a person is entitled to benefits in proportion to the effort he or she expends irrespective of merit, need or power. People who try hard are entitled to as much as those who have greater skill or talent are.
- Hebrews 6:10 (NLT): “For God is not unfair. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other Christians, as you still do.”

CONCLUSION:

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 (NLT): “I will proclaim the name of the LORD; how glorious is our God! He is the Rock; his work is perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!”

Ultimately God treats everyone fairly. God’s plan of salvation includes ALL of mankind and is the only fair plan of salvation there is. Since God is fair, let’s be sure that we are following His example in the way we treat others. We need to be as fair and just as possible.

Competing Theories of Justice



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2. **Need**—a person is entitled to whatever he or she needs. In a just system, everyone will have what he or she truly needs, and it is the responsibility of a just society to see that this happens.
3. **Might**—a person is entitled to whatever he or she can acquire or is given irrespective of merit, need or effort. Power is the basic determinant of what a person deserves.
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5. **Seniority**—a person is entitled to benefits such as a job and compensation based on seniority or title and how long he or she has been working for an organization irrespective of merit, need, power or effort.
6. **Effort**—a person is entitled to benefits in proportion to the effort he or she expends irrespective of merit, need or power. People who try hard are entitled to as much as those who have greater skill or talent are.

Group assignment:

- Is the theory you have been assigned a godly principle?
- Why or why not?
- Give an example(s) from the Scripture to support your conclusion.