

Throwback

Week 3

BIG IDEA

Jesus is always fair.

BIBLE

The Workers in the Vineyard: Matthew 20:1–16; John 10:11–18

LARGE GROUP TIME

Yo, pals! What's *crackalackin'*? Welcome back to *Throwback!* Each week, we'll go back in time and see that the things Jesus taught are always trending because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever! This week, we're going back to the 1980's! Isn't that *gnarly*? Let's *motor!*

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Pogo Ball Race

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show an [image](#) or [video](#) of a pogo ball being used. Then have two teams do a relay race by mimicking a pogo ball. Have each player hold a jelly ball between their feet and hop to the other side of the room and back or in a circular route. Alternate having some players "pogo ball" across while allowing others just to run holding the ball. The first team to get all their players through the course wins.
- Kids in the 80's were familiar with the hottest outdoor toy around . . . the pogo ball! Even though the commercials showed that the pogo ball would get kids to jump sky-high, that didn't really happen in real life. **Can you imagine how disappointed you would have been if you got a pogo ball and you couldn't jump as high as thought you would?** "No fair," you might say! Kind of like how in this game, some of you had to hop around pretending you were on a pogo ball while some of you just got to run regularly!
- There definitely are times when things don't seem fair, and sometimes they really aren't. Today, we'll learn about someone who is always fair!

POLL | Fair or No Fair?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the kids to vote on the following scenarios by yelling out "fair!" and giving a thumbs up or by saying "no fair!" with their arms crossed.
- We like to say that a lot of things in our life are unfair. **Which of these things do you feel are fair or not fair?**
 - **My friend's mom lets her play video games more than I'm allowed to.**
 - **I'm not allowed to drink coffee.**
 - **I have to go to bed way before my parents do.**
 - **I have to wake up early for school.**
 - **When it's cold outside, the grownups make me wear a jacket.**
 - **My siblings and I all have to clean up after ourselves.**
 - **My class gets way more homework than the class next door.**
 - **That other kid got the last slice of pizza.**
 - **We can't have a pet because someone in our home is allergic.**
 - **We have to finish our vegetables.**
- Sometimes our idea of "fair" changes with how we're feeling at the time. Let's take a look at the Bible story to learn about God's idea of fairness.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 20:1–16 (The Workers in the Vineyard)

- **Why don't we turn to in Matthew 20:1–16 and find out what's going on?**
- I feel like I could understand what the vineyard workers are feeling, especially the ones who got there super early. It doesn't seem fair that someone who only worked one hour should get the same pay as someone who worked all day.
- Jesus told this parable to get people to think differently about fairness. The early arrivals were getting fair pay. If they didn't know what everyone else was getting paid, they wouldn't have complained. The vineyard owner was already being generous. It just seems even more generous when someone didn't work as hard for it.
- God doesn't give according to what we think is fair and not fair. God is generous enough to give us what we need and even more generous that someone else may get more than we do.
- But this parable isn't really about God giving us stuff . . . it's about how God welcomes everyone to know God. God's idea of fairness is that everyone should have the same amount of chances to experience God's love. Now that's fair!
- Jesus showed us that God's fairness is a good trend to follow!

BIG IDEA | Jesus is always fair.

Jesus is always fair.

STORY | Totally Unfair!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a story about a time when you were a kid and you experienced something that felt unfair, such as moving to a new school and struggling to make new friends, not getting the gear or even haircut everyone else had, or feeling left out of a circle of friends.
- I'm sure you've felt like things were unfair in your life, too. We feel this way when we feel like we got something we didn't deserve (like a scolding) or didn't get something we felt we deserved (like a new toy or gadget).
- In today's Bible story, it might not have seemed fair on the surface that everyone got paid the same even though some worked hard and some hardly worked at all, but it wasn't a story about what people earn and deserve. It's a story about how generous God is. We know this because God gave Jesus to everyone even though none of us earned or deserved him.

- Everybody has a chance to connect with God and nobody is left out. **Jesus is always fair.**

SCRIPTURE | John 10:11–18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the passage aloud. Then show an image of a [Blockbuster VHS](#) (bonus points if you have an actual video cassette to show).
- You know how nowadays, if you want to watch a movie, you can pretty much find it online on a number of streaming platforms? Well, in the 80's, it was much harder to watch movies. Going to the theater was a special treat, and not everyone could go all the time. Not fair!
- So most people would rent movies from a video rental store called Blockbuster. People waited until the movie was available to rent and rushed to get it before it all ran out, which felt really unfair, especially if you were waiting all day to get your hands on a copy of the newest movie and you couldn't. Not fair!
- Jesus understands what "not fair" feels like. After all, Jesus was unfairly arrested and sentenced to death . . . he had done nothing wrong! But even though people had treated Jesus terribly while he was on earth, he wanted to show the way God loves, anyway.
- In this passage, Jesus talks about himself as a good shepherd who would give his own life for the sheep (that's us, by the way). Not just for the sheep that are in his sheep pen — that is, people who love and follow Jesus. He says in verse sixteen that he wants to bring sheep who are not part of his pen . . . people who don't know God.
- When Jesus died and rose again, it wasn't only for some people. It was for everyone. No one is excluded — not even the people who returned videos without rewinding them, even though that was so not cool.
- **Jesus was and is always fair.**

VIDEO | Throwback, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Press Play](#).

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

RESPONSE | Plan to Be Fair

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the book "Fair Shares" or show [this read-aloud video](#).
- Okay now, this story may seem like the opposite of our Bible story. It wasn't fair for the bear and the hare to each get the same number of chairs, but it was fair for the vineyard workers to each get one denarius? What gives?
- It makes sense when we focus on the right things. It's true that getting equal amounts of things isn't always fair.
 - You wouldn't give the same amount of food to a grownup and a toddler.
 - You wouldn't give the same amount of time to complete a math quiz to an expert mathematician and someone just learning how to add.
 - You wouldn't give the same amount of help to a billionaire as you would to someone in need.
- When it comes to fairness among people, each person's experience and circumstances matter. Being fair means making sure everyone is given the same amount of opportunities to succeed. (That's something we call *access*.)
- When it comes to God, though, the Bible tells us that at one point, we were *all* out of reach and had "*fallen short*" (Romans 3:23). We are all like the bear and the hare just staring at the pear tree. When Jesus came to earth, he gave us a way to reach what we couldn't on our own — a relationship with God! Jesus made a way so that everyone has the same access to God. It isn't based on how much we've done or what we do. It's based on how generous God is. **Jesus is always fair.**
- Let's make these "fair chairs" as we talk about some things we can do to show fairness to others. Maybe it's . . .
 - Helping out around the house even though no one asked.
 - Bringing an extra snack to school because you know someone in your class who always forgets to pack one.
 - Letting someone take longer on their turn to play something, just to be kind.
 - Giving up your spot in line to someone who is in a hurry.
 - Inviting someone to your party even though you don't usually hang out together.

MEMORY VERSE | Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

- **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."**

PRAYER

- Jesus, thank you for always being fair. You give everyone an opportunity to know God even though we did nothing to earn this gift. Help us to turn to you when life feels unfair, and help us to show fairness to others the way you do to us. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **How much did the landowner agree to pay each worker?** *One denarius*
 - **How much did the workers who worked all day and the ones who worked only one hour get paid?** *They all got paid one denarius each.*
 - **Do you think the landowner was being fair to the workers? Why or why not?**
 - **Read John 10:14–16. How is this an example of Jesus being fair?** *Jesus laid down his life for all "sheep," not just the ones in the "pen" that already know him. Jesus died for everyone.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **How is Jesus' idea of fairness different than ours?**
 - **What is the gift Jesus wants to give us, and why can't we earn it?**
 - **What is one way we can be fair the way Jesus is?**

ACTIVITY | Rubik's Cube

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show an image of (or bring in) a [Rubik's Cube](#). Then give each kid a copy of the [printable](#) printed on cardstock. Have them color in the cubes in whatever array they'd like. Show kids how to fold it into a box (cube). Give kids a few slips of paper to write or draw on as well. (See a worked example [here](#).)
- This was a really popular toy in the 80's, but even now, it's more of a puzzle challenge than a toy. Now you could go online and find solutions and learn how to solve a cube. This little riddle now became fair game for everybody!
- After you assemble and decorate your Rubik's Cube box, write down a few words or draw a few images on separate pieces of paper that will remind you of everything we talked about today. Don't forget to include the Big Idea: **Jesus is always fair.**

