



OFFERING FOR
GLOBAL MISSIONS

EXTEND
HOPE &
HOSPITALITY

Bible Study
for Youth

2020-2021

LOOSENING THE CHAINS
OF INJUSTICE

MINISTRY FOCUS:

Mira and Sasha Zivanov, CBF Field Personnel in St. Louis, Missouri

SCRIPTURE:

Hebrews 13:2; Isaiah 58:6-12

SETTING THE STAGE:

We all know how to tie a knot. We tie them with our shoelaces or occasionally we need to tie a bow on our dress or a necktie for a formal occasion. Maybe you even know how to tie a bowtie—which is very impressive. Tying a knot is easy (except for that bowtie). But what about untying a knot?

Maybe you've needed to untangle an extension cord or a piece of jewelry; or maybe your headphones have gotten knotted up in your pocket. Isn't it frustrating? The knot seems to be twisted around, and takes precious time and intention to untie the mess that was created by accident! You probably couldn't make such a big mess even if you tried.

ACTIVITY:

Option 1: Untie the Knot

Bring three or four pieces of rope that are knotted and tangled. Select participants to unravel and detangle these pieces of rope. (Make it challenging.) Time them or go head-to-head to see who can finish first.

Debriefing Questions: How did you do in untangling this mess? What made it frustrating or difficult? What could have made it easier? Was your challenge as difficult as those of the other participants?

Option 2: (Surprise) Three-Legged Relay

Create a simple obstacle course for three or four participants. (For example, run through hula hoop five times, move an item across the room into a bucket, balance a ping pong ball on a spoon, walk on a tape line with an item balanced on your head, or maybe limbo under a pole to the finish line.) Use what you have and consider your context. Be sure to provide challenges that don't alienate participants or embarrass them based on the level of challenge or appropriate attire.

Have one or two participants complete the challenge; then, for the final participant, adjust the rules to add a new element. Have this participant compete with another participant by tying their legs together as in a

“three-legged race.” This new challenge will create new obstacles and will undoubtedly slow down your challengers.

Debriefing Questions: Was this game fair to everyone? What made this challenge especially frustrating? What did we learn from our final participants who had new rules? Did anyone step up to advocate or assist them? What could have made this game more equitable or fair?

BIBLICAL CONNECTION:

The Bible doesn't have many stories that involve a “three-legged race” or tangled up ropes. But scripture does tell us about breaking the yokes of the oppressed. A yoke was an apparatus used to join cattle to each other for agricultural work. These yokes doubled the power potential of the cattle because it helped them work together. But it's also an image of forced labor and a rigid system that ignores injustices.

Have a volunteer read Hebrews 13:2 and Isaiah 58:6-12

The prophet offers a harsh word to the religious participants. Some people were satisfying the requirements of ritual fasting, but they weren't living into the right action of their spiritual exercises. The people were fasting and praying and mourning with sackcloth and ashes as they were supposed to. However, they were also doing things they weren't supposed to. They were exploiting their laborers without pay or adequate provisions. They were storing their own food in bulk while their neighbors were going hungry. God is indeed more pleased by acts of justice than by self-seeking attempts at spiritual holiness.

Indeed, our praise and worship are directed to God; but these acts of worship should inspire us to seek out those who are in need and to offer them the physical and spiritual nourishment needed for life.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that our hospitality should extend beyond our own families to strangers, refugees and immigrants. We should treat these people in the same way we would treat them if they were angels. If we knew that visitors from heaven were in our city or town, how would we treat them? Wouldn't we welcome them and invite them over to our homes? Wouldn't we make sure their fridges were stocked and their closets full of clothing?

Do you know anyone who is a refugee? How would it feel for you to be

forced out of your home to go to school and live in a completely new country?

What could you do to help someone in this situation? What would you want someone to do for you?

Have you ever had an experience of correcting an injustice towards an individual or group of people? How did that feel for you and others involved?

How can acts of justice seek to focus on correcting the problem or issue?

Correcting systemic issues of injustice seems like a huge task. What are some small steps that you and your class could take this week to help please God in assisting those in need?

MISSIONAL CONNECTION:

Mira and Sasha Zivanov are CBF Field Personnel who work with refugees and immigrants in St. Louis, Missouri. Most of these refugees are from former Yugoslavia and the current countries of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. The Zivanovs are originally from Yugoslavia as well. They work with Kirkwood Baptist Church and other congregations in St. Louis to help women, men and children that are seeking safety. The Zivanovs offer their ministry at the International Fellowship Center through the means of pastoral presence, a tutoring ministry, and a weekly food pantry.

The Zivanovs can relate to the experience of these refugees and immigrants, because that is their story too. Sasha recalls how the Yugoslavia Wars caused him and his family to have to leave their home never to return. "They re-drew the map and, with that, I became a refugee. I couldn't go back."

Mira recounts the experience of a woman coming in to the International Fellowship Center, seeking assistance with immigration paperwork. When the woman asked how much they would charge her for the assistance, Mira and Sasha told her that this was their ministry, and they wouldn't charge anything for their help. Their guest started to cry and said, "Since I came here to the United States, I've always been charged for whatever I was doing."

CALL TO ACTION:



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Mission contexts assist in:

- Global Poverty
- Global Migration
- Global Church

CBF Field Personnel live and serve in settings ranging from North Africa to New York City. In a world where poverty, human trafficking, and lack of access to clean water are a daily reality, Cooperative Baptists seek sustainable responses and commission field personnel to serve locally within a global response.

As warfare, civil unrest and famine cause innocent families to flee their homes, these people made in the image of God are suffering and in need of compassion in their new places of residence. Many of these resettled persons have lost nearly everything—their houses, occupations, friends, extended family and connection with all things familiar.

The Offering for Global Missions seeks to bear witness to Jesus Christ through the efforts of field personnel like Mira and Sasha Zivanov. Offer prayers for Mira and Sasha and those with whom they work. Pray that their ministry will continue to offer compassion to the least of these, and pray that they can make helpful connections with volunteers and other leaders who can help immigrants with employment, resources and Christian community.

Consider giving as individuals or as a class to the Offering for Global Missions. For \$120, your class could sponsor a cooking class that equips immigrants with the tools, skills and safe practices to cook their own food.

