



## Lenten Justice Crosses



**Suggested Time: 30 to 40 minutes**

### Overview

Through this hands-on project, students will create crosses that emphasize the Lenten message of conversion to justice. They will also become familiar with the message of the prophet Micah and the traditional spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

### Materials Needed

- newsprint and markers
- cardstock for paper crosses
- thin-line markers, one for each person
- scissors

### Procedure

- 1** Introduce the activity by reading the following scriptural quote: “God has told us what is good, and what is required of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God” (adapted from Micah 6:8).
- 2** On newsprint write the three commands that you just read from the prophet Micah: “Act. Love. Walk justly.” Invite the young people to reflect on the three attitudes that put us right with God. Note that during Lent we are called to act, love, and walk in ways that do justice to God.
- 3** On the same newsprint, write the following three commands: “Fast. Pray. Give away.” Comment that especially during Lent, Christians are called to do justice to others through the traditional practices of fasting, praying, and almsgiving. Some students may be unfamiliar with the traditional disciplines of fasting and almsgiving. It may be helpful to describe those practices as spiritual exercises that we do for the soul, along with prayer.
- 4** Invite students to cut out simple crosses that communicate this Lenten message of justice.
- 5** Give each person a piece of cardstock, scissors, and one thin-line marker, and invite the students to cut out any type of cross they choose.

**6** Lead the participants through the following process:

- A** Write the word “Act” on the left side of the horizontal crossbeam. Write the word “Walk” on the right side.
- B** On the top part of the vertical beam, write the word “Love.” On the bottom part, write the word “justly.”
- C** Turn the cross over.
- D** On the left side of the horizontal beam, write the word “Fast.” Write the word “Pray” on the right side.
- E** On the top part of the vertical beam, write the word “Give.” On the bottom part, write the word “away.”

- 7** Conclude the activity by inviting volunteers to choose one of the words on the cross and tell the group how they will make a commitment in that area to do justice to God and others during Lent.

## Alternative Approaches

The six commands of the justice cross can be used as themes for the six weeks of Lent. Create the cross throughout the Lenten season. Each week have the young people add a different command to the cross and challenge them to find one way of doing justice in their world by living that command.

Schedule this activity for the first week in Lent. Then hang the students’ crosses on a small tree or branch displayed in the classroom. Each week during Lent, ask the participants to write on a strip of paper an example of how they have practiced one of the justice disciplines. Invite them to glue their strip on their cross next to the corresponding command.

Help students make one large justice cross and hang it in the classroom. Provide blank strips of paper and tacks. Each week during Lent, invite students to write on the paper strips ways they have lived out one of the commands and to attach the strips to the cross.

## Scriptural Connections

**Isaiah 57:15** (God is a high and holy God who lives with people who are humble and repentant.)

**Matthew 6:5–7, 16–18** (Jesus teaches about prayer and fasting.)

**Luke 9:23** (Take up your cross every day and follow Jesus.)

**1 Corinthians 13:3** (If you give away everything but have no love, it does you no good.)



*This activity is adapted from Justice and Service Ideas for Ministry with Young Teens, a manual in the HELP series, by Joseph Grant (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000). Copyright © 2000 Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.*