

The Golden Rule of Love and Freedom
A Reflection and Discussion Guide for Christian Parent Groups
Two Textbooks: The Holy Bible and “Parenting 4 Social Justice”
Prepared by Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson
(Need a P4SJ book? Go to www.talkpoints.com,
www.parenting4socialjustice.org or www.amazon.com
or check with your local bookstore or library)

You are welcome to listen to the free audio version of the book by using the free Spotify app. Search for “Parenting 4 Social Justice” to listen to the book.

Options for Downloading and Using this Discussion Guide

1. **Paperless.** Download the pdf file to your computer, tablet or phone and type your thoughts and ideas into the text boxes. After you have written your responses for each session, save the pdf file to your computer. Bring your device to the group meetings so that this guide and your saved notes will be available for your meeting.
2. **Printed Copies.** Print the entire discussion guide, or at least the section you will need for each of your group meetings. Use a pen to write in your thoughts and notes. Be sure to bring the completed section of the document to each of your meetings.
3. **Permission to Skip.** You are welcome to skip any sections that you want to skip.

To Be Considered Before Our First Meeting

- How often will we meet? When do we start?
- What about the size of our group? (Ideally, no more than 12 and divide in two groups if more.)
- Where? Home(s)? Church? Other?
- Who will provide leadership and guide our group meetings? Will we rotate leadership?
- What about childcare during our meetings?
- Will there be food? If so, how will that happen?

How Many Meetings to begin with? Eleven meeting outlines are offered, however, some groups may decide to begin with 4 since many parents can't commit beyond that. Suggestion: Use Meeting One and Two to start, then choose meetings three and four based on the topic for those chapters. Some in the group may choose to continue with more chapters beyond 4.

MEETING ONE: STEP-BY-STEP FOR LAUNCHING OUR PARENT GROUP

Leader: Beloved parents, Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount with this command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

Welcome

Go around the circle (beginning with the one who is leading this first meeting) and briefly introduce yourself. Say something about who you are and some of your reasons for choosing to be part of this group.

Consider these Truths (Take turns letting volunteers read each truth to the group)

1. *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”* (John 13:34) - Jesus
2. *“To be human you must bear witness to justice. **Justice is what love looks like in public** – to be human is to love and be loved.”* - Dr. Cornel West
3. *“**Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.**”* - Martin Luther King Jr.
4. *“Love is the motive, but justice is the instrument.”* - Reinhold Niebuhr
5. *“If you love your country; your community; your kids, then think about what the Lord requires of us all: **‘To do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’**”* – Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson and Micah 6:8
6. *“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matthew 7:12) – Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount
7. *“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”* Maya Angelou

Expectations - The members of this parent group will...

1. **Commit** – I will make the scheduled group times a priority on my calendar, and if I’m unable to attend, I’ll try to let another member of the group know. I will come to each meeting prepared to participate in group discussion, and be open to others and willing to grow, listen and learn.
2. **Read** – Before each meeting I will try to complete the assigned reading which will usually be a chapter in the book, “Parenting 4 Social Justice” and the suggested passages from the Bible.
3. **Reflect** – I will try to come prepared for each meeting by filling in my responses (either paperless or with pen and paper) to this discussion guide. (Note that space is provided in this guide to type/or hand write your thoughts/questions/reactions to the reading.)
4. **Discuss** – I will come prepared and willing to share with others some of my thoughts/questions/reactions to the reading.
5. **Act** – After each session I will with God’s help try to act on what I’m learning about justice, especially in my role as a Christian parent.
6. **Pray** – I will be open to God’s guidance and pray for the other members of this group as we, together, seek to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Helpful Tips

- **Avoid defensiveness.** The author of the book writes, “As you read this book, I expect that you won’t agree with me and the other authors on everything.” It is OK when people disagree, but it’s not ok to disrespect others for their views and opinions. The times when you may disagree are learning opportunities as you listen to others who offer another opinion or idea. Defensiveness tends to close the door to learning. **Agree to disagree agreeably.**
- **Listen to others. Try using this simple process:** Step One: Wait until the person has finished their thought or idea. Step Two: While they are talking, think of a question to ask them about what they have just said that will help further clarify what they mean. Ask a question to what they have said rather than offering your own idea or opinion.
- **Be honest about what you think and feel.** But don’t be offensive or put others down.

- **While you are reading the assignment in the book, highlight or underline** the parts of the chapter you find most challenging, interesting, or maybe even confusing. Circle any ideas that you don't agree with.
- **Be ready for the group discussion** by filling in the discussion questions in this discussion guide.

(Invite a volunteer to read the following to the group.)

A Personal Note from Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson, father of Angela Berkfield, lead author of Parenting 4 Social Justice.

Why did I decide to write this discussion guide for Christian parent groups?

I served churches for more than 40 years and believe that *Parenting 4 Social Justice* is a Godsend to the church. Scriptures are not a part of this book, but it's easy to see how Christian parents will find great value in holding the Bible in one hand and Parenting 4 Social Justice in the other. They complement each other in many ways.

Angela Berkfield was our daughter. After living with breast cancer for 19 months she died on September 14, 2021, at the age of 44 and 4 months after Parenting 4 Social Justice was published. This book was her vision, the culmination of a life committed to social justice and equity. It is a practical and excellent resource for parents of children (and anyone for that matter) who want to raise their children in the ways of Jesus Christ.

Angela grew up in a Baptist pastor's home. I was the one who baptized her on an Easter Sunday when she was 9. Her baptism was symbolic of her willingness to be immersed in the Christian faith and her desire to live the Christian life. As she grew, Angela internalized the many messages from the Bible commanding us to love others as we want to be loved; to be kind to others as we would hope others would be kind to us; to be generous to those in need as we would hope they would be generous to us in our need; to respect all people; to help others to heal from illness; to be joyful rather than angry; to be fair rather than to take advantage, and so much more. These Biblical teachings showed up in the way she chose to live her life and the way she lived her life is revealed in the social justice themes of this excellent book.

As a little girl we gave Angela a black life-like doll hoping that she would grow up to know instinctively that all lives matter, including black lives. She went to church camps in the summer and mission trips to Mexico. She attended a Christian college and majored in social work and minored in Spanish. While in college she spent one of her summers working in a black, inner-city neighborhood helping to organize activities for kids. Another summer, she was a part of the staff of a dude ranch in Colorado where she met and served wealthy folks who could afford a week at the ranch. During college she co-founded a residential house located in the inner city of Minneapolis where she and the other students embedded themselves in the neighborhood, learning to know, love, respect and enjoy the people living there.

After graduating from college Angela served the hungry, poor, and chemically addicted in Puerto Rico for two years. She met her future husband there and she and Richard decided to travel to the Thai-Burma border where for 5 years they served the Karen refugees living in refugee camps. She was always organizing others (including her own family) to be a force for good, kindness, love, peace, and fairness. She was driven to be a part of creating a better world, a world that works well for everyone – to be a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem!

Here's the point:

The way we raise and nurture our children makes a difference in the kind of adults they become. There's no getting around that fact. It begins with helping our children understand what it means

to be committed to Jesus Christ, but that's only the beginning. We then nurture our child(ren) (and grandchildren) within Jesus' divine vision that each person has great value and needs to be loved. This Love (God's LOVE) is the foundation for a better world and, I believe, the guiding light for the creation of her book, Parenting 4 Social Justice.

In the last months of her life, Angela designated me to be her "church guy" and asked if I would write this guide for Christian parents. I have tried to picture myself as a member of a parent group in our church holding the Bible in one hand and Angela's book in the other, together looking for clues to how we can raise our kids (and grandkids) to be more like Christ. Jesus gave his life loving others and commanded his followers to do the same. Parenting 4 Social Justice gives us some tips and tools on how to do that in this fractured, diverse, and changing world.

INTRODUCING OUR KIDS:

Go around the circle again and introduce your kids to the group by giving their first name(s) and something that you find precious or unique about each one. (Try to remember to bring photos of your children to your next meeting.)

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

Luke 18:15-17

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Directions - Form groups of 2 or 3 (but no more than 3). Read each question and discuss together. For this first meeting, there is no need to write your responses, but in future meetings, come prepared by having your responses already filled in.

1. Jesus welcomed and loved all children. Some of the things Jesus must have enjoyed and appreciated about children include...
2. Name your precious child(ren) and one thing you enjoy about each one...
3. Something I hope to gain by being a part of this group is...

Now regroup and invite all to share at least one of their hopes for being a part of this group.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read the Forwards to P4SJ starting at page IX and reflect on your reading by using this guide. **Notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.**

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS (Optional)

(Talk as a group to see if some or all the members of the group would like to do this.)

Invite each person to choose another member of the group to be their partner during this series of parent meetings. Partners will stay in touch with each other between each meeting. As a minimum they would call, email or text each other at least once between each meeting to see how life and parenting is going. It would be wonderful, too, if partners could find at least once to get together, along with their children, for a meal or activity. This idea of sharing successes and failures with one other person outside of the group meetings can add much to the experience and

build accountability and community as we strive to follow Christ and our commitments to Him and each other.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes! With God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

In closing, read in unison the benediction:

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom

God loves this whole world over.

MEETING TWO: FORWARDS TO P4SJ PAGES IX-XVI

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord's command:

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

Let's pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

One reason I came back to this group meeting is...

Since our last meeting, a parenting success I enjoyed was when...

I was disappointed in my parenting when...

AFTER READING THE FORWARDS OF THE BOOK

Something that challenged my thinking:

I was moved or interested to read that...

These are some of my key takeaways after reading the Forwards:

I disagreed or became defensive with this idea...

As a Christian parent, concerned about racial justice, one thing I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

Beloved parents, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved parents, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:7-12

A key word or phrase that stands out to me in this passage...

That word or phrase is important in my desire to be a Christian parent because...

We know (and love) God when we love others. To say, "I love my child(ren)," means that I'm willing to...

To say that I love all others means that I'm willing to...

Can you think of one way in which loving others opens the door to personal freedom?

If loving others means that I treat them with compassion and fairness, then I need to be willing to love even those who are hard to love. Someone I find hard to love is (because)...

Here's the prayer I have for my child(ren):
Dear God,

ACTIONS!

An action/activity I will plan to do with my child(ren)...

A conversation I will have with my child(ren)...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to utilize is...

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 1: "Social Justice (in Brief)" pages 21-47 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline or highlight those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes! With God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING (Read together in unison.)

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING THREE: CHAPTER 1: “SOCIAL JUSTICE (IN BRIEF) PAGES 21-47

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

(The Ups and Downs of Parenting)

Since our last meeting I felt good about my parenting when...

I was disappointed when...

At our last meeting I promised to...

Here’s how that went...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 1

Some of my key takeaways from Chapter 1 include...

I was challenged by the idea that...

I agreed with the author that in my parenting it's important for me to learn how to...

I disagreed with the idea that...

One thing I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about is...

An action I'd like to take with my child is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

As God's chosen ones, holy and Beloved (parents), clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Colossians 3:12-15

Important "pieces of clothing" we need to wear in public and at home with our families include...

Here are the one or two that seem hardest for me to put on, especially when I'm disappointed or upset...

I am thankful that God has helped me to...

Here's my prayer for my child(ren):
Dear God...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

A conversation I will have with my child(ren)...

One or more of the books/resources suggested in this chapter that I'd like to get to use with my child(ren) is...

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 2: "Parenting for Social Justice" pages 49–71 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: Yes, and *with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING (Read together in unison.)

Go forth into the world in peace;
Be of good courage;
Hold fast that which is good;
Render to no person evil for evil;
Strengthen the fainthearted;
Support the weak;
Heal the afflicted;
Honor all people;
Steward the Creation;
Love and serve the Lord
Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit
Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING FOUR: CHAPTER 2: “PARENTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE” PAGES 49–71

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

(The Ups and Downs of Parenting)

Since we last met together, I felt good about my parenting when...

I was disappointed when...

At our last meeting I decided to do this with my child(ren) and this is how that went...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 2

Some of my key takeaways from Chapter 2 include...

This reading has challenged me to...

I was moved or interested to read that...

I disagreed with or found myself becoming defensive with this idea...

In my own parenting I know I could improve my ability to...

As a Christian parent who desires to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, especially as a parent, I'd like my child(ren) to grow up learning that...

An action I would like to take with my child(ren) is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:9-11

God's main message to me in this scripture is...

To love others as I love myself, I have to be willing to...

To do no wrong to anyone suggests that I need to be willing to...

I'd like to teach my child(ren) to love the people in our own community by...

I believe God expects us to love the poor, unfortunate and rejected of our communities by...

A person I know who could use my love is...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

A conversation I will have with my child(ren)...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 3 "Parenting for Racial Justice" pages 73-123 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: Yes, and with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.

CLOSING

Read together in unison...

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING FIVE: CHAPTER 3 “PARENTING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE” PAGES 73-123

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

(The Ups and Downs of Parenting)

Since we last met, I felt good about my parenting when...

I was disappointed or felt like a failure when...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 3

Here are some of my key takeaways from Chapter 3...

One thing I learned from my reading that I want to remember:

Something that challenged my thinking:

I was moved or interested to read that...

I disagreed with or became defensive with this idea...

Based on my reading I want to teach my child(ren) to learn to...

An action I would like to take with my child is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life." He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37

The key take away from this passage of scripture is that Jesus wants me to...

In the context of racial dignity and justice, Jesus is challenging me to...

If our neighbor is a Samaritan (a person I'm not inclined to love or care for, maybe even a person of another racial background), then what does it mean for me to "do unto them as I would want them to do unto me"...

One person of another race I know is _____. Some things I might do to become better acquainted with this person include...

I might include my child(ren) in getting to know this person by...

Some reasons Jesus wants us to love (rather than avoid, disrespect, or even hate) people who are racially different, include...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

I want to talk with my child(ren) about...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 4: "Parenting for Class & Economic Justice" pages 125-175 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes, and with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING

Read together in unison...

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING SEVEN: CHAPTER 4 “PARENTING FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE” PAGES 125-175

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

Since we last met, I felt good about being a parent when...

I felt I like a failure when...

So far, I have found that being a part of this group has helped me...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 4

My key takeaways from chapter 4 include...

One thing I learned about economic justice I don't want to forget:

I was challenged by the idea that...

I was moved or interested to read that...

In parenting for economic justice, I need to be open and willing to...

I disagreed or became defensive with the idea that...

As a Christian parent who wants economic justice for all, I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about...

And one action I'd like to take with my child is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' Matthew 25:31-40

This scripture suggests that Jesus expects his followers to respond to the needs of others by...

It was important to Jesus that the basic, economic needs of all people be met, because...

Some of the "least of these brothers and sisters of mine" in my own community include...

Some things I could do with my child(ren) to respond to those with economic needs in our community are...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

I want to talk with my child(ren) about...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 5: "Parenting for Disability Justice" pages 177-211 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes, and with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING

Read together in unison...

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

All: "And also with you!"

MEETING EIGHT: CHAPTER 5: “PARENTING FOR DISABILITY JUSTICE” PAGES 177-212

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

(The Ups and Downs of Parenting)

Since our last meeting I felt good about my parenting when...

But I didn’t feel so good when...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 5

My key takeaways from chapter 5 include...

The idea of disability justice has challenged me to consider...

One thing I don't want to forget:

I was moved or interested to read that...

I want my child(ren) to grow up understanding that...

I found myself disagreeing with or becoming defensive with the idea that...

I know that all people deserve justice and love, and so I want to help my child(ren) learn to...

An action I/we could do together is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the maimed, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. Matthew 15:29-31

Matthew describes Jesus as one who cared deeply for the needs of all people. We know today that those with disabilities are not necessarily looking to be healed or fixed, but rather, accepted and included. Someone who has a disability that I know is _____. Some ways I might get to know this person better include...

I'd like to involve my child(ren) by...

Other things we might do together to become more involved in the disability justice movement in our own community include...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

I want to talk with my child(ren)...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 6: "Parenting for Gender Justice" pages 213-256 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes, and with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING

Read together in unison...

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING NINE: CHAPTER 6: “PARENTING FOR GENDER JUSTICE” PAGES 213-256

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN: (The Ups and Downs of Parenting)

Since our last meeting, I felt good about my parenting when...

I felt inadequate when...

As a result of this study group I think that my child(ren) is/are becoming more...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 6

Some of my key takeaways from Chapter 6 include...

Some of the questions I have about gender justice include...

I found myself becoming defensive with the idea that...

This chapter challenged me to be more open to...

I was interested read that...

I agreed with the author that as parents we need to improve our ability and willingness to...

As a Christian parent who is concerned about justice for all people, including LGBTQ neighbors, I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about...

I'd like to expand my understanding of gender justice by...

FROM GOD'S WORD

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir,^[c] you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. John 4:7-30

What were some of the ways Jesus showed love and justice to this Samaritan woman?

Jesus broke the cultural norms of his day: First, "Stay away from anyone who is a Samaritan!"; Second: "Don't talk with a single woman in private!"; Third: "Don't show any love or concern from a woman with so many husbands!" Jesus did what we all are to do: care for and risk our lives and reputation loving others who need our love. This story challenges me to...

If I am to love and respect LGBTQ persons as I would want them to love and respect me, I need to be more open to...

An LGBTQ person I would like to get to know better is _____. I could involve my child(ren) by...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 7: "Parenting for Collective Liberation" pages 257-290 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

All: *Yes, and with God's help, I will love and respect all others as I would want them to love and respect me.*

CLOSING

Read together in unison...

Go forth into the world in peace;

Be of good courage;

Hold fast that which is good;

Render to no person evil for evil;

Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING TEN: CHAPTER 7: “PARENTING FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION” PAGES 257-290

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Let’s pray together (in unison) the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

Since we began meeting together, I think that I’ve improved my parenting skills in the following ways...

I still want to improve in the following ways...

At our last meeting my plan was to do what action or conversation with my child(ren)...

This is how that went...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 7

My key takeaways from Chapter 7 include...

I was challenged by the idea that...

I agree that as Christian parents we need to...

As a Christian parent who wants freedom for all people, I'd like to talk with my child(ren) about...

An action I'd like to do with my child is...

FROM GOD'S WORD John 8:31-36

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus said that the “truth will make you free.” How are truth and freedom connected?

If I love my neighbor (and all others) as I love myself; if I do to others as I would want them to do to me; if I will follow Jesus as my Lord and guide through life, I will continue to find a new measure of freedom. My prayer is...

Dear God...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

A conversation I want to have with my child(ren)...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR NEXT MEETING:

Read Chapter 8: “Looking Back and Looking Forward” pages 291-303 and reflect on your reading by using this guide. As you read through the chapter, notice sentences or paragraphs that stand out to you as true or challenging and underline those. Circle at least one sentence or paragraph that you don't agree with.

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Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak;

Heal the afflicted;

Honor all people;

Steward the Creation;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

MEETING ELEVEN: CHAPTER 8: “LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD” PAGES 291-303

Leader: Beloved parents, this is our Lord’s command:

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to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

CHECKING IN:

I’m grateful that this group has helped me become more...

I’ve grown in my Christian faith and my understanding of justice and love in these ways...

I’m interested in learning more about...

I want to become more open to...

I believe Jesus Christ wants me to...

AFTER READING CHAPTER 8

Some key takeaways from Chapter 8:

My thinking was challenged by this idea:

During the past few weeks, I've learned many important lessons, including...

As a Christian parent I feel more committed to...

And I want my child(ren) to grow up and mature in the Christian faith so that they will live as people who will...

And one action I plan to take with my child is...

FROM GOD'S WORD

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us, then, who are mature think this way, and if you think differently about anything, this, too, God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained. Philippians 3:12-16

But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amos 5:24

The word or phrase above that gives me hope for the future is...

I believe justice will roll down like water when we all learn to...

This parent group has challenged and helped me to...

I plan to continue to grow in my ability to parent for social justice by...

ACTIONS BASED ON MY READING!

An action or activity I will do with my child(ren)...

I need to talk with my child(ren) about...

One or more of the books/resources mentioned in this chapter that I'd like to get at the library or order online is.

OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Leader: We commit our lives, our parenting, and all our relationships to the Golden Rule of Love and Freedom!

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Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the communion and fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit

Be with us and with those whom God loves this whole world over.

Postlude and Evaluation

Please send an email to Frank Nelson at talkpoints@aol.com to let him know what you thought of being a part of this parent group. In what ways was this guide helpful? What could be improved? Thanks!