

Module 2 Workshop Guide – A condensed version

What Problems Do Women Face, and What Does Justice Require?

Pages 36-48 in *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement*

<http://www.elca.org/womenandjustice>

Opening Prayer – See *Suggested Prayers by Pastor Connie Winter-Eulberg on the ELCA Sierra Pacific Synod website or see prayers on pages 22-23 of the study guide.*

Conversation Covenant – See Pages 13-14 for more information and to copy the Covenant

1. Listen and share injustices suffered by women and girls in our society and church.
2. Investigate characteristics of justice as a biblical and social value.
3. Encounter the basis for a Lutheran theology grounded in hope.

Scripture

Amos 5:21-24 “I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies . . . Take away from me the noise of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

What are the problems women confront?

Divide the group into small groups. Each group will read one of the illustrations and use the questions as discussion starters.

Illustration 1: Marny and the high school dress code

“The dress code is unfairly enforced in my school. My friend was sent home because she violated the dress code. An administrator said her T-shirt was inappropriate and her shorts were too tight. Meanwhile the boys wear jeans below their waist, and once in a while you can see their ‘butt cracks.’ Jocks sometimes go shirtless or wear revealing shorts, and no one says anything. The administrators don’t enforce the code equally, since boys are rarely sent home. Geeks (like myself), ethnic looking girls (like my friend who was sent home), ‘plain looking’ girls, and ‘big girls’ are singled out by administrators. This is not fair.”

Illustration 2: June’s pregnancy

June and her husband were expecting their first child. At a party with friends, she could not help but share her anxieties about the impending birth. June felt anxious about the delivery and sought reassurance about how to deal with the pain associated with birthing, without having to resort to pharmaceuticals or epidurals. A well-intentioned friend commented, “Giving birth will come naturally to you as a woman since it is something women are designed to do. Your partner, on the other hand, has one important role to perform: to protect you and to provide for the baby once she/he is born.”

Illustration 3: Hallie

“As a college-aged student and member of the LGBTQ community who identifies as a lesbian, I am constantly asked why I am a lesbian. My mother frequently comments that I cannot be a lesbian because I am a female. My father says it is a phase, and that all I need to find is a good man. Guys at school make comments such as, ‘You’re too cute to be a lesbian.’ Or, ‘Would you and your girlfriend be up for a three-some?’ Some men have even commented that a night with them will make me change my mind about liking women.”

Questions to Consider:

1. Does this illustration surprise you? Why or why not?
2. What do you think the problem is in the case study you read?
3. What message does the case study you read tell you about social views of women and girls bodies?
4. Discuss any ways you see the personal experience in your case study being an instance of injustice or not.

How does a social system work? We can look at our families because they are small social systems.

Work in groups of 2, identify and share an example of a common or expected behavior in your family and label as good or not so good.

Find an example of a family supported behavior

How was this behavior reinforced by the family?

What were the consequences for NOT following along?

Discuss:

1. What do you notice about the way a social system works to keep people acting in certain ways?
2. How does patriarchy get expressed in a social system?

Some injustices that are faced by women

1. Women get paid less than men and women of color get paid even less than white women.
2. Women get seen as sex objects and are stereotyped.
3. Sexual and domestic violence.
4. Demeaning language toward women.
5. Loss of reproductive freedom.

How has the church perpetuated a male dominated system?

1. The church has had sexist attitudes toward women's ordination.
2. Suppression of women in leadership.
3. Male centered theology.
4. Primary use of male language in speaking about God.

How can we work for Justice for Women?

Martin Luther (LW 46:78) "If you want to live in a community, you must share the community's burdens, dangers, and injuries, even though not you, but your neighbor has caused them. You must do this in the same way that you enjoy the peace, profit, protection, wealth, freedom, and security of the community, even though you have not won them or brought them into being."

What does justice mean?

1. Sufficiency –meeting the basic needs of all people
2. Sustainability – maintaining an acceptable quality of life for all generations.
3. Solidarity – interdependence of all of creation
4. Participation – The right of all people to have a voice regarding activities and decision that affect their lives.

How do we deal with injustice?

1. Stand up
2. Show up
3. Speak up
4. Practice self-care so that you can continue this work.

**Find one thing/topic that you are interested in and work on this one topic so you don't get burned out.

Lutheran Theology Helps Us

1. We rely on the promises of God, and that provides us with hope.
2. As we live in God's hope, we do not tolerate destructive beliefs and practices that belittle, demean and degrade women and girls.
3. The sacraments remind us of God's ongoing work in our lives and in the world.
4. We believe that through the sacraments we are connected to each other and in that we work for the dignity, respect and justice for all people.
5. Because we live in community and in relationship with God we challenge the sin and injustice.

Ending Prayer

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Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA Women and Justice Process Builders