

Module 12: Just Action



Aims of the module

To enable the group to draw up an action plan to implement *Just Church* in your own church and local community, and to be a more effective part of the wider struggle for God's justice.



Notes for group leaders

This module should be run as a plenary session, attended by all who have taken part in earlier modules. The aim is for everyone to reflect on how they can best engage with issues in their community and national issues, and then begin a planning process which leads to action. This action process should continue into the future.



Resources required

- Copies of the planning grid (Handout 1) for everyone.
- A Bible.
- A flipchart or large sheets of paper, and felt-tip pens.



Opening worship (10 minutes)

Use the resources from the worship section of this module, or plan your own worship.



Activity 1: Taking it forward (20 minutes)

Ask someone in the group to read the Bible passage James 2:14–26.

Have a group discussion. Refer to your notes from previous sessions, and ask the group to recap on the modules that have been used. What ideas for action emerged during the “Action points” discussion in previous sessions? Brainstorm some possible actions.

- Agree on priorities for taking these actions forward.
- Who from the church needs to be involved in taking them forward?

Make sure your plans are SMART:

Specific – have a clear focus;

Measurable – easy to determine when they have been achieved;

Attainable – realistic targets rather than impossible ideals;

Results-orientated – focus on results;

Time-specific – have a clear end date.

Who, what, where, when and how?



Activity 2: Planning (40 minutes)

From the ideas thrown up in the recapping and brainstorming session, select a manageable number of actions to take forward. Between three and six actions might be about right to start with. Ask each member of the group to individually choose their “top three” from the list of ideas by placing sticky coloured dots or ticks against them.

Just Church: facilitator sheet

Use the planning grid (Handout 1) to create your own action plan and timetable. For each action you choose to take, you need to decide: **how** to take it forward; **who** will be responsible; **when** you hope to achieve it by; and how you will **review** your progress. Work across the chart, filling in each section as you go. We've provided an example of how you might fill in the chart if you want to incorporate justice issues more consistently into your worship.

You could break into smaller groups, with each group planning one action, or plan the actions as a whole group. Either way, it is important to allow 10–15 minutes to plan each action.

Every action should be reviewed after 6–12 months, so that you can check how successful you have been – and to plan further actions as a **Just Church**.



Activity 3: Rounding off and celebrating becoming a **Just Church** (15 minutes)

Once you've developed your action plan, it is essential to share it and celebrate it with the whole church. Discuss and agree how you're going to do this.

One way of doing this would be to ask the congregation to adopt the plan as a "**Just Church** Covenant" within a Sunday morning service (see example wording on the right). When you have done this, Church Action on Poverty will supply you with a **Just Church** certificate. This could be presented to the church at a Sunday service and displayed prominently on a church notice board.

Once you have made your plan and covenant, send a copy of your report and action plan to Church Action on Poverty via the "Network" page at www.justchurch.info. We'll send you a **Just Church** certificate to display, and your story and commitments will be shared online with the rest of the **Just Church** network.

Just Church **St Anywhere**

We believe that tackling poverty where it exists around us is a key part of living the Gospel. We commit to:

- Including justice regularly in our worship
- Joining Church Action on Poverty
- Writing to the local paper about... (e.g. asylum destitution)
- Seeing the local MP at his or her surgery twice a year regarding a local or national issue about poverty
- Ordering Poverty Action Week resources prior to 2008 for our church



Closing worship

Use the resources from the worship section of this module, or plan your own worship. You might want to say the **Just Church** prayer (see the introduction) together to end the session.

Handout 1: Planning grid



What? What do you want to achieve?	How? What actual tasks are involved?	Who? Who needs to be involved to make it happen?	When? When do you hope to have achieved this by?	Review How will you review your progress?
Example: Concern for poverty integrated into Sunday worship.	Example: Set up a worship planning group to review our existing worship.	Example: The priest/ minister, choir and prayer group.	Example: December 2008 – worship planning group to start in September.	Example: Worship planning group to meet and review the results



Opening worship

Holy God, we come before you in faith and obedience.
If we have driven a wedge between our worship and the quest for peace,
Erected a wall between prayer and politics,
Associated the justice of heaven only with the gentle things of earth,
God of justice,

Guide us in the way we should walk.

If we have rendered to Caesar
The things that are yours,
Or denied you a say in your own creation
God of justice,

Guide us in the way we should walk.

If we have watered down your Word or distorted our image of your Spirit,
Seeking an easy Gospel and a tamer dove,
Or dampening the fire of Pentecost,
God of justice,

Guide us in the way we should walk.

Wherever in this country
The poor are downtrodden or despised,
Wherever the sick are neglected and prisoners are refused redemption,
Wherever the strangers in our cities are suspected,
God of justice,

Help us to respond in love.

Wherever in our world
The lust for profit undermines our longing for peace,
Or the greed for power silences the call for justice,
Wherever warfare replaces welfare
Or new empires rob people of their culture,
Their identity and self-determination,
God of justice,

Help us to respond in love.

In the prison visitor and the conflict breaker,
In the vigils for peace and protests to safeguard creation;
To the eyes of mothers, who seek their missing children,
To the eyes of old men, who long for a new tomorrow,
God of justice,

Let us see your love.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen



Closing worship

In a few moments of silence let us reflect on the work we have done.

We have been attentive to the word of God.

We have heard the voice of our neighbour.

We have listened to the word of scripture.

We have heard the call of God's justice.

We have learned that to love our neighbour is to love God

To work for justice is to walk with Christ.

We have learned of the suffering of others

and we know it is hard to end injustice

But we are not dismayed. We are strong in our faith in God.

Lord, you have called us and blessed us

And brought us where we are upon our way.

Keep us strong in our faith as we seek to do your will.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

As we look around this room we give thanks to God

For those who have accompanied us on this journey.

For their patience and understanding. For their desire to do God's will.

For their courage in following the one who said: I bring life in its fullness.

Lord we thank you

As we look beyond this room to our church and to the wider world

We pray for those to whom we must speak.

Those with whom we must share our discoveries and learning.

Those who will hear our words readily: and those who will not wish to hear the words of the Gospel spoken for us today.

Lord, you have called them and blessed them

and brought them where they are upon their way.

Guide them in your service as they seek do your will.

That, together with them, we may become a just church.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit we with us all, ever more.

Amen