

WPC YOUTH

SOLIDARITY

SESSION 3



WHAT IS SOLIDARITY?

COOPERATION *NOT* COMPETITION

Solidarity means cooperating with our neighbors rather than competing with them. Solidarity means seeing the peace, freedom, and justice of my neighbor as *my* peace, freedom, and justice. Solidarity means we're all in this together, so we must care for our neighbors that are most deeply harmed by the world we live in, especially the poor, sick, incarcerated, and marginalized.





Photo by Marco Chilesse on Unsplash

THIS WEEK

CARING FOR THE INCARCERATED





LISTEN

‘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 who are members of my family, you did it to me.’



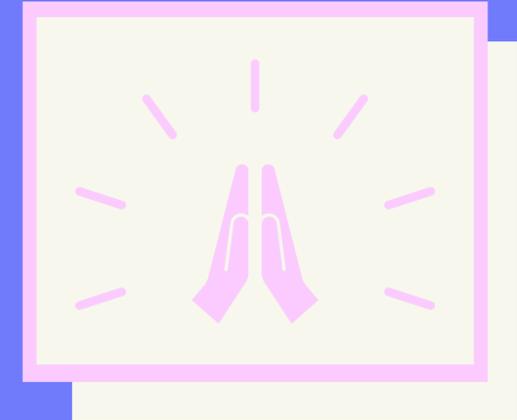
MATTHEW 25:36-40

••• TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Take some time contemplate these verses from Matthew's Gospel. Paint a picture, go for a walk (with parental permission!), listen to some music that helps you think, light a candle (again, with parental permission!) and meditate, or spend some time in prayer. Take note of any thoughts or feelings that arise in you as you focus on the words of Christ. You cannot get this exercise "wrong". Be honest about what you feel. Sit with your feelings for a moment, even if you feel nothing at all.

••• THINK ABOUT SCRIPTURE

- Why do you think Jesus chooses sides with the poor, the foreigner, and the incarcerated?
- Why do you think Jesus might have a special connection with prisoners in particular?
- Read Luke 4:18–19. How does this passage inform our understanding of Jesus' relationship to prisoners?
- How do you think Jesus would want us to "visit" prisoners today?



CONTEMPLATE

●●● 2.3 MILLION PEOPLE ARE INCARCERATED IN THE US

The US is only 5% of the world's population, but we have over 25% of the world's incarcerated population.

●●● OVER 550,000 PEOPLE ARE LOCKED UP WHO HAVEN'T BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME

This is because the cash bail system uniquely disadvantages those who are poor.

●●● SOCIAL DISTANCING IS *NOT* POSSIBLE IN A PRISON CELL

Prisons already suffer from overcrowding, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, the incarcerated are at higher risk than those on a cruise ship or in a nursing home.

INCARCERATION
in
AMERICA

A WORLD WITHOUT PRISONS

You've likely learned about *abolitionists* in school. These were the people who fought and struggled to end slavery in the US. They wanted to abolish slavery because they believed that such a destructive and dehumanizing institution could not be "reformed", it had to be demolished. Today, we have "prison abolitionists," people who are seeking to bring an end to our culture of incarceration and the practice of caging people. Like the abolitionists of old, they do not believe that the systems of incarceration can be reformed, rather they believe that we must build new ways of relating to each other, new ways of dealing with harm that do not rely on caging and punishment, and new ways of fostering solidarity with each other. Prison abolitionists envision a world where we deal with harm in ways that restore and heal, rather than cause more harm and destruction.

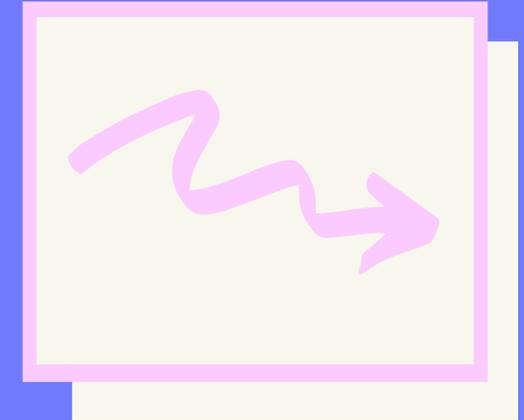


DISCUSS

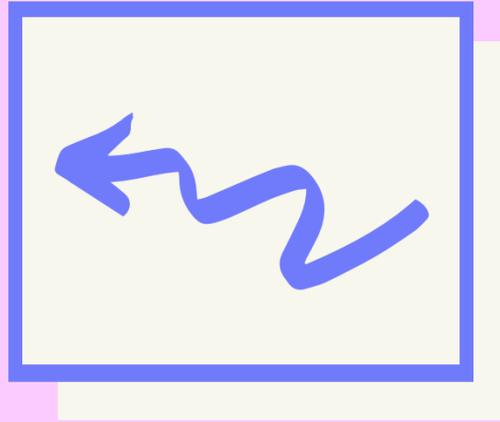
- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE IDEA OF WORLD WITHOUT PRISONS?
- WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY INCARCERATED?
- HOW DO YOU THINK THE CHURCH SHOULD SUPPORT THE INCARCERATED?

••• ON YOUR OWN

- Educate yourself about the carceral system. You can find a lot of useful information on the [Prison Policy Initiative website](#).
- Practice radical imagination. Think about what the world would look like without prisons. If you appreciate artistic expression, create an image of communities caring for one another, forgiving one another, and restoring one another. How would the world be different if we committed to these practices instead of incarceration?
- Find regular times to pray for your incarcerated neighbors and their families. Remember, *1 in 50 children in the US has a parent in prison*. If you know someone who has a family member in prison, reach out to them and pray for them.



GO AND DO



GO AND DO



WITH YOUR FAMILY

- Watch [13th](#) on Netflix. It helpfully unpacks the ways in which racism and white supremacy have produced the unimaginably huge prison system we have in the US today (Content Warning: language and violence).
- Start talking about racism as a family. We cannot be allies in the cause for racial justice until we acknowledge our own implicit biases. [Here is a trove of resources](#) for families to begin having this necessary discussion together.