



Action points

Acting for justice

Isaiah chapter 58 verses 6 to 10 is from the Old Testament of the Bible, it is a prophetic call to the nation of Israel.

See if you can arrange for the words below to be spoken by a character, dressed as a caricature of a prophet (long beard and sandals or with a sandwich board if you have one), entering where you are meeting and calling out 'Thus says the Lord ...' This will work best if the speaker can address the group directly as much as possible. Memorising some of the text or holding a prop with the text on would help with this. It is an impassioned plea to God's people and the questions in the passage should be spoken with energy and a sense of the prophet's desire that people understand and act accordingly.

The passage is as follows:

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, 'Here I am'. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

After the passage is read, ask the group if they think that this weirdly written advice from an ancient prophet has any relevance to us today. If so what? Recognise the link to Quaker language of today referring to our 'light'.

Then split into smaller groups, give a copy of the prophet's words to each small group and ask them to have a go at re-writing them in a way that makes it relevant to our times and our culture. Then hear the re-writes that each small group has written.

Bring people back together and explore with the young people what action they might take in their situations that might challenge injustice. How can they be merciful? How can they display humility while also being like the prophet and calling for societal change?

Stress that most of us can only take small actions, but that lots of small actions may bring about a big difference.