JUSTICE



‘Learn to do right.
Seek justice.’

Isaiah 1.17

Justice

When we explore our value 'justice', we know it means more than just making things fair. In order for our school community to live in harmony, it is important to have rules and laws that everyone follows. We talk about these rules and the impact that not living by rules could have on our school but ultimately on the wider world. Justice means giving all people what it is right and fair for them to have: life, health, freedom and dignity. It is about acting out of a concern for what is right and seeing right prevail. It is about social justice, especially for those who suffer most and are least able to protect themselves.

What makes 'justice' a distinctively Christian value?

In Exodus, the people are instructed to treat everyone fairly and to do what is right and just (Exodus 23:2) The Bible emphasises that 'The righteous care about justice for the poor' (Proverbs 29:7). Isaiah says: 'Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. (Isiah 1:17) Throughout the Bible, it is emphasised that justice is immensely important to God and is fundamental to God's character. 'For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.' (Psalm 11:7) Justice is not about a culture which encourages everyone to insist on their own rights at the expense of others. It is about a community that knows that everyone's well-being is bound up with that of everyone else. Justice is a prerequisite of peace: without justice there can be no peace. A commitment to justice leads to fierce opposition to injustice in whatever form it may be found.

Scripture

Throughout his whole life, Jesus upheld the rights of the marginalised both in his stories and his miracles: such as the outsider (the Good Samaritan); the outcast (the leper); the unfairly treated (women, children and non-Jews). In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-45), Jesus equates acting justly for the poor, the weak and vulnerable with loving and serving God. In this parable, Jesus uses the example of a shepherd who separates his sheep from his goats in order to help his followers understand what judgement will be like. Jesus explains that people will be separated into two groups: those who have lived good lives and believed in God will be put on one side and have a place in Heaven and those who have rejected the belief in God and sinned in their lives will be placed on the other side and will go to Hell. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats strongly encourages Christians to take action to help those in need. In this parable, Jesus makes it clear that a life worthy of the reward of Heaven must involve actively helping people in need. Jesus explains that helping a person, whoever they are, is just the same as helping Jesus himself and is therefore a duty for all Christians.