

# Change



## Preparation:

- Invite participants to bring with them the definition of the purpose of the economy that they wrote after Session 1
- Print a copy of Appendix D for each group member
- Have ready a copy of the Bible, and some spare pens or pencils for anyone who has forgotten theirs.

## Introduction

5 minutes

Explain that this is the final session of the Just Economics course, and that we'll begin by reflecting on what we've thought about in the previous sessions. As a reminder:

- Session 1 looked at the economic aspects of current crises facing society, and asked what the economy was for
- Session 2 explored poverty in a world of plenty, and what we understand 'enough' to be
- Session 3 examined the problems with perpetual economic growth, and asked what we want to see growing
- Session 4 looked at different understandings of how we measure value in the economy and in society
- Session 5 explored how freedoms and responsibilities might be balanced in an economic system, and asked how the economy would look if relationships were put at its heart.

Invite people to share:

- What has struck you most during the course?
- How do you feel now about the way we currently organise the economy?

This course has highlighted many injustices in the way our economy operates, and raised questions about how things could be thought about and done differently. In this final session, we'll be exploring different responses to injustice, and how we might work for change.

## Responding to injustice

15 minutes

Read Amos 5:10-15.

The prophet Amos was a farmer from Judea who lived at a time of great prosperity for Israel. He was called by God to the uncomfortable task of denouncing the affluent Israelites for their religious complacency and their exploitation of the poor. Discuss together:

- What are the economic injustices to which Amos draws attention?
- How does Amos say that people should change?

- How do you think Amos felt about his calling? (Look at verse 10)
- How do you feel about taking a stand against economic injustice?

Read Amos 9:13-15.

Although most of the book of Amos is devoted to God's judgement on the people of Israel, and warnings of their destruction if they don't change their ways, it ends with this hopeful vision.

- Which approach do you think is more likely to bring about change?

## **Rethinking the purpose of the economy**

*10 minutes*

After Session 1, group members wrote a definition of what they thought the purpose of the economy should be.

Invite people to revisit their vision in the light of the discussions over subsequent sessions, and spend some time individually writing an updated definition in the space at the top of Appendix D.

When everyone has done this, invite reflections on anything that has changed since people wrote their initial definition.

- The Joint Public Issues Team has a hope for “a just economy that enables the flourishing of all life”. Is this a vision that resonates with you?

Even if we have identified ways in which we would want the world to be different, that does not mean that change will come easily or without consequences for us or others.

## **A change of heart**

*13 minutes*

Read Luke 19:1-10.

This tells the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector whose life changed when he met Jesus. Tax collectors were disliked as they were agents of the Roman authorities and often cheated people for their own gain. Discuss:

- How did meeting Jesus change Zacchaeus's priorities?
- What made change possible for Zacchaeus?
- What would the consequences have been for Zacchaeus of his actions? How do you think they would have gone down with other tax collectors, and Jewish and Roman leaders?
- Do you see tax as a blessing or a curse?
- How could the tax system be used to shift economic priorities?

## **Where might change begin?**

*15 minutes*

Ask people to individually complete the exercise on Appendix D, which invites them to reflect on different ways that they could respond to the issues raised in this course, and take steps towards building a more just economy. Three categories of response are suggested: actions, attitudes, and advocacy.

When everyone has done this, invite each group member to share one of the changes they are considering. Are there any responses that you want to do together?

### **Homework**

*1 minute*

After this session, please ask participants to complete a quick feedback form about Just Economics from the Joint Public Issues Team, who wrote the course, by visiting [tinyurl.com/justeconomicsfeedback](https://tinyurl.com/justeconomicsfeedback) or scanning the QR code on Appendix D.

After doing the survey, group members can find out more about JPIT's work on the economy, and sign up for regular updates.

### **Closing prayer**

*1 minute*

May God bless us with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that we may seek truth boldly and love deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation, so that we may work tirelessly for fairness, freedom, and peace among all people and for the earth.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.

**The purpose of the economy** should be...

**Where might change begin?**

Reflect on different ways that you could respond to the issues raised in this course, and take steps towards building a more just economy.

<b>Actions</b> <i>Changes I could make to my own personal activities and habits</i>	<b>Attitudes</b> <i>Ways I could challenge myself and others to think and behave differently</i>	<b>Advocacy</b> <i>Issues where I could campaign for changes to unjust systems and practices</i>

Things I'd like to learn more about...

**Feedback**

Please complete a quick feedback form for the Joint Public Issues Team, who wrote this course, by visiting [tinyurl.com/justeconomicsfeedback](http://tinyurl.com/justeconomicsfeedback) or scanning the QR code.



Find out more about JPIT's work at [www.jpit.uk](http://www.jpit.uk)