

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

by Adrienne Miller and Carol Duerksen

KEY VERSE:

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” (The lawyer) said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10: 36-37

FAITH STORY:

Luke 10: 25-37

FAITH FOCUS:

Jesus is confronted by the experts in the law regarding eternal life and how to inherit it. Jesus replies with the parable of the Good Samaritan. As a man was traveling down the road he was attacked, robbed, beaten, and left to die. A priest and Levite passed by on the other side of the road, but a Samaritan stopped to help. He took the man to an inn and paid for his care. Jesus then told the experts to go and be like the Good Samaritan.

SESSION GOAL:

To help students understand that we should love all people and see all people as our neighbors.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- See how giving of yourself affects others
- Think about the people in their lives who may be considered enemies and consider how to befriend them.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Plan for this to be an extended meeting—contact parents and students at least a week in advance about these plans.
- 2 Bibles for each student
- 3 Bible dictionary
- 4 Trash bags (small or medium size)
- 5 Depending on location of your meeting place and if you have enough drivers in your group, you may need additional cars and drivers.
- 6 Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- 7 An adult to go with each group of 4-5 students

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (45 minutes–1 hour)

Welcome students and when they are seated, ask them to respond with one-word “first-reaction” thoughts as you call out certain phrases. These are the phrases for you to call out:

People who are homeless

People who are poor

People living in a 3rd-world country

People who receive government assistance

Say: Did you notice that I didn’t say “Homeless people” or “poor people”? Why do you think I said “People who are homeless” and “People who are poor”?

Explain:

This may sound like just semantics, but there is a significant difference. We are all human beings. We are all people. Some people are poor or homeless. Stating it the way I did emphasizes the person first, and the economic condition second.

Today we are going to start out by collecting food for persons who are less fortunate than we are.

Divide into groups of 4-5 with an adult in each group. Pass out a trash bag to each group. Send the groups out into community to collect canned goods or other non-perishable items to be given to a homeless shelter or a local food pantry.

CONNECT: (7–10 minutes)

After each group arrives back at the meeting place, talk about their experiences.

How did it feel to ask for the food? Were people willing to give items?

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10–15 minutes)

Invite two students to read the passage of the Good Samaritan story.

1. Luke 10:25-32

2. Luke 10:32-37

Ask two other students to look up these words in a Bible dictionary and tell the class the definitions:

Priest

Levite

Samaritan

Unclean and clean

Based on what you’ve learned about these words, discuss with the class: Why didn’t the Priest

and Levite stop? Why did the Samaritan stop? Share these thoughts with the class:

How we think of ourselves determines whom we are going to consider to be our neighbor. If what I value the most in myself is something I share with a relatively small group of other people, then I will be mostly interested just in that group of people. On the other hand, if what I value the most in myself is something that everyone could at least potentially possess, then my social concern will be much broader. This story illustrates this point. The priest and Levite thought of themselves and esteemed themselves primarily as a priest and Levite. The wounded man was neither of those. The Samaritan, on the other hand, thought of himself first as a human being, and so the important thing to him was not that a Jew was wounded, but that another human being needed help.

Ask students if this concept is clear to them, inviting them to paraphrase it back to you to make sure they understand.

APPLY: (10 minutes)

Ask: In light of what you just heard about the possible reason for the priest and Levite to ignore the wounded man while the Samaritan stopped, how does that tie in with the way I described people at the beginning of class?

(Answer: They both emphasize that we are a part of humanity, and as part of humanity, every person is our neighbor.)

Brainstorm with the students on how we can be good neighbors in our everyday lives. Make a list on the dry-erase or chalkboard. Encourage students to think of possibilities in their homes, schools, church, community, country and world. Note that the collecting of food today was one example.

RESPOND: (5–10 minutes)

Invite students to look at the list you've made and to choose one or more actions they are willing to take to be a good neighbor in the next week. If they are willing to commit to that action, ask them to write their name beside it on the list. Tell students that as a class, you will check up on each other next week. Set a good example by making a commitment or two yourself.

Close by reading the key verse together:

"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" (The lawyer) said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10: 36-37

Repeat the last line together with as much enthusiasm as you'd have in a sports huddle: **Go and do likewise!!!!**

Arrange for a time for the class to take the items they collected to a local homeless shelter or food pantry.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

Some people may ask why it is such a big deal that a Samaritan stopped and helped the beaten man. In those days, the Samaritans and Jews were not friendly with each other. To Jews, Samaritans were dirty, unclean, and overall bad people to associate themselves with. To help the disciples understand the importance of befriending even your worst enemies and confronting your negative stereotypes, Jesus used the Samaritan as the hero of the story.

In biblical times, people could become impure “by having contact with a corpse, certain dead animals, the involuntary flow of fluids from sexual organs, and disease such as tsara’at, or the eating of prohibited foods” (Achtmeier). When the Samaritan touched the man who was wounded and nearly dead, he himself became unclean.

To help your students understand the relationship between the two groups of people, compare Iraqi soldiers and American soldiers. If an American soldier was dying on the side of the road and an Iraqi soldier stopped to make sure he was okay, it would be the same concept as Jews and Samaritans in those days.

WORKS CITED:

Achtmeier, Paul J. “Purity.” *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996.

Holy Bible: New International Version. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1993.

The Interpreter’s Bible, Luke and John, Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee, 1952