Parable of a Good Samaritan



Scripture Reference: Luke 10:25-37

Suggested Theme: God has compassion on people in need. “Love your neighbour” by helping anyone who is in need.

Memory Verse: “The man answered, ‘Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ Also, ‘You must love your neighbour as you love yourself.'” Luke 10:27, ICB

Story Overview:

Each Jew knew the command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” When a man asked Jesus what exactly was meant by “neighbour,” he was trying to get out of his responsibility. By telling the parable of a Samaritan who helped a complete stranger, Jesus made it plain that any person who is in need is our neighbour.

Background Study:

Information about teaching the Parables

In the book of Matthew, Jesus referred to loving God as the “greatest command” and loving your neighbour as the command like it. He even said that “all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” Matthew 22:34-40. Being an expert in the law, the man asking Jesus questions would have been familiar with these commands. He would also have been familiar with the many additions to the law made by the Pharisees. He would rather debate the law than think about his own personal obedience. He tries to test Jesus or trap him in his own words. Jesus takes this potentially volatile situation and turns it into a teaching moment.

Has this ever happened in one of your gatherings? Perhaps one of the children is distracted or trying to draw attention to him/herself. It seems the discussion or activity is slipping out of control. Here is an opportunity to tell your best story! Try what Jesus did and ask the disruptive child their opinion about one point in the story. Perhaps ask them to read a verse and say how they would have felt if they had been there. Or ask them what movie star would be best to play that bible character if there was a movie about this story. Don’t embarrass them, but really find out what they think. Then say, “Now, let’s get back to today’s story.”

One way to help younger children regain focus is to give a few simple instructions – any instructions – in rapid succession: everyone stand up, everyone sit down, everyone wiggle your toes, everyone cover your eyes, and then everyone open your ears! “Now we are going to learn about God.” The attention is now on you because they are curious to hear what you are going to do next!

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As He had before, Jesus spoke in a parable. A parable was not an actual event but a story that was understandable due to the fact that it was the kind of thing that could easily have happened. The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho is about 25 kilometres. This familiar road ran through a rocky, desert country that provided places for robbers to hide and make surprise attacks on people.

The people listening to this parable would have been able to relate to the trouble that the man in the parable was in. Seeing a good Jewish priest come along would have been a relief for the injured man. How must he have felt to see the priest pass by without helping? Another Jew, a Levite, should have stopped, but he did not.

This Jewish audience would have expected other Jews to help a Jew in obvious need. What they did not expect was the next thing that Jesus said. In this parable, it was not a Jew who finally helped this man; it was a Samaritan! Jews looked down on the Samaritans. They were considered half-breeds and not true Jews. This goes back to 2 Kings 17:24-41 when the Jews of the northern kingdom were taken into Assyrian captivity, and the King of Assyria made an attempt to resettle Samaria with his own people.

Now, in this parable, the Samaritan went to extraordinary measures to help the man. He not only helped him in the moment of need, he got personally involved in the man's situation. He spent the night taking care of him and then paid an innkeeper to take care of the man until he was well. Two silver coins would have been equal to two days' wages. This would have been enough for up to two months' stay in an inn.

We are to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Neighbours are not limited to people who live near us or who are in our circle of friends and family. Neighbours are not just those who attend church with us. Neither is the neighbour relationship reserved only for those who believe in God. We are to love our neighbour, and Jesus defines our neighbour as anyone who is in need.

Sometimes helping our neighbour is very difficult and inconvenient. Sometimes, it means getting out of our comfort zone or even facing some ethical dilemmas. When Jesus challenged him with this parable, even this expert in the law knew that the Samaritan had obeyed God's command while the priest and Levite did not.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Display a few different maps (city, country, world). Help children find where they live on the map. Ask them where their neighbourhood is. "In today's lesson, we are going to learn about a parable Jesus told about neighbours . . ."

The Story:

Wherever Jesus went, people would come to hear Him talk about God. They loved to hear Him tell parables. Parables were stories that helped people understand important lessons.

Once, a man who was an expert in the Law of God asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to live forever?"

Jesus knew that man was an expert in God's Old Testament Laws. He asked the man what the Old Testament Law said that a person must do to live forever.

The man's answer was, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and, Love your neighbour as yourself."

Jesus told the man that he was right. That was the greatest commandment. That is the way to live forever.

Then the man asked about loving your neighbour as yourself. Did he have to love all of his neighbours or just those who lived close by? He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?"

Instead of telling him the answer, Jesus told him a parable. This is the parable:

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A man was travelling by himself from Jerusalem to the town of Jericho. While he was on the road, some robbers attacked him. They beat him up and took everything he had – even his clothes! The man was left all alone on the road. He waited and waited for someone to come by and help him.

A priest came walking by on the road. Priests were God's helpers in the temple. They knew how to worship God. They knew all of the rules of God. Do you think the priest helped the man? No, the priest went to the other side of the road and passed right by the man without help.

Next, a Levite came along the road. Levites knew all of God's laws. They were good Jews. Do you think the Levite stopped and helped the man? No, the Levite looked at the man, then crossed the road and walked past him.

Finally, a man from Samaria came along the road. The Jews did not like Samaritans. Everybody thought that the Samaritans would never help anybody. But this Samaritan was good. He saw the man on the road, and he stopped to help. He put oil and wine on the man's wounds. Oil and wine were used for medicine in those times. Then he lifted the man onto his donkey and took him to a nearby inn. He took care of the man all night to make sure he was going to be well.

The next morning, the Samaritan had to leave to continue on his journey. He wanted to make sure that the injured man was taken care of, so he gave money to the innkeeper. He gave him enough money so that the man could stay at the inn for two months! He even told the innkeeper that he would return the next time he was travelling and pay more if the man was still sick.

Everyone was very surprised to hear this parable. When Jesus was finished, He asked the expert in the Law of God a question, "Three men went on the road that day: the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan. Which of these men do you think was a neighbour to the man who was beaten and robbed?"

What do you think the expert in the Law of God answered? That's right, the Samaritan was a neighbour. Helping anyone who needs help is being the kind of neighbour that God wants. We don't even have to know the person. We should help them just because they need help.

God has compassion for people in need, and He wants to help them. We can help others just like the Samaritan did and remember if God has compassion on people in need, so should we.

top

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

top

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What is the greatest commandment? (To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind)
- After loving God, what is the second greatest commandment? (To love your neighbour as yourself)
- Why is the Samaritan man in Jesus' parable called the "Good Samaritan"? (He stopped and helped the man who had been robbed and hurt)
- According to Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan, who is your neighbour? (Anyone who needs help)
- What did this parable teach you about Jesus?
- What did this parable teach you about God?
- What did this parable teach you about people?

Reflection:

- What part of this story did you enjoy the most?
- Which person in the parable do you think you're most like?
- How do you think God feels when He sees people like the man who was robbed and hurt alone?
- Why do you think the other two people who came by the hurting man- a Jewish priest and a Levite- didn't stop to help the man on the road?
- Why do you think Jesus told this parable?
- What do you think this parable means? What was Jesus trying to teach us?
- What does it mean to love your neighbour?
- Who is your 'neighbour'? Think of the people you know- people at school, people in your house, people who live near you, people you visit or strangers. Who can you show love to today? Who can you show love to this week?
- What do you think God might be asking you to do today (or this week)?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Love is Something If You Give It Away Song
- Ha-la-la-la Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

top

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Assign parts to the children, then read the Bible story. Let them act out the story as you read.
- Let one child volunteer be the injured person, and then show the group how to perform simple first aid (plasters, cleaning and bandaging wounds, etc.).
- Fill a shallow container with sand and recreate the road in the story. Place stones and plants along the road as places where robbers might hide. Let the children draw paper people and cut them out. These characters can be used to tell the story.
- Memorize Luke 10:27. A fun way to do this is to write words like “fast, slow, baby talk, bass voice, opera singer, etc., on small cards. Children can draw cards and then say the memory verse according to the card they choose. Example: Child draws a card with “opera singer” on it so they sing the verse as an opera singer would.
- Makeup character cards with each character’s name (or pictures for younger children). Let the children take turns drawing the cards and telling what happened to them in the parable. Don’t forget the obscure characters: the innkeeper, the donkey, and the man asking Jesus the questions.
- For older children, supply newspapers. Look through them to discover what kinds of needs people have today.
- Help children think of ways to help someone in need. This could be a group project. Perhaps collecting food or items for the poor.
- Show a map (or use something like “Google Maps“) to show pictures of your neighbourhood. Talk about who your neighbours are. (*Thanks for this idea, Jaime and Amarylis!*).

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

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Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

top

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheets about the parable of the good Samaritan (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page and worksheets about parables in general (Calvary Curriculum)
- Craft: Printable pattern for house and neighbours (dltk-bible.com)

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- A collection of activities (sermons4kids.com)
- Song: Words to be sung to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell” (dltk-bible.com)

top

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