The Good Samaritan

Deep Prep

Luke 10:25-37

The Big Idea: Jesus broke down prejudice with a simple story about receiving help from one's enemies.

Learning Goal: Learners will recognize in this parable the heart of the gospel and one of the clearest biblical examples of love without borders.

A lawyer questions Jesus how he (the lawyer) can inherit eternal life. In response, Jesus asks him what is written in the law. Love God with all your heart and soul, and your neighbor as yourself, says the man, who then questions whom he should call his "neighbor." Then Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan, a story unique to the Gospel of Luke. This parable tells of two Jewish holy men who each pass by a man left for dead on the road. In fact, they go out of their way to avoid the body. Yet the Samaritan, considered an enemy of the Jews, stops to care for the man without consideration for his own safety or personal expense. The point of the story is that we are each called to love God with our whole heart, to recognize all people as our neighbors, and to care for them out of love and mercy. Jesus instructs the lawyer—and us—to "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Since they served in the temple, the first two travelers on the road would have put themselves at risk of contamination if they had touched the body. Rules from the book of Leviticus prohibit a priest from coming into contact with a dead body, unless it is a close relative (Leviticus 21:1-2). They would have risked being unable to fulfill their service in the temple if contaminated. However, the third traveler, the Samaritan, was already considered unclean by the Jews.

This story undoubtedly shocked Jesus' audience since Jews and Samaritans did not associate with each other. In fact, earlier in Luke 9:52-53, Jesus attempted to enter a Samaritan village but was barred from doing so since he was headed to Jerusalem. One of the points of contention between the two groups was the fact that the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. Jesus, heading to Jerusalem, may have been taken as an affront to their religion.

In the parable, not only does the Samaritan go out of his way to help the injured man and transport him to safety, but he donates what would be equivalent to two days' wages to provide care for him. He promises to cover any additional costs for the Samaritan's care.

Jesus uses this story to redirect our thinking. The question is not how to identify who is our neighbor—everyone is our neighbor. Instead, we need to reflect on how we will respond on a daily basis to the needs we see around us. It's easy to come to the assistance of a person we like, or who is like us. But how easy would it be to assist a bleeding accident victim if it might put us at risk of contracting an illness transmitted through contact with blood or other body fluids? Is it safe to approach an injured, homeless person lying in the street? Yet that is the kind of risky love and mercy to which Jesus calls us. With that kind of thinking, we suddenly understand the dilemma of the priest and the Levite. We walk in their shoes. Being a neighbor requires more of
us than "safe" contributions to Thanksgiving and Christmas food or gift drives. Being a neighbor is a full-time call.

This story offers the opportunity to discuss the human boundaries that divide us, be they social, religious, cultural, racial, or political. What does being a good neighbor mean to us today? How can we reflect God's boundless love in a world divided by social class, war, and hatred?

Peer groups are central to the lives of young adolescents. They seek to fit in, not set themselves apart. Being a neighbor to a person outside their peer group may seem threatening because in showing love and mercy to that person, they risk becoming an outcast themselves. Help your students to know that as they struggle with the question of how to be neighborly, God loves them too. Knowing that can help them during their times of confusion.

Quick Prep

Luke 10:25-37

The Big Idea: Jesus broke down prejudice with a simple story about receiving help from one's enemies.

Learning Goal: Learners will recognize in this parable the heart of the gospel and one of the clearest biblical examples of love without borders.

• We are each called to love God and our neighbor.
• God's love extends beyond religious differences and all human boundaries. We should not place limits on who we call our "neighbor," because God does not.
• When we truly love our neighbor, both our words and deeds will reflect our love. Jesus instructs the lawyer—and us—to "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).
• Loving our neighbor can put us at personal risk and may be costly.
• Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan probably shocked his audience, since Jews and Samaritans did not associate with each other and were religious enemies.

Adolescent Connection

Relating this powerful story to today's time is critical for a deeper understanding of its meaning. Youth have people that they perceive as their "enemies." This perception may be based on bullying, rivalry in sports, dating, grades, or whatever. Since perception is reality, if they believe someone is an enemy, that's the way it is. Helping them to understand that going out of their way to help someone they perceive as enemy is what it is all about.

Anyone can help a friend. It takes the guidance and teachings of Jesus to feel love and compassion for an enemy. Bringing the story home by making it "up close and personal" will help youth to relate and respond in healthy and helpful ways. In this way they can connect more readily with the story on an emotional, or affective, way.
Baptismal Connection

In the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism, a five-part question addresses each confirmand's intent to continue in the covenant God made with them in Holy Baptism. Here We Stand resources help adolescents—with support from parents, leaders, and the entire congregation—prepare to answer this question as they continue in their lifelong faith journey. Today's lesson focuses on the clause "to live among God's faithful people" (Lutheran Book of Worship, page 201; Evangelical Lutheran Worship, page 236).

Welcoming

Prepare your large group space by playing upbeat music in the background and by welcoming learners as they arrive. Make a special effort to welcome and thank adult small group leaders for their presence and for being willing to help pass on the faith to the next generation.

• Begin by thanking learners for coming! Remind the group what a privilege you feel it is to serve God by leading confirmation, and what a gift from God you consider all of them to be.

• Ask learners to recall last week's Big Idea if they can. Reward the first person to get it right with a handful of candy or some other small treat to share with their small group. (Be aware of any food allergies in the group.) Ask for a volunteer to capture last week's lesson in their own words; affirm all genuine responses; keep going until you're satisfied everyone has been oriented.

• Project this week's Big Idea on the screen or write it in HUGE block letters on your presentation board or overhead slide. Invite learners to recite it with you aloud. Repeat it two or three times.

Skit: How Can I Help?

Ask or assign a small group to perform the skit. In a pinch, grab enough volunteers from the audience to form an impromptu 'readers' theater' troupe.

CHARACTERS: Jeremy (student), Alecia (student running for student body president), Sam (school bully), Ms. Bernard (teacher), Principal Simmons

PROPS: stool, schoolbook, school bell (heard from offstage)

The scene opens as Jeremy walks onstage with a stool "glued" to his rear end. The stool can be attached with belts or Jeremy can hold it up while he is walking around.

JEREMY: (Angrily.) Ha, ha, ha, guys. Superglue, real funny.

(School bell rings.)

JEREMY: Oh, great! I'll never make it to class on time.

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(Ms. Bernard walks briskly onstage from the right. When she sees Jeremy, she holds a book in front of her face, pretending to be reading as she walks.)

JEREMY: Ms. Bernard! Ms. Bernard! Wait! Help! I can't really move. Ms. Bernard! I'm going to be late to your math class if you don't help. Argh!

(Ms. Bernard exits left as Principal Simmons enters the stage from the right. Jeremy is still looking toward Ms. Bernard. Principal Simmons walks halfway onto the stage and sees Jeremy before Jeremy sees him, and slowly backs up as if he is horrified by what he sees.)

JEREMY: (Turning to see Principal Simmons.) Oh, Principal Simmons, I am so glad to see you! Someone glued my...

PRINCIPAL SIMMONS: What? Oh, hmm, yeah. I can't really...I...I have to... (Turns and runs offstage.)

JEREMY: Oh, for crying out loud! Hello! Hello! Can anyone help me?

(Alecia enters. She looks happy and doesn't seem to be phased like everyone else was.)

JEREMY: Alecia. Oh good, it's you. You're always helping people. Can you help me?

ALECIA: Oh, I'm sorry, no, I can't. I'm in the middle of my campaign. Have you heard; my slogan is "How can I help?"

JEREMY: Well, actually I do need some help. I...

ALECIA: Mmm. It's just my slogan, Jeremy. I can't help unless I win. But if I become president of the student body, I can take this to the council and we can vote on it.

JEREMY: I don't think...

ALECIA: Have you asked for help from the club that donates food to the poor?

JEREMY: I just need...

ALECIA: Maybe a nice can of soup will help you.

JEREMY: No, I...

ALECIA: Good luck! Vote for Alecia! Oh, by the way, run away if you can. Sam is coming down the hall. He'll probably pummel you if he sees you like this.

(Alecia exits. Sam enters, looking as scary as possible.)

JEREMY: (Startled.) Aaaaah! Sam, hi. I'm...I was just leaving.

SAM: Oh, bummer. I had that done to me once.

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JEREMY: What?

SAM: Yeah, superglue, huh? Its nasty stuff; you'll never get it off your clothes.

JEREMY: Oh, yeah. I don't really know what to do.

SAM: Well, you just have to change pants.

JEREMY: (Sarcastically.) I don't know what I was thinking, but I forgot to bring extra pants with me to school.

SAM: I did. They're in my shop locker. They're messed up but they'll work. Come on, I'll give them to you.

(Sam starts to walk offstage and Jeremy tries to follow with the stool, but it isn't working well. Sam picks up the stool with Jeremy in it, and walks offstage.)

Quiz Show

Multiple Choice

Ask for three contestants to stand in the front of the room. Each contestant will need to come up with a distinctive sound to make when he or she wants to answer a question. Have each contestant practice the noise before the game begins.

The host will ask a multiple-choice question. The first contestant to make his or her noise gets to answer first. If the answer is correct, the person receives two points. If the answer is incorrect, the other two contestants have the opportunity to "ring in" with their noises. If either of these people answers the question correctly, he or she receives one point. Keep score on a piece of paper or chalkboard. The winner of the game is the person with the most points after all the questions have been asked. You may want to have a small prize for the winner.

1. Jesus told a parable commonly known as...
   a. the good Samurai.
   b. the good Sandwich.
   c. the good Samaritan. (Correct.)
   d. the good Samson.

2. The neighbor in this story was...
   a. the priest.
   b. the Levite.
   c. the Samaritan. (Correct.)
   d. the lawyer.
3. Samaritans were...
   a. considered holy in the religious community.
   b. notorious do-gooders.
   c. excellent cooks.
   d. outsiders and enemies of religious leaders. (Correct.)

4. A parable is a story...
   a. that illustrates a religious lesson. (Correct.)
   b. based on historical facts.
   c. told only after supper.
   d. that makes people sleepy.

5. The parable of the good Samaritan teaches us that our neighbor is...
   a. someone who lives next door to us.
   b. an enemy and outcast.
   c. a person who believes in Jesus.
   d. all of the above. (Correct.)

6. After Jesus tells the parable to the lawyer, he says...
   a. go and sin no more.
   b. go and sell all your possessions.
   c. go and do likewise. (Correct.)
   d. go tell it on the mountain.

7. When we take care of sick people, it's important to...
   a. pray for them.
   b. visit them.
   c. fix them some comfort food.
   d. all of the above. (Correct.)

8. When we show God's love to others, we should...
   a. share it with all people.
   b. make sure we only love other Christians.
   c. be generous.
   d. both A and C. (Correct.)

True or False

This quiz show includes 10 true or false questions. Select four students to play: two will be contestants and two will be "buzzers." The buzzers sit in front of the standing contestants. When a contestant wants to answer a question, he or she must tap the buzzer on the shoulder, and the
buzzer must make a unique noise. Each question can be answered by either contestant, with the person who buzzes in first having the opportunity to answer first. Correct answers earn the person one point. If the answer is incorrect, the other contestant gets a chance to answer the question. Two incorrect answers ends the round, and you move to the next question. Always give the correct answers so everyone can learn. You may want to give a piece of candy or other prize to the contestant with the most points.

1. The parable of the good Samaritan is based on actual events. (False. It is a parable, a story to illustrate a religious point.)

2. Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan to a lawyer. (True.)

3. A Samaritan was an enemy of the religious leaders in Jesus' day. (True.)

4. It's likely that the priest and the Levite passed by the half dead man because they were concerned with following the laws of cleanliness. (True.)

5. The two denarii the Samaritan spent to have someone take care of the injured man are equal to about $20 U.S. today. (False. Closer to $200 U.S.)

6. In the story of the good Samaritan, the man who was the "neighbor" to the beaten man was the priest. (False. It was the Samaritan.)

7. Jesus tells the lawyer that you should love God with 50 percent of your heart, and love your neighbor with the other 50 percent. (False. Love God with ALL your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself.)

8. When we show kindness and love to other people, we are showing kindness and love to God as well. (True.)

9. Jesus defines neighbor as a person who lives next door to you. (False. Everyone is our neighbor.)

10. The point of the good Samaritan parable is that we should only look out for other Christians. (False. God's love knows no boundaries.)

**Presenter's Interruptions**

Keep this menu of short theme-related bits at the ready for those moments when you feel you're losing your audience.

- With a loud voice, say, "Freeze!" and clap your hands. Ask students to find someone they haven't spoken to today. Ask them to share a time they received an unexpected act of kindness. Who was the person? What did she or he do? What made it unexpected?
- With a loud voice, say, "Stop!" Have students turn to a friend and discuss this question: "Do you have a hard time accepting help from others?" After a few minutes, poll the class. Ask for a show of hands from people who answered "yes" and "no."

**Opening Prayer**

Ask the students to close their eyes and take one minute to silently think about the people they've
encountered during the day. Encourage them to reflect on how they interacted with friends, enemies, strangers, family, and social outcasts. When a minute has passed, teach the class response in this litany or write it on a board or chart paper; then pray together.

L: God, we confess our shortcomings in how we treat others.
C: Help us to be a neighbor to all.
L: You call us to see your face in the faces of everyone we meet.
C: Help us be a neighbor to all.
L: Give us the courage to reach out to our enemies and the people that nobody cares about.
C: Help us be a neighbor to all. Amen

My Faith Story

Think of a time when someone offered unexpected aid to you in a time of need. Perhaps it was when you were a child in need of help, a student in college or seminary, or as an adult in a tough situation. How did the person show kindness? What was at stake for you and for the one who helped you? Did the act of kindness have any long-term effect on you? How was the person a neighbor to you, in the way that Jesus talks about "neighbor" in the parable of the good Samaritan? What was your response to the act of kindness?

Guest Speaker

The parable of the good Samaritan is told in the midst of a conversation between Jesus and a lawyer. Invite a lawyer to speak to the class. Give this person a few minutes to share with the group what he or she does for a living. Perhaps he or she would like to discuss how his or her faith is lived out in the job. Ask the guest speaker to offer a perspective of the lawyer in Luke 10:25-37.

Cartoon Connection: Get Off My Yard

"Love your neighbor as yourself." No problem, right? Except...maybe not the woman down the street with the severe speech impediment—it takes her so long to talk that it's just incredibly frustrating...and not necessarily the kid from the end of the block—the one who brought a gun to school and ended up in prison...and almost definitely not the man from the next neighborhood over—you've heard the stories, and the whole town knows what he did to his own kids. We know we should love all of our neighbors, but these particular ones? It can be tough. We know we should do better. We've heard the story a million times. But it's not easy. In fact, it's really, really
hard. Perhaps the hardest thing that Jesus asks us to do is to love, with all our hearts, those people who are the hardest to love. To forgive those people who are the hardest to forgive.

Who are the people that are told by society that they don't deserve love? Who are the people that may feel as though they don't deserve forgiveness? What can we, as Christians, do to be better neighbors to the world around us?

**Handbook Connection**

Have students open *The Lutheran Handbook* to pages 110-111, "How to Care for the Sick." In today's lesson, we learn how the Samaritan cared for the injured man. Give students a few minutes to skim through these two pages. Ask them to think of a person they know who has recently been sick. This could include anything from a sibling with a cold to a parent with cancer. Ask students to share ways that they can care for these people. Ask someone to read point 2 aloud on page 110. Emphasize the importance of faithful prayer for the sick or injured. Take time to pray for anyone the students name as being sick and needing healing.

Have students turn to "How to Work for Peace and Justice on Behalf of People Who Are Poor and Oppressed" on pages 93-95. Though we don't know if the man who fell into the hands of robbers was poor or oppressed, it is clear that he was in need of aid. Jesus calls us to help all people in need—because they are our neighbors. Emphasize points 2 and 4 on page 94. These are great ways to be a neighbor to others in need.

Have students turn "The Three Most Rebellious Things Jesus Did" on page 156. Choose students to read aloud each of the items. Then invite all students to add a point 4 at the bottom of the page: The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Though it was only a story Jesus told, it certainly made many of the religious elite angry with him. After all, the hero of the story was a religious enemy and the religious leaders in the story were not good examples of providing neighborly behavior. The telling of this parable would have been reason enough for Jesus to be jailed or killed.

**Bible Connection: Who's Your Neighbor?**

- Have students turn in their Bibles to Luke 10:25-37. This is the parable of the good Samaritan. Select four students to read the parts of a narrator, Jesus, the lawyer, and the Samaritan. Encourage the rest of the class to follow along in their Bibles. After the "reader's theater" has ended, write "NEIGHBOR" on the board or on chart paper.

  Ask the class to brainstorm a definition of this word. Affirm answers that remove any limitations or borders of who is a neighbor.

  Ask the students what they make of the lawyer asking the questions. Do you think he's trying to trick Jesus? Do you feel that he is an honest man trying to do what is right? Why do you think he feels the need to "justify himself" (Luke 10:29)? Put yourself in his place. After hearing this parable, would it be easy or difficult to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37)?

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• Turn to Luke 10 and ask students to underline verses 27-28 in their Bibles. These are the key verses for this story. Ask the students to read verse 27 aloud together. How can we love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and still be able to love our neighbor too? *(When we love our neighbor, we love God at the same time.)* Love here is not an emotional feeling that one manufactures; rather, it is the act of caring for your neighbor and valuing his or her life as much as you value your own. Jesus shows us that the heart of Scripture is the twofold love command, and that our behavior is to be based on it.

• Have students turn to Mark 12:28-31. Ask a student to read these verses aloud while the others follow along in their Bibles. Have the students point out the similarities between these verses and the key verses from Luke 10:27-28. In this instance, Jesus is not only speaking to one man (a lawyer in Luke), but a gathering of scribes. Emphasize that Jesus obviously felt it was important to love God and neighbor.

**More Bible Connections**

• Have students turn to Leviticus 19:18. Ask the class to read this passage aloud. Using their fingers to keep their place, ask students to turn to Luke 10:27. Point out that Jesus cited this law from the Old Testament and combined it with the notion that when we love our neighbor we are loving God too. How is Jesus breaking down prejudice with the story of the good Samaritan? Even prejudice cannot be a barrier to love of neighbor.

**Object Lesson: Operation**

In advance of this class, plan to have the "Operation" board game available for demonstration. The object of the game is to "perform surgery" on the person on the game board by removing various objects from the body. The game requires a steady hand and careful attention to remove the objects without touching the sides.

Invite some students to try their hand at removing some of the objects. It's likely that some will not be able to complete the task, and the buzzer will sound. Use this as a way to illustrate that caring for other people is often difficult; it takes patience and care, the qualities demonstrated by the Samaritan.

**Science Connection: Two-Part Solar Prints**

*In advance of this lesson, assemble the following items and read through this experiment.*

Photosensitive paper (available from most education or craft stores)
Items from nature to print, such as leaves, twigs, flower petals
Pieces of sturdy cardboard
Shallow pan of water
Towel
Sunny day!
Jesus told a simple story about an unlikely neighbor who cared for another person. Ask if there have been any pleasant surprises like that in the students' lives. Have any students ever stopped to help someone or stick up for someone who was different from them? Every time that someone does something for another, it is a two-part process. We may not always know what happens afterward, but in some way both people's lives are changed.

On a sunny day, take the students outside. Put the pan of water in a shady spot. Give each student a sheet of the photosensitive paper, and have him or her place it (light blue side up) onto a piece of sturdy cardboard. Then have each person arrange natural objects, such as leaves, on the paper and put the paper in the bright sun for 2-3 minutes. Then take the paper into the shade, remove the objects, and look at the imprints the objects made.

Take turns putting the paper into the pan of water and watch for about two minutes as the images fade. Take the paper out of the water and set it on a towel to dry. As the paper dries, the images should reappear as a permanent solar print.

**Video/DVD: Love without Borders**

**Option 1: Glory Road**

Provide the movie *Glory Road* (2006, PG).

Start cue: (Chapter 9, 01:04:08) An exterior view of an airport terminal. A subtitle reads, "Dallas Love Field Airport." A reporter says, "Coach Haskins. Matt Pavelar, Dallas Morning News." End cue: (Chapter 9, 01:05:52) The scoreboard shows that there's 6:09 left in the quarter. The announcer says, "In spite of a hostile crowd, the Miners have played well tonight."

Coach Haskins faces a lot of criticism when he recruits an almost all-black team in the all-white world of 1965 Texas basketball. The team has a great season and is now headed to the playoffs. At the airport, they cross paths with the most famous coach in Texas. Earlier, he expressed negative feelings regarding Haskins' integrated team. Both Coach Haskins and his players experience hostility and prejudice on small and large scales.*

*This film is based on a true story. You may wish to introduce this scene with a few additional words about the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.*

- Where do you see prejudice in your world today?
- What does the story of the good Samaritan teach us about love without borders? What is one thing you can do this week to cross a border and love a neighbor?

*Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.*

**Option 2: Sahara**

Provide the movie *Sahara* (2005, PG-13).

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Yves is not necessarily the most scrupulous businessperson. But his conscience is pricked when he learns that his dealings with tyrannical General Kazim are poisoning an important water supply. What is General Kazim's response to Yves? (I don't want to lose money. It's not our problem anymore; it's our neighbors' problem.)

- How easy or difficult is it to love your neighbor when doing so might lead to personal risk or loss?
- Have you been a "Good Samaritan" in your own life? If so, how?

Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.

Option 3: Hotel Rwanda

Provide the movie Hotel Rwanda (2004, PG-13).

In this true story of events in Rwanda in 1994, hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina desperately tries to save the 900 refugees in his hotel as Hutu soldiers arrive to weed out and eliminate Tutsi. Paul begs his Belgian employer for help. Mr. Tillens is able to assist for the moment, but has bad news about help coming from Europe or the United States in the long run.

- Who is your neighbor? How far do the boundaries of your "neighborhood" reach?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to love your neighbor when you have nothing obvious to gain from doing so?

Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.

NOTE: Consult Christian Video Licensing International at Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (1.800.462.8855 or www.mplc.com) for its umbrella licensing program covering the use of videos/DVDs or video/DVD clips in any public gathering.

Music: Asking for Help

Option 1: "Lean On Me"

Provide the song "Lean On Me" by Club Nouveau (from Life, Love, & Pain, Warner Bros., 1986).
"Lean On Me" is a classic song about friendship and love that has been remade several times by different artists since the 1960s. Just like the story of the Good Samaritan, the song shares a timeless message of acceptance and love without limits.

- Why is the story of the Good Samaritan so important?
- Do you ever have the opportunity in your life to be a Good Samaritan? In what situations? How does being a Good Samaritan make you feel?

Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.

Option 2: "Love's the Only House"

Provide the song "Love's the Only House" by Martina McBride (from Martina McBride: Greatest Hits, RCA, 2001).

Martina McBride's "Love's the Only House" describes some of the painful things we can see and experience for ourselves in modern-day life. It also continuously repeats the concept that love is the only way we can help each other and make a difference in this world. Just as in the story of the Good Samaritan, no matter how difficult things get or how unacceptable it may be to help, the song speaks of loving each other above all things.

- Have you ever seen, heard about, or experienced things that are tragic or painful? If so, what were they? How did people respond to the event? If it was a personal experience, how did you respond?
- How can you show love and care to people who are hurting?

Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.

Option 3: "Help!"

Provide the song "Help!" by the Beatles (from Help! Capitol, 1965).

In this song, the singers acknowledge that asking for help does not always come easily. Perhaps this is because by asking for help, we must humble ourselves and open ourselves up to possible rejection by others. In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus chose to use the Samaritan as an example because there was a great racial division in the culture at that time. Samaritans were likened to dogs by the Jews.

- Where in your own culture do you see racial or social differences keep people (or you) from helping others?
- What cries of help do you hear around you in your own culture and neighborhood?
- How can you be a neighbor in the sense that Jesus was talking about?

Please preview this content to determine its appropriateness for your setting.
Learning in Motion

This parable is a fun one to act out. Ask for volunteers to fill the various roles. Encourage the students to have some fun with their roles as they see fit. It's usually best to have an adult leader read the story. Allow space and time for the players to act out their parts. If you are familiar with this parable, you may wish to tell the story rather than reading the narrative from the Bible. If so, add your own entertaining embellishments.

Closing Questions

Consider starting the Closing Time with a "Stump the Presenter!" moment in which learners may ask you questions that have come up during their small group discussions, but for which they want further explanation. This gives the small group leaders an "honorable out" when they get into sticky theological territory, and it's a great way to start out your final minutes together.

If there are no "Stump the Presenter!" questions, tickle learners with one or more of the following questions to connect Small Group Time with the larger conversation:

- Who in your life needs a neighbor?
- How can you see God in others this week, and how will others be able to see God in you?
- Who can you thank for being a neighbor to you?

Closing Ritual

Have the group form a circle and join hands. Ask someone to offer this prayer:

God of mercy and love, thank you for the people in our lives that stoop down to help us in our times of need. Help us to respond by caring for others that we encounter. Give us courage and strength to seek out those who are lost, lonely, broken, and outcast so we may speak a word of love to them. For Jesus’ sake. Amen

Closing Blessing

Before anyone leaves to go home, make sure each learner receives the following blessing from the small group leader, or from you! (Or, if you like, consider writing your own blessing, based on your teaching time.) Have leaders trace the cross on each learner’s forehead as they say the blessing.

May you be bold and reckless in sharing the love of God with your neighbor. In the name of the Father +, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit +. Amen

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Small Group Leader Sheet: The Good Samaritan

Instructions

Make sure each learner has a Learner Sheet for use during your discussion. At the end of the lesson they can take the Learner Take-Home Sheet to use with their household at dinner or bedtime.

Be sure to start on a positive note. Welcome each learner by name. Let them know you're glad they're here! If anyone is absent, mention you'll be praying for that person together. Small Group Time is for give-and-take discussion. Your main job is to draw learners out and get them talking about the theme. Ask open-ended questions that will provoke responses. Once the conversation begins, intervene only to bring it back on track or to stimulate more talk.

Quick Prep

Luke 10:25-37

The Big Idea: Jesus broke down prejudice with a simple story about receiving help from one's enemies.

Learning Goal: Learners will recognize in this parable the heart of the gospel and one of the clearest biblical examples of love without borders.

• We are each called to love God and our neighbor.
• God's love extends beyond religious differences and all human boundaries. We should not place limits on who we call our "neighbor," because God does not.
• When we truly love our neighbor, both our words and deeds will reflect our love. Jesus instructs the lawyer—and us—to "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).
• Loving our neighbor can put us at personal risk and may be costly.
• Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan probably shocked his audience, since Jews and Samaritans did not associate with each other and were religious enemies.

Prayer Time

Go around the group and have each learner share the best and worst thing from his or her week. Remind learners to pay special attention to (for example) the person on their right, as they will be praying for that person in a moment (alternate prayer partners from week to week). When the group has finished, prayer partners can pray for each other.

Key Words

PRIEST is a person of a religious group who performs sacred duties and acts as a mediator between God and humans. These people concerned themselves with following the laws of God.
LEVITE is similar to a priest; a person who worked in the temple. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.

Samaritan is a person from Samaria. Jews disliked Samaritans and considered them foreigners and social outcasts.

Neighbor is a person whom we are called to love. Anyone and everyone can be called our neighbor.

Discussion Time

Use the following questions to kick off a conversation about the theme:

• Ask the students to share a time when a person was a Good Samaritan to them. What did this person do? What impact did his or her kindness have on them? (Remind the students to practice good listening skills during this time. Sharing stories of a personal nature can be difficult for some adolescents. Be affirming.)

• "How to Care for the Sick," on pages 110-111 in The Lutheran Handbook, offers ways that we can care for people who are sick. Ask the students to share if they know anyone who is physically ill. Take time in your small group to pray for these people. How else can this group support people who are sick?

• Pass out index cards to the students. At the top of a card have each person write "Love Others = Love God" and beneath that write "Luke 10:27-28." Ask the students to write the names of three people they know who could use a neighbor. Encourage the students to keep their cards with them during the coming week as a reminder of God's call to love without borders, and to be a neighbor to the persons they have named on the cards.

Big Fun Idea

Join up with another small group for a game night. Meet at someone's house, bring favorite board and card games, and have fun! Make sure there are no distractions, such as TV or cell phones. Just enjoy interacting with other people.

Big Serving Idea

Have your group volunteer at a local hospital, hospice center, or care facility. Request that the young people have an opportunity to interact directly with at least one person. After your time of serving has ended, spend a few minutes discussing what it felt like to give aid to a stranger.
Funny Shape of Faith Small Group Devotions: The Good Samaritan

Have a volunteer read the devotion that corresponds with this cartoon: "Get Off My Yard," The Funny Shape of Faith: Devotions for the Rest of Us (Augsburg Fortress, 2007), p. 119. Then use the following questions to spark group discussion.

Along with the people living next door, who are your neighbors?

Along with your entire town, who are your neighbors?

What are some ways you can love your neighbors who are half-way around the planet from you?

How have people been good neighbors to you?
Learner Sheet: The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

The Big Idea: Jesus broke down prejudice with a simple story about receiving help from one's enemies.

Big Fun Idea

Join up with another small group for a game night. Meet at someone's house, bring favorite board and card games, and have fun! Make sure there are no distractions, such as TV or cell phones. Just enjoy interacting with other people.

Big Serving Idea

Have your group volunteer at a local hospital, hospice center, or care facility. Try to interact directly with at least one person. After your time of serving has ended, spend a few minutes discussing what it felt like to give aid to a stranger.

Prayer Time

Remember your partner's prayer needs—record them here.

Discussion Time

• Share a time when a person was a Good Samaritan to you. What did this person do? What impact did his or her kindness have on you?

• "How to Care for the Sick," on pages 110-111 in The Lutheran Handbook, offers ways that we can care for people who are sick. Do you know anyone who is physically ill? Take time in your small group to pray for these people. How else can you support people who are sick?

• At the top of an index card write, "Love Others = Love God." Beneath that, write, "Luke 10:27-28." Then write the names of three people you know who could use a neighbor. Keep the card with you during the coming week as a reminder of God's call to love without borders and to be a neighbor to the people you have named on the card.
Learner Take-Home Sheet: The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

*Take this sheet home and keep it someplace near the dinner table, like on the fridge. At least three times next week at dinner, use Prayer Time and one other family activity to make your confirmation learning come alive!*

**Prayer Time**

Ask family members to gather at a table and make a list of people that are in need. The needs may be physical, emotional, financial, relational, and so forth. Pray silently for a few moments for the people and the situations they face. When the time of prayer has ended, have a discussion about how the members of your family can show God's love to the people in need, in addition to continuing to pray for them.

**Key Words**

Keep a family white board someplace near the dinner table, and write these words on it. Try writing a family definition for each one during the week.

PRIEST
LEVITE
SAMARITAN
NEIGHBOR

**Talk Time**

• The parable of the good Samaritan is one of the most familiar stories told by Jesus, and yet it only appears in one of the Gospels (Luke). What do you think of when you hear the term "Good Samaritan"? What do you know about this parable? (You may want to read this story together in Luke 10:25-37.)

• Talk about someone in your family you would identify as a Good Samaritan. What kinds of things does this person do or say to show God's love without borders? What can the members of your family do to continue that tradition?

**Web Time**

Go to your favorite search engine and type, "Good Samaritan." You'll probably find some things of interest that are directly related to the biblical account of this parable (devotions, commentary, and so forth). However, take a look at some of the secular uses of this term. Discover how the themes of this parable can even cross religious borders in our society.
Ritual Time

Identify a friend of the family who could use some neighborly love. Perhaps this is a phone call, a letter in the mail, a home-cooked meal, or a visit from your family. Make plans for the entire family to participate in showing God's extravagant love to this person.
Video 1 (High Resolution): Coloring within the Lines

Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.mov

In this humorous clip satirizing conformity, Professor Cornelius Norbert extols the virtues of coloring within the lines. Glimpses into the experiences of others clearly demonstrate the benefits of proper crayon control and the dire consequences of deviating from the norm.

• What kind of grade would you give your crayon control? In life, are you more of a "color within the lines" person, or a "let's see what this crayon can do!" person?

• What attitude regarding human-made boundaries and limitations did Jesus demonstrate during his life on earth?

• How do you think Jesus' Jewish audience reacted when they realized that the "hero" of Jesus' story was not a prominent, righteous Jew but a reviled foreigner?

• What lesson about "coloring within the lines" does the story of the Good Samaritan teach?
Video 1 (Low Resolution): Coloring within the Lines

Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.mp4

In this humorous clip satirizing conformity, Professor Cornelius Norbert extols the virtues of coloring within the lines. Glimpses into the experiences of others clearly demonstrate the benefits of proper crayon control and the dire consequences of deviating from the norm.

• What kind of grade would you give your crayon control? In life, are you more of a "color within the lines" person, or a "let's see what this crayon can do!" person?
• What attitude regarding human-made boundaries and limitations did Jesus demonstrate during his life on earth?
• How do you think Jesus' Jewish audience reacted when they realized that the "hero" of Jesus' story was not a prominent, righteous Jew but a reviled foreigner?
• What lesson about "coloring within the lines" does the story of the Good Samaritan teach?
### Video 2: Breaking Barriers

*Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.mpg*

Most people love a surprise ending. M. Night Shyamalan's movies (*The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*) keep us on the edge of our seats. O. Henry's stories ("The Ransom of Red Chief," "The Gift of the Magi") are celebrated for their irony. However, the plot twist of Jesus' parable—a Samaritan as the hero!—probably received a thumbs down from his critics. We humans construct barriers between each other. But Jesus encourages us to see others with God's eyes and to reach out to all—even our enemies—with God's boundless love.

What kinds of barriers did you see in the video? (*Fences, differences of opinion, physical limitations.*) What are some barriers (both literal and figurative) between you and others? What might you do this week to bridge the gap between you and a stranger?
Music Clip: Needing a Friend

Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.mp3

Song: "Icebox Heart"
CD: Lamentations of Ecstasy (www.stefloy.com)
Artist: Stef Loy
© 2002 Stef Loy

Cry out to Elohim.
Befriend me.
Please befriend me
Here in the faraway.

There are many hurting people in our world. Jesus knew how to recognize them and how to care for them. This parable refers to a man being in an awful situation, seemingly without a friend in the world. He found one in the most unlikely of people, someone who culturally would have been an enemy. Fortunately, the Samaritan who found the man in the road stopped and helped. The cultural stigmas did not deter the Samaritan man from being Christlike. "Icebox Heart" refers to someone in a similar situation. Play the song then ask the following questions.

• What are warning signs that someone is hurting on the inside and needs help?
• Has anyone ever helped you in your time of need? How did it make you feel?
• Have you ever helped someone in his or her time of need? How did that make you feel?

Note: You can purchase the CD featuring this song from the Augsburg Fortress online store (www.augsburgfortress.org).
This presentation includes a video file and an audio file. All three (the presentation, the video, and the audio) will download at once as a ZIP archive. Unzipping the archive will produce a single folder containing all three files. For the presentation to work properly, the files must all be in the same folder; therefore, we recommend you not remove them from the folder produced when you unzip the archive, but rather move the entire folder as a single unit.

Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.zip
Cartoon

Media file: TheGoodSamaritan.tif

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