

## Opening

### Check-in & Introductions

## The Good Samaritan

## The Bible Story

Please watch the story, following the link provided. If you would like to read the story as well, the text has been provided below.

### Watch the Story *(Biblical adaptations written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

Together, watch the children's story time found on Manchester Children & Families Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/178276089786532/>

### Gospel Lesson

Luke 10:25-37 (NRSV)

<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

## Wondering Questions (Part I)

"Wondering Questions" are open ended discussion questions. These are the same questions that our children are working through!

### Wondering Questions for Children *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

1. I wonder if the hurt man could see the two men cross away from him?
2. I wonder what the priest and the Levite felt inside when they walked away from the hurt man?
3. I wonder if the Samaritan's donkey wondered why his master was walking?
4. I wonder what the hurt man thought when he was healed and the Samaritan was gone?
5. I wonder if the hurt man ever knew the Samaritan's name? I wonder if he ever said "thank you" to him?

**Wondering Questions for Older Children** *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

6. The men who walked past the hurt man could have stopped to help. Why do you think they didn't? Have you ever not helped someone when you know you should have? Why did you choose not to do so?
7. Normally, the man who was hurt wouldn't have wanted to be helped by the Samaritan because Samaritans were thought to be unclean. Are there people you have a hard time accepting or who you really don't want to help you? Who are they and why do you feel that way?
8. After the Samaritan helped the man who was hurt do you believe the hurt man changed his mind about the Samaritans? Why or why not? Have you ever had an experience with someone in your school or on your bus that made you change your mind about that person or people like that person? What was it and how were you changed?

## What's Going On

*In the Good Shepherd children's curriculum, a section called "Teacher Helps" is provided. This section gives a deeper background to us adults Please take turns reading through this section.*

**Teacher Helps** *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

This parable really begins with the questions put to Jesus by a lawyer in the crowd. It is very probable that this particular lawyer was sent by Jesus' enemies to try to trick him. The Pharisees were to a point of looking for something that could be wrong with what Jesus was doing so they could arrest him. The fact that he was stirring up the people concerned the Jewish leaders. They understood that as long as the people of their land were willing to live by the laws of the Jewish faith, they, as leaders, would be in control. Jesus was challenging those laws much too regularly for them to be comfortable.

The text says that the lawyer stood up to "put him (Jesus) to the test". The question was "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Most likely this man was hoping Jesus would say, "Believe in me and you will have life eternal." That could have been called blasphemy and Jesus could have been arrested. But Jesus turned the tables on the lawyer by asking him what the scriptures said. The lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus told the lawyer that he had answered correctly and he only need go and do what he's just said and he will live. The lawyer goes a step further and wants to "justify" himself (prove that he is righteous and acceptable to God) by defining who is his neighbor. At this point Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan.

It's a very typical form for a story to have three pieces of action or a triadic response. After the man is beaten, first a priest, the highest order in the temple, then a Levite, second to the priest as a very knowledgeable layperson, come down the road. We are stunned by their apparent callousness as we read and hear this story today. It may be that Jesus was trying to make more than one point in this story. According to Jewish law, the priest was forbidden to touch a corpse. The priest may have assumed that the beaten man was dead and crossed the road to keep from defiling himself. The Levite only has this restriction in that he was on his

way to perform cultic rites or activities. (The Parables of Jesus, Joachim Jeremias, New York: Scribner's Sons, 1972. p. 203). Was Jesus perhaps saying that people will always be more important than the law? I believe that was his intent. While the story was intended to show the radical love of God, it was also a good lesson in helping the Jewish leaders do some self-examination of their laws.

A third and final observer was probably expected. Since Jesus had moved from priest to Levite, it was logical to assume that next would be a Jewish layperson with no cultic relationship to the temple. What was completely illogical was that the next person be a Samaritan. The Jewish people considered the Samaritans to be unclean. They would not touch them or sit at a table with them. While the Jewish people tended to believe that they disliked the Samaritans for religious reasons, it's probably more likely that it was for historical and racial reasons. The Samaritans were people from the northern 10 tribes of Israel who remained in that land when it was conquered in 722 B.C.E. They intermarried with other people who were imported into their land. The Samaritans worshiped God, as did the Jews, but the basis for their belief was in the books they believed to be written by Moses. That would be the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) but not the prophets, or psalms or wisdom literature. The true Jews considered themselves pure, whereas the Samaritans were not because they had intermarried.

Here the law of the priests and the law of love came crashing together. Who needed love? Who gave love? It would be expected that the people who were kept pure in their traditions and faith would be the first to respond. They would know the command to love of which the lawyer had spoken. But, it was a Samaritan who remembered the law, and acted on it. He acted quickly and generously. It is doubtful that he was carrying bandages with him. So, he either used his headdress or his robe to make bandages for the injured man. Then he took care of the man as long as he was able. When he needed to leave, he made sure there was someone else who could take over. It would have cost perhaps 1/12 of a denarius to spend a night in the inn. So, the two denarii given to the innkeeper was a generous amount. If there was any more expense incurred, the Samaritan promised to pay it as well.

The emphasis of this lesson for the children is that all of the people of this world are capable of giving and receiving love. We want the children to begin to understand that it is not the church that a person attends, or doesn't attend, or the clothes that he/she wears or the friends a person plays with that tells us of their place in God's creation. Rather it is the actions of each person that will tell us if they are loving and kind. The children will probably begin to think of someone whom they would consider less than desirable if they are pushed to make the link. If time allows, that would make lovely discussion time with the older children.

The wondering questions are designed to try to help the children understand how the injured man, the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan felt. It's okay to hear about hurt and anger and even hating in response to this story. But try to end with the fact that someone did help, and how good those feelings must have been for both people involved.

## Wondering Questions (Part II)

### Wondering Questions for Adults

1. How might a child hear this story? What might this story mean to a child?
2. "To put ourselves in the place of the helpless man asks us to empty ourselves. Forces us to remember that God is God and we are not. It puts us in a place of humility that is more closely aligned with the humble goodness of Jesus." Are you comfortable with being called helpless? When have you felt helpless?
3. What would it mean if the church as a body entered into the story as that person in the ditch? Is it even possible for the church to empty itself of power? Or would the church need to be robbed of it?
4. This week's sermon said, "Help for the church is going to come from the margins." Do you agree? Who are the marginalized people, within the church, that will help us in the ditch?

## Closing

### Prayer

Holy God, thank you for the good stories of Jesus. Remind us that we are not the savior. You are the savior; others are the savior. We thank you for your humbling grace, your gentle reminders that we need each other, and that we belong to each other. **Amen.**

### Study Link

<https://manchestermc.org/all-church-study/>

*We started out talking about "eternal life" and now, here we are talking about how we define the idea of "neighbor."*