

Lesson Eight: The Story of the Good Neighbor

Main idea: Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven show sacrificial kindness and mercy to everyone, including their enemies.

Teacher preparation:

- Read Scripture references, John 15:12-17, Philippians 2:3-4, and Galatians 5:13-15
- Gather: Bible; dry erase markers or chart paper and markers; hand out for each child crayons, markers, and colored pencils; scissors; cheap, colorful band aids for game
- Take time to meditate on this week's Scripture and think about your own life. We all have "enemies," people we don't necessarily like or have a hard time getting along with. What changes do you need to make to your own life in order to serve and show mercy and kindness to the difficult people around you?

Scripture references:

- Luke 10:25-37
- Deuteronomy 6:5
- Matthew 22:35-40
- Leviticus 19:18

Game: Band Aid Relay

Divide the kids into at least two teams and line them up on one side of the room. On the other side of the room, set out a bunch of band aids. Have the first child from each team run across the room and grab a band aid. They must take the band aid back to their team, open it and place it on the back of the hand of the next person in line. The first person then goes to the end of the line. The second person then runs and grabs a band aid to put on the hand of the next person. Play continues like this until every child from a team has a band aid on the back of their hand. The first team with a band aid on every child wins. Talk about what a great job the children did in taking care of one another.

Message:

Open in prayer, then say, This is our eighth week learning all about the parables. Next week will be our very last week learning about the stories Jesus told. We have learned what Heaven is like, what God is like, and what we should be like as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven is full of people who love and obey God. It's better than anything we could ever imagine, and worth everything we could ever have in this life. God loves everyone. He patiently waits for people to repent of their sins and follow him, but he will punish those who choose not to follow him. He wants everyone to know the truth about his son Jesus so everyone can love and obey him. As citizens of the Kingdom of God, we tell others about Jesus, forgive those who wrong us, and we obey the commands of the Lord. We use the talents and abilities God has given us to bring him glory. Today we will learn another characteristic of citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Today's story is called the Parable of the Good Neighbor. You may have heard it as the parable of the Good Samaritan. This may be a familiar story for some of you, but there is still a lot we can learn from it. Follow along as I read from Luke 10:25-37.

²⁵ One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"

²⁷ The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸ "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

³¹ "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

Before we talk about the parable Jesus told, let’s talk about the context leading up to the story. An expert in religious law asked Jesus a question to test him. This man knew the Word of God, he knew what the Law, which all Jewish people then followed, had to say. When he asks Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, he was trying to test Jesus to see if Jesus knew what the Law, what we now know as the Old Testament, had to say. So Jesus turns it back on the man and has him answer his own question. What does the lawyer, this expert in the Law, say in verse 27? (Allow a student to respond.) The lawyer answers with what we now know as the greatest commandment. He says we are to love God and love others. He was quoting from two passages from the Old Testament. Let’s look them up with a couple of sword drills. Take all fingers and bookmarks out of your Bible and hold it above your head. When I say go, look up Deuteronomy 6:5. Go! (Read, or have a student read, Deuteronomy 6:5.) “And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.” We can read a similar verse to this in the New Testament. In Matthew 22, another lawyer is trying to test Jesus by asking him what the greatest commandment in the law of Moses is. In Matthew 22:37, Jesus replies to this man by saying, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” Let’s look up the second greatest commandment found in the Old Testament before we hear Jesus quote it. Take all fingers and bookmarks out of your Bible and hold it above your head. When I say go, look up Leviticus 19:18. Go! (Read, or have a student read, Leviticus 19:18.) “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.” This verse makes God’s will very clear to us. We are supposed to love the people around us as much as we love ourselves. Jesus quotes this verse in Matthew 22. After he tells us that loving God with all our heart, soul, and

strength, he tells us that Leviticus 19:18 is the second greatest commandment, and it is just as important as the first, greatest commandment: “love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus tells us that everything in the law and the prophets, everything in the Old Testament, relies on these two commandments. Everything in the Bible is useless to us without these two commandments. They sum up what we are supposed to do as Christians. We are supposed to love God and love others. Most Israelites in Jesus’ time knew these verses well. The lawyer that is trying to test Jesus in today’s parable knew that doing our best to follow these two commandments is how we inherit eternal life. But after answering Jesus and showing he knows what God wants him to do, and what is required of a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, this lawyer asks Jesus a question. In Luke 10:29, the lawyer asks, “who is my neighbor?” He probably knew he was not doing a very good job loving his neighbor, and was looking for Jesus to give him an easy answer to make him feel better about what he was doing. Jesus of course doesn’t give the guy a straightforward answer. Instead he tells a story to help challenge the lawyer and everyone listening- including us- to really think about who our neighbor is.

Let’s review the Story of the Good Neighbor that we read at the beginning of class. What happened first? (Allow a student to answer.) A Jewish man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by bandits. These thugs left the man naked and beat up on the side of the road. They took everything he had and left him to die. (Draw a simple picture of a stick figure lying on its side by a road. Add a sad face if you want.) Who was the first person to walk by this injured man? (Have a student answer.) That’s right, a priest walked by first. The priests were like the pastors, the people in charge of leading the rest of the people to worship. They were supposed to set the example of Godly behavior for everyone to follow. Did this priest set a good example? (Allow a student to answer.) No, obviously not. Instead of helping this injured man, he crossed the street and ignored him. (Draw a stick figure walking on the opposite side of the street from your injured stick figure.) If anyone were to stop and help someone who is hurt, it should have been the priest. Who crossed by next? (Allow a student to answer.) The Bible says in verse 32 of Luke 10 that a Temple assistant walked by next. He too crossed the street to avoid the injured man. (Draw a picture of another stick figure on the opposite side of the street.) A Temple assistant worked in the Temple and helped the priests with their duties. They too were supposed to set a good example of following God to others. Clearly, this Temple assistant was not setting a good example either.

Jesus says a third person walked by, and this is where the story gets really interesting. In verse 33, who walked by? The Bible says a Samaritan walked by next. Some translations say that a “despised” Samaritan walked by. Does anybody know who the Samaritans were? (Allow students to answer.) The Samaritans were the enemies to the Israelites. It is really hard for us to fully understand what that means. The Israelites and the Samaritans absolutely hated each other. Some people these days may hate people with a different skin color than their own, or they may hate people who make more or less money than they do. But on the whole, we don’t have a whole group of people that hates another whole group of people the way the Jews and Samaritans hated each other. That’s what makes the next part of verse 33 so amazing. It says the Samaritan had compassion on the Jewish man who had been beaten and robbed. His heart went out to the man that according to everyone, he was supposed to hate. He did what was totally unexpected. He did what the priest and the Temple worker refused to do. He helped this poor man. (Draw a stick figure on the board next to the injured stick figure. Consider using a different color marker than you used for the injured Israelite, the priest and the Temple worker, to remind the kids that they were seen as different.) Jesus says that the Samaritan, the man who should be the enemy, poured oil and wine on the injured Jew’s wounds and bandaged them up. Oil and wine back then were used for first-aid. He then put the injured man on his own donkey and took him to an inn. He didn’t have an extra donkey. He gave up his own ride and walked until they got to the in. Once there, he stayed all night to take care of the man and make sure he was going to be okay. He then gave the innkeeper extra money and told him to continue to take care of the hurt guy. He also promised that when he went back that way, he would pay for any other charges the injured man came up with. To get a modern day picture of this story, this would be like setting up a complete stranger in a hotel and leaving our credit card at the front desk. Sounds pretty crazy, doesn’t it? Now imagine doing that not for just some stranger, but for someone you really, really don’t like.

After sharing this story, Jesus asks the expert in the law, “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” The answer is obvious, and the lawyer responds by saying “the one who showed him mercy.” Notice something interesting here. Just before our parable, the lawyer asked who his neighbor was. Jesus tells the Story of the Good Neighbor, and then asks who the neighbor to the injured man was. Jesus was not only teaching us who our neighbor is, but how we are supposed to be good neighbors. So let’s answer those questions. Who are some people we are supposed to consider our neighbor? (Allow children to

answer, and make a list on the board. Encourage them to really stretch their minds and name as many people as possible, from family and friends to the mailman and grocery store cashier.) That's a long list we have here. And you know everyone on this list is a neighbor. A neighbor is not only someone who lives next to us, but anyone we come in contact with. Including our enemies.

We don't usually say we have enemies. We have people we don't get along with or would rather not be around. When I picture enemies, I tend to picture superheroes and arch villains. But the point here is, there are people in our lives that may be difficult for us to want to serve. Think to yourself about who these people might be for you. Don't share out loud, just think about it. Some examples may be the homeless person on the corner, the class bully or the new kid in school, or your little brother. Sometimes it can be the hardest to serve the people we see every day. And in this parable, the Samaritan didn't just give the man who had been attacked by bandits a band aid and a glass of water. He sacrificed his own time, belongings and money to help out an enemy. That is Jesus' other point. A neighbor is anyone we come in contact with, and we are good neighbors ourselves when we show kindness and mercy to our neighbors, even if we don't necessarily get along with them. We sacrificially give our time and belongings to help those in need.

Let's wrap up by making a list on the board of ways we can show kindness to our neighbors. (Write down student suggestions. Encourage them to list specific things they personally can do to show kindness and mercy to their neighbors, including the ones that are difficult to get along with.) So now we see through the Story of the Good Neighbor that citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven show sacrificial kindness and mercy to everyone, including their enemies.

End in prayer.

Craft: Mini Book

Every week, students will make a mini book that retells the parable in very basic terms. This eighth mini book in their library reminds the kids that we are to go out of our way to be kind to everyone. To begin, demonstrate how to fold the book. Fold along the solid lines. Start by folding the long side to the long side. Crease well. Keep it folded, then fold in half, crease well, and fold in half again, creasing well. Now unfold it all the way and fold it in half short side to short side, so the dotted line in the center is folded in half. Cut along this

dotted line. Do not overcut! Now unfold the paper and fold it in half again, this time long side to long side. Now for the tricky part. Pinch both short ends of the paper, with the crease facing up. Bring your hands together, causing the cut in the middle of the paper to open up. You should have a plus sign now. The last step is to press all the pages down so the cover is on top. Mush the pages down and crease all the folds. You may need to use a marker or pencil for these creases, as they are all now stacked up on each other. Now that you have a little book, have the kids write their name on the cover. Read each page and have the children illustrate it accordingly.

Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven show sacrificial kindness and mercy to everyone, including their enemies.

Story Time with Jesus

Lesson Eight

The Parable of The Good Neighbor

Name: _____

neighbors as ourselves.

two passages as the greatest commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul and might, and to love our

the Old Testament. We now know these lawyer responded with two passages from

asked him what he thought, and the Jesus how to inherit eternal life. Jesus An expert in religious law once asked

33 "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 34 Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35 The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' 36 "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

37 The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

for dead.

traveling along and got beat up, robbed and left Jesus told a story of a Jewish man who was

justify himself. He asked who is neighbor is. inherit eternal life. But the lawyer wanted to obeying the greatest commandments he would Jesus told the lawyer he was right, that by

Luke 10:25-37

"25 One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" 27 The man answered, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind." And, "Love your neighbor as yourself." 28 "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" 29 The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. 31 "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. 32 A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

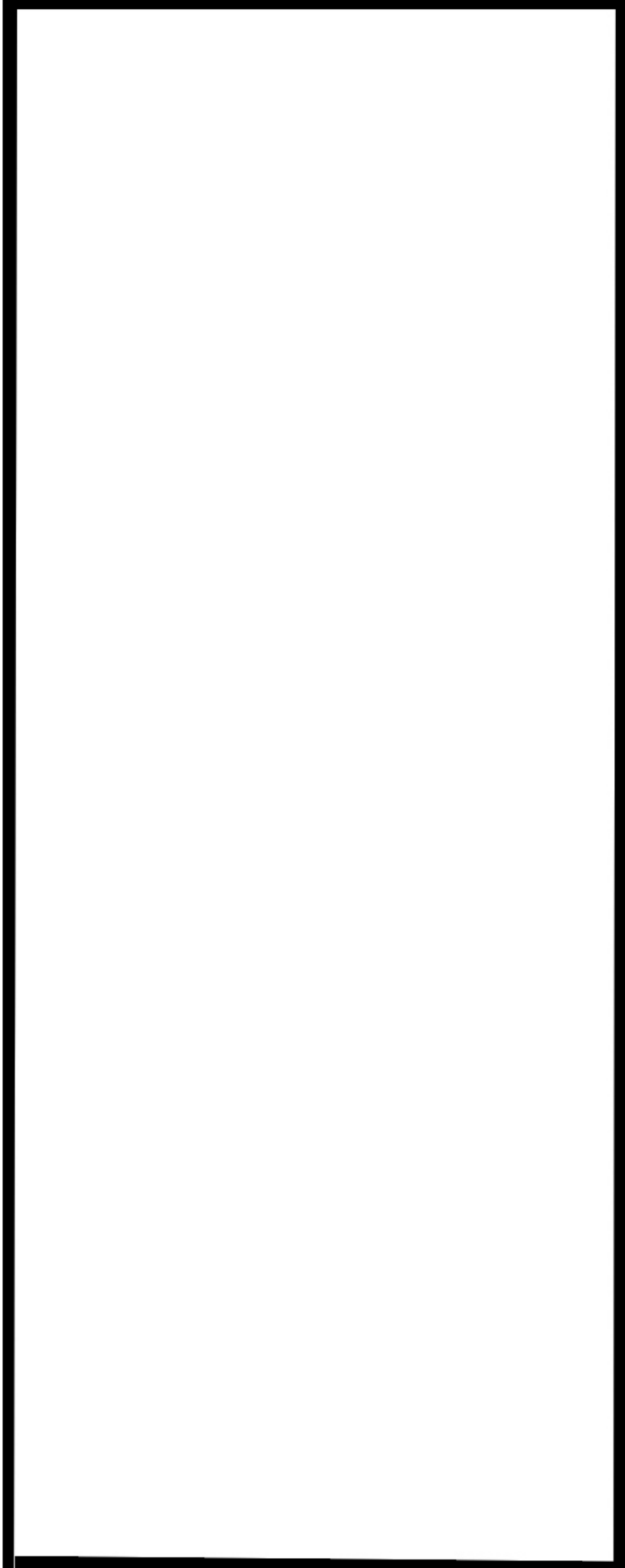
the one who was a good neighbor.

care of the injured Jew. This Samaritan was his own time, belongings and money to take enemy of the Jews, came by, and he sacrificed avoid the hurt man. Then a Samaritan, an priest walked by, and then a Temple assistant. They both crossed the street so they could Three men passed by the injured man. First a

From this story, we learn that everyone we encounter is our neighbor, and that we are good neighbors who fulfill the greatest commandments when we do things to show kindness and mercy to everyone. This includes people we don't really like or get along with. We give up our own time, stuff, and money to care for the needs of those around us.

YOU SHALL

**LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.**



MATTHEW 22:39