



STORIES **AND** RITUALS

LESSON 24

Stories & Rituals: The Bible in Broad Strokes

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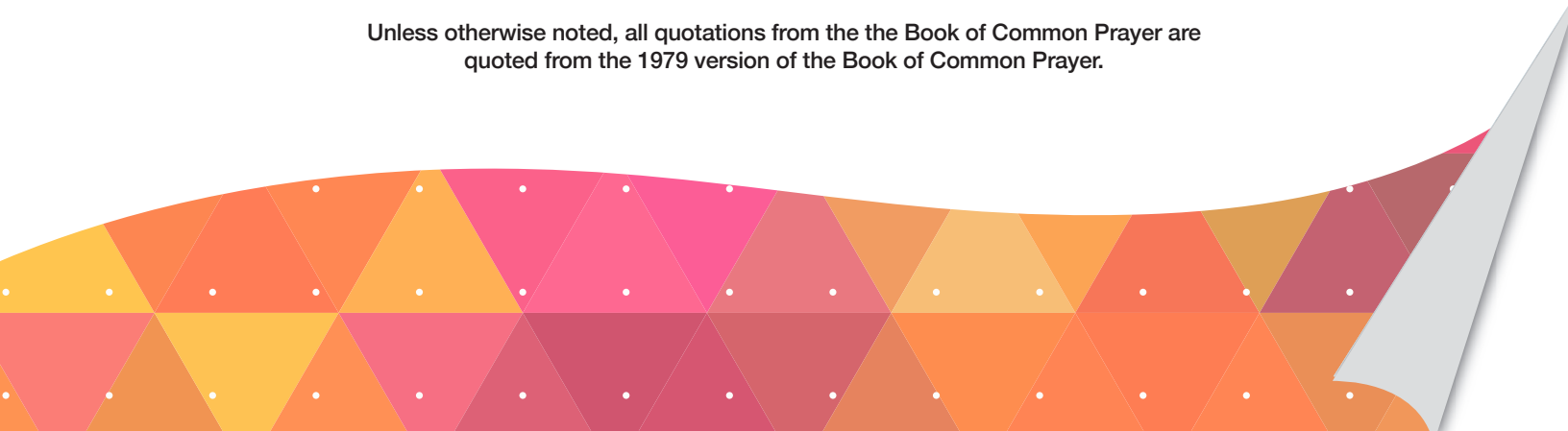
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The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Texts: Luke 10:25-37

Big Idea: We are called to help others in need.

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

1. Formulate an understanding of a theme of the lesson by completing a challenge with a partner.
2. Identify that God calls us to serve one another by hearing the story of the Good Samaritan.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of relational service by participating in a service project.

ACTIVITY (TIME)

Dive In (10 minutes)
Group Check-In

Community Builder (15 minutes)
Partner Teach

The Story (15 minutes)
The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Ritual (15 minutes)
An Act of Service

Dig Deeper (10 minutes)
Making Service Relational

Wrap it Up (5 minutes)
Closing Prayer

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nothing

- Nothing

Copy of Lesson Sheet 24.1

- Soft, instrumental music (optional)
 - Method for playing music (optional)
 - List of shut in or hospitalized members and addresses
 - Construction paper • Markers
-

- Flip chart and easel or white/chalkboard
 - Markers or dry erase/chalk
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- Nothing

LESSON OVERVIEW



What's the Story?

Today's story is found in Luke 10: 25-37 and is probably familiar to most members of your group. Luke is one of the three Synoptic Gospels (along with Matthew and Mark), who share similar content and likely worked from at least one common source material. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is only found in Luke's Gospel and reflects the Gospel writer's concern that Jesus be seen as a Messiah for everyone, regardless of faith tradition, socioeconomic status, or ethnic identity.

Historically, the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notoriously dangerous and largely avoided by "respectable" members of society. The Jewish audience hearing this story would have also been shocked to hear that a Samaritan was the character to help the injured man. Samaritans and Israelites had a bit of sibling rivalry, dating back to the book of Genesis. Both communities were told to stay out of one another's territory and avoid speaking to one another at all cost.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us to embrace the other and seek out Christ in everyone we encounter through relational service, especially those society has told us to reject.



What's the "Big Idea?"

Today's lesson focuses on the big idea that *we are called to help others in need*. This lesson will focus specifically on relational service. The majority of your group has probably done some form of service through school, scouting, or other organizations. Very rarely is this service introduced in a way that frames it as a theologically important, Christian practice and relational instead of transactional. Many of us have been involved with service projects in which we give something to others in need. (For example, donations, serving soup, etc.) Very rarely are we asked to relate to one another on common ground, both giving and receiving from those we have come to serve.



What's the Symbol?

Today's story is about showing unconditional love to others. Place a large cross on your altar area, along with a greeting card that is open and standing. Both will remind participants of the sacrificial love shown by Christ and embodied love they will be sharing through cards later in the lesson.



What's the Ritual?

Today's ritual invites participants to make cards for shut in or hospitalized members, using a list provided by Clergy or other church leadership. By making these cards, participants will remember other members of the community in prayer and be reminded of those we do not see week to week. Participants will also brainstorm who might be considered a Samaritan today and begin to reflect on societal divisions.



Setting Up Your Space

Set up your "altar" area. Set up a table and cover it with fabric or linen. On the table, place a few candles and a large cross. Place a greeting card, standing up, next to the cross. Have supplies for the ritual and Dig Deeper activity nearby. If you are using the Community Builder activity, prep materials needed for the challenge.

DIVE IN (10 MINUTES)

Group Check-In

Materials:

- Nothing

During the session:

- Open your session with a quick prayer. Use this one or a prayer of your own:
Holy Lord, open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see your love and faithfulness in the world around us. Help us see your love for us in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- **Let's start our time together by sharing some of the great and not-so-great things that have happened to us this week. What were the high and low points of your week?** Go around the group and invite everyone to share.

COMMUNITY BUILDER (15 MINUTES)

Partner Teach

Materials:

- Nothing

During the session:

- Break the group up into pairs. **Today we are going to teach each other new skills. Please take a minute and think about a special talent you have that you would like to teach your partner. Maybe you can speak another language, know a secret handshake, or can do a special dance move. Be creative, but make sure it's something that can be taught in a few minutes!** Give participants a moment to think.
- **Now, we are going to take some time to teach each other our talents. Then, everyone will show off their new talent to the group!**
- Give everyone 5-7 minutes to learn their new skills. Walk around the room and make sure each group has chosen appropriate talents to share and offer helpful advice if anyone appears to be struggling.
- Invite all the pairs back together to share their new talents with the group. Encourage everyone to applaud after each person goes.

COMMUNITY BUILDER - CONTINUED

- After everyone has shared, ask:
- **What was difficult about teaching to, and learning from, your partner?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: communication struggles, not understanding an instruction, not being able to follow a movement, etc.]*
- **What surprised you as we discovered all of the talents we have in this room?** *[Answers will vary. Accept all answers.]*



THE STORY

(15 MINUTES)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 24.1

Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 24.1
- Practice reading through the story several times so you are familiar with it.

During the session:

- Tell the story on Lesson Sheet 24.1.
- After the story ask: **What is this story telling us about God?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: God works through humanity; God loves everyone, regardless of what others think.]*
- **What is this story telling us about humanity?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: we are called to help others in need; sometimes we feel pressure to exclude people, but we are called to welcome and serve all.]*
- **What is the story telling us about the world?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: the world divides and separates people; the world would be a better place if we helped one another.]*
- **The Good Samaritan chose to disregard what society said and help the injured man, even giving the innkeeper his own money to take care of the wounded man. Others who would have been expected help the man (like a priest and Levite) passed by, while God showed love for the injured traveler through a very unlikely character. Who do you think we have been called to serve and how have others helped you in times of need?** *[Answers will vary. Accept all answers.]*

THE RITUAL (15 MINUTES)

An Act of Service

Materials:

- Soft, instrumental music (*optional*) • Method for playing music (*optional*)
- Construction paper • Markers • List of shut in and hospitalized members

Before the session:

- Gather a list of shut in and hospitalized members of your church from Clergy or another congregational leader.

During the session:

- If you are playing music, begin playing it softly.
- **We are all called to serve others and embody the love of Christ in the world, just like the Good Samaritan in today's story. What are some ways you think we could serve members of our own community here at church? Take a moment to think about it.**
- Give participants time to think and reflect.
- **On our altar we have some construction paper and markers, along with a list of church members who are sick and unable to join us for weekly worship. Today we are going to make cards for them, which we will deliver soon. Each card should tell the person how much God loves them and that this community is keeping the person in its prayers. If the person is hospitalized, you could add that we hope he or she feels better soon.**
- Invite participants to take some paper and markers, and assign them some people for whom they can make cards. Allow them time to decorate cards.
- As everyone finishes their cards, reassemble the group. Invite participants to bring their cards to the altar and leave them by the cross.
- Read the following blessing over the cards: **Loving God, bless these cards which we have made for** (*read first names off of list*). **Please send your healing spirit upon them and let them feel this community's support. We ask all of this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who first taught us how to love and serve one another. Amen.**

DIG DEEPER (10 MINUTES)

Making Service Relational

Materials:

- Flip chart and easel or white/chalkboard
- Markers or chalk

Before the session:

- Think about some ways participants could transform this service experience into one of relational service. Ideas include: go Christmas caroling to visit members, make cookies or a craft to deliver with their cards, etc. The ideas participants brainstorm should be concrete, simple to organize, and planned by the group. Participants may have great, large ideas that might not be practical for the group to actually accomplish. Think about your own limitations (for example, group size, budget, support, etc.) and use them to set realistic parameters in your own mind before brainstorming with the group.

During the session:

- **Thank you all for making cards for members of our community; I am sure they will love seeing your warm wishes. We have also talked a lot about service and even shared some ways we have received the love of God from others. Service is something that we should think of in terms of relationship. We are called not just to serve our neighbors once, but build relationships with others as well. Today we are going to spend some time brainstorming ways we can deliver these cards in a way that will help us more fully connect with those for whom they were made. I'll give you a minute or two to think before we begin.**
- Invite participants to begin brainstorming ideas for how they can continue being in relationship with the people for whom they made cards, remembering your guidelines. Write down their ideas on the flip chart or board.
- **Wow! These are all great ideas, thank you all for brainstorming with me. If we had to pick 2 or 3 ideas, which ones do you think we should do as a group? Remember, we need to keep our goals realistic and commit to things we can accomplish.**
- With the group, select 2-3 ideas and write them down.
- Split the group into teams. Assign each team one of the ideas, and invite them to work with their team to plan how to perform this act of relational service.
- Arrange for your group to complete their service projects.

WRAP IT UP (5 MINUTES)

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share any prayer concerns or requests they may have for the week. Close your time in prayer. Use the following or pray your own prayer:

Almighty God, look with favor upon these people who have now reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lesson Sheet 24.1

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

A story from the Gospel according to Luke:

One time Jesus was sitting with a group and they began to ask him questions about all sorts of things, like which was the most important Commandment. Jesus patiently answered all of their questions, even those that weren't real questions, but tricks to get Jesus in trouble or show he didn't know the answer.

Someone asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus could sense that this man was not asking an honest question, but wanted to trap him in a trick, so Jesus told a story to answer the man's question. Jesus told a story about a man who was walking down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. This was a very dangerous road and most people Jesus was talking with would not have gone on this road alone. As the man was walking, he was attacked by a group of robbers. The robbers beat the man and took all of his money and valuables, leaving him for dead. A priest came walking down the road, saw the man, and crossed the road to avoid him. He did not help the man. A Levite, another religious leader, came walking down the road and also crossed the road to avoid him. He did not help the man. The man laid there, feeling worse and worse with no one to help him.

A Samaritan came walking down the road next. Now Samaritans and the man were not supposed to like each other. They were from different neighborhoods and their friends and family told them to stay away from each other. The Samaritan heard the man crying and stopped. He looked over and saw the man, robbed and bleeding, and felt really bad for him. He went over to the man and took care of him, bandaging his wounds and eventually taking him to a nearby inn. He stayed with the man and made sure he was okay through the night. The next day he gave the innkeeper some money and said, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." The innkeeper took good care of the man and the Samaritan resumed his trip.

Jesus then asked the group he was talking with, "Who was a neighbor to the man by the side of the road? The Priest, Levite, or Samaritan?" The man who originally asked him the question responded, "The Samaritan, because he showed the man mercy." Jesus responded, "Go and do likewise."