

Youth Resources

JOURNEYS OF PROMISE



“Treat the foreigner as you would a local...
Love him like one of your own.”

Leviticus 19:33-34


Presbyterian
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LEADER'S NOTES

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one that we have heard over and over again, probably since childhood; it is often referred to in Sunday School, Youth Fellowship and the odd sermon. The message is simple – love your neighbour. But what does that really mean? Who is our neighbour? For the Jews who heard it first, Samaritans were definitely NOT their neighbours. They were their sworn enemies who had turned away from God and were involved in all sorts of sin. The message for them was not simple. It was a message of a radical love that challenged everything they had thought up until that point. So what does that mean for us?

This pack highlights a very real and current global concern, and it is something we must address with our children and young people. Go on a journey together, reading the well-known parable afresh and looking at what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Objectives

- To think about what it means to be a refugee.
- To understand our calling to love our neighbour.
- To be challenged by the concept of radical love and what that means for us as followers of Jesus.

Introductory activities

Introduce the project theme by doing either or both of the activities

1/ Nightline (10 minutes)

Equipment needed

- Obstacles • Blindfolds • Stopwatch

Rules

1. Must not take blindfolds off
2. Must keep one hand on the shoulder of the person in front

Method

1. Set up an obstacle course for the young people to navigate through.
2. Split the group into two teams.
3. Both teams get 10 seconds to memorize the course.
4. Make sure both teams have a leader at the front to communicate what to do at each obstacle.
5. Give each young person a blindfold.
6. Time both teams to see who is the quickest, giving some time penalties for every obstacle knocked over, then let one team try to navigate their way through the course without knocking anything over.

2/ Love collage (10 minutes)

Equipment needed

- Flip chart and marker • Piece of paper for each young person • Magazine/newspaper/internet cutouts
- Glue

Method

1. Write on the flip chart the word "LOVE".
2. Encourage the group to write around it what comes to mind when thinking about the word love e.g. football team, fruit, colour etc.
3. Hand out newspapers or magazines which include things that the group might like and get them to glue the pictures on the page around the word love.

Ask: What do your parents work as? What would you love to work as when you are older?

Say: We are going to watch a video that tells us about the Youth and Children's Project. We are going to focus on the story of Achmed.

Show introductory video on DVD.

BIBLE FOCUS

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke 10:25-37. There are many different ways to engage with a story and a few ideas are listed below for you to use in your session.

1/ Drama

Teach the story of the Good Samaritan by reading it and getting the group to act out the different parts e.g. when someone talks have them make hand gestures or pretend to talk through moving their mouths.

For the walk from Jerusalem to Jericho have signs at each side of the hall and have the person walk between them. Having props or signs helping to indicate who is who should be used to help the group understand the story.

Relate it to the immigration crisis and how we should look to help immigrants like the Good Samaritan did. Explain that a refugee is someone who is pushed out of their country for some reason e.g. war and fighting, persecution or famine.

The main teaching point is that we should always show love to everyone, even people we might not want to or don't see why we should.

2/ Modern story

Another way of telling the story is through recreating it for modern day. Using the story of Achmed (the full story is included in the children's resource), split the young people into different groups and get them to write their own modern story of what that might look like in the UK. After a while invite them to act out the modern story for the rest of the group and explain why they chose to do it that way.

3/ Radical love

Say: The Parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to think about a more radical love – the message isn't as simple as just loving our neighbour.

Do: Have a flipchart ready and write the words "radical love" in the centre. Ask the group to think about what that means for them and to shout out their answers.

Study: In groups get them to look at the table on the Extra Resources DVD which invites them to look at what the Bible says about radical love. On completion of the table, have them feedback to the group on what they were looking at so that each group can have a chance to tell others what they found.

RESPONSE

Say: You've heard the story now, chances are not for the first time, and you know what Jesus has to say - but how do you respond? Do you respond? The Christian faith isn't a passive hobby, but an active choice to live in a certain way. And in this instance, God is challenging us about how we live.

Ask: What does the story of the Good Samaritan look like in your life? Who have you previously walked past without stopping to help?

Say: We've all done it - the kid who is always on their own in school, your parent trying to cook, clean and hold down a job all at once whilst we play video games, or the appeals on TV to give aid to a recent humanitarian crisis. They cry out for our help but we're so used to crossing the road and walking by that it's second nature a lot of the time now.

Ask: Do you find yourself no longer paying attention to certain cries for help? Have you become desensitized to the stories of death and despair in our world?

CHALLENGE

The Good Samaritan story doesn't end with the man still lying on the road, bruised and beaten, and it shouldn't be how ours does either. Rewind to the start of the passage, and in verse 29 of Luke 10, Jesus is asked, "And who is my neighbour?" And that's a question we can still ask - who is our neighbour?

In this story, the answer was unlikely, uncomfortable and difficult. A Samaritan coming to the aid of a Jew would have been unthinkable at the time, and very out of the ordinary. Who are we called to show love and mercy to, even if it is uncomfortable or awkward? Who is our neighbour? The answer is simple - it's those who God has placed in your path, anywhere, any day; whether you'd normally have a friendship or relationship with them or not - if they are now in need then they are our neighbour. We are to love all people. 'And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise.'" - verse 37.

So we have decided we should respond. But how? Looking again at the Good Samaritan, we can learn from him. He paid two denarii - the equivalent of two day's wages - to look after his neighbour. And what's more, he was willing to pay more (verse 35). Wow! Not only has he let go of his pride and social expectations but he has given incredibly generously of his money; two days wages is a significant sum for anyone. Can we love, serve, give generously like the Samaritan? It might be in terms of monetary aid, but we can also be generous with our time, efforts and gifts.

How does that sit with you? How is God challenging you to show love and mercy to his children - your neighbour?

Although Jesus spoke these words some 2000 years ago, their relevance and their challenge remains true and valid today. Jesus is alive today, we follow him today, and we live for him today, so we can respond to this challenge today.

IDEAS FOR HOW YOUR YOUTH GROUP MIGHT RESPOND:

- **Write a letter of hope** – Open Doors can facilitate letters of encouragement being sent to our brothers and sisters facing persecution for their faith. Visit www.opendoorsyouth.org/sendhope for letter writing tips, and profiles of those whom you may write to.
- **Pray** – Use the prayer cards on the Extra Resources DVD to pray for Achmed and the other children and their families.
- **Watch** – Listen to Pastor B talk about what it means to refugee children to read the Bible. Watch the video from Open Doors on the Extra Resources DVD.
- **Research** – In what way are similar scenes of injustice affecting your local community? Is there a local hub where migrants are supported, can you get involved? Is there a food bank operating in your area - why not learn more about who that serves? Is the refugee crisis a priority for your local political representative? Why not write to them and let them know that it matters to you.
- **Fundraise** – See the Children's Resource for fundraising ideas, or be creative and come up with your own.