



'Light for the Path' a Resource for Families in the Year of Mercy

Session Four for Children: 'Who is my neighbour?' – the action of Mercy

We look

What does it mean to be a 'good neighbour' at home in the family? And as a family for others in the community?

We listen

Gospel of Luke, Chapter 10 (verses 25-37) A teacher of the law stood up. He was trying to test Jesus. He said, 'Teacher, what must I do to get life for ever?' Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there? You already know!' The man answered, 'That's true, I do know. It is to love the Lord your God. To love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind'. Also, 'You must love your neighbour as you love yourself.' Jesus said to him, 'Your answer is right. Do this and you will have life forever.' But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' To answer this question, Jesus said, 'A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes and beat him and took everything he had. Then they left him lying there, almost dead. It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the man who had been hurt and left lying there half-dead, he walked by on the other side of the road, and went on his way. Next, a Levite came there. He went over and looked at the man who had been hurt, robbed and left lying there half dead, and he walked by on the other side of the road. Then a person who did not come from Jerusalem, a visitor from a country called Samaria, came travelling down the road. (The Jews did not like the Samaritans and the Samaritans did not like the Jews). When this stranger, the Samaritan, came to where the hurt man was lying, half dead, he saw the man and felt very sorry for him. The Samaritan went to him and put medicine on his wounds (in those days, oil and wine was used) and he bandaged them. He then put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn. At the inn, the Samaritan took care of him that night. The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins, and gave them to the innkeeper. The Samaritan said, 'Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.' Then Jesus said, 'Which one of these three men do you think was a neighbour to the man who was attacked by robbers?' The teacher of the law answered 'The one who helped him'. Jesus said to him, 'Then go and do the same thing he did'.

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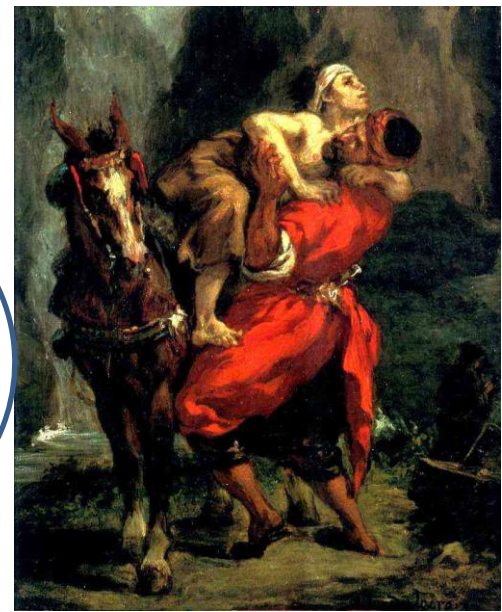
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We wonder

- I wonder who you would like to be in this story?
- Who you would not like to be?
- What might it be like to be the one hurt and left lying at the side of the road, half dead?
- I wonder who is the 'neighbour' to the person who was hurt? Is it the Priest? The Levite? The Samaritan?
- I wonder who is the neighbour for the Priest or Levite? Or the Samaritan himself?
- If you found the person who was hurt, what would you do?



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At Home

You might like to talk together about how we help one another when one of us is hurting or sad, or feeling left out or ignored.

Who do you think needs our special love, care and attention at the moment?

How might we help them?

Find out about how we support 'hurt' people as a parish.



Address on 3 Oct 2015

Pope Francis says Jesus's family life was like that of most families, with their problems and joys, with patience in difficult times, and respect for others, and a love of serving and looking after each other. If we can be like brothers and sisters in Church too, no-one will be a burden or a problem, but always a gift!



You may like to draw your favourite part of the story, or your favourite character in it.

Tips for using this 'Year of Mercy' resource with children at home

1. **We gather:** Decide on the best time – before or after school, evening or weekend – for a quiet 10-30 minutes together.
2. **Background:** What does the word 'mercy' mean? You will find some notes below.
3. **We look at our experience and our Catholic Tradition:** What does it mean for us to be a 'good neighbour'? Helping those in need is at the heart of our faith.
4. **We listen to God's Word.** Read the story. For the very young, the pictures might help to talk about the story and where we find ourselves in it.
5. **We wonder:** Ask the 'wondering' questions. Have a conversation about these.
6. **Pope Francis says:** Look at the 'Pope Francis' box, and his teaching about mercy. What catches your attention? What is our experience of 'patience in difficult times'?
7. **We respond:** Look at the 'At Home' box – and talk about this.
8. **What difference does this make?** Finally, draw the part of the story or character you like best, to remind you of the importance of being a 'good neighbour'.
9. **We pray:** Finish with a simple prayer (see an example below)

Prayer moment

Let's sit quietly for a moment, and remember the story of the Good Samaritan, and all that we have shared together. As we think about these things, we pray using words based on the prayer of St Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now on earth but ours, no hands or feet on earth but ours; ours are the eyes through which he looks with loving kindness on the world.

Thank you for being with us as we gather here in your name Lord Jesus. You have shown us how to follow you, being your hands and feet, your eyes, your heart, your voice. May our families and homes be places where anyone can come and experience through us God's love and mercy for them. We make this prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Background: In biblical times, Levites were men from the tribe of Levi, who helped the Jewish priests with their work in the Temple. The Samaritans were people from Samaria. They were part Jewish, but were not accepted as true Jews. Jews and Samaritans despised each other. (In fact the teacher of the law in the story even found it difficult to say the word 'Samaritan' when Jesus asked him which of the three had been the good neighbour!) Oil and wine were used as medicine to clean wounds. A denarius was a Roman coin - one coin was average pay for a day's work.

The story of the Good Samaritan only appears in the Gospel of St Luke. Through this parable, Jesus teaches us again about the very best way of love: Love of God, and love of neighbour, and that the proof of love of neighbour is shown in 'helping those in need'. 'Loving kindness' or 'mercy' is an attitude of mind or a 'lens' through which we are asked to see and respond to the world around us. It is the 'trademark' of the law of justice with mercy, not to be ignored! It serves as a good examination of conscience – 'Where have I been or not been loving, kind and caring today, even to people who are very different from me?'