

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Parables (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

Learning Goals: Students should learn to distinguish between interpretations of a parable by alternating the point of view from which they view the story.

Question: What does it mean to be a Good Samaritan?

“Stock Metaphors” - an equivalent in our culture - stock jokes (priest, minister, rabbi jokes):

A Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a rabbi are discussing what they would like people to say after they die and their bodies are being prepared for burial.

Priest: I would like someone to say, “He was a righteous man, an honest man, and very generous.”

Minister: I would like someone to say, “He was very kind and fair, and he was very good to his parishioners.”

Rabbi: I would want someone to say, “Look! He’s moving!”

Jesus uses similar formula: Priest, Levite, and a Jewish Man
(*Jesus plays around with formula*)

Read: Luke 10:25-37

Text: Problem that we are so familiar with it (one of most familiar stories of Jesus)

We “know” what it is about before we ever read it.

It has become a part of our normal culture (Good Samaritan hospital, shelter, soup kitchens, laws, etc.)

Who is the hero of the story?

Who do we want to be like?

Let’s look at the context:

A Lawyer comes to Jesus and asks great question: How do I inherit eternal life?

We might expect Jesus to respond:

Believe in me

Confess your sins

Ask me into your heart

He does not. Instead, he turns it around on man:

What does the law say? How do you read it?

The man gives a solid answer (shema - Deuteronomy 6:4-9): love God, love your neighbor

Jesus responds, “You have spoken well. Now, go and do it.”

Ever notice - easy to know what to do, much harder to do it?

One spiritual writer once said: “The way you live is the way you believe”

It’s not enough to believe in the mind, our life supports or contradicts those beliefs

Lawyer wants to justify himself: Who is my neighbor? (define who is in and who is out)

So, Jesus tells a story, using the standard formula

Man traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho

Robbers jump him, beat him unconscious, and strips his clothes.

(Important - no clothes, not conscious)

For a traveler - identify unknown person by his speech, his clothes

Jesus starts with a **priest** traveling by

He is a man of position and power (would not be walking)

Riding on a horse or donkey

According to the law, if he touches a dead body, he would ritually unclean.

“The priest collects, distributes, and eats tithes. If he defiles himself he can do none of these things, and his family and servants will suffer the consequences with him.” (Bailey, p. 44)

Not only the humiliation, but the process to become clean again is time consuming and costly

(finding, buying, and reducing a red heifer to ashes - would have taken a full week)

He cannot determine if this man is a neighbor without risking defilement.

The priest was the victim of a rule book ethical/theological system

Next, a **Levite** passes by

Lower social class - possibly walking instead of riding

He is not bound to as many regulations as the priest - he was only required to maintain ritual cleanliness in the course of his activities in the temple

Why did he pass by then?

Fear of defilement?

Fear of the robbers?

Following the example set by the priest?

We don't know exactly why, but we do know that he did not stop to help.

Jesus throws a curveball - instead of Priest, Levite, Jew; Jesus adds a **Samaritan** into the mix

Why was that such a big deal?

Remember the story of the Jews:

Exodus from Egypt

Wander in the desert for 40 years

Enter the promised land and drive out the inhabitants

Judges rule

Get a King

Kingdom splits into north and south

North Conquered, taken into captivity

Assyrians resettled the land - mix with Jews in north

Captives come back - want to help rebuild

You are mixed-breeds, you aren't pure

you don't fit in the circle

you don't qualify as a neighbor

They go and set up their own temple

Political enemies, religious enemies

Hostility between two groups

Jewish proverb:

“He that eats the bread of a Samaritan is like the one who eats the flesh of swine.”

It says that the Samaritan “had compassion” - (splachnizomai - to be moved in the guts)

Let’s see if we can get at what Jesus was trying to say by acting out this story.

Who do we see as the hero? (Samaritan)

Who is Jesus’ audience? (Jewish people; normal everyday folks)

Who in the story would the people identify with? (the man in the ditch)

Jesus is elevating the enemy, the outsider, to the place of hero

He is making the one who is hated morally superior.

Maybe think of it this way:

In the wake of all the violence in our world -

(deacon, pastor, Islamic extremist)

Notice that Jesus never actually answers the man’s question.

Instead of “who is my neighbor,” Jesus tells him “how to be a neighbor”, for that is the more important aspect.

Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Samaritan
- splachnizomai
- What was the unexpected element of this parable? Why was it shocking?