

Early Summer - Cycle C - Revised Common Lectionary
Pentecost through Proper 10
May 27, 2007 - July 15, 2007

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead, in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us, as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us, still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

Proper 10
July 15, 2007
Luke: 10: 25-37

Often our task as we explore the Word, is to listen to a story we have heard before -- maybe even many times before — and listen to it as if for the first time. Today, with a fresh look at the story of the Good Samaritan, we ask: Who are the marginalized people in our community? Who is the one who shows mercy in our community? Where have we felt the wind blowing us to "Go and do likewise?"

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Theme: Go and do likewise.

Before Class. You have a couple of options; you will need to decide which you are comfortable using. Both involve acting out the story. One way would be to keep the setting in Jesus' time, dealing with the fact that Samaritans were the outcasts of Jesus' time. The other way would be to set it in our town, this year, and have the children decide who the outcast is — deciding who are the marginalized people in your community. Perhaps it is migrant workers; it might even be the richest person in town that many people envy! The children will also need to decide who are two well-respected people in their community, who in the play will go to the other side of the road to avoid the wounded person. Some of the people in the "play" could also be women, instead of all men.

Beginning. Tell the children to be thinking of this question — a question that a man asked Jesus — "And who is my neighbor?" Tell them we have the story Jesus told that helps us notice who are neighbors to us.

Opening Prayer. Jesus, you teach us to love God with everything we have and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Help us as we try to do this. Amen.

The Story. Luke 10: 25 - 37. Some information that will be helpful, if the children do not know: The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was known to be a very dangerous route, with robbers lurking at all times. Samaritans were the outcasts of choice in Jesus time, looked down on, shunned, considered the scum of the earth. Priests, of course, were held in high regard; Levites were very well-respected.

We will need the lawyer (who can also read the part of the narrator) Verses 25, 27, and 29. All the rest is read by Jesus. A suggestion: One reader read verses 26 and 28, another read verse 30, another verses 31-32, and another verses 33 - 35. Verses 36 and 37 are Jesus and the lawyer, so one person could read those two verses.

Some Questions.

What are some aspects of this story that would have shocked the lawyer? (Perhaps the lawyer would have understood that both the priest and the Levite would not think they needed to risk stopping on this dangerous road. But a Samaritan cast as the "good guy? That would be shocking.)

Notice all the things the Samaritan did for the man. (Yes, he stopped. He administered first aid; he put the man on his own donkey, meaning he would have to walk; took him to an inn; took care of him; and even paid for the man's lodging after he would go on, promising to make up any difference with the innkeeper when he came back.)

If someone had asked you, earlier this morning, for a definition of a neighbor, what might you have said? (The people who live in the house next door? Other kids at school?)

Who do we think Jesus would say is our neighbor here in our town? (Draw out of the children the more invisible people in our community: the homeless, old people, who else?)

Option One. Invite the children to act out this passage as it is written. If there are insufficient children to play all the parts, suggest that some children take more than one part. Offer the children the option of using speaking parts — or presenting the play in pantomime.

Option Two. Work with the children to decide who would be the persons in this story if it were set in our town this year. Who would the marginalized person be? (A migrant worker? Other recent immigrants from Russia or Asia? Might it be a Native American or a person of Latin American origin? Who is most looked-down upon? Might even be an elderly person.) Who do they cast as the people who choose not to get involved? (Could it even be us?)

Invite the children to present the play, set today in our town.

Getting Closure. Ask the children to share what they noticed in this play. Be sure they understand that Jesus told this particular story to a man who was pretty sure of himself. Do you think that a story that makes us uncomfortable helps us to be more aware of the needs of others?

Closing Prayer. Thank you, Jesus, that you love us, accept us just as we are, and help us to grow. Amen.