



Who Is My Neighbor?

Goal: To practice being a good neighbor to others.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 10:25-37

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a familiar story in Scripture that engages us on many levels. Have we been like those who have “crossed over to the other side” (vv. 31-32, CEB)? Would we have stopped to help a person who was our enemy? Have we experienced someone who is our enemy helping us in a meaningful way? The questions abound.

Jesus told this parable in response to a lawyer's question: “Who is my neighbor?” (v. 29, CEB). Jesus' parable breaks outside the traditional view that a neighbor is only one who is near to us. Jesus expands the net to include even our enemies as our neighbors. The world and all its peoples are our neighbors. Our neighbor is anyone who is in need.

Jesus' ministry demonstrated that way of living. He extended the grace of his love, reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace to all people—Jews and Gentiles alike. He calls us to do the same. We convey the love of God in Christ to all people, regardless of who they are or even what they may have done against us. The forgiving love we receive in Christ leads us, in gratitude, to serve all people.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The beloved Mr. Rogers always asked children, “Won't you be my neighbor?” Jesus knew that people needed to understand in a new way what it meant to be a good neighbor. He wanted them to realize that God's love is very big and that we need to love and help others, anyone, no matter how different they are from us. When children have a chance to learn ways they can serve God by loving others who are different from themselves—with different colors of skin, ages, languages, and abilities—then they are able to live with God's grace in this world.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Be aware of the differences represented in the children in your care and in your congregation as you prepare to lead this session. This familiar parable provides a great opportunity for children to share their own stories of relating to someone different from themselves, helping someone else, or being helped by someone. Those perspectives are important and will contribute to the children's growth in confidence in their abilities to love God by serving their neighbors. A good way to end the session would be by inviting the children to respond, “I am a good neighbor when . . .”

God, thank you for the neighbors who have helped me. Help me recognize the neighbors near and far who may need my help. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2021–2022

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 1, 17, 18

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: stuffed
animals, dolls, first aid
supplies

choice 3: helper props
or costumes

Exploring

choice 1: a washcloth for
each child

choice 4: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

LG **A** **B** **VI** **FM** **SD**

Greet the children by name and with the words “Grace and peace to you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Introduce yourself to parents and caregivers whom you do not know. Be sure they know who will be caring for their children. Explain to the parents and caregivers that their children will hear a story Jesus told about a man who helped another man in need, the story of the Good Samaritan.

Introduce the activities and invite children to participate.

- 1. Caring for Others**—Gather several stuffed animals, dolls, and a variety of first aid supplies, such as bandages, cold packs, adhesive bandages, gauze, and so on. Suggest that the children pretend to care for the stuffed animals and dolls.
- 2. Tracing Hands**—Invite children to choose their favorite color of construction paper and trace their hands on the paper with washable markers, write their names on their paper hands, and cut them out. Assist with writing and cutting as needed. As the children work, wonder how we use our hands to help others, such as opening a door for someone, comforting a sick brother or sister, and picking up litter. Put the hands aside for use later in the session.
- 3. Helping**—Provide a variety of “helper” props or costumes—doctor, nurse, babysitter, church greeter, church musician, police officer, and firefighter. Encourage the children to try them on and pretend to be that kind of helper. Ask them about how to help other people.

T *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*

Some SCMs are used throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.



Transitioning to Story Time



When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing the first stanza of “Jesus Loves Me”—**MM 23; SCM 17**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Helper Song

Using the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
If you’re a helper and you know it,
what you do will surely show it.
If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)

Helping God

Invite the children to follow your motions as you say the poem.

One little mouth to speak, (*point to mouth*)
one little nose, two little cheeks. (*point to nose and cheeks*)
Two little eyes to see, (*point to eyes*)
all my ten little toes. (*point to toes and wiggle toes*)

One, two, three, four, five, (*hold up fingers one at a time on right hand*)
six, seven, eight, nine, ten. (*hold up fingers one at a time on the left hand*)
Ten fingers and two hands, (*hold up both hands and clap*)
we can help God! Yes, we can! (*raise hands in the air and wave them*)

M Children requiring more movement than others can benefit from dynamic activities. Set clear expectations about boundaries for appropriate movement to position these children for success.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), pcusastore.com and *Who is my Neighbor?* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), pcusastore.com.



Hearing the Story

M C

Open the Bible to Luke 10 and point out that the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that the story they will hear is a story that Jesus told. Tell them the story is often called "The Good Samaritan," and ask them to listen carefully to find out why it is called that.

Read **SCM 1**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

After reading the story, wonder with the children what the word *neighbor* means. Ask if they know any neighbors. Mention that when Jesus told his story about the good Samaritan, he said that the Samaritan was the neighbor of the man who was hurt. Wonder how that can be. Point out that the two men didn't know each other and didn't live near each other. Wonder what makes a neighbor.

Read the story again asking the children to listen for the word *neighbor*. Tell them that each time they hear the word, they should give a "high five" to a neighbor.

Wonder with the children what the man who was hurt said to the Samaritan. Wonder what the man said to God.

Invite the children to name people they want to thank God for. Remember the names or write them down. Then say a prayer thanking God for those people.

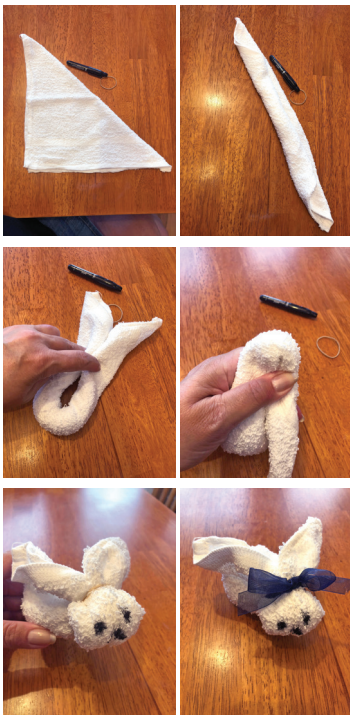
EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Making Boo-Boo Bunnies

LG L TD FM

Explain to the children that sometimes when you bump your head, knee, elbow, or other part of your body, putting something cold on it can help you feel better. Tell them that they will make a boo-boo bunny to use as a small ice pack. Use the following instructions:

- ✎ Hand each child a washcloth and have them fold the cloth in half diagonally.
- ✎ Place the cloth on the table with the fold near them and the corner on top.
- ✎ Roll the cloth as tight as possible, starting at the top corner rolling toward the bottom fold.
- ✎ Fold the cloth in half with both points meeting.
- ✎ Fold in half again, with the center fold meeting under the corners.
- ✎ Place a rubber band about 1" in around the new fold.
- ✎ Fluff the ears up.
- ✎ Using a permanent marker, draw circles for eyes, and draw a small triangle for a nose.
- ✎ Tie a ribbon around the rubber band.





Wonder how they can use their boo-boo bunnies to help someone who is hurt.

Explain that the boo-boo bunnies can be kept in the freezer so they are ready to use when someone needs help. Just put a fresh ice cube into the bunny's tummy. Remind the children to watch for ways that they can be good neighbors to others.

2. Helping Hands Banner

LG A C L FM

Using the hands from "Guided Play," make a banner. Using a marker, write a title in the center of a strip of mural paper, such as "Being a Good Neighbor" or "God's Helping Hands." Invite the children to glue their hands around the title to decorate the banner. If a child did not make a pair of hands during "Guided Play," encourage them to do so now.

As the children work, invite them to name ways they can be God's helper by being a good neighbor with their hands. Write their ideas on the hands or the banner. Tell the children that the banner will remind us to use our hands and work together to be helpers of God every day. Hang the banner in a place where the children and others will see it.

3. Play and Sing Good Neighbor

LG MS

Help children think of ways to care for others as Jesus said to do.

Invite two children to make an arch by facing each other, holding each other's hands, with their arms at an angle in front of them. Others walk underneath their arch in a line. Sing the song below.

When the children who are making the arch hear "neighbor," they lower their arms and catch the person going under. The caught person can name one way to be a good neighbor and then switch with one of the children who was making the arch.

Sing the song to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

Jesus said that
we should be, we should be, we should be;
Jesus said that we should be
a good neighbor.

Jesus said that
we should care, we should care, we should care;
Jesus said that we should care
for our neighbors.



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Color Page

C FM

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color using the following wondering questions.

- ▼ I wonder, “What were the people thinking who passed the hurt man by?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the hurt man think when a Samaritan came to help?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the man who asked Jesus the question think about Jesus’ story?”

T *The session plans for Growing in Grace & Gratitude follow a common flow. This helps in planning an effective schedule with transitions to decrease the number of behavior issues.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

T FA

Encourage each child to put away one toy or object. Invite the children to sit around a table or on the floor.

Sing the first stanza of “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**MM 24; SCM 18**—together while you serve the snack. Remind the children that Jesus said, “Go and do the same.” Wonder together ways to be good neighbors this week.

Say a litany and ask the children to respond with “Thank you, God”:

Thank you, God, for Jesus.

Thank you, God.

Thank you, God, for helping us know God’s ways.

Thank you, God.

Thank you, God, for calling us to love you.

Thank you, God.

Help us to share your love with others.

Thank you, God.

Amen.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), show your love for Jesus and for others through your actions. The grace of God is with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their e-mail addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org. Remind the parents and caregivers about the e-book and story audio (see p. vii).

Who Is My Neighbor?



The Samaritan was a good neighbor.

