

Who's Your Neighbor?



MAIN POINT

Jesus calls us to love everyone – even those who don't think, live, or believe like us.

MAIN BIBLE VERSE

Luke 10:25-37 NIV

Students will understand that loving their neighbor is about choosing compassion over comfort and will be challenged to notice and care for people they might normally overlook.

Teaching Script / Guide

HOOK (2 minutes):

- Have you ever seen someone, maybe at school or out in public, but you pretended not to see them?
 - Maybe it's someone not in your friend group
 - Maybe somebody you find annoying...
 - Maybe it's someone who's bullied you or made your life difficult in some way?
- Let me ask: Why do you walk past them?
 - You don't want to talk to them?
 - It feels awkward?
 - Maybe you want to talk to them, but you don't know what you would say?
- The truth is that most of us have someone in our lives that we're willing to walk past...
 - But what if following Jesus meant there are times when we should stop walking?

SCRIPTURE (5 MINUTES):

- Today, we're going to be in Luke 10. Let me set the stage a little bit. One day, a religious expert ask Jesus a question: What must I do to inherit eternal life? (Luke 10:25).
 - And Jesus responds by telling Him that he must love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." But He also says, "You must love your neighbor as yourself."
 - Now this may seem simple. Maybe you've heard this before. Maybe not, but it's not surprising that Jesus commands us to love God and love others.
 - But I want you to take a second and think about what that really means.
 - Like if Jesus told you, "Love other people", you might think, "Well, which 'others' is he talking about?" If he means mom and dad, great! I can do that... but what about... "that" person.
 - This is the thought the religious expert has. So he doubles back and asks Jesus another question: "Jesus.... Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). In other words, "Jesus... who do I not have to love?"
 - But instead of answering His question... Jesus tells him a story...
- READ: LUKE 10:30-37 NIV – The Parable of the Good Samaritan

TENSION (3 MINUTES):

- So two religious leaders walk past the injured man... but a Samaritan stops.

- You want to know the shocking part?!
- The Samaritan was the last person anyone expected to help.
- In their culture, the Jewish people who were listening to Jesus did not like the Samaritans. These two people groups did not get along. They were enemies by nature and identity.
 - There's no way anyone listening to Jesus that day would have expected the Samaritan of all people to be the hero of the story, yet Jesus held the Samaritan up as the one whose example we should follow.
 - Not because of who the Samaritan was on the outside, but because of how his heart responded to this other man who was hurting. He didn't see him as an enemy. He loved him like a neighbor.
- Here's what this means for us:
 - We rarely, if ever say out loud "I won't love that person", but we often pick and choose who we decide to treat with dignity, respect, and Christlike love.
 - We think...
 - They're not my type of person
 - That's not my problem
 - Someone else will handle it.
- But Jesus flips the question. Instead of asking:
 - "Who counts as my neighbor?"
- He asks:
 - "Will you choose to be a neighbor?"

APPLICATION (4-5 minutes):

- Being a neighbor means:
 - Noticing
 - Stopping
 - Caring
 - Taking Action
- It might look like:
 - Sitting with someone new
 - Standing up for someone
 - Refusing to join in on gossip
 - Checking in on someone when something seems off.
- Jesus' message is that love is not just a feeling, it's a decision.
- You don't have the capacity to love everyone deeply, but you can treat everyone with dignity and respect as someone made in the image of God.

LAND THE POINT (1 minute):

- Jesus doesn't say, "Just love the people who are easy to love."
 - He showed us that real love crosses lines.
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