

Loving the Samaritans

Karen Hall

PURPOSE: The purpose of this program is to consider who the Samaritans were in Jesus's time. Who are the people of our day who are treated as Samaritans? How would Jesus treat these people? How do we treat people who are different from us?

MUSIC: (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) "Let the Beauty of Jesus be Seen in Me" #600. If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10: 25-37 and John 4: 4-9, 16-18, 27.

PREPARATION:

Skit: Run off a copy of the opening skit and assign the needed readers. You may choose to make signs for the various characters to wear during the skit. Keep these signs to use in all the other skits.

Music: If using music, acquire enough hymnals for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

Scripture: Have Bibles available for those who need one, and assign Scripture pieces at the start, to make reading through them smoother.

Print the attached worksheet and make copies for each person. If that is not possible then either a chalkboard or a whiteboard may be used with the worksheet information written on it. Do not give out the worksheet or show the board until later in the program.

Devotional

Invite the people who are in the skit to go over to the side of the room and come in as their part is read. If you have a small group, you may ask them to stay seated and just get up and act out their parts as appropriate and then be seated. The person who is acting out the man who is beaten does not have to get on the floor but may sit in a chair or recline on a couch. The point is to have each person walk by, and then go to the other side.

This devotional will focus on Samaritans. In the Scripture about the Good Samaritan, we know that he was a man of compassion. A Samaritan was considered someone to avoid. As the Scripture is read, the characters will act out the reading. At the end of the reading, the character who is the Samaritan will stand and share her part. The narrator may be the one giving the devotional or may choose someone else. The narrator should read the Scripture slowly enough for the actors to play their roles.

Hook

Say: “Today, I have the privilege of introducing the drama, “Loving Samaritans.” (Have the skit performed.)

SKIT: **Loving Samaritans**

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

The one who is the Samaritan will look at the audience and say,

“I know what it is like to be looked down upon. Growing up a Samaritan, I was taught about our God and know about his commands. I also have known prejudice and hatred.

Sometimes, it has made me bitter and angry. Sometimes I just shake my head and try to move past the injustice my people have endured.

When I saw the man on the side of the road, though, I just couldn't walk away. He was covered in so much blood; I first thought he must be dead. Was I tempted to walk on by? Yes, for a brief second, I thought I could pretend I didn't see him. But I couldn't. He was so injured, so helpless, so in need of someone, anyone to help.

When I got to him, I wasn't sure what to do. What if I hurt him by moving him? What if people saw me and thought I was the one who beat him? But I had no choice. While I couldn't do everything, I did what I could with what I had. I hope the oil, wine and bandages made him feel better. I'm counting on the innkeeper to take care of him now. I'll be heading back to check on him as soon as I can.

I do hope he will be alright.

(Thank the actors and give everyone time to return to their seats.)

Book

Give out the worksheet or uncover the board.

Say: "The Scriptures in today's devotional are very familiar to us. As we look at them now though, let us look at them from a different perspective." (Discuss the first two questions on the worksheet. Accept the answers and thank the members for their participation.)

Say: "The next Scripture is from the story of the woman at the well. Unlike the Good Samaritan parable, this is the recording of an actual event. This Scripture is also very familiar to us. For our devotional today, we are focusing on the aspects of who the woman was, so parts of the Scripture are left out." (Ask someone to read the Scriptures as presented.)

Say: "Let's look at the questions together." (Discuss the questions. The answers are not difficult, but the women may need a few seconds to consider them. Do not rush, but also do not wait for extended periods of time.)

Question 2 asks what three strikes the woman has against her. The strikes are: she is a Samaritan, she is a woman, and she has been married five times and is now living with a man who is not her husband.

Question 3 has many answers so allow discussion time, make sure one of the answers is that he knew he would meet this woman and he loved her dearly.

Question 4 has many potential answers. Encourage the women to look broadly. The “Samaritans” in our world may be people of a different race or religion, but also people who are illegal immigrants, different cultures, different political views, or people with disabilities. Our world seems to be increasingly divided into “groups” and we Christians have bought into that division.

Question 5 may take a political turn. That is fine, as long as the discussion recognizes that Jesus did not agree with everyone, but he loved them and treated them humanely. We must do the same.

Look

Say: “Every day, we come across people who are unique. Some are different in the ways mentioned. Some just have different personalities, so we find them difficult to be around. How do we respond? The story of the Samaritan woman at the well is a perfect example of how Jesus chose to live and what the disciples thought. John said they ‘Marveled that he was talking to a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you seek?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’ Possibly because they had already been with Jesus long enough to know that he truly loved everyone and sought out those who needed him, despite their differences.

As we go about our day-to-day lives how do we treat others? Is it with love and compassion? In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the ‘bad guys’ were the ones who crossed to the other side of the road. The ‘bad guys’ were the ones who represented the church of that day. The Jews were smug in their treatment of Samaritans. They felt justified in their prejudice. We look at them and think how wrong they were, but aren’t we often the same? Whenever we treat people differently, judge them more harshly, or avoid them because of the differences we perceive, we are “crossing to the other side of the road.”

Took

Say: “In a moment I will ask us to put this program into action. You will not be asked to share your answers out loud. First, we will stop and pray. As you pray silently, ask God to reveal all the times you have acted like the Priest, the Levite, or even one of the robbers in the parable. Ask God to reveal to you the prejudices you have hidden even from yourself. We all have them. Ask God for his forgiveness and ask him to change your heart to be more like the Good Samaritan. Ask God to help you recognize what you can do to make a difference.

Now, as a group what can we do to be welcoming to people different from us? Are we truly kind and loving to those people who we believe are different? Over the next few weeks let us think about our group. Are we exclusive in our group and our relationships? As we move forward pray that each decision made, each word said and each plan implemented will truly represent the love that Jesus we are called to have for everyone.”

Close with prayer.

Shared by: Karen Hall has been a member of WHFMS all her adult life. She had the privilege of serving as the national president for nine years. Writing this program was a difficult one she says, because it opened her eyes to the times she has not behaved as the Good Samaritan. Karen and her husband, David, live at the Advent Christian Village, in Dowling Park, Florida.

Loving Samaritans Worksheet

1. Had you considered before how the Samaritan may have felt as he ministered to someone who had perhaps treated him badly? Do you think he may have had other feelings other than the ones he expressed in the skit?
2. In this parable Jesus could have used anyone as an example of a good neighbor. Why do you think he chose to use a Samaritan?

John 4:4-9

And he [Jesus] had to pass through Samaria. So, he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so, Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well, it was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

John 4:16-18

Jesus said to her,
"Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband," Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband;' for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

John 4:27

Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"

1. Why do you think Jesus made a point of going through Samaria?
2. In the story of the woman at the well this woman had three strikes against her. What were they?
3. Why did Jesus choose to put himself in this situation?
4. Who are the Samaritans in our world today?
5. Do we have to agree with a person to treat them in a loving manner?