

SUPPLIES: a cup with water in it, an ice cube, a tennis ball, one plastic cup (16 oz or more) per every 3 students, 1 plastic easter egg (or ping pong ball) for each student, rope/yarn to mark boundaries.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Here's the opening question: In the story we're reading today, Jesus is telling a story to help the people understand who their neighbor is, which as you'll hear is different than how we think of a neighbor, which is someone who lives next to us. But for the opening question, let's share the name of one of our neighbors – someone who lives next to us.
- (go around the circle)
- During this summer, we're going to be talking about parables. Parables are stories that can help us better understand an idea. For instance, I could tell you that you have to just try harder. Or, I could tell you the story of the "little engine that could" that shows us what trying harder might look like.
- The story we're going to hear now is about who does and who doesn't help others.

READ Luke 10:25-37: 25

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 The lawyer answered, "You shall 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." 28 And Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." 29 But wanting to justify himself, the lawyer asked Jesus, "So who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who took his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw the victim, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw the victim, he too passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near the victim; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two hundred dollars, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." 36 Jesus then asked the lawyer, "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 The lawyer said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

ASK

- At the very beginning of the story, the lawyer asks Jesus a question. Do you remember what that question was? (how to get eternal life)
- Jesus asks the lawyer, “What is written in the law?” And the lawyer gives two answers. Do you remember what the two answers are that the lawyer gives? (1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind. 2. Love your neighbor as yourself).
- So then, the lawyer wants to know who his neighbor is. So Jesus tells the parable. After the man in the story was hurt, do you remember who passed him by and did not help him? (a priest and a levite)
- Who *did* help the man who was hurt? (a Samaritan)
- At the end of the story Jesus asks the lawyer, “Who was a neighbor to the man who was hurt?” Do you remember how the lawyer answered? (the one who showed him mercy)

TELL

- A priest and a Levite are people in the Jewish community who would be expected to help someone.
- A priest is a like a modern day pastor and the Levite would be like a police officer (or at least a security guard).
- So the priest and Levite not helping the man is a pretty surprising and disturbing thing.
- And then, what’s even more surprising, is who *did* help out – A Samaritan. As far as Israelites were concerned, Samaritans couldn’t do anything right and were to NEVER be trusted or befriended.
- And yet, that is who - a Samaritan! - helped out.
- Jesus tells the story to the lawyer to let him know that it doesn’t matter who you are or who your neighbor is – the point is to show mercy, all the time.
- Having mercy in this way is not just something that happens for us. We don’t just suddenly feel mercy for others – nor can we make ourselves feel mercy.
- And that’s why the first part of the “law” is so important. In order to love our neighbors as ourselves, we have to first love God.
- As we love God with all our heart, mind and strength, then God helps us to know and see and receive what we need in order to love those around us.
- In other words, the relationship we have with God affects our relationships with other people.

EXPLAIN CAUSE AND EFFECT (demonstrations will be more effective if you do them, instead of say them)

- So we’re going to talk some about cause and effect.
- An *effect* is something that happens. A *cause* is why the effect happened.
- So I’ve dipped my hand in some water. My hand is now wet. The effect is that my hand is wet. What was the cause of my hand being wet? (dipping it into water)
- So now I’m holding an ice cube. And my hand is cold. What’s the cause and the effect? (holding the ice cube and then hand is cold)
- The ice cube is melting. That’s an effect – what’s the cause? (holding the ice cube)
- I throw a ball against the wall, and it bounces back. What’s the cause and what’s the effect?
- So now that you’ve learned cause and effect – let’s apply it to the story.
- The first law is the cause - Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, strength and soul

- And the second law is the effect - as you pay attention to and love God, then you will be able to love your neighbor and yourself.

TELL

- We're now going to do an activity where we'll see how helping one another is better than not helping one another.

EXPLAIN Activity

- We're going to split into teams of 3s.
- One person for each team will hold an empty plastic cup (sized 20 ounces or more) about 7 feet away from the rest of his/her team (marked by a rope).
- Each member of the team that doesn't have a cup gets three plastic easter eggs to try and throw into the cup.
- The cup holder **MAY NOT MOVE** his/her body or cup whatsoever!
- After everyone throws, rotate so that a different member is holding the cup. Same rules for holding the cup apply.
- Keep track of total points for your team.
- Once everyone on the team has held the cup, that is the end of the first round.

DO FIRST ROUND

TELL

- For the second round everything remains the same except for one thing: The holder of the cup may now move his/her body side to side and may move the cup as well.

ASK

- How hard was it to get the easter egg in the cup when the cupholder wasn't moving?
- How hard was it to get the easter egg in the cup when the cup was being moved?
- What made it easier when the cup was being moved?
- When did you feel more pressure as the egg thrower – when the cup was moving or not moving? Why?

TELL

- When we seek God first and love God with our heart, mind and soul, and then receive God's love back, then its like the cup-holder moving the cup and helping us with our task.
- And when we love God and receive God's love, this helps us (even causes us) to be like the Good Samaritan and help those who are around us.
- And when we help those who are around us, it makes life easier and better for all of us.
- And that's the Good News for today.

CLOSING PRAYER