

# The Good Samaritan

## Exploring Parables

### Overview

A part of each *Venture* lesson is always dedicated to hearing the Sunday Gospel story. In this lesson, the children will dramatize the Parable of the Good Samaritan and play a game that challenges them to find ways to help others.

### Share Experiences

**Gathering Prayer:** Have volunteers prepare the ritual space in your classroom. Ask the children to gather there as they arrive. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Invite the children to offer petitions that they would like the group to pray about. After each petition, lead the children in the response that your parish uses at Sunday Eucharist. Conclude this sharing by thanking God for the members of the class and asking God to bless your time together. Close by singing “We Are Called” (*Venture/Visions Music CD, CD-2, #12*).

**Telling Stories:** A.A. Milne, the creator of Winnie-the-Pooh, was the youngest of three sons. He recalled that when the three boys snuggled on the sofa with their dad to hear a story, the story would often begin, “There once was a man who had three sons.” Milne’s two older brothers would immediately jab an elbow in his ribs because they knew from the beginning which of the sons would be the hero and get the princess—the third son. Folk tales and hero tales rely on stock situations, such as dangerous men or beasts or insurmountable difficulties, to get listeners interested and to assure them that the ending will be satisfying.

The form of story Jesus tells is called a parable. Jesus often tells a parable in response to a question, as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A parable often gives the questioner an answer he or she does not expect.

### Materials

- Copies of “A Good Samaritan Dilemma” activity page
- A Bible
- A whiteboard or newsprint
- *Venture/Visions Music CD* and CD player

### Discover Gospel and Doctrine

**The Good Samaritan:** Introduce the story of the Good Samaritan by explaining that this is a story Jesus told about helping others. Jesus knew that all of us need help at times. Jesus also knew that sometimes we take time to help others and sometimes we don’t.

Prepare the children for the Gospel by describing Samaritans, Levites, and priests—three of the main characters in the story. Samaria is a country inside Israel, just north of Jerusalem. The Assyrians conquered Samaria and settled many non-Jews in the territory. The Jews of Samaria intermarried with the non-Jews, which made the Jerusalem Jews treat them with disdain. As far as people in Jesus’ time were concerned, nothing good could come out of Samaria.

Levites were descendants of Levi, one of the 12 sons of Jacob. They are connected to the Temple in Jerusalem. Priests are also officials of the Temple. They seem to have more authority than the Levites. Both Levites and priests often criticize Jesus and try to trick him.

Now that you have the cast of characters, ask the children to listen as you read the story from Luke 10:25–37. After the reading, discuss these questions:

- Which of the three characters would people in Jesus’ time have expected to stop and help the

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man? *The priest and Levite were respected people who kept the Law, which told them to be good to the stranger in their land.*

- Which of the three men would people never have expected to stop? *The Samaritan was considered to be a heretic that most people thought was not pleasing to God.*
- What reasons can you think of for the priest and Levite not stopping? *Fear, other commitments, conscious of their importance at the Temple.*
- Do any of these reasons excuse them from stopping? *No. The commandment to love your neighbor is from Leviticus 19:34, part of the Jewish law. The man's life was in danger. They owed it to him to stop.*
- Why does the Samaritan stop? *The story says he was moved with compassion, which means "to feel with." He treated the man in the ditch the way he would have wanted to be treated himself. He went beyond just helping him get to the inn. He arranged to pay extra for anything the man needed.*
- How does Jesus' parable answer the man's two questions at the beginning of this Gospel passage—how can I have life forever and who is my neighbor? *Jesus answers the first question by telling the man to love God and his neighbor. He answers the second question with the story. Our neighbor is anyone who needs us.*

## Live the Gospel

**Who Will Help?** Distribute "A Good Samaritan Dilemma" page, one copy for each child. Assign the eight parts and read the play aloud together. Discuss the questions. Write the answers on the board or newsprint so the children see what motivates the ones who help and the ones who

don't. Ask eight children to mime the play for the group while eight others read the parts. Or, ask the children to create another dilemma like this one where children have to make a decision to help or not.

**Closing Prayer: Prayers of Thanks** Most of us have had a Good Samaritan moment, a time when someone came out of nowhere to help us out of a sticky situation. Ask the children to take a moment of silence to remember someone who helped them, their family, or someone they know. Ask the child to sum up, "Thank you, God, for \_\_\_\_\_." Close your sharing by quoting Jesus in the Gospel, "Go and do likewise. Amen."

Name \_\_\_\_\_



# A Good Samaritan Dilemma

## Characters

**Narrator**  
**Paul**  
**Natalie**  
**Cullen**

**Abigail**  
**Mean Kid**  
**Tough Kid**  
**Darin**

**Narrator:** Darin and his class were on the way to lunch. Suddenly, Darin remembered he'd left his lunch money in his desk. He hurried back to get it. Some kids who were hanging out in the hallway grabbed Darin and shoved him out a side door.

**Tough Kid:** Where do you think you're going?

**Darin:** I'm going to lunch.

**Mean Kid:** I bet you've got some lunch money, then. Hand it over!

**Darin:** Leave me alone.

**Narrator:** The mean kid punched Darin in the nose. The tough kid shoved Darin down. Then they took his money and ran. Darin's nose started to bleed. Tears ran down his cheeks. Suddenly, a softball rolled toward him. Natalie came running back to fetch it and nearly tripped over Darin.

**Natalie:** Hey! Watch it! I nearly ran over you!

**Abigail:** Hurry up, Nat! Throw the ball home. We can still win.

**Natalie:** Here it comes.

**Narrator:** Natalie hurried back to her game just as Paul, the most popular kid in school came walking by.

**Paul:** Nice throw, Nat. *(Sees Darin)* Whoa! What happened to you?

**Darin:** These two guys punched me, knocked me down, and...

**Paul:** You're a mess, man. Don't bleed on me.

**Narrator:** Paul left in a hurry. Darin tried to get up, but it hurt so much that he just moaned.

**Cullen:** What's that noise? Sounds like someone is hurt.

**Narrator:** Darin recognized the voice. It was a kid nobody liked much. Everyone teased him, including Darin.

**Darin:** Two guys knocked me down and took my lunch money. My nose is all bloody.

**Cullen:** Come on. I'll help you get cleaned up and take you to the school nurse. I'll get some lunch for you and bring it to the nurse's office.

## Discuss

- Why don't Natalie or Paul help Darin?
- Why does Cullen help?
- Who are you most like in the story?
- How is this story like the one Jesus tells in Luke 10:25–37?