Summary of Today’s Story
A man asks Jesus what he must do “to inherit eternal life.” When Jesus mentions the commandment to “love...your neighbor as yourself,” the man asks, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, making clear that “neighbor” is connected not to proximity in living habitations, but rather to giving and receiving unconditional mercy and compassion.

Where You’ll Find Today’s Story

In the Bible
We recommend the New Revised Standard Version Bible.
Luke 10:25-37

In Children’s Bibles
If you plan to use a children’s Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today’s story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary
Today’s story is told in church on the following Sunday:
Year C: Proper 10
Since the beginning of his ministry, Jesus has taught that God's salvation is open to all, and that God's world is a world of which we all are part—even Samaritans, even people we hate, even people who hate us.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the man from Samaria puts into practice what Zacchaeus later will promise—he offers compassionate love to a dying stranger who hates him, ministering to a newly poor and marginalized person even as he himself is marginalized by the Jews. In this act of compassion, the Samaritan embraces God's command to us to offer hospitality and welcome, including all people in our offering of mercy even as God does.

In the new age that began at Jesus' birth, God welcomes, invites and opens up a total experience of union with God, to which we respond in repentance, conversion and then in love for the poor and for all persons. This is the heart of Luke's spirituality.

Who is our neighbor? Usually we see this question in a personal setting: our neighbor is any individual whom we happen to meet, in whose face we might see Christ.

In a community of faith, we may ask a similar question: Who is our neighbor of faith? As we look around and grieve about our divided Christianity, we might also ask ourselves how we can work for unity while still honoring our differences. How can we be good neighbors to other faith traditions, other Christian and non-Christian perspectives?

To reject neighborliness is, in a way, to reject community, communion and common life. A world without neighbors is a world of strangers, a world characterized by division rather than by unity.

The Episcopal Thread

The principles on which the Episcopal Church—the Anglican Communion—are founded may give us a useful perspective about our relationships with one another. Based on the Anglican respect for diverse beliefs within the framework of common worship and common love of the Divine, Anglicans have been committed to ecumenical dialogue and even to the prospect of Christian unity, to the hope of the “One Church in Christ.”

Anglican theologian John S. Pobee says, “The vocation of the Anglican Communion is not primarily to make many people Anglicans... To be an Anglican is only a half-way house to the kingdom of God. Besides, to revel in denominationalism is to undermine the credibility of the Church as God’s agent of reconciliation of all things to God in Christ.” (“Prospects,” in The Study of Anglicanism, ed. Stephen Sykes et. al. [SPCK/Fortress Press, revised ed. 1998], p. 454)

So who is our neighbor? In the Anglican tradition of which the Episcopal Church is part, our neighbor is all of us. Our goal is reconciliation and partnership with one another in our common journey to the kingdom of God. Is that not also true in our personal and social lives?
Gathering

As the children enter the room, engage them in a simple activity that relates to today’s lesson. On pages 7-8, you’ll find Gathering Activity handouts to use if you wish.

If the weather is nice, invite the children outside for a travel lesson, to focus on the theme of following Jesus around.

Older children will appreciate time to connect with each other at the beginning of your time together.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, either one of your own, one from the Prayer Book or this one:

- We thank you, God, for your Son Jesus Christ, who came to earth to live among us and to teach us how to be with you and with each other.
- Show us how to love our neighbors, as we gather together here today, in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

Telling the Story

Read today’s story aloud from a children’s story Bible, showing the pictures, or tell the story in your own words. Be sure to make clear that the parable of the Good Samaritan is a story-within-a-story, a story that Jesus told.

You may use any of these enhancements to bring the story to life for the children:
- puppets: hand puppets, stick puppets, marionettes
- a flannel board with felt or paper figures
- expressive voice
- drama (Invite the children to act out the major roles.)

When you have finished telling the stories, proceed directly to your prayer time with the children without talking about the lesson. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it and explore its message.
Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your room.

Materials:
small table with a cloth to cover it
2 candles or 1 large Christ candle
matches
Bible
cross
optional: flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read a verse or two of today’s scripture from a Bible so that the children connect the story they heard with the Bible, which is the word of God. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Luke 10:36-37


Help the children become familiar with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Luke:
(Read the selected passage.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself, then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God’s work in our lives during the past week. Where did they see God working in them or others?
- Welcome any prayers of concern or petition for people in need—for themselves or for others. Pray for any children or their family members who are sick or in any need or trouble.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord’s Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.

Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as:

- Thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life—for our family and friends, for these people here today, for the food prepared for us. Let this food and this time be a blessing to us. Amen.

Or favorite table graces from home or camp may be shared.

This is an excellent time, while sharing a snack, to begin talking about the story that the children have just heard. Ask questions such as:

- Who is like a Samaritan in our lives?
- Who treats us like Samaritans? That is, who avoids us, and whom do we avoid?

Then explore how we might be “Good Samaritans” to others.

- If a family member is sick, what can we do?
- If a friend just skinned her knee at school or at home, how can we help our friend?
- If you see a elderly stranger fall and struggle to get up, how might we help that person?

In any discussion about helping strangers, you will need to be sensitive to cautions about children (or
anyone) dealing with strangers. Children need to learn to be safe as well as compassionate. They cannot bring a stranger to their home, but they might be able to find a parent who could call 911.

**Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.**

After Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today’s story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so that they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson on pages 9-16.

Additional activity ideas can be found in the Appendix (also downloadable) where we’ve provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.

**Memorization**

Older children may be encouraged to learn if not memorize Luke 10:36-37, Jesus’ question “Which was the man’s neighbor?” and the response, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Children may also continue to learn the people responses in our service of Holy Eucharist, especially the Nicene Creed.

Suggestions for ways to help the children with their memorization can be found on page 15 in the Appendix (also downloadable).
Weaving God’s Beloved Community

God’s beloved community is woven as our own stories connect to the story of God and to the stories of the people around us.

As your time together draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:

- Who (or what) did we talk about today?
- What was the question that was asked?
- What was the answer to the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God’s love and blessing.

The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- God of all people, you created us in your image and told us to love each other. Help us to do this, with our families, our friends and everyone else. For we are all family, friends and neighbors to you. Amen.

End with a dismissal, such as this one from the Prayer Book:

- Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God!
GATHERING ACTIVITY:
FIND THE INN

In our story, a man stops to help another man on the road, and then takes him to an inn to heal from his injuries. Can you help our helper find the right path to the inn? It’s a dangerous road, and some paths lead to danger—watch out for snakes and robbers!
Look, somebody lying in the road! He is hurt and needs help. Of the things you see in the picture, what would you give him? Why? Circle these things that he could use.
Children draw and color scenes from the Good Samaritan story and assemble them into a book.

**Materials:**
- white paper
- pencils
- crayons, colored pencils or markers
- scissors
- construction paper, 9” x 12”
- first-aid gauze and adhesive tape
- sand or dirt
- glue
- scissors
- staple or hole punch
- ribbon

**Directions:**

Invite each child to make a book as follows:

1. Fold the white paper in half, then cut at the fold. Fold each sheet to make the pages. You may use several half-sheets of paper for the book.

2. Cut a sheet of construction paper in half and cut. This will be your book cover.

3. Put the white pages together and draw the story of the Good Samaritan. Older children may also add the text. Color your pictures.

4. Add three-dimensional items such as first-aid supplies on the injured man, sand on the roads, using glue. Let these dry before closing the book.

5. Decorate your cover.

6. Attach the book cover to the white pages. You may staple them together or punch holes along the left side and tie ribbon or string through the holes.
Children bring the Good Samaritan story to life through drama, reenacting it in Bible times or using contemporary people situations.

**Materials:**
- props for drama
- video camcorder, if making a video
- paper
- markers

**Preparation:**
See the section on Drama (p. 3) in the Appendix (also downloadable) for suggestions about dramatizing Bible stories.

**Directions:**
After telling the story during storytelling time, invite the children to dramatize it as follows:

1. Decide on the parts to play: the man, the robbers, the priest, Levite and Good Samaritan. You may also have a director, a narrator and someone in charge of props and scene titles.

2. Have children write the scene titles on the papers (On The Way To Jericho, Here Comes A Priest, etc.). Use these at the beginning of each scene.

3. Act out the story, recording it with a camcorder or acting it out for another church school group. You may also rehearse it and present it for an “enacted gospel” during the worship service.

**Contemporary Story:**
Have children make a contemporary version of the story, substituting the place locations and the people involved. In one church, the “Good Samaritan” took the man to a hotel, flashed his MasterCard, and told the hotel manager to “take it out of my account.” Why not? It makes the lesson relevant!
STORY DOLLS
Preschool

Children draw faces and clothing on wooden dolls to represent the priest, Levite and Good Samaritan, then use them as the story is retold.

Materials:
- plain wooden dolls, available at craft stores (see illustration)
- markers
- optional: fabric pieces

Directions:
Invite each child to make a set of story dolls as follows:

1. Draw faces and clothing on each doll. Each child will make four dolls, representing:
   - hurt man
   - Levite
   - priest
   - Samaritan

2. If you use fabric, cut out and glue onto each doll for clothing.

3. Retell the story of the Good Samaritan and let children use these dolls to act out the parable.

Variation:
If you cannot find wooden doll shapes, you may use other cylindrical shapes such as bottle corks, tiny clay planters or small favor cups. You can even use rocks—but then you will probably need acrylic paints rather than markers.

For a creative craft, have a variety of small similar-sized objects available to paint and let the children decide!
WHO IS THE GOOD SAMARITAN?
Preschool, Primary

In this game, children hide a token of love in their hands as they pass it around the circle.

Materials:
- a heart or other small token of “love” that you name

Directions:
1. Invite the children to sit in a circle.
2. Begin passing the heart around the circle, behind their backs.
3. At some point, say “Stop! Who is the Good Samaritan?” The one holding it moves to the center of the circle and the game continues. On the next round, the new Good Samaritan replaces the person in the center from the previous round.
Children act as passersby who ignore someone in need who is “in their way.”

**Directions:**
1. Invite one child to play the part of the _injured person_. The others are the _passersby_.
2. The _injured person_ gets into a contorted position. Other children must find a way to get over him/her, going one at a time.
3. The _injured person_ may choose a different contorted position with each _passerby_, to be “in the way.”
4. Then talk about the point that it’s actually hard to pass by someone who is hurting! To “miss the mark” so deliberately is a sin!
HOW DOES IT FEEL?
Elementary, Intermediate

Children put on a musical play in which they stop and ask, “How does it feel to be beat up…passed by…helped? How does it feel to pass someone who needs help?”

Materials:
- copies of the “How Does It Feel? Song Sheet” (p. 15), 1 per child
- 1 copy of the “How Does It Feel Script” (p. 16)

Preparation:
- Copy the “How Does It Feel? Song Sheet” (p. 15) to hand out to the children. The song is sung to the tune of “Clementine.”
- Make a copy of the “How Does It Feel Script” (p. 16) to read.

Directions:
1. Choose children to be the parable characters: beaten man, Levite, priest and Samaritan. Others are the Chorus.

2. Give each member of the Chorus a copy of the “How Does It Feel? Song Sheet.”

3. Read the script on page 16 aloud. When you get to each Pause, stop the action and have the Chorus sing the appropriate part(s) of the song. Then the character(s) may answer: “Mad,” “Sad,” “Scared,” “Guilty,” “Relieved” or another word appropriate to the storyline. Then continue with the story.
“How Does It Feel?” Song Sheet

Tune: Clementine

Song 1: To Beat-Up Man
How’s it fe-el, how’s it fe-el, how’s it fe-el right now
To be beat up, and be hurting
How’s it fe-el right now?

Song 2: To the Priest
What’s it li-ke, what’s it li-ke, what’s it li-ke right now
To go by someone who’s hurting
And do nothing right now?

Song 3: To the Levite
What’s it li-ke, what’s it li-ke, what’s it li-ke right now
To cross to the other side
And do nothing right now?

Song 4: To Beat-Up Man
How’re you feeling, how’re you feeling, how’re you feeling right now?
No one comes to help you out,
How’re you feeling right now?

Song 5: To the Samaritan
Whatcha thinkin’, whatcha thinkin’, whatcha thinkin’ right now,
To help someone who despises you,
Whatcha thinkin’ right now?

Song 6: To Beat-Up Man
Whatcha thinkin’, whatcha thinkin’, whatcha thinkin’ right now,
One you hate has saved your li-fe,
Whatcha’ thinkin’ right now?
“How Does It Feel?” Script

A man is going through the mountains from Jerusalem to Jericho. Suddenly he meets some robbers. They tear his clothes and take away his money and everything he has, and then they beat him up. Then they run away and leave him half dead, lying in the middle of the road.

Pause for Song #1 and the Man’s Response

Now here comes a priest. Can he help? But when he sees the man lying there, half dead, he turns his head and crosses to the other side of the road so he doesn’t have to walk into the man lying in the road.

Pause for Song #2 and the Priest’s Response

Then a Levite comes along. He gets near the man lying half dead. Then he too turns his head and crosses to the other side of the road.

Pause for Song #3 and the Levite’s Response and Song #4 and the Man’s Response

And now a Samaritan comes along. The Jews and the Samaritans don’t get along at all. They are enemies. But this one Samaritan takes one look at the man lying half dead in the road. He is moved with pity. He goes up to him, kneels at his side, and puts healing oil on him. He prays for him. And then he bandages his wounds. Then he put the man on his own animal and takes him to a motel and takes care of him. Then he takes out some money and gives it to the motel clerk and says, “Take care of him, and when I come back, if you need more money, I’ll pay it.”

Pause for Song #5 and the Samaritan’s Response

So the man lies in bed, getting better, and he thinks, “Now who is my neighbor?”

Pause for Song #5 and the Man’s Response