



# The Samaritan Journey: *Leaders Guide*

The stages for the Samaritan Journey are as follows:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Basic Exegesis**
- 3. Instructions for the Journey**
- 4. Reading the Parable (*Luke 10:25-37 NAB*) & Conversation**
- 5. Prayer**
- 6. Processing**

## 1. Introduction

Once your group is gathered together, introduce this activity to them. A sample introduction is provided below:

**Having had the opportunity to reflect on our personal gifts, we're going to spend some time considering how we might put our gifts into action to serve the vulnerable in our community.**

People experience many kinds of vulnerability, including physical vulnerability, economic vulnerability, social vulnerability, and environmental vulnerability. Often a person will experience overlapping forms of vulnerability. Women experiencing an unintended pregnancy, for instance, often experience multiple forms of vulnerability.

In order to enter into this activity prayerfully, we will first reflect on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We are going to experience a walking Lectio Divina exercise called “The Samaritan Journey” where we will undertake a sacred reading of the story and consider its meaning for our lives.

## 2. Basic Exegesis

We want to help young people deepen their understanding of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, so after the introduction, offer a brief exegesis. An exegesis is a critical explanation of Scripture that grants us access to the text's meaning beyond what might first be apparent. You need not use the word “exegesis” in this section or even explain what an exegesis is – all you are called upon to do is teach your group some points of deeper meaning in the story.

**The Parable of the Good Samaritan illuminates the teachings found in the Torah and how to apply these teachings in our daily lives.** The story brings to light the two-fold requirement for discipleship: the call to love both God and neighbor. Not only does Jesus share this parable, but brings it to fulfillment through his actions, his life, death, and resurrection. God always makes the first move and shows us the way to be his disciples.

### 3. Instructions for the Journey

At this point, clear and easy-to-understand instructions for the first part of the Journey are important. If you set up the Journey well, then all the group members need to do is follow you, listen, and (hopefully) enter into the story meditatively and through conversation. You will also need to introduce the notion that we are not just listening to the story, but actually reliving it in our own way, in our own time, that is: today.

**Now we are going to listen to the Parable of the Good Samaritan together, but our listening is not going to be passive.** We are going to do some very active listening. For people of faith like us, the Bible is NOT just another book that we read through like a novel. When we read the Bible, we are invited to really enter into the stories. The stories come alive for us. They speak to us about our lives. They are not just old stories about olden times – rather, they are stories that are always new because they have to do with what is going in our lives today...right now...at this moment. The stories of faith, struggle, and hope that we find in the Bible, especially in the Gospels, are meant to include us as they teach us. Our hopes, our struggles, our faith, our failings – these are all part of the Bible. The Bible is a living text.

In order to really enter into the parable, we are going to add movement to our listening and imagining. We are going to walk like the disciples did often in the Bible; we are going to journey 2-by-2 to a specific destination. The person who walks next to you is your traveling companion on this Journey. As we walk, I will read the parable in sections to you. Try to imagine the scenery, the people, and the feelings. Imagine yourself as a character in the story. Think about your own life.

At the end of each section of the story, I will give you some questions to think about and talk about with your walking partner. Trust the person next to you and welcome them into your Journey of discipleship.

## 4. Reading the Parable & Conversation

When your group is in two lines with each person standing next to another person (aka, their traveling companion), you will first recite a short prayer. Then start walking and reading the Parable of the Good Samaritan in segments.

### *Prayer:*

Loving God, We thank you for your love. Though we find it difficult at times to know of your presence in our lives, we trust and hope that you are with us always. Help us to recognize your son, Jesus, in our daily lives, and especially on this walk together. Lead us to become the disciples You call us to be. We pray this in your holy name. Amen.

Start walking. You will read the segments below intermittently. When you read, you should stop and face your group. After the Scripture passage, pause briefly and then pose the questions for that passage. The group members will share their conversations with their partner as you continue walking. Be sure to read in a loud and clear voice. It is important that you space out the reading over the course of the walk.



### *A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke*

**There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”**

### *Questions:*

- What does it mean to love God with all your heart, being, strength, and mind?
- What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

*{Pause and walk}*



**He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”**

### *Questions:*

- How does my daily life reflect my love for God and neighbor?
- What holds me back from loving God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?

*{Pause and walk}*

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half dead.

*Questions:*

- Have I ever felt wounded and abandoned by others?
- What happened? How did that feel?

*{Pause and walk}*

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**A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.**

*Questions:*

- Have I passed by others in need out of fear or indifference?
- What causes me to look away from others in need?
- How does my indifference wound others further?

*{Pause and walk}*

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**But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds, and bandaged them.**

*Questions:*

- Who has “seen me” in my need?
- Who has taken the time to really understand what I am going through?
- How have I been cared for by others when I was in need?

*{Pause and walk}*

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**Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him.**

*Questions:*

- Do I let myself really see the needs of others?
- How have I responded to the needs of others?

*{Pause and walk}*

The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?’ He answered, ‘The one who treated him with mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

*Questions:*

- Whose neighbor can I be?
- Where am I called to take time to really see and respond to suffering?
- How can I grow to better recognize and respond to the needs of others?

## 5. Prayer

Gracious God, help us to recognize the call to love you and our neighbor with all of our heart, with all our being, with all our strength, and with all our mind. Through our experience of this Samaritan Journey, enlighten our hearts to recognize and respond to the needs of our neighbor and to seek to be neighbor to all. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## 6. Processing

At this point, you may want to offer your group time to debrief their time of prayer and reflection. This will allow everyone the opportunity to process what they have experienced and give voice to something that stood out to them or was difficult.

*Questions:*

- Was there anything new that came to you from experiencing the story of the Good Samaritan this way?
- As we experienced the story of the Good Samaritan, you were asked to put yourselves in the shoes of different people. Who did you resonate with most closely and why? Who was the hardest for you to put yourself in the place of and why?
- At the beginning you were asked ‘What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?’ Has your answer to that question changed at all and if so how?

The last set of questions from the journey experience would be good questions to transition to discussing various vulnerable populations. You may consider asking the group to share their responses to these questions.

- Whose neighbor can I be?
- Where am I called to take time to really see and respond to suffering?
- How can I grow to better recognize and respond to the needs of others?