

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Background

Focus: the Samaritan and the wounded traveler (Luke 10:30-35)

Material

The gold box for The Parable of the Good Samaritan is on the New Testament shelves.

It contains:

- brown felt underlay
- beige felt road
- 2 dark blue felt rocks
- paper Jerusalem
- paper Jericho
- 2 paper robbers
- paper traveler
- paper priest
- paper Levite
- paper Samaritan
- paper Samaritan and Traveler scene

Movements

Go to the New Testament shelves and bring the gold box containing The Good Samaritan to the circle.

Place the box in the middle of the table. Gently run your hand over the lid.

Knock on the top of the box as if the top were a door.

Words

Watch carefully where I go so you will always know where to find this lesson.

Look. This box is the color gold. Perhaps there is something valuable like gold inside. There could be a parable inside. They are very valuable. They are worth even more than gold.

The box also has a lid on it. Sometimes it's as if parables have doors that are shut. You can't go inside the parable even if you are ready. I don't know why. It just happens, so don't be discouraged. Keep coming back again and again. One day the parable will open up for you.

Lift the box and admire it like a present.

The box looks like a present. You know, there may be a parable inside, because you were given parables as a present, even before you were born. Even if you don't know what a parable is, it is still yours.

Sit back again. Continue reflecting on what might be in the box.

It looks old. Parables are also old. They are older than you, and they are older than me. They are even older than your grandmother or grandfather. They are almost two thousand years old.

Move the box to your side and take the lid off. Lean the lid on the side of the box toward the circle so the children cannot see inside the box.

I wonder if there really is a parable inside? I have an idea. Let's look and see.

Remove the brown underlay. Drop it in a crumpled shape in the middle of the circle and look at it for a moment. Then begin to smooth it out. Wait for the children to begin to wonder. If they do not begin, you might suggest a few things like a giant cookie or a piece of wood to get them started. See if you can leave dirt or the desert for them to propose. If there is silence, let there be silence for a while.

I wonder what this could really be? There is so much brown. There is no green at all. Look, there is no blue. There is nothing but brown, and the brown is scratchy.

Bring out the beige felt "road." Lay the road from one corner to the other, starting at your near left.

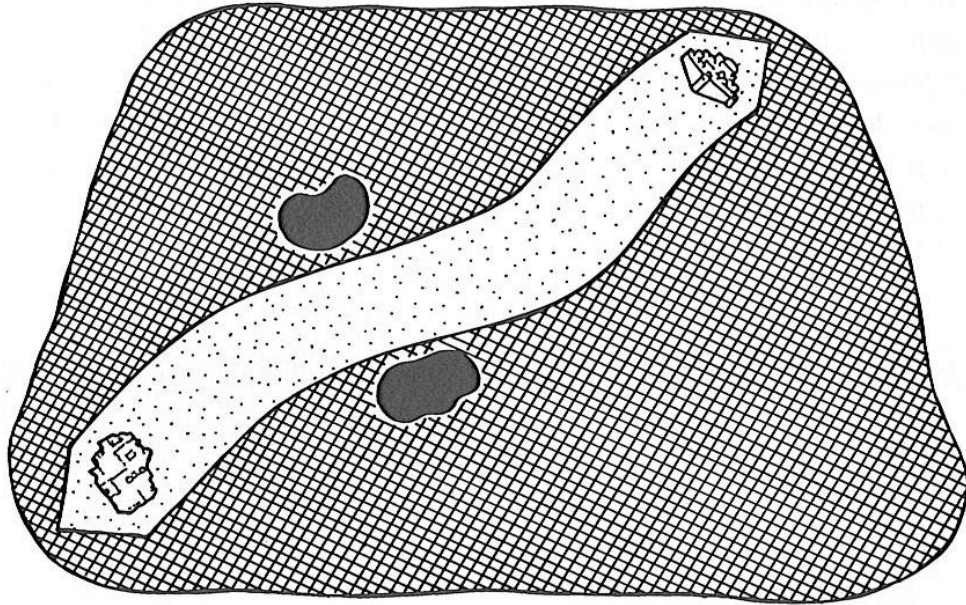
Now, I wonder what this could be? What could it really be? Yes. It could be a crack. Perhaps the whole thing is going to break into two pieces?

Place Jerusalem at the end of the road nearest you, then place Jericho at the other end of the road.

Let's see if there is anything else to help us. Oh, look. It is a road. It is going from this place to this place.

Take the two pieces of dark blue felt from the box one at a time. Put one on one side of the road and the other on the other side of the road at the midpoint of the road.

But there is more. Look at this. I wonder what these could be? There is no light in them at all. They are like shadows. Let's see what else there is to help us make the parable.



JERUSALEM AND JERICO (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Take out the two thieves and put one behind each of the dark blue felt pieces by the road. Sit back and prepare to begin the parable.

There once was someone who did such amazing things and said such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him speaking of many things. Sometimes people asked him questions.

One day a person asked him what the most important thing in life was. He said, "You already know."

"That is true. I do. It is to love God and to love people just like they are your neighbors." The person paused a while and thought. He then asked another question, "But who is my neighbor?"

He then told him this parable.

Take the traveler out of the box and place him at the Jerusalem end of the road near you. Begin to move him slowly along the road toward the children as you speak.

There was once someone who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho.

Take the robbers out from behind the "rocks" and place them in an "X" over the traveler. Then move the robbers off the underlay, back to the box at your side. When you say "half dead," turn over the traveler. He is at the side of the road by one of the "rocks."

As he went along his way, he was attacked by robbers. They hurt him, took everything he had, and left him by the side of the road half dead.

Move the priest from Jerusalem slowly down the middle of the road. Don't hurry.

There was also a great priest of the temple who went on the road from Jerusalem down to Jericho. As he went along his way, he came to the place where the traveler was who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left by the side of the road half dead.

When the priest comes to the injured traveler, move the priest slowly to the other side of the road and past the traveler. When the priest is past, move him back to the middle of the road and on to Jericho.

When the priest came to him, the priest went to the other side of the road and went along his way.

Move the Levite slowly down the road. When he comes to the injured traveler, move the Levite to the other side of the road and past the traveler. Then move the Levite back to the middle of the road and on to Jericho.

There was also someone who worked at the temple who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho. He was one of the people who helped the priests. He took care of the temple and helped with the music. He was called a Levite.

When the Levite came to the place where the traveler was who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left by the side of the road half dead, he went to the other side and he went on his way.

Move the Samaritan slowly down the road until he comes to the injured traveler.

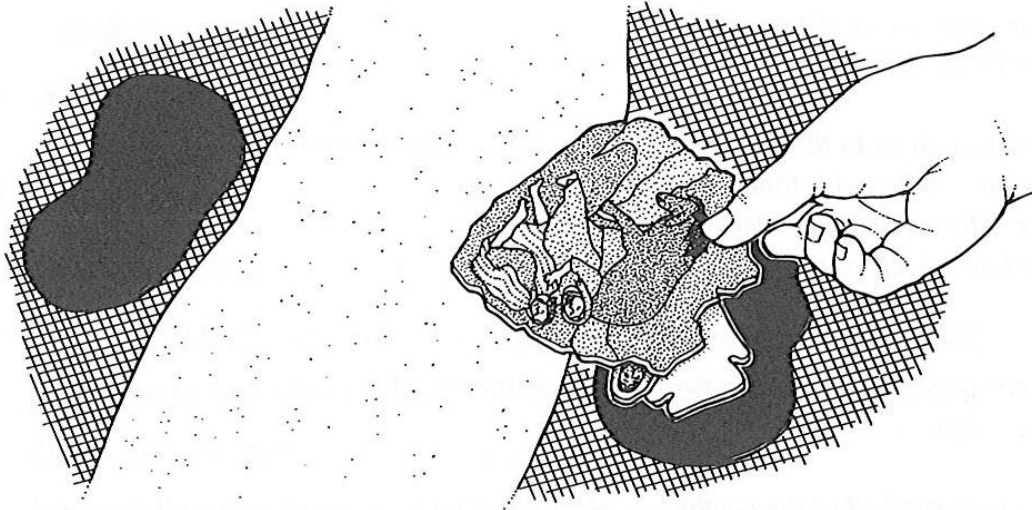
There was also a person on the road who did not live in Jerusalem. He was visiting from a country called Samaria. The people in Samaria did not like the people of Jerusalem, and the people in Jerusalem did not like the people from Samaria.

Move the Samaritan to the traveler.

When the stranger came to where the traveler was who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left by the side of the road half dead, the stranger went to him.

Reach into the box and take out the "covering piece" that shows the Samaritan putting a coat on the traveler. Put the card over the figures of the Samaritan and the traveler.

The stranger put medicine on the places where the person was hurt. He gave him his coat to put on. He then put him on his donkey and took him to a place to spend the night.



PLACING THE "COVERING PIECE" (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Move the Samaritan and the traveler with the card over them along the road almost all the way to Jericho.

The stranger even stayed with him all the night, and in the morning he gave the innkeeper enough money for him to stay there until he was well.

Sit back and ponder the whole parable. Place the “covering piece” back in the box beside you. Place the robbers by the rocks. Place the traveler on the underlay close to the children on the left side.

- Now I wonder, who is the neighbor to the person who was hurt, had everything taken from him, and was left by the road half dead?

Place the priest beside the traveler. Ask the first question. Wait. Repeat for the Levite and the thieves. Finally place the Samaritan.

- I wonder if it could be this one?
- This one?
- Could it be this one?
- I wonder if it could be this one?

Move the traveler to join the other figures near Jericho. Put one of the robbers in the place where the traveler was. Move the priest up beside the robber. Try the Levite, then the other robber and the Samaritan. Finally, try the traveler.

- I wonder who is the neighbor to this one? Could it be this one?
- How about this one?
- Or this one?
- Or could it be this one?

Move the priest down to the comparison position. Hold each figure next to him asking:

- I wonder who is the neighbor to this one?

Try different combinations of the figures, always asking:

- I wonder who is the neighbor to this one?

Leave all the figures on the underlay.

- I wonder what would happen if the people in the parable were women and not men?
- I wonder what would happen if the person finding the injured traveler were a child?

When the wondering is over, place each of the figures back into the parable box with great care. Put the road and the dark pieces back in the box, then fold up the underlay and put it in the box, too. Name each one as you put it away.

Here is the traveler.
The Samaritan.
The priest.
The Levite.
The two thieves.
The rocks.
The city and the inn.
The road.

*Take the parable box back to its
shelf and return to the circle.
Help the children decide what
work they will get out.*

Jerome W. Berryman, *The Complete Guide to Godly Play Volume 3: 20 Presentations for Winter* (2002), pp. 87-94.

Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman, *Young Children and Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), pp. 169-172.