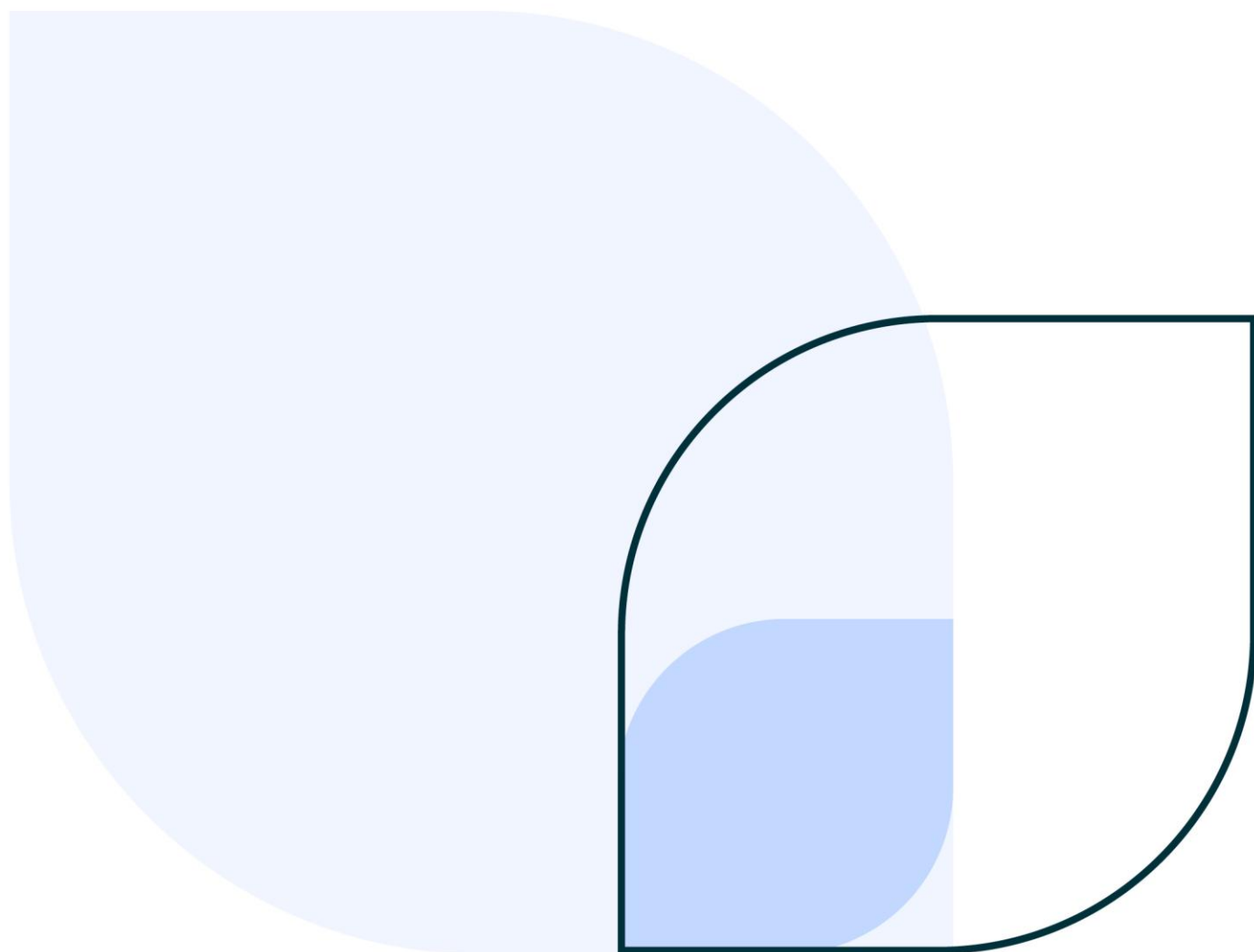


# Collective Worship

Secondary resource:

Loving our neighbours in hard times





## Key Concept / Message

### Slide 1 - Title

#### Teacher's Note

At times of unrest, inequality, or division, Christians often return to one of Jesus' most radical commands: "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27). For Christians, this is not just a moral suggestion but a central belief, one that cuts across boundaries of culture, class, religion, and background.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus redefines what it means to be a neighbour. He tells of a stranger who showed kindness when others, people who shared the victim's faith and culture, passed by. For Jesus' listeners, choosing a Samaritan as the hero was deliberately shocking. It demonstrated that love is not confined to those who are similar to us but must extend even to those who do not share our culture, values, or experiences.

There are many reasons why societies experience unrest. People may feel angry, powerless, or unfairly treated. These feelings are real and valid. Even Jesus himself is described in the Bible as feeling anger at injustice. However, while emotions are human, the challenge lies in how we respond. Threatening, harmful, or discriminatory behaviour is never the answer.

This act of worship invites us to consider a different way of living, one modelled by the Samaritan. It is a way that recognises the dignity of every human being, made in the image of God (Imago Dei). It calls us to respond not with fear or hatred, but with curiosity, compassion, and courage.

**Bible Text:** Luke 10:25–37, *The Good Samaritan*.

## Gathering

### Slide 2

Begin with your usual greeting to gather everyone together (familiarity is a helpful part of providing a safe environment, especially if this worship is delivered during a time of unrest). As students enter worship, use a reflective piece of music (for example [O Lord Hear My Prayer](#)<sup>1</sup>) to set the tone.

You may like to start with an opening prayer, such as this one:

Father of all

We gather here together as your children in this place.

We come with gratitude in our hearts, for our community, loved ones and the world in which we live.

Be present among us as we reflect on what it really means to love our neighbours.

In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, whose love is offered to everyone.

Amen

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that YouTube videos may contain videos; the NSE does not endorse any advertising shown via YouTube



### Slide 3

“Who are your neighbours?”

#### Teacher's Note

Give students time to reflect on this question. You may wish to allow quiet reflection, short written notes, or discussion in pairs.

Encourage them to move beyond the immediate and obvious answers. For many, the word “neighbour” means the people who live next door or in the same street. But Jesus’ teaching pushes Christians to think more widely:

- Where do ‘neighbours’ live? Are they only those in your local area, or also people across the city, the country, or even the world?
- What are your particular neighbours like? Are they people similar to you in culture, language, or background? Or are they people who might be very different?
- What’s good about neighbours who are similar? (Shared experiences, mutual understanding, common values.)
- What’s good about neighbours who are different? (New perspectives, different traditions, opportunities to learn, such as new foods, festivals, music, or worldviews.)

Encourage students to extend their thinking to:

- Digital neighbours – people they interact with online or through gaming/social media.
- Global neighbours – people whose lives are connected to ours through the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or the technology we use.

### Slide 4

#### Reflection Question:

*If a neighbour is someone with shared humanity, how might this challenge the way we see those we struggle to agree with or like?*

If neighbourliness is about recognising shared humanity, how might this challenge the way we treat those we find difficult, disagree with, or have never met in person? As the students to reflect on the question together.

## Bible Passage

### Slide 5&6

*Jesus told his followers that they should do two main things: love God and love their neighbours as themselves. When Jesus was asked ‘who is my neighbour?’ he told this story...*

#### Luke 10:25-37

You can tell the Bible story, or use a video retelling such as: [The Good Samaritan Video](#)



‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”

\*Adjust the powerpoint slide to suit your choice of retelling.\*

### Teacher’s Note

For Jesus’ audience, the Samaritan was the most unlikely person to be the “hero” of the story. Jews and Samaritans had a long history of mistrust, hostility, and prejudice.

By choosing a Samaritan as the example of a true neighbour, Jesus deliberately challenged stereotypes, racism, and religious superiority.

The story goes beyond kindness. It is a call to break cultural barriers and act with costly compassion, even when it feels risky, uncomfortable, or inconvenient.

### Discussion Prompt:

- Why do you think Jesus chose a Samaritan to be the hero?
- How does this story challenge the way we think about neighbours and enemies?
- What does this story suggest about the difference between feeling compassion and actually acting with compassion?
- Why do you think the priest and Levite chose not to help? What excuses might people today use for walking past someone in need?

## Engagement

### Slide 7

### Teacher’s Note

This activity helps students connect the parable to real-life situations they may have experienced or witnessed. Note, students may be more aware of personal struggles (their own or others’) such as family issues, mental health, bullying, exclusion, or injustice. We also need to be aware that some students may have been involved in, or affected by protests, rhetoric around immigration or issues in their community/ family.

Handle the discussion with care, and remind students:

- They do not need to share aloud if it feels uncomfortable.
- Listening with empathy and respect is just as valuable as speaking.
- Feelings of sadness, frustration, or even anger are valid human responses.
- Be sensitive to those who may be unsettled and follow up quietly if needed.



*Do you recognise any of the characters in this story from your own experience?*

Encourage students to consider the different characters in the story in today's context. Invite written reflection, small-group discussion, or silent journaling.

- **Similar to the injured man** – Do you know someone who is struggling at the moment? How does it feel to be in that position of vulnerability?
- **Similar to the priest or Levite** – Have you ever seen someone ignore a person in need? Have you ever looked away yourself because you felt uncomfortable, busy, or didn't know what to do? What pressures hold people back from helping?<sup>2</sup>
- **Similar to the Samaritan** – Do you know someone who shows kindness, even to people who are different from them in culture, background, or beliefs? What does that look like in practice?

#### Slide 8

##### Teacher's Note

Students might be navigating strong emotions; anger, anxiety, frustration, fear, compassion, and may not always have language for them. This activity helps them recognise those feelings in the parable and then connect them to their own experiences. Encourage honest reflection without forcing students to share personal details publicly.

For each character in the story, consider the emotions they may have experienced:

- **The injured man** – Perhaps he felt abandoned, angry, or betrayed when his own community leaders walked past him. He might have felt invisible, helpless, or even bitter at being left behind.
- **The priest and Levite** – They may have felt conflicted: fear of danger, worry about ritual rules, or even frustration that someone else's problem might interfere with their own responsibilities. Were they anxious about being judged, or simply indifferent?
- **The Samaritan** – He could have felt nervous, even worried, about stopping to help someone who belonged to a group that despised his people. He might have worried about the cost or being rejected for offering help. Yet he also felt deep compassion that pushed him to act.

## Response

#### Slide 9

##### Teacher's Note

Encourage students to explore how "neighbourliness" is defined in their own lives. For many, it may be about friendship, loyalty, or trust. For others, it may extend to justice, fairness, and standing up for those who are

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that the injured man and the important people in the story were Jewish as this was the culture in which Jesus lived and was telling the story. Please be aware of any antisemitic or discriminatory comments, making sure to deal with these. It is important to remember that Jesus himself was Jewish.



different. Jesus identifies the good neighbour not as the one who looked most religious or socially respectable, but the one who *showed mercy*.

### **Reflection**

We often assume that “good neighbours” are people who are like us. Those who share our culture, background, interests, or values. Similarity can feel comfortable, safe, and affirming.

But Jesus’ story challenges this assumption. The Good Samaritan shows that being a true neighbour isn’t about appearance, background, or social status. It is about action. It is about mercy, kindness, and respect, even when it costs us something.

### **Reflection Questions**

- What qualities do you most value in a neighbour, friend, or ally?
- How do you decide who “deserves” your kindness and who doesn’t?
- Is it harder to be a good neighbour to those you don’t like, don’t know, or don’t agree with? Why?
- What would it look like in your school or community if people consistently chose kindness and respect over judgement or indifference?
- What kind of neighbour are you right now and what kind of neighbour do you want to become?

The Good Samaritan cared for the injured man as if he were part of his own family. Jesus’ challenge is the same today: to expand our understanding of who counts as “family” or “neighbour,” and to act with mercy even when it feels uncomfortable or inconvenient.

### **Slide 10**

#### **Teacher’s Note**

This is not easy. Differences can make us feel uncertain or afraid. Sometimes our emotions come out as anger, frustration, or resistance. We may think, “Helping will make life more difficult for me” or “It’s not my problem.”

Jesus’ teaching, however, is clear: ignoring those in need, or worse, treating them with hostility, is never loving, respectful, or kind. Real love is not just a feeling, it is expressed through action:

- by helping,
- by caring,
- by standing alongside others,
- and by challenging prejudice.

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows that loving our neighbour is not about convenience or comfort. It’s not just about being kind to people we already like or those who are similar to us, although that matters too. Jesus pushes his followers to love those who are *different*, those who may be ignored, and those who are in need, wherever they come from.

#### **Question Prompts:**

- Who do you find it hardest to show kindness or respect to and why?



- What are the barriers that stop people from loving across difference (fear, prejudice, pride, social pressure)?
- Can you think of a time when someone showed you unexpected kindness, even when it cost them something?
- What might it look like in your school if more people chose compassion over indifference?

Christians believe they can pray for strength to live this kind of love. They encourage one another through worship, community, and accountability to keep showing love even when it's difficult.

You may wish to include these words from **1 Corinthians 13** (adapted from *The Message*) as a vision of what this love looks like in practice:

'Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't strut or have a swelled head.

Love doesn't force itself on others.

Love isn't always "me first."

Love doesn't fly off the handle.

Love always looks for the best.'

Loving others when it is hard may not always feel natural, but it is powerful. It has the potential to transform relationships, communities, and even societies.

#### Slide 11

Closing Prayer:

Invite the pupils to join in the closing prayer if they would like to or sit and reflect on today's theme.

*Let us close with a prayer, asking God to help us.*

*Loving God*

*We thank you for our neighbours, and for the message Jesus taught about loving our neighbours.*

*Thank you that you understand all our emotions; when we feel angry, frustrated, uncomfortable or anxious, we know you are with us.*

*Please help us to act with compassion, kindness and respect towards all our neighbours, even when it is the hard thing to do.*

*May we love others in the way Jesus demonstrated.*

*Amen*



The time of worship has ended. Close by blowing out the candle, maintaining a time of silence or playing reflective music.

## Collective Worship – Our approach

### Invitational

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### Inclusive

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is ‘what Christians believe’, saying things like:

‘I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?’

‘The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### Inspiring

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?