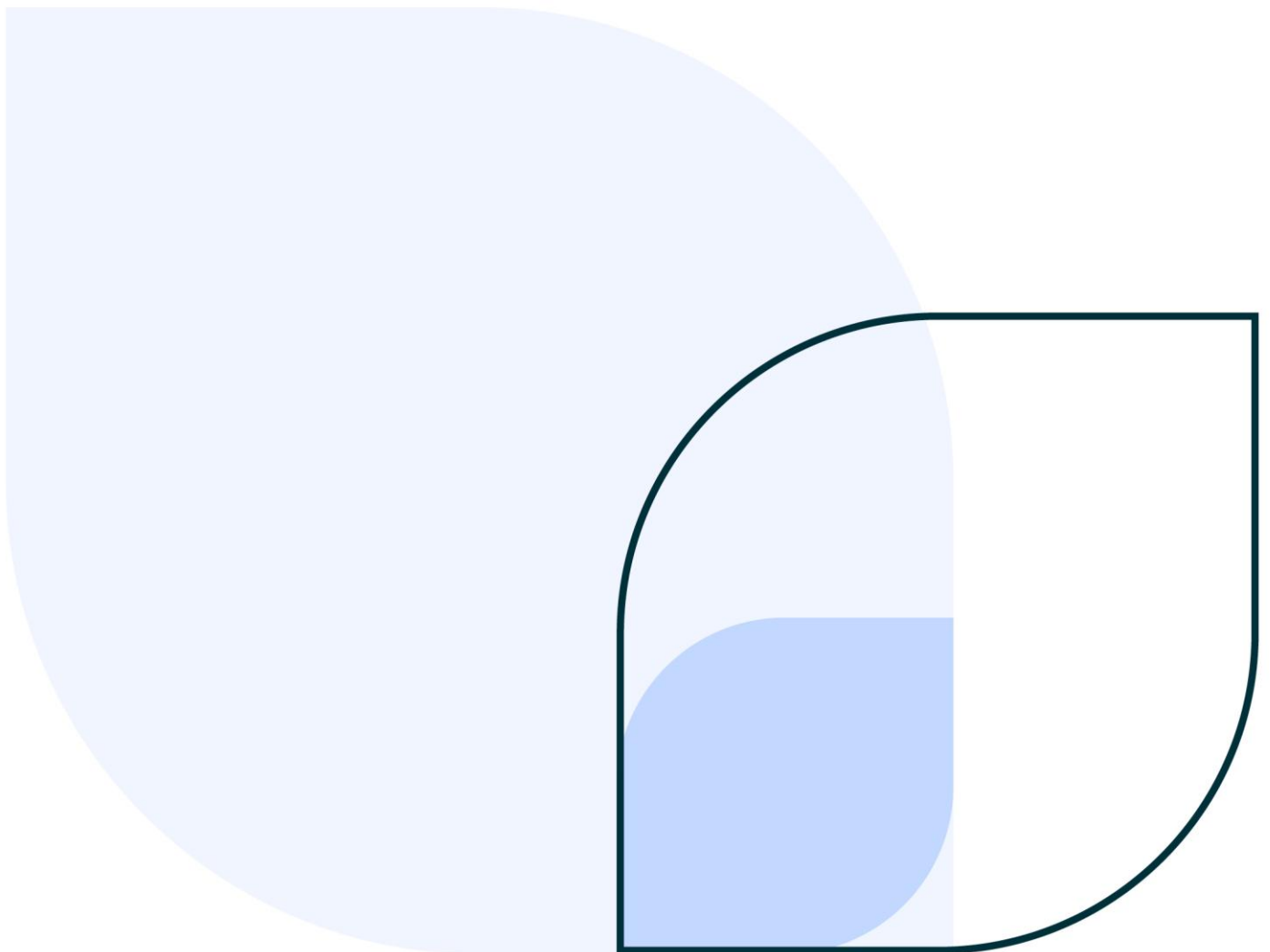


Collective Worship

Primary resource:

Loving our neighbours in hard times





Key Concept / Message

Slide 1 – Title: **Loving our Neighbours in Hard Times**

Teachers' note:

At times of civil or national unrest, it is good to remind ourselves of Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Luke 10:27). This is a core belief of the Christian faith, exemplified in a story about the kindness of a stranger after a man's own countrymen passed him by. It crosses cultural and religious barriers and demonstrates the kind of love that Jesus expects from his followers.

There are many reasons why social unrest happens, and many reasons why people may feel frustrated, angry or a sense of unfairness. It is important in those times to recognise that those feelings are valid and real (we all feel angry at times, even Jesus felt angry the Bible says, and there will be all kinds of reasons for those feelings). However, we must also recognise that threatening, harmful or discriminatory behaviour is never the answer.

This act of worship looks at a different way to act, as modelled by the Samaritan in the Bible story. One which sees the dignity of every human being (as made in God's image) and chooses curiosity and kindness over hatred and fear.

Bible text: [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 children enter worship, use a reflective piece of music (for example [O Lord Hear My Prayer](#)¹) 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 thank you for our families, our community and our school.

Be present among us as we think about what it means to love our neighbours.

Thank you for the example of Jesus, whose love is offered to everyone.

Amen

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



Slide 3

Ask the question posed on the slide 'Who are your neighbours?' giving the children time to reflect on this (for example with a partner, or through quiet reflection).

Talk through their concept of 'neighbours' and reflect on similarities and differences with the neighbours they have identified.

I wonder where your 'neighbours' live? Are they next door, in your street, your area or community?

I wonder what your neighbours are like? Are they similar to you and your family or different? What is good about having neighbours who are different? What is good about having neighbours who are different?

Encourage the children to think beyond their immediate next door neighbours to their wider community, and to consider what is good both about similar neighbours (shared interests, culture etc) and different neighbours (the opportunity to experience new things such as different food, games or festivals).

Bible Passage

Slide 4

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 text, 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.



Engagement

Slide 5

Teacher Note:

This activity invites pupils to make personal connections between the story and people they may know. Be aware that some children might feel uncomfortable or upset if they think of someone close to them who is sick, struggling, or has been hurt. We also need to be aware that some children may have been involved in, or affected by protests, rhetoric around immigration or issues in their community/ family.

Encourage sensitivity in how children share their reflections, and remind them that it is fine not to share aloud if they prefer. Create space for empathy and listening, and reassure pupils that their feelings are valid. You may wish to check in quietly with any child who appears unsettled.

Considering the different characters in the story, ask the children to reflect on whether they can think of anyone similar.

1. Like the man who was attacked, do they know someone who is going through a difficult time? Someone sick, or without work, or having lost someone close to them.²
2. Like the priest and teacher who passed by the man, do they know anyone who has failed to help?
3. Like the Samaritan man, do they know someone kind who is perhaps from a different background or culture?

Slide 6

For each character, think about the feelings they may have experienced.

The injured man might have felt really **angry** that the leaders in his community ignored him and walked away. He may also have felt **uncomfortable** accepting help from someone from another culture.

The important people might have felt **frustrated** to see an injured person in their way.

The Samaritan man might have felt very **anxious** about helping someone from a different culture.

I wonder, have you ever felt like this? These are BIG feelings and can sometimes be hard to express. It is important to recognise these feelings and the reasons we feel this way.

Response

Slide 7

Who was the good neighbour?

We may think we want our neighbours to be just like us, that this will make our lives feel good.

² 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.



But this story shows us that being a good neighbour isn't about what we look like, where we are from or what we are in to. Being a good neighbour is about kindness and respect.

Ask the children to reflect on the question: *What qualities do you look for in a neighbour?*

Jesus says the good neighbour is the one who 'showed mercy'. He was kind and he cared for the injured man himself, as if he was in his own family.

Encourage them to reflect on what being a good neighbour looks like, and what it would mean for them to be good neighbours to all those around them. *I wonder, what kind of neighbour are you?*

Slide 8

How can we love our neighbours, even when it is hard?

Jesus tells this story to show what loving our neighbour really looks like. It is not just liking or caring for people who are similar to us (although this is important too!). The love Jesus asks his followers to show is also love for those who are different from us. It is love for those in need (whoever they are and wherever they have come from).

He knows that this can be hard. Differences can sometimes make us feel uncertain, and those feelings may show up as anger or fear. Sometimes we feel frustrated or even annoyed when we're asked to help others. We might worry that supporting them will make life harder for us. Ignoring those in need however, or even harming them, is not loving, respectful or kind. Real love is shown in action; by helping, caring, and standing alongside others.

Christians believe that they can pray to God for help to be more loving. We will pray a prayer like that in a minute if you would like to join in. They also try to encourage one another to be more loving. Who encourages you to be more loving?

You might like to use the verses from 1 Corinthians 13 (adapted from the Message version) to help with the children's understanding of what this kind of love looks like.

'Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Always looks for the best.'



Slide 9

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.

Dear God

Thank you for the story Jesus told about loving our neighbours.

Thank you that you understand when we feel angry, frustrated or anxious.

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

Help us to love others.

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?

