

## Messy Church – October 2020

### The Good Samaritan

Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, from verse 25

This is a story told by Jesus, to show people who their neighbours might be. The story is told in the celebration, but various parts are included in the activities.

The activities are:

- 1 The road from Jerusalem to Jericho  
Cooking activities
- 2 Set on by robbers  
Craft activity
- 3 Priest and Levites  
Learning activity
- 4 Samaritan and donkey  
Drawing activity  
Learning activity
- 5 Took him to an inn  
Craft activities

# Stories and Activities

## 1 The road from Jerusalem to Jericho

Jerusalem was the capital city of Judea (it is now the capital of Israel), in the hills between the Jordan valley and the Mediterranean Sea. Look at the map. Jerusalem is 760 metres **above** sea level.

Jericho is in the Jordan valley, and is 258 metres **below** sea level, and 25 kilometres from Jerusalem by the original route, almost all of it downwards. It is wild country, with no towns or villages, but plenty of places for robbers and thieves to hide themselves.

The Jericho Road was famous for its robbers, and most people in Jesus' day would have tried to travel it in company, rather than on their own.

There are two recipes you might like to try, to represent the road. Rock cakes are made with dried fruit, and have a rough shape, like rocks, and Rocky Road, which doesn't need cooking, and has chocolate as its main ingredient!

### 1(a) Rock cakes

### 1(b) Rocky Road

For the recipes for these, see the separate recipe files.

## 2 Set on by robbers

Jesus' story begins with a man walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. At some point, he was attacked by robbers – which was a known hazard on this road. It is probable that he was attacked on the part of the route that is now by-passed, in a narrow valley with steep sides, where robbers would be able to hide before an attack, and get into hiding again quickly afterwards. Robbers would have had a variety of weapons – knives, short swords, possibly bows and arrows, and possibly coshes – small rocks or sand (which they could have just picked up around the attack site) put into a small bag, and used to hit their victims. This would have caused injury to the people they attacked, but unless they were unlucky, it probably wouldn't have killed them. The man in Jesus story was injured, but not killed.

**You will need:** a stocking, or one leg of a pair of tights, or a long sock, some newspaper, scissors.

Screw up the newspaper in small balls, and push them down to the toe of the stocking or sock you are using. Fill the foot and the leg to about 2/3rds full. Hold the top of the stocking or sock, and swing it around to pretend to hit someone. Imagine what it would feel like if you were the one being hit, if it were filled with stones or sand.

If you have some sand, weigh just a little in a paper or plastic bag, to see how heavy it could be.

### 3. Priests and Levites

In the Judea of Jesus' time, priests and Levites were important people. Their importance dates back to the earliest days of Judaism, when the Israelites left Egypt. Both priests and Levites were descended from Levi, the son of Jacob, and older brother of Joseph. Moses, and his big brother Aaron, were descendants of Levi, and Aaron was the first High Priest of the Jews. When the Jews left Egypt, God said that the descendants of Levi would be the people who served him most closely. The tribe of Levi became a little separate from the other tribes: they wouldn't get tribal lands like the other tribes, just the right to live protected in specific cities. This set a distance between the "ordinary" Jews and the descendants of Levi. Both sides would develop attitudes because of this distance.

There is a picture of the High Priest in the documents – all the details are in chapter 28 in the book of Exodus. An ordinary priest would not have been dressed like this, but he would have been dressed in better clothes than the ordinary people.

Aaron's family became the **priests**, with the head of the family as the High Priest. They were responsible for leading all the services in the portable tabernacle, and in the temple when it was built, in Jerusalem. They were responsible for packing up the special equipment in the portable tabernacle, and unpacking it again at the next stop. The priest in this story could trace his family back to Aaron. Because the priests served God, there were rules about what they could do – and among the

rules was one about not touching dead bodies if they were not members of the family. If the priest thought the man was dead, he would stay away from the body.

The Levites were the other descendants of Levi, all who weren't Aaron and his sons – his brothers, and their cousins. They also were special. They were responsible for transporting all the tabernacle equipment, packing the outside parts onto carts, and carrying the delicate stuff themselves. They guarded the tabernacle while the Israelites were camping, to make sure no damage was done. When the temple in Jerusalem was built, the Levites became responsible for maintaining the building, preparing what was needed for services, and for the music that was sung or chanted – so some of the Levites were responsible for writing the original music the psalms were sung to. They also guarded the building to make sure no damage was done.

Because the Levites were as separated from the “ordinary” people as the priests, their cousins, they also would not have wanted to deal with a possibly dead body, so they walked past as well. A Levite would also have been dressed differently from the ordinary people.

Even ordinary Jews would be careful of going to help someone lying in the road in such a dangerous place. They might be being tempted to stop so that they could be attacked. It is possible that this was also in the minds of the priest and the Levite.

Think how you might behave if you thought you might be attacked, or if you saw someone lying in the road.

#### **4. The Samaritan and his donkey**

The Samaritans were not part of the Jewish community – they were descendants of marriages between Jews and non-Jews, and they were not welcomed in Jewish towns, or in the Temple. They lived in Samaria, which was the land between Judea and Galilee, and instead of going through it, Jews from Galilee would go down into the Jordan valley to Jericho, walking round Samaria, and then up the hill from Jericho to Jerusalem – the opposite way from the way the man in Jesus’ story was going – and then go home again the same way. Perhaps this man was going to Galilee.

I don’t know if an “ordinary” Jew would have ignored someone if they had thought him a Samaritan, but in Jesus’ story, the Samaritan was the only person who seems to have paid any attention to the man lying in the road. We don’t know which way he was travelling, but when he saw the man, he stopped, cleaned and bandaged his injuries, and then put him on his donkey and took him to the local inn.

Draw or paint a picture of the Samaritan and his donkey. (See the picture of the crowd to see how the Samaritan might have been dressed)

## 5. Took him to an inn

An inn would have been a bit like a hotel is now, but probably not built as a multi-storey building, more like a really large bungalow!

The innkeeper would have looked after the building, but also looked after the people who stayed. Maybe some of them would have brought their own food, but he would have had workers who could cook for those who didn't. Obviously, he was also prepared to take care physically for those who needed it.

The Samaritan paid the innkeeper in advance to look after the man who had been robbed, and promised to pay any more needed when he returned.

You will need: coins of various values and/or ages, greaseproof paper, wax crayons or colouring pencils.

Put the paper over the coins, holding it down firmly. Colour over the paper hard enough to show the picture on the coin.

In this country, all our coins have an image of the queen on one side, but all sorts of different things on the reverse. See how many different coins you can find.

Talk about the different values, and what each one might buy.

## Celebration

When I needed a neighbour were you there?

<https://youtu.be/B7a7LdgRh-k>

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to answer a question he was asked, in a conversation with a lawyer. It started off with a trick question, designed to get Jesus into trouble no matter how he answered it, but Jesus didn't fall into the trap. When the lawyer tried harder, the story showed the answer, whether the lawyer liked it or not. The story Jesus told goes like this:

A man was travelling along the desert road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and on the way he was attacked by robbers, who stripped him, and beat him up, and left him half dead at the side of the road.

There was a priest going that way, who saw the man, walked past as far away as he could get. And then a Levite came past. He looked at the man, but he walked past as well. Then a Samaritan came to the place, and he was very sorry for the man. He went over to him, washed his injuries with oil and wine, and bandaged him up. He put the man on his own donkey, and took him to the inn, where he looked after him. When he travelled on, the next day, he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper, to look after the man, promising to pay any more that the innkeeper spent on him when he came on his way back.



Jesus told the story to show that anyone could be a neighbour. You see, these days, because of this story, we think of Samaritans as being good, but in Jesus day the Jews didn't like Samaritans, and Samaritans didn't like Jews. So the idea of them helping came as a surprise. Jesus wants us to be a good neighbour to everyone.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to be good neighbours to the people we meet and the people we haven't met yet.

Amen

He's got the whole world in his hands

[https://youtu.be/PJhV\\_6vrGaE](https://youtu.be/PJhV_6vrGaE)

Enjoy our celebration.

Then have tea or a treat if it isn't tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I will share them on the Church Facebook page (if you want to send pictures that you don't want shared, just tell me. I'll only share the one's you're happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

We had some technical issues last month and didn't manage the YouTube bits. We will try again. Look out for it on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR\\_QCxujk\\_h1zHjTFcoJw/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujk_h1zHjTFcoJw/videos)