

Sermon-Based Small Group Leader Guide

For the week of October 5, 2014

“Who Is My Neighbor?”

Sermon Series: *Who Is My Neighbor?* (week 1 of 3)

Mark 12:28–31

Getting Started

10 minutes

- 1) What is your favorite autumn activity?

Key Concept

We are all called to love others as God has loved us — not just with feelings and words, but also with actions.

Into the Bible

20 minutes

Read Mark 12:28–31 (all scripture references are in the Additional Resource)

- 2) In this passage, a teacher of the law asked Jesus a question in order to test him. If you were to stop at verse 28, how do you think Jesus would have responded to this teacher of the law?

Alternative Question: If you were not familiar with Jesus’ response in the following verses, what would you have guessed his response would be to this question?

- 3) Paraphrase Jesus’ answer to the teacher of the law? What response did the teacher expect from Jesus?

- 4) ⌚⌚⌚ What do you think Jesus is trying to teach his followers (both then and now) by his response to the question in Mark 12:28?

Leader Note: He is trying to teach them that loving God cannot be detached from loving others. Encourage someone in the group who has a Bible to look up 1 John 4:20–21.


Digging Deeper


40 minutes


- 5) ⌚⌚⌚ Perhaps it is easier to follow Jesus’ command to love others, more so at certain times and in certain circumstances than others. Share with the group concrete methods you rely upon to remain obedient, even when it does not come naturally.

- 6) Jesus quotes Leviticus 19:18 when he replies, “Love your neighbor *as yourself*.” Implicit here is the notion that you must love yourself. For some, this might come quite naturally. But, for others, this may be very difficult. However, receiving God’s love for you — and loving yourself as a result of this love — is essential to being capable of loving others.
Leader Note: Encourage someone in the group who has a Bible to look up John 3:16 , 1 John 4:10, and Romans 8:39. We love because he first loved us. We are worthy of love, because he finds us worthy. If we belong to Christ, he no longer condemns us. In fact, nothing can separate us from his love. Now, that is good news!

Read Luke 10:25–37


- 7)  Contextualize this passage into your own life. Then, determine what does it mean to “be a *neighbor* to” someone else?
Leader Note #1: In this passage of scripture, we see that we are to focus on being a neighbor to everyone — even to folks who may be different from us — and even when we may be inconvenienced or interrupted in trying to care for them.
Leader Note #2: From Sunday’s sermon we saw how being a neighbor in Jesus’s day is in some ways different from being a neighbor in our day (because we’re more “inside-the-house” folks than “outside-the-house” folks, etc.). So, this brings some extra challenges, if we are going to be a neighbor today.
Alternative/Follow-up Question: Since we know the neighborhood is in some ways different today, in what ways might we need to take “extra steps” in order to reach our “neighbors?”

- 8)  Pastor Harrington speaks of “love” in terms of “intending the good of another — as God defines good” [or, stated otherwise, in terms of “wanting them to become the best person that God has made them to be”]. What are some “first steps” we can take towards “intending the good of another” when that person has been living a life contrary to God’s will? Please explain.
Leader Note: One “first step” is just to pray, “God, would you bring good into this person’s life?” Another “first step” is to convey to that person just how much they are loved and cherished by God. And, still another “first step” is for us to take the initiative in expressing love to that person.
- 9) Having an extroverted or introverted personality affects the way we reach out. How might God choose to love others through you, not in spite of your personality but precisely because of it?

- 10)  Choose one or two “neighbors” you feel called to show love to this week. What are some concrete ways that you can express love to these people before your LIFE Group meets again?

Group Prayer

20 minutes

 = Key questions to ask (for groups with shorter time frames)