

The parable of the Good Samaritan

Jesus loved talking to people. He loved telling them about God and how God wanted people to be kind and to ‘love one another’. He really wanted them to understand this— and so he told them the best way was to ‘love your neighbour as you love yourself’. One man wasn’t very sure what Jesus meant by this, so he asked him a question. ‘Who is my neighbour?’ he asked. Jesus answered by telling a story. ‘There was once a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was a long hot dusty road. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a holy man – a priest – was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he turned away and walked on by on the other side. Then another man came along. This man was also a holy man. He worked in the temple in Jerusalem. But he too carried on walking, taking no notice of the injured man. Next, a visitor from another country (a Samaritan) travelling the road came across the injured man. When he saw him, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, “Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill – I’ll pay you on my way back.”

Based on Luke Chapter 10, verses 25–29 In order to understand this story, it is really important to think about what the people listening to the story would have expected to happen. They might have really expected the Priest to help. They would have expected the same with the Levite. Using a Samaritan as the hero in the story would have been a real surprise because Jesus was telling the story in Israel, and there was real hatred between the people of Israel and the Samaritans.