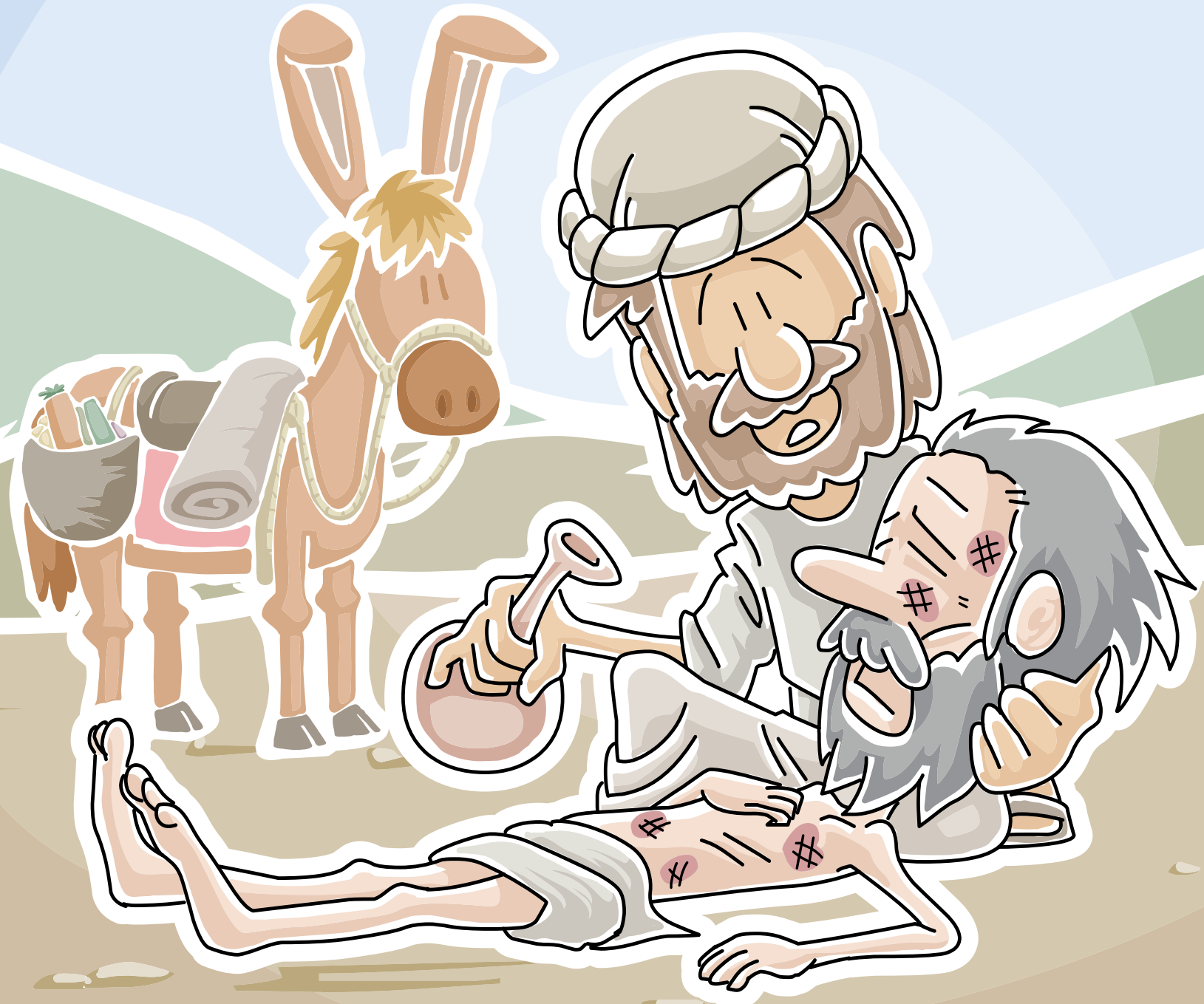
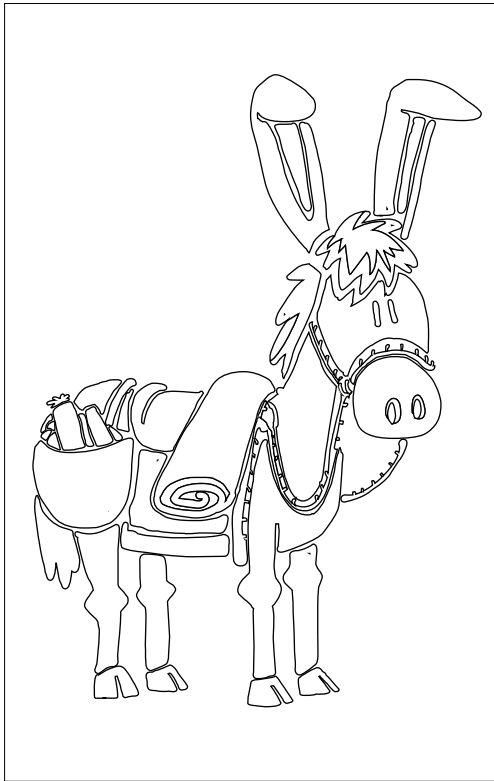


The good Samaritan



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Luke 10:30-37

Jesus replied [to a religious teacher]: As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. Later a temple helper came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side.

A man from Samaria then came travelling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, "Please take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return."

Then Jesus asked, "Which one of these three people was a real neighbour to the man who was beaten up by robbers?" The teacher answered, "The one who showed pity." Jesus said, "Go and do the same!"

Commentary

What was Jesus doing? Imagine telling a story where the hero is someone that everyone hates and the people who are meant to be kind turn out to be the villains of the piece! Not long before, Jesus and his disciples had been turned away from a Samaritan village on their way south to Jerusalem. Samaritans and Jews despised each other; they wouldn't normally even exchange a simple greeting, and certainly never shook hands. Yet here in this story it is the Samaritan who stops, has compassion on the Jewish man who was beaten up and applies first-century medicine to the wounds.

Jesus told this story in response to a question from a religious expert who wanted to know what God's law meant when it said, 'Love your neighbour'. Surely a 'neighbour' is anyone close to you and someone with whom you get along. But Jesus expands the word way beyond this narrow definition. Anybody in need is our neighbour. God wants people to love without limits, just as he does. Sadly, like the priest and the temple helper, we often limit our love to those who are like us. What is more, the injured man had to learn to be helped by a neighbour who was his enemy.

Questions

- ▶ If you were telling this story today, who would you choose as the enemy who turns out to be the hero?
- ▶ Can you imagine the thoughts going through the priest's head to justify his decision not to stop? And what was the temple helper thinking about?
- ▶ Why do you think the Samaritan stopped to help?
- ▶ In the light of this story, who is your neighbour?



Visual aid

Find pictures of two local, rival sports teams – perhaps represented by team colours, uniforms or jerseys, or mascots. The hatred between Samaritans and Jews was even more deadly than this!



Activity idea

Together, work on an up-to-date version of this parable. Who is travelling and where are they going? How do they get hurt? Who are the equivalents of the priest and the temple helper – that is, the people who should help? Who is the surprise enemy who stops? How does he or she help? Try to capture in your story the same dramatic shock that Jesus' original version caused.



Prayer idea

As a family, draw circles, starting small and getting bigger and bigger. For each circle, name people God wants you to care for, starting with those close to you in the family, then your friends, then those in your school and at work, then the wider local community, then those in your town or city, those in your country, and finally others in distant lands around the world. God's circles of love include you and me, as well as the whole universe.

Key verse

Jesus said, "Go and do the same!" (Luke 10:37).

Old Testament story link

Leviticus 19:9-18: Here are some of God's Old Testament laws about the practical ways in which we should love our neighbour.



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