



Great Lent Giveaway 2017 Life!

Youth Group Session 2 – For younger children
Compassion in Action! - Christian Almsgiving
Introduction and Questions – by Fr. Robert Holet
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(Originally created for GLG 2013 modified by the Office of Youth Ministry 2017)

Leader Packet Background

Goal - To make youth aware of the plight of the poor and their suffering, leading to the possibility of the charitable engagement, service in love.

I. Introduction

This session is designed to engage students to use their desire to help others and to creatively address the needs of the poor and those in distress who they may encounter in their lives. This will focus on two general areas - determining the need of the poor, and engaging our resources to help.

Our almsgiving is not only an attitude of the heart, but a course of action. When encountering others in need we may react emotionally - and this is not always wise. Love is more than an emotion - it is an engagement in the life of another. In some cases, like the emergency care by first responders at an accident scene, personal reactions have to be stifled, less the emotional impact of the crash be too overwhelming to allow the essential life saving measures to be swiftly and effectively applied. To love someone in need may mean first approaching them with gentleness and ascertaining what their true need is, then engaging our personal resources and the help of others to make a difference.

II. Determining the Need of the One Afflicted

We need to picture the plight of the victim. In part this 'vision' of the poor person (he *saw* him) leads to a growing awareness of the real needs of the afflicted. Sometimes it means peering beyond the externals and listening intently to hear the story of others. Such attention leads to the experience of compassion in the heart, prompting a response to action. The encounter must center on the life of the one afflicted, not the agenda of the caregiver. The discussion on the needs hopefully helps to sharpen that focus, and begins to give us clues how we can actually help.

III. The Samaritan Gets Busy

The parable is filled with action verbs which describe the Samaritan:

he *saw* him,
he *took pity* on him.
he *went* to him
bandaged his wounds
poured oil and wine on his wounds
lifted the man on his own donkey,
brought him to an inn
and *took care* of him

Charity in this way is identified with acting out of a compassionate heart. It is not enough to care or feel sorry for others. There are usually things we can do that can make a real difference.

III. Beyond the Human Caring and Giving

All true charity is a reflection and revelation of divine love. God, Who is Love, reveals himself through the expression of love of human beings - as a fruit of the Incarnation. Divine love is often expressed in simple, not necessarily heroic ways. It is self-emptying and focused on the Other. This is why the Church saw the Parable as something of an icon of Christ Himself. When the power of divine love is at work, human efforts - seemingly incidental - can work miracles. An excerpt from a homily by St. Ambrose is available here:

http://books.google.com/books?id=Gh6sFDUfq8cC&pg=PA179&lpg=PA179&dq=good+samaritan+Ambrose+%22exposition+of+the+gospel+of+luke%22&source=bl&ots=j_U3mEv5jK&sig=3BDfyyGoK8K_O_wotdCABLSINPE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=TZxtUa_NJMan0AGQ_YGoBQ&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=good%20samaritan%20Ambrose%20%22exposition%20of%20the%20gospel%20of%20luke%22&f=false

Needed Items:

construction paper

3-4 people in need (will explain further in the lesson)

tape

scissors

5 bananas

1 orange

sharpie

Session II Outline - Compassion in Action

I. Opening prayer - Recite together

From the Lenten Triodion (First Wed - Vespers)

'While fasting bodily let us also fast in spirit. Let us loose every bond of iniquity. Let us undo the knot of every contract made by violence. Let us tear up all unjust agreements. Let us give bread to the hungry and welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them, that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God.'

II. Being aware of those around us - You will need 3-4 volunteers to be "people in need". They can be in need of any sort of thing. For example: someone can be lying on the floor needing help to get up, someone could have dropped a bag of groceries, someone could be sitting needing refill of their drink. Your people in need will be placed along a path that the participants will take but they will need to be out of their direct line of sight.

Holding the construction paper horizontally long, cut it in two down the middle. Give each participant pieces of paper. Have them roll it to make a funnel and then tape securely. Use scissors to make the wider end even all the way around. The small end of the funnel should be approximately the size of a dime.

Instruct the youth to put their special lens up to their eyes. They will now need to walk to a predetermined "end" space in the room. Tell them to go and try not to bump into anything. Make sure that the "end" space is something they may clearly focus upon across the room. Tell them not to take off their special lens until they are told.

Once to their destination, ask them if they were happy with their efforts to get to the destination. Now ask them to take off their lens and look behind them. They should now see the "people in need" they passed by.

Ask them to identify the "people in need" and what they needs were. Ask them if they had noticed any of these people along the way or were they to concentrated on their own path? Explain that their special lens were like living our lives only thinking of ourselves. When we only focus on our own needs it can make us blind to the needs of other and the opportunity to help them. Sometime even a small gesture of help, can make a big difference for someone else.

Interactive telling of the Good Samaritan

For younger children, you may want to utilize this interactive telling of the Good Samaritan. For older children, you can read directly from the bible and ask them to retell the parable in their own words.

Interactive Parable - This activity is provide by Flame - Creative Children's Ministry.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/telling-good-samaritan-with-bananas-and.html?m=1>

You will need your fruit and sharpie for this.

When the story is complete - ask them if they noticed any similarities between the parable and the activity with their special lens?

Read the Scripture Passage - Let's take a look at the scripture passage to begin our discussion today. Compassion for my neighbor (Parable of the Good Samaritan) **Lk. 10:25-37**

III. Questions!

The questions below to begin discussion. For younger children keep the group together and pose the questions to them allowing time for discussion or for older children break them up into small groups allowing them time to discuss and then share their thoughts with the group. Utilize a white board or easel pad paper to write down the main points of their discussion.

Question 1: The Samaritan 'had compassion' on the hurt (afflicted) man and was moved in his heart. Have you ever been so moved in your heart, what do you want to do? What *can* you do?

Question 2. What did the Samaritan do for his neighbor? What are the action words that describe his actions? (consult the bible passage - use imagination.) Charity is often about *doing*, not just feeling.

Some possible responses:

- he *went* to him - to go is the first step, to draw close not only in body but in spirit
- *bandaged* his wounds - providing medical care as well as healing emotional wounds through comforting words and gestures
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- *poured* oil and wine on his wounds - applying specific treatments to areas of need.
- *lifted* the man on his own donkey - he provided transportation so that more help could be received.
- *brought* him to an inn - he took the man himself
- and *took care* of him - stayed with him in his need, overnight
- gave the innkeeper *his money* - so that he would be cared for after he left
- *promised* to return - to visit and pay for additional expenses for his care. (hospital bill)

Notes: Any of these verbs could serve as a jumping off point to open the discussion to all manner of ways in which we can help people in need. The imagery of bandaging and pouring in oil and wine should be explained as images of the Church's healing for the whole person - especially spiritual healing. The Mystery of Holy Anointing brings healing to our inner soul, afflicted by sin, as well as our body. We celebrate this Mystery on Great and Holy Wednesday.



Question 3. What is one thing that the passage doesn't say directly that we might consider doing as well?

Some possible responses:

- *Pray* - Seeking God's will helps to guide our actions. In helping situations we need to rely not only upon our own strength but upon God's grace. This will bring His grace to the situation where it's needed.

- *Think First* before jumping in - charity does not mean foolishness or being simplistic about what a situation requires. Orthodoxy stresses this using terms like 'discernment' to guide us into the right approach in these situations. Sometimes, it may mean diving right in. In other situations, the prudent path might be more cautious.

- Ask ourselves, "What resources do I/we have to offer?" Often our helping requires us to be creative to be helpful. Often young people can be very creative in finding ways. Also, we should be careful about promising help to people when we may not be able to deliver it.



Question 4. One of the goals of the Great Lent Giveaway is trying to help us focus on the needs of people in need, to help mothers and babies who may be without. How can the actions of the Samaritan in the story of the Good Samaritan help us find ways to do things where we can participate in such charitable work?

Some related questions that you should utilize when the discussion is held in or presented to the group. Some related questions are more appropriate for older youth and some for older and younger:

- Just as the Samaritan solicited the help of the Innkeeper, how can we work with ZOE for Life to bring this about? We don't have to do it all by ourselves! We are raising money and collecting warm baby blankets!

- Just as the Samaritan used the money available to him to provide help and encouragement for the afflicted man, how can our money be used to support worthy charities, such as the ZOE? How can this bring encouragement to someone suffering?

- Is it better for us to use our own money for these things, or raise money from others? Is Almsgiving about raising money or offering our own?

Note: When we do a fund raising event in the right spirit, we are offering our time and talents, and often expend money as well so as to join with others, to provide help for people in need. So to have a benefit dinner, it takes time, effort, food for the meal, etc. from which the proceeds can benefit the charitable work. Fundraising is not a replacement for almsgiving and personal financial offerings for people in need, but might work along side with it.

Question 5 - Is there some way that the spirit of Almsgiving can overflow past these weeks of Lent, to other projects and charitable efforts in our parish? Sponsored by our youth group?

We can keep our eyes open and take off our special lens. This way we can always be ready to help someone in need. Sometimes it can be overwhelming when we see the needs of a person or situation. Often we are not able (and must not try) to meet all the needs. Just begin with what we can do, and hopefully do well. The Samaritan is a Superman when it comes to Charity!

IV. Closing Prayer:

Prayer of St. Ephraim : Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. Rather, grant to me your servant, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yes, Lord and King, help me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother for blessed are you to the ages of ages. Amen.

Notes on Supplemental Materials:

- *The lesson of the Special Lens was modified from the blog Your Life UnCommon*
- *An Explanation of the Prayer of St. Ephraim by Kira Senedak of Co-Director of Mommy & Me/Daddy & Me Camp with a forward for parents (available on the GLG webpage)*

