



One truth shared: Focused love leads us to find neighbors to love like Christ has loved us—no matter who that neighbor may be.

“And who is my neighbor?” . . . “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:29,37

Focused Love Finds a Neighbor Rather Than Avoiding One

“Look at that guy,” Andre thought, “No way I’m sitting by that dude!” Andre glanced to the other side of the cafeteria and saw a table full of strangely dressed girls, each with brightly poppin’ hair colors. “Ummm . . . No.”

After lunch Andre was on his way to 6th period and saw a freshman trip up the stairs and dump his books and papers everywhere. “Stinks to be that guy!” Andre laughed to his friend.

Later that night Andre lay alone in the dark in his room, mindlessly scrolling through social media. What followed was 30 minutes of absolutely trolling his peers with every snarky, sarcastic, or downright mean comment he could think of.

This was sort of Andre’s daily routine—walking through life like a social elite while trampling on the self-esteem of pretty much everyone he came across. Each day brought another round of arrogant savagery—until one Tuesday during Homecoming Week.

Andre thought his Spirit Day outfit was gonna be fire, but it totally bombed. Pretty much the whole school laughed at him all day long, and at least a dozen people posted pictures of his crazy outfit on their stories. To make things worse, a meatball squirted out of his sub at lunch and rolled down his shirt onto his pants. And then in the most epic fail, Andre tripped over a chair and fell over trying to get an extra napkin. The cafeteria erupted in laughter.

Andre felt terrible at his lunch table with his head hanging low—until another student came and sat next to him. “It’ll be alright. They’ll all forget about it by the end of the day,” the student said as he slid some napkins over. “I got you, bro.” The student happened to be the same freshman who tripped on the stairs two weeks before. “Why are you helping me and being nice to me after all I’ve done?” Andre asked.

“We’re Christians. That’s what we do. We love like Christ.” It was just one comment, but it hit Andre with a quick strike both law and gospel. He quickly remembered how sinful he had been in how he had been treating others, yet he was also reminded of how much Jesus loved even sinners like him.

The story of the Good Samaritan that Jesus tells in Luke 10 is very similar. It’s a story about a man who thought he was so much better than others, much like Andre. When Jesus told him he needed to love both God and his neighbor in order to be truly perfect, the man asked, “Who is my neighbor?”

The story Jesus told illustrates the answer. After several self-righteous Jews passed by, it was a hated and looked-down-upon Samaritan who stopped to help the man who was robbed, beaten, and left half-dead. The point is that anyone and everyone is our neighbor whom we should love, and Jesus drops the mic on the arrogant man when he says, “Go and do likewise.”

On our own, how could we be so loving? Our sinful hearts cloud our minds with so much arrogance and pride, so many biases and prejudices. Thank God that Jesus has been our Good Samaritan and beyond. He has shown perfect love that covers over us, and his loving death paid for all we have done. It’s his love alone that can fill our hearts to the point of taking the focus off ourselves and onto our neighbors. His love is what will give us both the motivation and the strength to see all our neighbors and “go and do likewise.” Look to Christ and his cross, then filled with his love, look to your neighbors and show them the same.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for the pastors you have given to me. They aren’t perfect, but they are from you. Help me to honor them as I honor you. Through them, help me to lean on you. Amen.

Foundations Teen Facilitators Guide

Year C – Proper 10

Focused

One truth shared: Focused love leads us to find neighbors to love like Christ has loved us—no matter who that neighbor may be.

Focused Love Finds a Neighbor Rather Than Avoiding One

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- What are some of the ways that teens act really mean and unloving to other teens at school?
- Who are the people that are easy for you to love and be nice to? Why?

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- What is at the core root in our hearts that makes us unloving to others and treat them as “less” than we are?
- In your context (your school, team, community, culture, etc.), who are the most difficult people to love as your neighbor?

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- What do you think was the most surprising and startling part of the story of the Good Samaritan to those listening to Jesus? Why?
- Identify excuses for not helping that those who passed by the injured man likely made. What excuses do we often make for not showing love to others?
- What excuses could Jesus have made for not coming to save us? Why didn't he make any, and what does that say about him?

***Conclusion:** Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- So . . . who is your neighbor? Identify someone you would like to be more of a neighbor to.
- Describe three specific ways you can show unexpected love for a neighbor next week.