

VULNERABLE

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper, pens; tape or safety pins
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: AT A DISADVANTAGE

Take a stack of paper and on each piece write down one circumstance that would make someone vulnerable or place them at a disadvantage (see suggestions below). As the teens arrive tape or pin one of the papers to each back. As they talk with others in the group, the teens try to guess what their assigned identity is by asking yes-or-no questions of others until they have guessed it. (You may need to indicate that the identities refer to situations, not names.)

- Travelling far from home
- Pregnant
- A small child
- Unemployed
- Homeless
- Orphan
- Widow
- Prisoner
- Sick
- Paralyzed

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson (below) by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: SEEING AND CARING

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Who are the people you know that are at a disadvantage in some way?
- What are their disadvantages?
- What do you think would make things easier for them?
- How do people usually treat these people? Do you treat them differently?

VULNERABLE

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- We all encounter people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged in some way. Sometimes these things can be hard to recognize (for example, because some illnesses are not obvious to the casual observer), but in other cases we can immediately see that someone has a problem of some kind. You may have peers at school who need special assistance in learning, or there may be elderly people in the church who cannot walk without a cane.
- The more you get to know people, the more you discover different circumstances – both the obvious ones and the less obvious ones – that place some people in a position where they need the assistance of others or where they cannot defend themselves well. The Litany includes a good list (also used for the ice breaker), but there are many more. See how many your teens can come up with.
- Kindness is always in season. You may not always know what someone needs help with, but it never hurts to smile and take the trouble to ask if there's anything you can do to help. Being ready to help others means making enough space in your life so that you have the time to both ask and do.
- Vulnerable people are often the targets of cruelty or carelessness. Because they are at a disadvantage there are others who will take advantage of them or laugh at them or ignore them. We all tend to be preoccupied with our own concerns, so it is easy to get into the habit of “looking out for number one” and forgetting to see and care for those who need help.

THE LESSON: LUKE 10

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

*To preserve all that travel, all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children;
 and to show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives...
 To defend, and provide for, all widows and orphans, and all who are desolate and oppressed,
 We beseech thee, good Lord.*

God cares deeply about those who are vulnerable, and his people are called to care deeply about them too.

When God gave the law to his people it contained some considerations that were very peculiar in that day and age. It took the trouble to set out protections for those who were vulnerable in that society, especially the poor, immigrants, widows and orphans. When we read the Old Testament prophets, we find that many of their accusations against the people were about this issue – they were mistreating the vulnerable among them, when they should have been caring for them!

Listen to how the Psalms describe our God: “he executes justice for the oppressed... gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down... The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless” (Psalm 146: 7-9). A concern for the disadvantaged is part of who our God is.

When we reflect upon the ministry of Jesus, we find that this deep concern for the vulnerable is evident. He touched lepers, rubbed shoulders with the poor and blessed the children. Moreover, he called his followers to embody this compassion as well.

Refer to Luke 10:25-37.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What kind of answer do you think the lawyer was looking for to his question, “Who is my neighbour”?

VULNERABLE

- Who do you identify with most in this parable?
- What lesson can we take from the parable?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *The text tells us that the lawyer was “desiring to justify himself” (v29), a phrase that has been interpreted in various ways. He may have been embarrassed at having been shown that he already knew the answer to his first question. He may have been worried about eternal life and genuinely interested in Jesus’ teaching. But he may also have wanted affirmation of the contemporary Jewish view that “neighbour” did not include Gentiles or Samaritans (who were ethnic half-Jews and had a distorted understanding of the faith). It is this that Jesus responds to with his parable, by turning the lawyer’s question on its head so that it is not “Who is my neighbour?” but “To whom am I a neighbour?” The question is not whether someone deserves mercy, but whether we show it!*
- *Perhaps you’ve been in a situation where you needed assistance and have watched others, hoping they’d help, only to be disappointed. Or perhaps you’ve been like those busy men who didn’t want to get caught up in someone else’s troubles. But maybe you’ve been the person who offers a seat on the bus to someone who needs it or shares your lunch with someone who has none.*
- *If you don’t identify with the “good Samaritan” of the parable, then learning to see the needs of others and care for them is a goal worth setting for yourself. Not only is this something we can do as individuals, but it is also something we are called to do as a community of believers. So, let’s ask ourselves: who are the vulnerable in our world that need someone to see their plight and help?*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Give your teens a moment to think of a person (or group) they know of that is vulnerable in some way, then ask them to share that one name with the group. (If you have more than ten teens, you’ll want to break into smaller groups.) Each person in the group should write all the names mentioned down on their lesson paper so they can remember them.

During this unit, we’re going to focus our prayers on specific people in our world.

Each day this week, take time to pray for each of those named on your group’s list. Ask God to care for them, and to help us to see the needs around us and to respond with his love.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer.

Almighty God, who art afflicted in the afflictions of thy people: Regard with thy tender compassion those in anxiety and distress; bear their sorrows and their cares; supply all their manifold needs; and help both them and us to put our whole trust and confidence in thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR THOSE IN ANXIETY, BCP PAGE 54)

VULNERABLE

CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

LUKE 10: BE A NEIGHBOUR TO THE VULNERABLE

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."