

BreakThru

From Catechism to *Christ*

EVERYDAY SAMARITAN: HELLO

LEARNING EVENT MAKE-UP

A WORD ABOUT THE EVERYDAY SAMARITAN SERIES

For this and the next four Learning Events, we will be going through a series called Every Day Samaritan for Early Adolescents, which is a curriculum of Peer Ministry Leadership led by Lyle Griner. The Learning Events themselves are very interactive, involving one-on-one and small group interaction and practice of skills, and it is a challenge to get the full experience through a make-up assignment like this. I encourage you to make an effort to be at the actual Learning Events throughout this series to get the full impact of this wonderful training and learning opportunity.

HEART – TRUST

Spend some time in conversation with your parents using the following questions. Both parents and students should share for each question.

- **A like, dislike, a feeling or a story about my name is...**
- **Something I usually don't tell others about me is...**
- **A trait that makes a person a really good friend is...**
- **A reason I don't trust sharing about myself with others is...**
- **A present concern I have for another person is... (keep identities confidential)**
- **What are the qualities a person needs to demonstrate before you share more personal information with them?**
- **Are there situations that friends experience when you wish you could be more helpful? What are some of those situations?**

BUILDING TRUST

- **Filtering what is shared:** People don't share everything with everyone. They need trust, time, and a safe environment before more personal information is shared. People share when they are ready to share, so when asked to share about yourself, people in the group naturally evaluated how much trust and comfort they felt with the group and filtered in their minds what they thought was safe to share.
- **Peer Ministry Leaders build trust:** Part of being a Peer Ministry Leader is to be aware of the importance of trust. Trust cannot be forced. A person must wait until trust is established. However, trust can also quickly be lost, especially when behaviors are not consistent. Keeping trust in a relationship is ongoing work, especially since no perfect people exist. Everyone makes mistakes.



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- **Every relationship has norms:** Seldom are relational norms named as was done here. People most often learn relational norms by watching, by trying out behaviors or saying things to see if they are acceptable. People notice and admire kindness, care for others and welcoming acts. Such acts create trust and become positive ways for people to be in relationship.
- **PML is about caring and welcoming others every day, everywhere, in every relationship:** As a Christian, every person at every age is called to be a minister to all those around them. That is what makes Christians unique. We care for others because we have a God who created us and showed us his love and grace through Christ's life, death and resurrection.

HAND - W.H.E.A.T

One of the most important skills for a Peer Ministry Leader to have is the skill of carrying on a conversation. Sometimes it can be a challenge to know where to start, especially when you don't know the person very well. W.H.E.A.T. is an acronym and tool to help with carrying conversations. The letters stand for:

W - Where
H - Hobbies
E - Events
A - Acquaintances
T - Travel

Often, using this simple acronym to lead a conversation can put you in a place where you suddenly find yourself in a very serious conversation about a relationship that is going bad or some other situation in which a person really needs your listening ear. This is not a silly acronym—it's about God! It's the Good Samaritan story. Here are some examples of questions you may ask under each topic. This is not an extensive list, but simply examples:

WHERE

- Where are you from?
- How long have you lived there?
- What do you like most about that area?
- If I were to visit as a tourist, what would you recommend I see or do?

HOBBIES

- What hobbies do you have?
- How did you get started?
- What is most satisfying about it?
- What do you hope to do in the future with it?

EVENT

- What has been most significant (or exciting, or meaningful) this last month?
- What was your experience like while you were ___?
- How has ___ changed you?
- What would you do differently?

ACQUAINTANCE

- Do you know ___?
- How did you meet ___?
- What do you enjoy most about ___?
- What is your favorite memory with ___?

TRAVEL

- Have you been to ___?
- What was most fun about your spring break trip?
- What is your favorite place to visit?
- What inspired you to go there?

Take some time in the next few weeks to practice this skill in your daily life. Try to intentionally “WHEAT” three different people—someone you know really well, an acquaintance, and someone you don’t know well. You can do this at school, an extracurricular, or on Sunday morning after church or before or after a Learning Event. Share about the experiences in the space below:

For each conversation, answer the following questions:

- **Who did you WHEAT?**
- **When and where did the conversation happen?**
- **How would you describe the experience?**

Imagine that you are in a large group setting, and the leader asks you to choose a partner—someone who you don't know. Process with your parent how you react in that situation using the questions below.

- When someone says, "Choose a partner," what feelings and thoughts go through your mind?
- Some people choose, some people wait to be chosen. Which of those camps do you typically fall in?
- What fears might people have in this situation?
- How do differences such as age, gender, race, and other diversity effect your decisions to meet or get to know someone?
- Why might people get nervous about saying hello to others?
- How might saying "Hello" be considered an important part of ministry?

SAYING HELLO

- **Common Fears:**
 - Fear that another will not want to talk to them
 - Fear that they will be rejected
 - Fear from being nervous
 - Fear that they will say something dumb and be laughed at
 - Fear that they will be the last to be chosen
- As some of these fears are shared, many begin to realize that their fears are normal and that they are not the only person having fears. This contributes to understanding what others must feel when they are new to various groups.
- **Genuine Interest:** In a first-time conversation, it is important to communicate warmth and interest in the other person. Even though one learns specific skills in starting conversations, if the genuine interest and warmth are not there, you cannot establish a relationship of trust that is needed to help or reach out to another.
- **Asking Interested Questions: We convey an interest in others by:**
 - The kind of questions we ask
 - Not interrupting and talking about ourselves
 - Picking up on something the person has said
 - Continuing to ask increasingly in-depth questions on the subject
 - Looking, not staring, at the other
 - Our tone of voice and body posture
- **Begin with an Observation:** As easy as it is to use the WHEAT topics, there still needs to be a beginning point of contact. The beginning observation is a polite way to let a person know that you notice them. It is a skill that comes from being observant and interested in others. The observation usually shows recognition, pointing to a commonality or a point of interest or curiosity that you have.
- **Welcome All:** Christianity is an inclusive religion. Jesus constantly crossed the cultural, economic, religious and social lines to welcome all. He healed the untouchables, saw the Samaritans as good, welcomed the children, ate with sinners, and even cared about prostitutes. PML is a ministry that is about meeting and welcoming all people.

- **Counter Cultural:** Some have said that PML is counter cultural, because many have grown up being told, “Never talk to strangers.” Now in Peer Ministry people are encouraged to talk and welcome the stranger. This does not mean that one should not consider common sense and personal safety. Saying “Hello” is always risky. Sometimes those risks mean that the other person may not say hello back. Other times saying hello could put a person in conversation with someone with ill intentions. Use your skills in settings where there are familiar people and places that you can rely on. If you feel a conversation has become inappropriate or you feel uncomfortable, no need to explain, just end it.

HEAD - THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Read the story of the Good Samaritan from **Luke 10:25-37** (below in The Message):

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.[a] “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 27 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 neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii,[b] gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Reflect on this story, imagining yourself in the position of each of the different characters in the story. You may want to re-read the story with each different character as you are reflecting. Focus on being each character, and discuss the questions from the perspective of each character below.

CHARACTER: VICTIM

*As I understand the story, you were traveling along a road by yourself. **What was the day like?***

- **When you first saw the Levite, then the Priest, coming up the road, what was going through your mind? What did you think when they each chose to ignore you?**
- **Then the Samaritan, “Despised Samaritan,” came up the road. What was going through your mind?**
- **He stopped and helped. What surprised you about this?**
- **What would you like to say to the Samaritan?**
- **From your perspective, what is the most important thing about being human?**

CHARACTER: VILLAINS

*As our victim was walking walking, you jumped out, beat him, took his money, took his clothes and left him half dead. **Did he have a lot of money on him? Was it fun?***

- **Is it okay to hurt people? Why do you do what you do?**
- **What happened to you in life that turned you into a robber, thief and a thug?**
- **Anything you want to say to the victim?**
- **From your perspective, what is the most important thing about being human?**

CHARACTER: LEVITE / PRIEST

*You (the Levite) came down the road shortly after this but passed him by. **Did you see the man? What were you thinking? Why didn't you help? Busy, and as important as you are, you felt you needed to keep going.***

*You (the priest) were the next person to come along. I understand you are not to handle blood, especially if the person might be dead. If you do, I have heard there are many ritual washings and a need to be quarantined (Numbers 19:11-12). So it was not very practical for you to help. **What did you feel as you saw the person on the ground?***

- **It must be tough to be in ministry, living up to everyone's expectations. Tell me what it is like in ministry these days.**
- **How are you feeling, knowing that everyone now knows you passed this guy by without helping?**
- **What does it feel like to have this Jesus going around telling stories that degrade your status and reputation?**
- **Do you have anything you would like to say to the victim?**
- **From your perspective, what is the most important thing about being human?**

CHARACTER: SAMARITAN

*Now the third person who came along was this Samaritan. You took pity upon the man. You stopped, bandaged his wounds, put him on your donkey, and took him to the Innkeeper. I know it is huge for you to be here in our audience today, since most people in our audience really do not like any Samaritans. Thank you for coming. **Why didn't you just leave him? What was it that made you stop and help?***

- **Who are you anyway? What is your motivation? Why did you stop and help?**
- **Did you hope for some kind of reward or special recognition?**
- **How did kindness become so important for you?**
- **Are you concerned about what the other Samaritans might be thinking? Why? What do you think they might be thinking?**
- **From your perspective, what is the most important thing about being human?**

CHARACTER: INNKEEPER

*Little is mentioned in the story about you, but you were the one that gave the man a room, fed him, used some medical supplies and nursed him back to health. You are a good person, caring for people who need shelter, food and help along the road. I hear travel along this road is becoming more dangerous. **What will it take to make it safe again?***

- **How is the victim doing?**
- **People seem to trust in your care. What does that feel like?**
- **What is it like to watch someone like this Samaritan who authentically cares? What do you want to say to him or her?**
- **How did you get involved in caring so much for others?**
- **From your perspective, what is the most important thing about being human?**

We are in the story. Christ says, "Go and Do Likewise." This statement is to us! The audience he was speaking to, then and now, is us! I would like to suggest that this is the calling for everyone here, to be Christian Leaders, by caring and welcoming everyone around us.

We may never have imagined ourselves here, but we are. Christian leaders, the caring and welcoming, unqualified, imperfect people we are. When I take time to look, I see people in need all around me—in my school, neighborhood, community, and all over the world.

- **"Go and do likewise." What does that mean for people your age?**
- **How does this story shape how you live?**
 - **Professionally? As a student?**
 - **Personally? As a neighbor? A friend?**
 - **As family? A son or daughter? A sibling? A parent?**
- **What are the hesitations people have for living out this story?**
- **What is it that Jesus is asking us to do? How do we learn to live that way?**
- **Where do you see yourself in this story?**
- **When have you been most like these various characters?**
 - **When have you hurt others?**
 - **When have you ignored, looked the other way, or passed by another?**
 - **When have you helped others?**
- **For you, what does it mean to be human? What are the most important things about being human?**

THE GOOD SAMARITAN - THE PEER MINISTRY LEADER

- **Observant: Is alert to the needs of others** - PML is about being able to see the needs of others, whether that be in one's family, in school, in our community, in our nation, or globally. Often we become aware that there is a need through some inner sense, possibly the tug of the Holy Spirit, which prompts us to begin by saying, "Hello."
- **Takes Action: Uses skills and confidence, led by a compassionate heart.** As needs are recognized, the Peer Minister does not pretend to not see or pass to the other side of the road. Instead, the PML follows his or her heart to take action. Action becomes easier as skills for caring and welcoming are practiced. Most of the time, it is better to do something, rather than nothing.

- **Improbable: Knows woundedness from having been wounded.** No excuses are made for being too young, too inexperienced, too busy, or even too hurt or wounded. There is no one who has all the confidence, training or qualifications. Where there is a need, if we are the person present, we get to be the first to welcome or offer help.
- **Comes Close: Listens patiently and explores what is the real need.** PML is not about fixing someone, it is about coming close, caring enough to hear and let a person make choices that best fit him or her.
- **Sacrifices: Willing to risk group security to give help.** Caring and welcoming is not always the popular thing to do... even in the church! Caring and welcoming means accepting and including. This sometimes threatens a group's norms. Insecure people might make fun of caregivers. Be assured, caring is always noted, and often admired.
- **Crosses Barriers: Gives help to others, no matter their clique, culture, color or creed.** Jesus knew that using a Samaritan in his story would raise eyebrows and even make some listeners angry. Many believed there are no good Samaritans. Caring and welcoming has no barriers, including race, age, sex, religion or other differences.
- **Seeks Help: Guides others to people who can help.** Even the Good Samaritan takes the victim to someone who can help. The Good Samaritan is really just the bridge to the long-term caregiver, the Innkeeper. We do not have to be it all for a hurting person. We are often the bridge needed to get the person to another who can help. Ministry is not meant to be a solo experience. We need the support of others, as a body of people, with varied gifts and skills.