

The Least of These



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, paper, scissors, pens or markers

Surveying the Source

1 Thess. 4:17; Heb. 10:24, 25; John 13:34, 35; 15:9, 12; Acts 2:1; Heb. 10:24; John 13:34-35

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Discover that ministry to “the least of these” is possible as a result of God’s selfless love captivating the human heart.

► Recognize the value of every human being because Jesus Christ died for them.

► Strive to follow the example of Jesus by reaching out to those who are at the margins of society.

Preparing to Lead

One of the characteristics of God’s people at the very end of time is that they will be actively sharing God’s love with the world around them. Satan has accused God of being unfair, and furthermore, has tried to distort God’s character. It is God’s end-time people who share the good news of the “everlasting gospel” to the whole world (Rev. 14:9–12). Are you serious about sharing your faith with others? Then this means that as Christ’s faithful followers at the end-time that we have a distinct calling to minister to “the least of these” meaning that we are duty-

bound to make sure everyone, including those may not be able to help themselves, are recipients of God’s selfless love. This may take place in a variety of ways and means, but the motivation behind it remains the same—“by love is love awakened” (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22). Thus, each one of us has a sacred responsibility to pay attention and reach out those who in society might otherwise be neglected. In this way we minister and follow after the example of Jesus who consistently cared for those whom society otherwise overlooked.

Getting Started

A. Discuss what it would be like to take the class back to an early Christian gathering for worship. Keep in mind that early Christians did not have church buildings, but often met in the homes of believers (often because of persecution). Imagine as a class what it would be like and how it would feel to gather.

B. As a class, talk about the life of Jesus in the way that He reached out to others who were marginalized or neglected within society. As a class identify those who are marginalized within your sphere of influence. How can we, in ministering to others, extend Christ’s healing touch by ministering to such persons (Matt. 25:40)?

Delving Into the Word

A. Read the story of the Good Samaritan (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44; Luke 10:25–37). The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was a treacherous one. The geography belies part of the story. Jerusalem is often described as the “heavenly city” and typified all that is good whereas Jericho was quite the opposite. Jerusalem is also much higher geographically; Jericho was next to the Dead Sea. Clearly the person was headed in the wrong direction. *Ask:* “Why were none of those who walked willing to help this person? Why does it make the person who did help so unusual? How can we follow the example of the Good Samaritan?”

B. The Sermon on the Mount encapsulates the radical teachings of Jesus (Matt. 5:2–16). Take time as a class to use your sanctified imagination as one person reads this passage reflecting on Jesus when He preached this passage beside the Sea of Galilee. List each of the different kinds of people who are described by Jesus. *Ask:* “In what ways are each of these descriptions counter-cultural to the world in which Jesus lived?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. As Christians, what is our role within the world around us, and how can we work toward true justice and peace? Will such justice ever be truly achieved in this world?

2. Jesus ministered to common persons, especially those whom society overlooked. How was this counter-cultural? Who were the persons overlooked in society during Christ’s lifetime? Who are the marginalized within society today?

3. What does heaping burning coals look like (Rom. 12:20)? In what ways does Jesus call us to reach out to those who have wronged us?

4. It is God’s compassion and goodness that leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4). How has God changed your life? In what

ways, however subtle, has God been showing you His compassion and goodness?

5. How does God’s love break down barriers? What barriers have you experienced that God’s love and grace has broken down for you?

6. How is Christian fellowship a vital part of the Christian experience?

7. In what ways, as a Sabbath School class, can you work together to show God’s love to your community? If Jesus were in your community, who would He reach out to that is currently neglected? What would Jesus do? How would this be similar or different from what you are currently doing?

Closing the Activity

The focus of this lesson is to emphasize how Jesus calls us as His disciples to reach out to “the least of these.” Today there are numerous examples of those who are struggling just to survive. Distribute the Reproducible Activity. Once they write down their answers, have them turn to the person next to them and share

their answers with that person. Then as a class, have each pair of persons share the examples they have given. As a class, select at least one of these examples and as a class, discuss how you can work together to minister to that person or group. Intentionally reflect about how Jesus would minister in such a situation.

Michael Campbell, Burleson, Texas, USA

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Write down groups of people who are systematically disenfranchised and any individuals you know of who may be considered as needy.
