

Love Thy Neighbor

Lesson 33

Purpose To inspire class members to obey the Lord’s commandment to “love thy neighbour” (Matthew 22:39).

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 22:35–39; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 10:25–37; John 19:25–27; 1 John 4:20–21; 3 Nephi 17:7–13, 17–23; Moroni 7:46–48.
2. Materials needed:
 - a. The pictures Jesus Healing the Nephites (62541; Gospel Art Picture Kit 317); Jesus Praying with the Nephites (62542); The Good Samaritan (62156; Gospel Art Picture Kit 218); and Bedside Prayer (62217).
 - b. A set of scriptures and a scripture marking pencil for each class member. Continue to encourage class members to bring their own scriptures to class each week.

Note to the teacher *The Lord has commanded us to love our neighbor (see Matthew 22:39). Encourage class members to develop love for all people by following Jesus’ example and by praying to be filled with charity, the pure love of Christ.*

Suggested Lesson Development

Love: The Greatest Commandment

Scripture discussion

Before disclosing the topic of the lesson, ask the following question:

- Of all God’s commandments, which do you think is the greatest?

Allow class members to offer answers to this question. Then explain that a man once tried to trick Jesus by asking this same question (see Matthew 22:35–36). Have class members read and mark Jesus’ response in Matthew 22:37–38.

Write *Love the Lord* on the chalkboard. Then have class members read and mark Matthew 22:39.

Write *Love thy neighbor* on the chalkboard.

- Why do you think these are the two greatest commandments?
- How would obeying these commandments make it easier to obey other commandments?
- How is the commandment to love our neighbor “like unto” the commandment to love the Lord?

Have class members read and mark 1 John 4:20–21.

- Why is it impossible to love God and hate other people?

Explain that the prophet Mormon also taught that we should love one another. Have class members read and mark Moroni 7:46–47.

- What is charity? (The pure love of Christ.)
- Why do you think Mormon said that “if [we] have not charity, [we] are nothing”?
- Why is it sometimes hard to have charity for all people?

Explain that this lesson discusses three things we can do that will help us have charity.

Chalkboard
and scripture
discussion

The Savior Set a Perfect Example of Love

Write the following on the chalkboard:

We can develop charity by:

1. Following the Savior's example

Read with class members the scripture passages listed below. Have class members mark phrases in the passages that show the Savior's perfect love for all people. After you read each passage, ask class members to share the phrases they marked and talk about why they chose those phrases.

1. 3 Nephi 17:7–13, 17–23. Jesus blesses the Nephites. (Display the pictures of Jesus healing the Nephites and Jesus praying with the Nephites as you discuss this passage. You may also want to use the video segment listed in the second enrichment activity.)
 2. Mark 6:30–44. When people follow Jesus and his Apostles, Jesus teaches them rather than sending them away, as his Apostles request. When the people become hungry, he miraculously feeds them.
 3. John 19:25–27. Jesus, while on the cross, asks that his mother be cared for.
- How did Jesus Christ treat others? What are some things we can do to follow his example?

Serving Others Helps Us Develop Charity

Add 2. *Giving service* to the chalkboard.

Explain that once after Jesus explained the commandment to love our neighbor, a man asked him, “Who is my neighbour?” (see Luke 10:25–29). Jesus answered by telling a parable, or a story intended to teach a lesson.

Show the picture of the good Samaritan, and have class members read the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–35. Then have them answer the question asked by the Savior:

- “Which now of these three . . . was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?” (Luke 10:36).

After class members have responded to the question, have them read the answer in Luke 10:37. Emphasize that all people are our neighbors. Invite class members to “go . . . and do thou likewise,” as the Savior said.

Chalkboard
and scripture
discussion

- What are some things we can do to be good neighbors to all people? How will being a good neighbor help us develop charity?

Story and
discussion

Tell in your own words the following story:

“Snow fell lightly on the cold, bitter Canadian landscape. Overhead a dome of gray, lifeless clouds blended with the bare aspens on the ground, painting a gloomy picture. I gazed listlessly out the window of our [pickup truck]. The scene outside matched my own downcast spirits. My companion, Elder Hancock, was humming ‘Joy to the World’ to himself, half smiling and lightly tapping his fingers on the rim of the steering wheel. Christmas, my first one away from home, was in three days. I’d always enjoyed the same sort of traditional Christmas each year at home. But that was behind me now and far away like my family. I wanted this Christmas to be the same but knew inside that it wouldn’t be. . . .

“ . . . Our apartment was bare of any sign of Christmas. We didn’t even have time to put up a tree. At first we had agreed to spend the entire Christmas day in active missionary work, but Elder Hancock soon sensed my lack of enthusiasm and arranged for us to have dinner with some members that night.

“‘Elder,’ he said as we drove into town, ‘what you need more than a turkey dinner is a little TPLOC in your life.’ He grinned to himself as if he’d just made a very witty remark. I stared out the window, pretending to ignore him. I always wondered how he stayed so cheerful. Trying to teach me the discussions, along with keeping track of the area we’d opened up, must have been hard for him; yet I never heard him complain or get despondent. Oh well, I did enough of that for both of us. I wondered what he meant by TPLOC. Probably some new missionary term no one had bothered to tell me about.”

Write *TPLOC* on the chalkboard. Then continue with the story:

“We pulled off onto a wide street in the older part of town, parked our truck, and began tracting. The boardwalks raised above the frozen earth snapped in protest as we stepped on them. Houses on this street were rundown, unpainted, and inanimate. . . . Several houses were empty. At the first corner we encountered a small shack that, in comparison, made the other houses on the street look good.

“The house hid all signs of ever having been painted. There were no power outlets attached; here we would find no electricity. My companion knocked on the door. . . . Small timid footsteps started at the back of the house and worked forward toward the door. It creaked open, and I beheld a living museum piece.

“The woman stood four-and-a-half feet tall. Her face was full of wrinkles, so much so that it was only with effort I could make out two piercing, coal-black eyes peeking out of the crevasses. She invited us in. As I suspected, her home was also threadbare on the inside, yet it was spotless.

“Her name was Mrs. Ivar, and she was a 98-year-old immigrant from Poland. We tried to teach a discussion, but it was hard—she was so lonely. She had just learned that none of her children would be home for Christmas, and so she would be alone. I felt sorry for the lady, but we had work to do. We talked a little longer and then left.

“The next day we finished our preparations for Christmas. We had asked the Relief Society to bake us some cakes to take out to investigators. They responded

in numbers, and soon our small apartment was lined with assorted cakes. One sister brought us three. She said she wanted to bake one for us, but reasoned that if she baked two we'd give them both away, so she had baked three. I smiled at that but couldn't help thinking how bare our place looked without a tree.

"Christmas came swiftly, on a bright clear day. My stomach tied itself in knots at the thought of barging into investigators' homes on Christmas day. If Elder Hancock was nervous, he hid it well. It took us most of the day to deliver our cakes. People were glad to see us, all of them, even one man who had thrown us out earlier. By dusk we had only one cake left, the cake that was ours, and our dinner was in half an hour. As we climbed in the truck I had visions of hot turkey and stuffing drenched in cranberries. Elder Hancock paused to look at something as he slid in. I looked and saw nothing—except that old row of houses we had tracted out earlier. They were leaning at crazy angles, Mrs. Ivar's being the worst.

"That's whose house he's looking at,' I thought to myself. I knew my companion too well. 'He wants us to miss our dinner appointment and give our last cake to that old lady.' He turned and saw me eyeing the house, too. His eyes met mine, and he waited; he knew me pretty well also. This would be my decision.

"I thought of the member's home where we were expected—warm, inviting, full of life. It wasn't our fault that none of the old woman's kids could make it back home. She wasn't even good for a discussion, so why bother?

"I shifted my weight and thought of home. My sister would be back from school, and my brother would be there with his family. But what if, for some reason, none of us could make it? What if that were my mother all alone on Christmas? A lump as large as a grapefruit grew in my throat.

"I glanced at Elder Hancock and said, 'I never did go for cake much.'

"He grinned. We stopped to phone our excuses to the member family and then sped over to spend the rest of the day in the company of a great lady. She told us stories of her homeland and her Christmases as a girl. . . . Before we left, Mrs. Ivar had a new pile of wood for her stove and a half-eaten cake for her pantry.

"On the way back to our apartment I tried to tell Elder Hancock how I felt, but the words just wouldn't come. The phone was ringing as we stepped in. Elder Hancock answered it while I put on some hot chocolate.

"'Guess what?' he announced, after a brief discussion. 'I've been transferred.'

"I didn't know what to say, there was so much. Finally I blurted, 'Well, before you go there's one thing I want to know. What does TPLOC stand for?'

"'It stands for what you caught a feeling of today, Elder Johnson. TPLOC stands for "The Pure Love of Christ." And it tastes much better than a turkey dinner.' With that he began to pack" (Kelly Johnson, "The Secret of TPLOC," *New Era*, Aug. 1979, 40–42).

- What important lesson did Elder Johnson learn? How does this apply to us?

Point out that as we help other people, our love for them grows.

Heavenly Father Will Help Us Develop Charity

Chalkboard
and scripture
discussion

Explain that Mormon talked about another thing we can do to develop charity. Have class members read and mark Moroni 7:48.

Show the picture Bedside Prayer. Add 3. *Praying for help* to the list on the chalkboard.

- Why do you think prayer is important in our efforts to develop charity?

Explain that we need Heavenly Father's help to be filled with this kind of love. He will fill us with charity if we sincerely ask for that blessing and make an effort to follow the Savior's example in our relationships with others.

Testimony

Share your gratitude for the love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for us, and testify of the joy that comes to us when we have charity for others.

Encourage class members to develop love for their neighbors by following Jesus Christ's example, giving service, and praying to be filled with "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47).

Enrichment Activities

You may want to use one or more of these activities during the lesson.

1. Sing with class members "Love One Another" (*Children's Songbook*, 136). You may also want to teach class members the song in sign language, as shown on page 137 of the *Children's Songbook*.
2. If *Book of Mormon Video Presentations* (53911) is available, show "My Joy Is Full," a four-minute segment, in connection with your reading of 3 Nephi 17:7–13, 17–23.
3. Make a copy of the puzzle on the next page for each class member. Give each class member a copy of the puzzle and a pen or pencil. (If it is not feasible to make copies, prepare the puzzle on a poster and have class members work together.) Explain that one of the scriptural messages discussed in this lesson is hidden in the puzzle. Tell class members to start with the second letter in the puzzle, *C*, and write down every second letter in the blanks to find the message ("Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever").

