

Stopping Prejudice

Quarter 10 | Lesson 7 | Character Development

1. **Connecting:** Create role-plays about prejudice and talk about how to respond.
2. **Teaching:** Learn common types of prejudice and talk about ways to stop prejudice
(Luke 10:27, 30–37; 1 Samuel 16:7; Leviticus 19:14; Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:25).
3. **Responding:** Create art to encourage others to recognize and stop prejudice.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, image of the Good Samaritan
- Paper
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Before class, tear out the situations at the end of the lesson and separate the sections. You will use these situations for the Connecting activity.

Teacher Devotion

*“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”
Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.
John 1:46*

Jesus called His disciples from many different places, different professions, and different social classes. He spent His days on earth with those society would consider the worst—the sick, the poor, the tax collectors, the prostitutes. He travelled, talked, and ate with people who understood what it felt like to be judged and condemned by others. They knew the effects of prejudice in real and painful ways. And, as this passage tells us, even Jesus faced prejudice. If Nathanael had allowed his prejudices against the people of Nazareth to govern his choices, he might have stayed in Bethsaida. But instead, Nathanael decided to “come and see”—and what he saw changed his life forever. He saw Jesus!

Each day, you have similar choices to make. You can choose to follow your prejudices, or you can allow love to determine your direction. Will you embrace the opportunities and the people God puts in your path? Or will you allow your prejudices to hinder you? It is difficult to open your mind and heart to those who may seem different. But as you start the journey, know that you are not alone. God can help you to erase prejudice from your heart. Come and see.

Lesson Time

1. Connecting: Create role-plays about prejudice and talk about how to respond.

Greet the students and ask them to share ways they were able to show honour to others. Congratulate them for their efforts. If you have time, allow 2–3 students to share their stories with the whole group.

Divide students into 4 groups. Give each group a situation from the tear-out page at the end of the lesson. The situations are listed below for your reference.

Teacher Tip: Some of your students may have deeply rooted prejudices against certain people or groups, possibly without even recognizing these feelings. Listen as the groups prepare their role-plays and remind the students to show honour to others, including those who are different.

Situation 1: Vanya has a skin disorder that makes her skin lighter than her friends' skin. Other teens stare at her and tease her. She often wears scarves and hats to cover her face and long sleeves to cover her arms.

Situation 2: Akil is deaf. He often mispronounces words because he has never heard them. When the teacher asks Akil to read out loud, he says the words incorrectly. The teacher and the other students mock Akil.

Situation 3: Maria was forced to leave school when she was 8 years old, but her older brother still attends school. When Maria asks why she cannot go back to school, her parents tell her that educated girls do not make good wives.

Situation 4: Aberto finds out about a housecleaning job near his home. When he applies for the job, the woman says she will not hire him. "Girls are better workers than boys," she says. "Boys do not work as hard, and they always steal."

Give the groups 5–6 minutes to discuss their situations and create a short role-play to show the best ways to respond to each situation. Then gather the class together and have the groups present their role-plays. After each role-play, ask the following questions:

- Did this show a positive way to respond to prejudice? Why or why not?
- How could the people in this situation have responded better?

After all of the role-plays are finished, ask the following questions.

- What types of prejudice are present in our community?
- Why do you think these prejudices exist?

Teacher Tip: Do not allow students to begin to blame others for any prejudice in the community. This lesson is about changing their own hearts and minds. If they get angry or begin blaming others, redirect the conversation to the important points of the lesson. Help them to remember that God can give them the wisdom, the courage, and the discernment to help to heal the prejudice in the community.

Today we will learn more about common types of prejudice, and we will work together to discover ways to stop prejudice in our community.

2. Teaching: Learn common types of prejudice and talk about ways to stop prejudice (Luke 10:27, 30–37; 1 Samuel 16:7; Leviticus 19:14; Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:25).

One reason prejudice exists is because it is accepted in a culture or community. Often people do not even recognize it as prejudice. So the first step we can take to stop prejudice is to recognize it. We need to be able to see prejudices in our community and even in ourselves. This may be difficult, but we can ask God for help. When we are able to recognize prejudice in our own thoughts and feelings, we can begin to overcome it.

Many prejudices are deeply rooted in cultures and families. They have existed for many years and through many generations, so change is slow and often challenging. But we can begin by making a change in ourselves. We can choose to think or speak in a different way—based on truth and love instead of prejudice. We can begin to share our new perspectives with others. We can also try to defend and become friends with those who are victims of prejudice.

Let's read what Jesus taught about how to treat others.

He answered, "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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Luke 10:27

After Jesus said these words, someone asked Jesus who his "neighbour" was.

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said neighbour?

In response to this question, Jesus shared a parable. Let's read it.

Optional: If possible, share the image from The Action Bible.

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:30–37

In Jesus' time, Jewish people had very strong prejudices against Samaritans. Jewish people often mistreated the Samaritans and refused to do business with them. A Samaritan probably would not have helped an injured Jewish man who was lying on the side of the road. It seems more likely that the priest or the Levite, a Jewish religious leader, would have helped the injured man. Instead, it was the Samaritan who showed kindness and mercy.

- **What does this story teach us about prejudice?**

We should care for and love others, regardless of who they are. We should not allow prejudice to stop us from doing what is right.

- **How could acting like the Samaritan help us to stop prejudice in our community?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

Now we will talk about some common prejudices and work together to find ways we can use what we have learned to stop these kinds of prejudice in our own community. We know from our last lesson that the best ways to respond to prejudice are to recognize it, to change our own attitudes and behaviours, and to show God's love to everyone. Think about these ideas as we decide how we should respond to different types of prejudice.

The most common types of prejudice are those based on what a person looks like and where he was born. Many people have prejudices about people who come from different countries and regions and whose appearance is different than their own. Where a person lives often influences how he looks, how he dresses, how he talks, and what traditions and customs he practices. And where a person is born is often reflected in his appearance.

Though our background and where we live do make us different, these things do not define who we are. The true measure of who we are is our character. Listen to what the Bible tells us about this.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

*The LORD does not look at the things people look at.
People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*
1 Samuel 16:7

- **What are some specific examples of this type of prejudice in our community? Do not use names. Just describe situations you have seen.**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts. If the teens do not mention common prejudices in your community, be sure to share them for discussion.

- **Why do you think these prejudices exist?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

- **Based on what this verse teaches us, what can we do to stop this kind of prejudice?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

Another common type of prejudice is based on ability. Many people believe that those with illnesses and disabilities are less valuable than those who do not have these disabilities. But disabilities are not imperfections. They are simply differences. Listen to how the Lord tells us to treat those with disabilities:

*Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind,
but fear your God. I am the LORD.*
Leviticus 19:14

- **What are some specific examples of this type of prejudice in our community?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts. If the teens do not mention common prejudices in your community, be sure to share them for discussion.

- **Why do you think these prejudices exist?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

- **Based on what this verse teaches us, what can we do to stop this kind of prejudice?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

Another common prejudice is based on gender. God created men and women to be different. Neither is more valuable or more important to God. They are created to work together and to help one another. Both men and women have important roles in every community. All people, no matter what their race, their social status, or their gender might be, are equally loved by and important to God. Listen to what the Bible tells us about God's family.

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
Galatians 3:28

- **What are some specific examples of this type of prejudice in our community?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts. If the teens do not mention common prejudices in your community, be sure to share them for discussion.

- **Why do you think these prejudices exist?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

- **Based on what this verse teaches us, what can we do to stop this kind of prejudice?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

Another type of prejudice is based on social class. Many people have prejudices against people of other social classes—both those of lower social classes and those of higher ones. In the early church, many people struggled with prejudices and misunderstandings about who Jesus' message of hope was for. But the Bible explains that all believers are part of the body of Christ and that all people should care for one another.

*That there should be no division in the body,
but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.*
1 Corinthians 12:25

- **This verse is intended for Christian believers. But how can these same ideas help all of us?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts. Then guide them to understand that choosing kindness and caring instead of judgment can bring peace in all situations, not just the church.

- **What are some specific examples of this type of prejudice in our community?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts. If the teens do not mention common prejudices in your community, be sure to share them for discussion.

- **Why do you think these prejudices exist?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

- **Based on what this verse teaches us, what can we do to stop this kind of prejudice?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

Overcoming prejudice can be difficult. But when we recognize the different types of prejudice and ask God to reveal the prejudices in our own hearts and share what we have learned about prejudice with others, we can begin to heal the prejudices in our community.

3. Responding: Create art to encourage others to recognize and stop prejudice.

Poems and songs help us to share information in interesting and memorable ways. Now we will create our own poems and songs to tell people in our community about prejudice and how to stop it. Be sure that your song or poem shares a positive message, not a negative one.

Divide the students into groups of 4–5. Have each group create an original poem, song, cheer, or rap that inspires people to stop prejudice. They can include motions, appropriate dance moves, and inspiring words. If they create a song, they can use a familiar tune or create their own.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, the students can write their poems or songs on their pages.

Give the students 5–7 minutes to create poems or songs. Then allow the groups to present their creative work. Lead the class in clapping for their poems and songs. Encourage the teens to share their songs or poems with others in the community as well.

Close with a blessing based on Matthew 7:12:

Blessing: May God give you the wisdom to recognize prejudice, the courage to stop it, and the compassion to treat others the way you want to be treated.

Family Connection: Encourage the students to share their poems or songs with their families. They can then discuss prejudice in the community and talk about ways to stop it.

Lead the teens in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "A Thousand Hallelujahs" by Brooke Ligertwood: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeS49pSXDts>