

Christian Meditation

Virtue to Live By: Love of Neighbour & Compassion

"Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than this." Mark 12:31

*"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you."
2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

Virtue to live by Statement

I know that loving my neighbour means loving EVERYONE.

I show my compassion when I am patient, understanding and loving to my neighbour.

Setting the Scene/Focal point on floor or low table:

Green cloth Ordinary time, candles, dimmed lights, spiritual/reflective image on interactive whiteboard or as part of prayer focus, Bible, prayer stones, religious artefacts, plants, shells, objects to link to the theme.

Meditative music/ peaceful/calming hymns quietly playing e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW8r1JzsuPk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoguumq8VvY>

Gathering together – children enter to calm meditative music and sit in a horseshoe around the focal point.

Stillness exercise

Close your eyes, sit comfortably, place your hands on your knees, allow the music to help you relax, take a deep breath in slowly and deeply through your nose, hold your breath for 3-4 seconds and breathe out through your mouth. Continue to take a few deep breaths, allowing the music to help you relax each part of your body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. Lift your shoulders and then relax, relax your arms, legs, stomach, face, concentrating on your breathing inhale...exhale...inhale...exhale...every part of your body.

Love of Neighbour meditation

We share this time together in meditation friends and neighbours. Who is our neighbour you might think?" Jesus teaches us that a true neighbour has nothing to do with closeness. Our neighbour is anyone who crosses our path in life. As disciples of Jesus, everyone we meet should see the love of Christ in us, so that He can be glorified through us.

We hear in the Bible, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35. This is one of the greatest commandments.

Now let us go and be with Jesus to learn more about how we can love our neighbours as we love ourselves and show compassion for others. We are called to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We are to love one another and grow in love that puts others first.

When we spend time with Jesus in meditation it brings us closer to Him and deepens our love for Him.

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Listening to Jesus and learning from his parables helps keep our love strong. It also helps us share Jesus with others. As friends together, neighbours together, let us share this special time in meditation and prayer with Jesus.

Let us focus on this...take a deep breath...inhale and exhale...

Take this time to feel safe and loved in the presence of the Lord.

Imagine you are walking down a dusty road. It is daybreak, the sky is a wondrous warm shade of pink on the horizon. There are beautiful hues of yellow and blue beginning to appear. The sun is slowly rising, and it is not too hot. You know it is going to be a wonderful day and you want to make the most of every minute that God has given us.

Feel the warm sun on your shoulders, take a deep breath in and relax, allowing your shoulders to drop and allow your breathing to slow down...inhale slowly...and exhale slowly...

Begin to walk down the dusty road and listen to the tweeting of morning birds as they awaken in their nests in the trees that line the side of the road.

As you continue to walk, people begin to awaken and start their day. Just ahead you see a group of people gathering next to a tree. As you walk closer, you recognise that it is Jesus. You also begin to recognise Jesus disciples are the people sitting with him. Go and join Jesus and his disciples... he sees you and calls for you to join them.

He calls you by your name... you walk closer...Jesus smiles at you. He pats the ground for you to sit down. Jesus is talking to his disciples about being a good neighbour and is telling them the story of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus says that a man was once travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by thieves who stole his clothes and wounded him, leaving him half-dead. A Jewish priest came past, but although he saw the man, he passed by on the other side of the road.

Then a Levite, a member of a different tribe, came past and looked at the poor man, but he, too, walked on by on the other side of the road.

But then a Samaritan passed, and when he saw the man in need of help, he had compassion and he went to him and bound up his wounds with oil and wine. Then he put the man on his horse and led him to an inn, where he looked after the man.

The next day, the Samaritan must leave the inn, but he gives the innkeeper two pence and asks him to look after the wounded man. He also says that if the innkeeper needs to spend more money on looking after the man, the Samaritan will repay him when he returns.

Jesus asks you and his disciples which of these was the true neighbour of the man who was attacked by thieves? You answer it is the man who showed mercy and helped him in his time of need. Jesus smiles and tells you to follow the Samaritan's example and help others and show love of neighbour.

Spend some time with the disciples in quiet prayer, to Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

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'Dear Lord, you have said that to truly love you then I must also love my neighbour, which can be difficult sometimes. Yet in overcoming those difficulties it is possible to see the miracle that you love someone like me. Teach us to love, Lord, as you have loved us that this world might be a better place and we will seek to help our neighbours and those in greater need than ourselves.'

Spend a moment telling Jesus what you are going to do to be a good neighbour and put others before yourself...

Jesus is pleased with you; he is smiling and reaches out his hand to you to say good bye. It is time to leave Jesus...say goodbye... Jesus gives you a hug goodbye...

It is hard to say goodbye to such a good friend. Tell Jesus you will talk to Him soon. Slowly get up and walk away... turn and wave goodbye to Jesus. He is smiling at you... as you walk away know that Jesus is always there for you.

When you are ready, open your eyes and come back into the room. Bring your consciousness back to the words love of neighbour. As you breathe in, concentrate on the word love... and as you breathe out, concentrate on neighbour...take a few breaths and relax. Begin to gently wiggle your toes and fingers and slowly sit up.

This story of the good Samaritan shows us that a true neighbour has nothing to do with closeness. A "good Samaritan" is someone who goes above and beyond to help someone in their time of need. But the time of need isn't always a dramatic one. Someone's time of need may be when they need to experience patience, compassion, or gentleness.

Jesus lived a life of love and service for his neighbours.

Following the example of Jesus means that we can never just walk by when we see those in need. This is a big challenge because it is not always as simple as helping individuals. We have the responsibility to help build a society that looks after all the poor, marginalised and disadvantaged. This is a journey we embark on for life.

Take a few deep breaths and listen to this prayer.

Closing prayer

Dear Jesus,
All I am, and all I have,
I offer, Lord, to you.
I offer you these hands,
that you might use them
in and through my daily work.
I offer you these feet,
that you might lead them
to someone who needs my help.

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I offer you these shoulders
if you should them
to help lighten another's load.
I offer you this voice
that you might use it
to speak up for those in need.
All I am, and all I have,
I offer, Lord, to you. Amen.