



## Wednesday Prayer

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Equipping youth to journey safely

***[The lawyer] 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." And [Jesus] said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 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." Luke 10:25-37 (excerpt)***

These are obviously verses selected from the familiar story known as "The Good Samaritan." Jesus answers a man's question about how to inherit eternal life by telling a parable. A traveler is seriously harmed by strangers, seen but ignored by supposedly religious folks, and finally aided by the person we least expected—a despised Samaritan.

Suppose the road from Jerusalem to Jericho had better signs. "Caution: not a safe road to travel alone!" "Watch for thieves around the next corner!" "It would be safer to turn around now!" Could the traveler have stayed out of trouble with a better map, or if he or she had a trusted person to show them a safer way?

When our youth and adolescents are on their journey, becoming ever more independent, do they know how to recognize potential dangers on the road? Can they identify the warning signs? "What does this person really want from me?" "Why would I trust this stranger?" "Does all this attention mean he loves me?"

How can your congregation help children and youth travel more safely by equipping them to recognize the signs that they or a friend may be a target for exploitation? Cherish All Children shares many tools and resources to train our teens to be prepared for situations that arise by knowing what to watch for and having a plan to stay safe. Rather than passing by on the other side, you can be a neighbor to them and empower them to travel safely.

**God, help us to be neighbors to the children in our midst by equipping them to journey safely. Help them to be watchful for those who would do them harm and protect them from dangers along the road. And when we encounter travelers who need help, teach us to show mercy and bring them safely home. Amen.**

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Written by Gay Gonnerman, lay faith formation minister at Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer in south Minneapolis, development officer for a non-profit agency, and Cherish All Children Advisory Board member.