

## Serving my local community

You are a member of another very important community: **Your neighbourhood**

Where you live, there are many people who you may see on a daily basis and others who you may see rarely. Friendly neighbours can make a big difference to the lives of people who live in them. There are times when we need the support of those people who live closest to us. Neighbours can help each other in little ways all the time. You can make a difference to your local community by choosing to build helpful and supportive relationships with the people who live around you.

*When we help and love another person, we are helping and loving Jesus.  
God is not absent from our lives. He lives in our neighbour.*

***Every person, no matter how small,  
Is a person of great dignity.  
Every person is Jesus in disguise.***

The way in which we respond to the people we come across in our daily lives is a measure of our willingness to love in a real and practical way. Our lives are busy, full of all the important things that we have to do. It requires an effort on our part to take the time to give someone a hand or spend time with someone who we may not know all that well, but the rewards from making this effort are great. We can help to build friendly relationships in our neighbourhood and connect people with each other.

### **Why should we be concerned about the people who live nearby?**

In the Gospels of Matthew (22:34-40), Mark (12:28-34) and Luke (10:25-28), Jesus explains to his followers that the essence of all the commandments is summed up by just two:

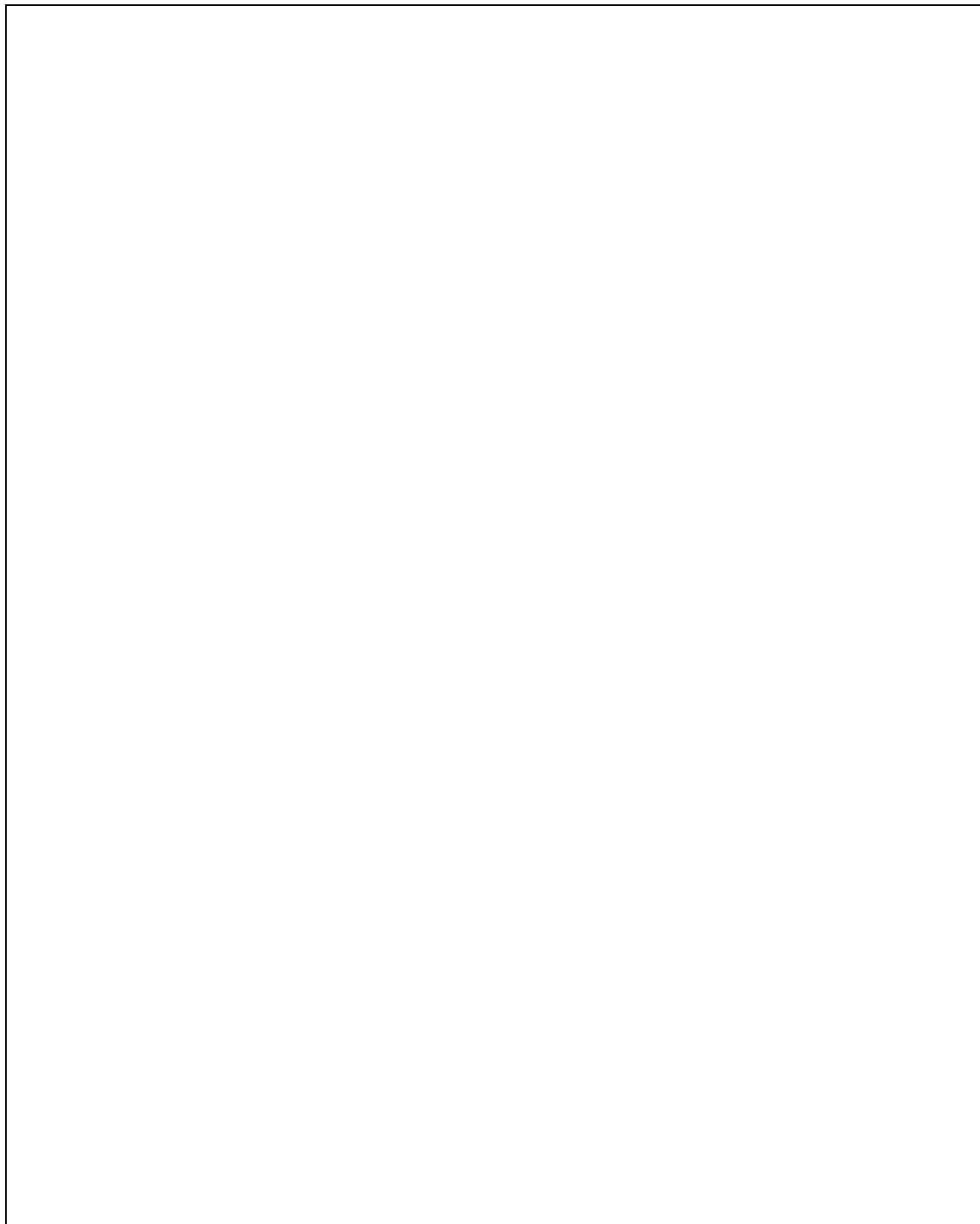
**‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.’**

In Luke’s gospel, Jesus explains to a lawyer who wants to test what he is saying, what he means by **your neighbour**. He tells the story of the **Good Samaritan** to make it clear. At the end of this story, he turns it back on to the lawyer by asking him: **‘Which one was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?’** and the lawyer replies: **‘The one who showed mercy’**. Jesus says: **‘Go and do likewise.’**

It is clear from this story that **our neighbour** is anyone we come across who **needs our help** and that we are obliged to **care for their needs**.

## My local neighbourhood

Draw a diagram of your neighbourhood. Make sure you include all the main buildings and places like parks and areas where people socialise. On each of the houses, describe the people who live in them as best you can. Colour each house according to how well you know the people, e.g. warm colours for those whom you are friendly.



**Homework:** Find out more about the community in which you live by asking your parents or other family members what they know. Spend some time outdoors observing the people who live in your area. Fill in the details on your diagram.

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