

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Zenith



By: Acata Felton

Layout by Olivia Montoya

*A pervasive, solo LARP for 8 days.
Variation available for up to 8 players.*

Duration: 30 min per day (solo)

Content Warnings:

This game is, by its very nature, a game about the Catholic religion, feeling left out of it, and carving your own space. The game encourages vulnerability and honesty, while examining an alternative to a traditional religious structure.

Logistics for Playing Solo Game:

You will use journaling to play the game as a solo player. This game takes place in **8 sessions** (played 1/day or 1/week), with an intro session 0 tacked onto the beginning of session 1 and a debrief session 9 tacked on to the end of session 8. Each round plays in **3 parts**: the **Introduction**, the **Experience**, and the **Reflection**. The details of the "character" you will play, and of what to do in each session and each part are covered in the table on the next pages. If you miss a session, just pick up the next one when you are able.

Logistics for the Study Group Variation:

You can play this game with a study group of up to 8 players with the following changes:

- Designate someone as the facilitator, to help keep sessions on track.
- You can meet online or in person.
- Meet 1x a week. - You will need 9 sessions to complete the game.
- Do the **reflection** for the previous "session" and the **introduction** for the next "session" in the same study group meeting.
- Players should seek out the **experience** for each "session" between study group meetings.
- Share your answers to the questions rather than journaling them.
 - Do not debate anyone's experience; the group is here to bear witness to what each person is sharing, and to provide emotional support.

Caring for Yourself and Each Other:

This game is meant to facilitate vulnerability by deliberately blurring the line between life and LARP, so we must handle ourselves and each other with care. Prepare for sessions by doing what you need to do to come in with enough resources to talk about difficult stuff. Stick to "I" statements when answering questions.

Remember that the player is more important than the game. If someone becomes upset or overwhelmed, take a pause and help them find support, either among the players or elsewhere. Even if you are playing solo, you get to pause to take care of yourself.

Inspiration for this Game:

I am writing from my own experiences only. I do not speak for anyone else's, whether within the Catholic church or elsewhere.

I am an Atheist who was raised Catholic, in a place that was ~70% Latter Day Saints (LDS). This game focuses on recreating that feeling of being disconnected from Catholicism (which was disconnected from the dominant cultural religion), and finding my own morality—inspired by, but not beholden to, that particular Doctrine.

"[The Good Samaritan](#)" is a parable told by Jesus about a person held in low regard choosing to act in a moral way, even when well respected religious people did not. The message from Priests when this story comes up was usually "Be like the Good Samaritan. Do good because it is the right thing to do, not because the Lord has promised you a reward for doing so." The message always felt... weird to me. Why go to all the effort to feel the Truth of God's promises, only to set them aside when you are presented with the opportunity to do good? Why not just be good? This game is about being that Good Samaritan.

[The Beatitudes](#) are a set of guidance and comforts issued by Jesus in the New Testament, as part of the Sermon on the Mount. We will use these, and a Catholic interpretation of them, as the blueprint for the game. This game is about finding or creating your own comforts, motivations, goals, and morality.

Acknowledgements:

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN SESSION GUIDE

Session

Purpose

Baselining

Introduction

0

(pre-game)
Combine with
Session 1



Review the game content and structure, answer the baselining questions, and read the **introduction** material.



For session zero, answer the following questions as yourself (we'll feel into the "character" for game afterwards):

- What was your experience with organized religion growing up?
- What is your experience now?



"The Good Samaritan" is a game about taking "The Beatitudes," a portion of the New Testament, a Christian religious text, and assigning meaning to it without dependency on a divine power (e.g.: through a [humanist](#) lens). We do this not to disrespect the religious interpretation, but rather to examine an alternative experience. This design has a large amount of intentional "[bleed](#)." The game will carry the most impact for players who have a strong current or previous experience with Catholicism or Christianity. If you don't, you can still play this game, but the experience may be more of an intellectual exercise; there will likely be less bleed, and developing the **persona** to play may be more challenging.

Answer the Session questions below, neither as yourself, nor as a full-fledged character you have preconceived. Your "character" for this game starts as a **persona** removed from yourself by as few degrees as you feel comfortable with, while being willing to mindfully construct a moral system for themselves. This persona might be wondering, "where does morality come from?" Don't answer this question yet. Instead, answer the questions and meet the **Experiences** as this **Persona**. With each new session, build out layers of this persona allowing them to grow into their own, complete person, as organically as possible.

Session

Focus

*1 beatitude per game session
(terms defined in the catholic
interpretation)*

Introduction

*Questions to answer at the beginning
of the day. (~ 15 minutes.)*

Experience

*Things to watch for or
act on during the day*

Reflection

*Questions to answer at the end
of the day. (~ 15 minutes.)*

1

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit
(i.e.: humble), for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven (i.e.: a
better, future world, not
necessarily the afterlife)."*

What is "humility"? What is
"pride"? Are they opposed?

If one does not have a "kingdom of
heaven" to earn what could be
another reason to be humble?

Look for a time when:

- You or someone else is
being "proud".
- You or someone else is
being "humble".

Is it ever "bad" to be humble?
Is it ever bad to have "pride"?

How can you recognize and
lift other people's
accomplishments?

2

*"Blessed are they who mourn
(i.e.: show remorse for past
sins), for they shall be
comforted."*

What actions do you mourn?

What feels comforting to you?

Try to:

Provide comfort to someone (it
could be yourself. You may find the
phrase "is there anything I can do
to support you?" helpful in
approaching people.

How do you "mourn"
something or someone?

What feels supportive to you
when you are trying to change
a behavior?

3

*"Blessed are the meek (i.e.
submissive to the will of
God), for they shall inherit
the earth."*

Where do you draw the line
between honoring your own limits
and deferring to an authority?

If one does not have God's will to
submit to, how else can we define
"meekness"?

Look for a time when:

- You defer to someone
when you don't really want
to.
- A time when someone else
capitulates, either to you or
a third party.

In what ways could being
"meek" be valuable to you?

How do you communicate a
personal boundary to
someone else?

4

*"Blessed are they who hunger
and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied."*

What is the value of pursuing
righteousness when we can't
guarantee success without a higher
power?

What qualifies a cause as righteous?

Try to:

Do or say something that forwards
one of your convictions.

What change do you want to
work toward in this world?

How can you be receptive to
changes other people are
advocating for?

5

*"Blessed are the merciful, for
they shall obtain mercy."*

How are "mercy" and "forgiveness"
different?

How does receiving mercy make
you feel?

Look for:

- A time when you feel angry,
or like someone has
wronged you.
- An unmet need someone
has.

Is it ever appropriate to
withhold mercy?

How does granting someone
else mercy feel to you?

6

"Blessed are the pure of heart (i.e. selfless), for they shall see God."

If there is no God to see, why be "selfless"?

How does receiving something (e.g.: a gift, an act of service) make you feel?

Try to:

- Do something nice for someone without any possibility of them finding out it was you.
- Identify a "mutual aid" group or a "buy nothing" group near you.

Is being selfless in order to get something a contradiction?

Is empathy important or necessary for selflessness?

7

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

Who in your life would you call a "peacemaker"?

What activities bring you peace, or help you feel peaceful?

Look for:

- Conflict between two people.
- Cooperation between two people.

When is "choosing violence" necessary or appropriate?

How do you address conflict happening around you? How do you address it in yourself?

8

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness (i.e.: made to endure pain and suffering), for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

If there is no "Kingdom of Heaven" for you to look forward to, what are other reasons to tolerate pain or suffering?

What helps you feel like someone is on your side or supporting you?

Try to:

- Take an action to ameliorate someone's pain in the present.
- Connect briefly with someone who has a different life experience than you.

How can you stand up for yourself or others, either in an individual instance, or as part of addressing a systemic imbalance?

How do you identify what is "good" or "moral" in your life?

Session

Purpose

Introduction

Concluding

9

(post-game)
Combine with Session 8

To reflect on the experience of playing this game and provide closure.

Read the material in the box to the right either to yourself, or out loud to the group.

Welcome to Session 9. This time is for derolling and debriefing from the game.

Thank you for playing "The Good Samaritan." Take a moment to bring to mind the persona you have developed over the course of this game. Acknowledge that you have been playing a game, and that you are separate from this persona. If you want, thank them for the experience. Take a deep breath. Close your journal for a moment (if you're using one). Stand up and stretch. Sit back down when you're ready. The concluding questions will help guide you out of the experience of playing this game.

For session nine, answer the following questions as yourself:

- What is something you did during this game that you wouldn't have done as yourself? How do you feel about it?
- What part of the persona became the most **different** from you? What part remained the most **similar**?
- Is there any part of this persona that you are looking forward to putting aside or getting rid of?
- Did you gain any new perspectives or approaches that you want to keep?
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Session	Focus	Introduction	Experience	Reflection
	<i>1 beatitude per game session (terms defined in the catholic interpretation)</i>	<i>Questions to answer at the beginning of the day. (~ 15 minutes.)</i>	<i>Things to watch for or act on during the day</i>	<i>Questions to answer at the end of the day. (~ 15 minutes.)</i>
1	<i>"Blessed are the poor in spirit (i.e: humble), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (i.e.: a better, future world, not necessarily the afterlife)."</i>	<p>What is "humility"? What is "pride"? Are they opposed?</p> <p>If one does not have a "kingdom of heaven" to earn what could be another reason to be humble?</p>	<p>Look for a time when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You or someone else is being "proud". • You or someone else is being "humble". 	<p>Is it ever "bad" to be humble? Is it ever bad to have "pride"?</p> <p>How can you recognize and lift other people's accomplishments?</p>

2	<i>"Blessed are they who mourn (i.e.: show remorse for past sins), for they shall be comforted."</i>	<p>What actions do you mourn?</p> <p>What feels comforting to you?</p>	<p>Try to: Provide comfort to someone (it could be yourself). You may find the phrase "is there anything I can do to support you?" helpful in approaching people.</p>	<p>How do you "mourn" something or someone?</p> <p>What feels supportive to you when you are trying to change a behavior?</p>
3	<i>"Blessed are the meek (i.e. submissive to the will of God), for they shall inherit the earth."</i>	<p>Where do you draw the line between honoring your own limits and deferring to an authority?</p> <p>If one does not have God's will to submit to, how else can we define "meekness"?</p>	<p>Look for a time when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You defer to someone when you don't really want to. A time when someone else capitulates, either to you or a third party. 	<p>In what ways could being "meek" be valuable to you?</p> <p>How do you communicate a personal boundary to someone else?</p>
4	<i>"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."</i>	<p>What is the value of pursuing righteousness when we can't guarantee success without a higher power?</p> <p>What qualifies a cause as righteous?</p>	<p>Try to: Do or say something that forwards one of your convictions.</p>	<p>What change do you want to work toward in this world?</p> <p>How can you be receptive to changes other people are advocating for?</p>
5	<i>"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."</i>	<p>How are "mercy" and "forgiveness" different?</p> <p>How does receiving mercy make you feel?</p>	<p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A time when you feel angry, or like someone has wronged you. An unmet need someone has. 	<p>Is it ever appropriate to withhold mercy?</p> <p>How does granting someone else mercy feel to you?</p>
6	<i>"Blessed are the pure of heart (i.e. selfless), for they shall see God."</i>	<p>If there is no God to see, why be "selfless"?</p> <p>How does receiving something (e.g.: a gift, an act of service) make you feel?</p>	<p>Try to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do something nice for someone without any possibility of them finding out it was you. Identify a "mutual aid" group or a "buy nothing" group near you. 	<p>Is being selfless in order to get something a contradiction?</p> <p>Is empathy important or necessary for selflessness?</p>

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