

The Parable of the Bridge

Items needed for this lesson:

20ft section of clothesline type rope.

1ft section of rope for each person present, in addition to the 20ft section.

Have two individuals read and practice this parable.

Have them choose which role they will play.

Give them the 20ft section of rope

Have Chapter leader set the stage, if nothing else describe a visual of a bridge 20-30ft above the river below, narrate the story.

Have helpers act out the parable.

The more they can memorize the better it will work, though use the script as needed.

It is okay to improvise.

When completed, ask the "actors" how they felt.

Leave them "on stage" to help with responses.

Ask the audience to respond.

As the leader, use questions from below to help promote critical thinking.

Allow chapter members to help direct the discussion, and you can insert your own questions as well.

As responses near an end, hand out one 12in section of rope to each person present.

Have them come forward, with a pair of scissors, cut their rope into two 6in pieces.

Ask them to name the person in their life that held the rope for them.

Tell the participant to connect with that person and to share this parable with them. Encourage the participant to tell them something like, "Thank you for holding my rope until I was ready for you to let go of it." Then, give that person the 6in section of your rope.

The second piece can be given to someone else that held the rope or that even had let go of the rope and set you free to recover. Also, feel free to keep the second piece as a reminder.

The Parable of the Bridge

First, read The Parable of the Bridge. Then, use critical thinking to answer the following questions and discuss as a group.

Define *parable*. Who are the characters in this *parable*?

The man crossing the bridge.

The stranger.

Whom do the two characters represent?

Which one most accurately represents the *old you* and which is the *present you*?

Name 3 individuals that were/ have been/ are your rope holders.

Name individuals that you were/ are holding the rope for.

Name a "*man on the bridge*" that has been there for you.

Remember that the man on the bridge did not choose to be involved.

Name someone in your life that chose to "*get*" involved.

What options did the man on the bridge have?

Refuse to hold the end of the rope.

Immediately let go of the rope as soon as the stranger jumped.

Let go at any time.

Pass the stranger off to someone else.

Find help.

Tie the rope around himself and hold on for dear life.

After doing all he could, the man on the bridge did what?

What options did the stranger have?

He could have asked the man on the bridge to come to him and then shared his problem.

He could have stood there on the bridge and asked for help.

He could have jumped off the bridge without including the other man.

He could have helped himself by starting to climb.

What do you think the stranger was thinking/ feeling?

What do you believe the man on the bridge was thinking/ feeling?

When did the man on the bridge become an “enabler”?

When did the man on the bridge have a “lights on” moment?

Did the man on the bridge make the best choice/ right choice or was there another choice?

As the man on the bridge, what would you do in this situation?

As the stranger, what did you think the man on the bridge would do?

What does God expect from us in similar situations?

As the man on the bridge or as the stranger, can you tell us an experience of a parable experience in your life?

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Script

Narrator: It is a moonlit night and alone in his thoughts he starts crossing a bridge. The man sees out of the corner of his eye a stranger dressed much like himself coming towards him. He thinks the man approaching is putting his hand out to greet him. However, the stranger has the end of a rope in his hand with the other end entwined around him.

Narrator: The stranger asks the man to hold the end of the rope. Whilst perplexed, the man complies.

Narrator: The stranger asks the man to hold on tight with two hands and then promptly jumps off the bridge toward the swift running deep river below. "Hold on" the stranger cries. The free-falling body hurtled the distance of the rope's length, and from the bridge the man abruptly felt the pull. He held tight despite being almost pulled over the side of the bridge. Peering down at the stranger who was close to oblivion the man yelled:

Man: What are you trying to do?!

Stranger: Just hold tight!

Narrator: The man tried to haul the stranger in, but he could not. He could not get enough leverage. His strength was almost perfectly counterbalanced by the other man's weight.

Man: Why did you do this? (calling out)

Stranger: Remember if you let go, I will be lost!

Man: But I cannot pull you up!

Stranger: I am your responsibility!

Man: Well, I did not ask for it!

Stranger: If you let go, I am lost!

Narrator: The man looked around for help, tried to invent solutions but could not think of any that would work. He waited for someone to come and help pull the stranger up, but no one came. Fearing that his arms could not hold out much longer, he tied the rope around his waist.

Man: Why did you do this? Don't you see what you have done? What possible purpose could you have had in mind?

Stranger: Just remember, my life is in your hands.

Narrator: Time passed and a decision needed to be made. The man could not hold on much longer. A thought occurred to him. If the stranger hauled himself up and he kept the end steady and pulled a bit, together they could get the stranger back to safety. But the other wasn't interested.

Man: You mean you won't help? But I told you I cannot pull you up myself, and I don't think I can hang on much longer either.

Stranger: (shouting back with tears) You must try! If you fail, I die!

Narrator: The point of decision arrived.

Man: Listen to me. I will not accept the position of choice for your life, only for my own; the position of choice for your own life, I hereby give back to you.

Stranger: (afraid) What do you mean?

Man: I mean, simply, it's up to you. You decide which way this ends. I will help you if you help yourself.

Stranger: You cannot mean what you say! You would not be so selfish! I am your responsibility! What could be so important that you would let someone die? Do not do this to me!

Narrator: He waited a moment. There was no change in the tension of the rope.

Man: I accept your choice.

Narrator: After releasing those words, he at last freed his hands.