



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

22 OCTOBER 2017 — 26 NOVEMBER 2017

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS



Lifelong Disciple Formation in Community of Christ is the shaping of persons in the likeness of Christ at all stages of life. It begins with our response to the grace of God in loving community and continues as we help others learn, grow, and serve in the mission of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, discipleship is expressed as one lives the mission initiatives of the church through service, generosity, witness, and invitation.

We invite you to use these lessons for your class, group, or congregation.

Lectionary-based: The weekly lessons connect the *Revised Common Lectionary* for worship with Community of Christ identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

Quick, easy: The lessons are designed for approximately 45-minute class sessions with two to three pages of ideas, discussion starters, and activities. Additional preparation help may be found in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament* (with focus on the gospel according to Matthew).

Lessons are available for three age groups. Recognizing each age group represents multiple stages of development, the instructor is encouraged to adapt lessons to best meet the needs of the class or group. When possible, optional activities are provided to help adapt lessons for diverse settings.

Children (multiage, 6–11): Help children engage in the Bible and introduce mission and beliefs with stories, crafts, and activities.

Youth (ages 12–18): Engage teens in scripture study and provocative questions about identity, mission, and beliefs.

Adult (ages 19 and older): Deepen faith and understanding with reflective questions, theological understanding, and discussion ideas.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Bible scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 24)

LESSON 48
22 October 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 22:15–22

Lesson Focus: When faced with deciding what is really important in life, disciples of Jesus are called to place God at the center of living—top priority!

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand that all we are and have come from God.
- understand the meaning of generosity.
- discuss how to share generously in all aspects of their lives.
- identify their personal gifts and talents.

Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Items to decorate treasure chest—paint, markers, crayons, stickers, etc.
- Strips of paper
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 22:15–22 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 110, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children to the group and gather them in a circle. Tell children you are going to ask them some tricky questions so they need to be listening very carefully! After you ask each question allow several children to share their thoughts before giving the answer.

- A farmer had 15 sheep, and all but eight died. How many are left?
Answer: Eight are left because “all but eight died.”
- A rooster laid an egg on top of the barn roof. Which way did it roll?
Answer: It didn’t roll—roosters don’t lay eggs.
- How can a man go eight days without sleep?
Answer: No problem. He sleeps at night.

Explain that sometimes questions are tricky and require careful thought before answering.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Share with children that in today’s scripture story some of the leaders of Israel were trying to trick Jesus with their questions. Let’s listen to how Jesus handled the questions.

Read “Trouble for Jesus” based on Matthew 22:15–22 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 224–225. When you have finished reading the story, consider these questions as a group:

- Whom do you belong to?
- What does “generosity” mean? How can you be generous in your life?
- What do you have to offer God?

Hand out supplies to create a treasure chest (you could use shoeboxes, egg cartons—cut into three sections (example can be found at www.redtedart.com/2013/07/31/egg-carton-crafts-treasure-box-craft/), or print out a

paper template such as this one: www.mssscrafts.com/crafts/treasurechest/). Give children time to decorate their treasure chests.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Ask children what goes in a treasure chest. Expand their understanding of the word treasure from just money to gifts and talents as well. Talk about the treasure they each have to offer. Discuss the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity. Share the idea that because we have received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.

Give the children strips of paper to write down gifts they can generously give to God and to others. Have them put their gifts in their treasure boxes to remind them of the treasure that they are.



Going Deeper

Discuss these questions with older students:

- What are priorities in your life?
- How does an awareness of God's generosity influence your decisions?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Brainstorm two or three things children could do today to give generously to others. Check in with them after church or the following week to see how they were able to be generous toward others.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sing together "From You I Receive" CCS 611 three times as your prayer of blessing.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 25)

LESSON 49
29 October 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 22:34–46

Lesson Focus: Love is at the center of discipleship: love God, love your neighbor. Love knows no boundaries.

Objectives

The learners will...

- learn the first and second commandment.
- discuss Community of Christ mission statement.
- connect the mission statement to the focus scripture passage.
- generate ideas of how to share love with your neighbor, the community, and the world.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 22:34–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 111, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Heart cut-outs
- Markers
- *Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd Edition* (downloadable at www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.pdf)
- Chart paper
- Tape

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children and invite them to sit in a circle. Read or sing together “Love the Lord Your God.” There are several renditions on YouTube you can sing along with if you want.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and all your soul and all your mind
and love all of humankind
as you would love yourself.

Love, the Lord your God
with all your heart
and all your soul and mind and love all humankind.

We’ve got Christian lives to live,
we’ve got Jesus’ love to give,
we’ve got nothing to hide
Because in him we are but LOVE!

—Author Unknown

Give children heart cut-outs and ask them to write some of the important words from the song on the hearts. (Ex: Love, God, soul, humankind, Jesus, etc.)

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Let the children know the song they just sang actually comes from scripture. Read Matthew 22:34–40 or “The Most Important Things” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 228.

Sing the opening song again and encourage children to listen to the similarities. Have them add any additional words they feel are important.

Explain that in Community of Christ we share a mission. The church’s mission statement points the way: We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.

Add more words to the heart cut-outs to reflect Community of Christ beliefs about our mission to share love with others.



Going Deeper

Take some time to discuss our Mission Initiatives and how they relate to the scripture. See *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 8–9.]

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Ask the children these questions:

- How do you love your neighbor?
- How does your congregation love the neighborhood?



Going Deeper

For older children, discuss these questions:

- When has your congregation stood for justice against powers of oppression?
- What are the barriers to loving your neighbor?

Acknowledge that while it might be easy to think of ways for you to love someone you know, it can be harder to imagine how you might share love with a community or with the world. Brainstorm ideas together.

Divide a large sheet of paper into three sections. Label one section "Neighbor," one section "Community," and the last section "World." Attach the hearts you created around the

edges of the paper. Then have the children write or draw ways that they can show love in each of those categories.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Have each child choose one new way they want to share love this week. Ask them to share their plans with the group.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Use Community of Christ's Basic Belief statement on "The Church" as adapted below for your final moment of blessing.

God intends Christian faith to be lived in companionship with Jesus Christ and with other disciples in service to the world. The church of Jesus Christ is made of all those who respond to Jesus' call. Community of Christ is part of the whole body of Christ. We are called to be a prophetic people, proclaiming the peace of Jesus Christ and creating communities where all will be welcomed and brought into renewed relationship with God, and where there will be no poor.

Invite children to stand in a circle and offer this blessing:

Today we learned that God calls us to work with other disciples to proclaim the peace of Jesus Christ and create communities where all will be welcomed and shown the love of God, and there will be no poor. As we go forth today, help us remember your call to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 26)

LESSON 50
5 November 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 23:1–12

Lesson Focus: We are called to be humble servants of God.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore the concept of practicing what you preach.
- understand what phylacteries and fringes are.
- consider how they can serve others.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Paper
- Pencils, markers, or crayons

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 23:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 114–115, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome the children to class and tell them they are going to play a variation of Simon Says. In this variation of Simon Says, the kids will have to pay extra special attention to Simon’s instructions.

Have all of the kids stand up, staying a full arm’s length away from each other. Make sure everyone in the room can both see and hear you, and instruct them to listen carefully for each move.

Simon will give a simple instruction verbally (for example, pat your head), but act out something completely different (for example, touch your nose). After each instruction, any kids who followed what you did must sit down, while the kids that followed what you said stay standing for the next round. Mix it up after a few rounds, making your instructions and demonstration match to see if there is hesitation. Continue until there is only one child left standing.

Say to the children, “Do you know what I noticed in that game? It was easier for you to follow what you saw than it was to follow what you heard. I wonder why that is?”

Activity found at ministry-to-children.com/do-as-he-says-lectionary-lesson-from-matthew-231-12/. Used with permission.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Gather students in a circle and read Matthew 23:1–12.

¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. ⁹And

call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah, ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Acknowledge that there are some tough words in this scripture. Help children act out the scripture as you read it again.

Pick a few children to be the Pharisees and scribes. The rest of the class will represent the crowds. As you read vv. 1–3, have them stand tall and proud like they are the most important persons in the room. They may even look down their noses and point at the rest of the children as if they are telling them what to do.

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.

As you read v. 4, have the Pharisees and scribes tell the other children to pick up heavy items. Encourage the rest of the class to pretend they are carrying something heavy.

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.

Before you read v. 5, have the children switch roles so the crowds are now scribes and Pharisees and the scribes and Pharisees are now the crowds. Invite the new scribes and Pharisees to prance around the room showing off how important they are as you read v. 5.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.

Before moving on to the next verse, explain what phylacteries and fringe are and what that section meant in Jesus’ time.



Going Deeper

What are phylacteries, and what is Jesus talking about making fringe long? Phylacteries were small leather boxes containing Scripture verses that were tied to the forehead and arms while praying. According to Mosaic Law, Israelites were instructed to wear tassels (fringe) on the corners of their clothes (Numbers 15:38) as outward reminders to follow God’s commandments.

In Jesus’ time, many of the Pharisees made their phylacteries larger than necessary and the fringe on their robes

longer in order to appear more pious (holy or righteous). Jesus knew their hearts though and knew that they were hypocrites, only seeking the praise of men.

As you read vv. 6–7, have the scribes and Pharisees continue to prance around as the crowd greets them with respect and offers them the best seats in the room.

They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi.

As you read vv. 11–12, have the scribes and Pharisees become the servants of the crowd.

The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.



3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Ask the children to think back to the opening game of Simon Says. Explain to them that if our church leaders were telling us one thing and doing another it would be really hard to know which to follow. That's how it was in the early Christian church. The author of Matthew was Jewish, writing to Jewish people who were familiar with how the Pharisees and scribes didn't follow the teachings they were imposing on the Jewish people.

It was written during a time when the early Christian church was struggling with who it was and what it meant to be the church. This scripture passage is telling us it is important to be humble. The one we need to follow is God, and we shouldn't be concerned about looking good or getting praise from others.

In Community of Christ, some disciples are called and ordained to take on special ministry tasks. These ministers are priesthood who follow the model of Jesus' ministry and serve the church in a special way. Priesthood offices in Community of Christ are deacon, teacher, priest, elder, seventy, high priest, bishop, evangelist, apostle, and presidency.



Going Deeper

Discuss how the different Community of Christ priesthood offices model the ministry of Jesus.

Deacon—as minister of comfort and welcome
Giving nurture and comfort to individuals and families welcoming them into the congregation and community

Teacher—as minister of peacebuilding with individuals
Helping individuals and families in the congregation and community find peaceful resolutions

Priest—as minister of presence with families
Sharing friendship with families, in congregations, and in community

Elder—as minister of sacred and spiritual community building
Giving clear expressions of the spiritual ministry of the gospel

Seventy—as minister of witness and invitation
Inviting and witnessing to people who seek to commit their lives to Jesus Christ

High Priest—as minister of vision
Helping the church see the world in new ways, and guiding congregations and individuals in becoming disciples

Bishop—as minister of generosity

Helping congregations and individuals share their gifts of true capacity

Evangelist—as minister of blessing

Serving as spiritual companions, counselors, and guides especially in times of change

Apostle—as minister of global witness proclaiming Christ's peace

Sharing the message of the gospel and creating signal communities of justice and peace throughout the world

There are 12 apostles.

Presidency—as minister of prophetic leadership

Leading the church through visionary and prophetic guidance

The Presidency includes the prophet-president of the church and two counselors, also called president.

Jesus didn't believe that church leaders could do whatever they wanted. Jesus taught that if you tell others to do something, then you should do it, too; the leaders of the church, even the pastor, should be serving and helping others. It's our job to take care of others no matter who we are.

Have children trace their hands on a sheet of paper and write or draw ways they can serve others and share their gifts as disciples of Jesus. Once they have finished, invite them to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Review the last two verses of the focus scripture passage, "The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted." Then sing together "Humble Yourself" CCS 211.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Read this adapted version of "Make Me a Servant" CCS 597 as your closing.

Loving God, make me a servant, humble and meek. Lord, let me lift up those who are weak. And may the prayer of my heart always be, make me a servant today. Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 27)

LESSON 51
12 November 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 25:1–13

Lesson Focus: We are called to be prepared for the coming of God’s kingdom. Preparation for the kingdom involves genuine acts of discipleship, which include acts of love and mercy.

Objectives

The learners will...

- discuss the concept of being prepared.
- understand that we are called to be prepared by loving God and loving our neighbor.
- discuss ways to share acts of love with others.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 116–117, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Undecorated cookies
- Items needed to decorate cookies (frosting, sprinkles, plates, plastic knives, napkins, etc.)
- Paper
- Pencils

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Before class begins, make sure you have the decorating supplies out of sight.

Welcome children to the group and gather them in a circle. Let the children know that you are going to be having a cookie decorating party this week and would love their help to figure out exactly what you are going to need. Give each child a sheet of paper and a pencil and ask them to write a list of what you will need. Most children will write cookies, frosting, perhaps even sprinkles, but they might forget knives, plates, or napkins. Once everyone has completed their list, gather them up and thank the children for their help in making sure you were prepared for your cookie party.

Optional Activity:

Instead of cookies and decorating supplies, gather supplies for a different snack or possibly a craft project—anything that students would be familiar with.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Share with children that in today’s scripture passage Jesus told a story about being prepared for a wedding. Read “The Wedding Party” based on Matthew 25:1–13 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 236–237.

Ask the children these questions:

- Have you ever found yourself unprepared for an important event? (If children are having a hard time with the question, you might suggest a couple of examples: school assignment, sporting event, or party.)
- What happened?

Let the children know that your cookie party is actually happening now! Return the preparation lists for the cookie party and have them take their lists to the table. Give each child the things that were on their list and nothing more. Allow them time to start decorating the cookies. If someone doesn’t have something they need, they might want to borrow from someone else. Don’t allow that at this point. Smile and let them know that they can only use what is on their list.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

After the students have had some time to decorate their cookies, pause the “party.” Gather them back in a circle and discuss these questions:

- Was there anyone who wasn’t quite prepared for the cookie party? How did that feel?
- What did you think when I said you couldn’t share supplies with one another?
- What do you think Jesus is teaching us in today’s parable?

Share with the children this statement adapted from *Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 116:

The church is called to be prepared for Christ coming again through responsible acts of love and mercy. This is not something that can be borrowed from someone else; rather it is our responsibility to respond, for we do not know when we will see Jesus again. We are called to be prepared by loving God and loving our neighbor. This cannot be done at the last minute. Rather it forms who we are and shapes our faith and how we understand God’s kingdom. This is what it means to “be ready.”

Allow children to return to the tables and ask them how they could act out of love to take care of their neighbor and make sure everyone enjoys the cookie party. Help them generate ideas to make sure everyone has what they need

to finish decorating their cookies. Once they are done, the children can eat their cookies. Encourage acts of love that also include cleaning up the party once it is finished.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Discuss ways that the children could take acts of love into the congregation today. If there are additional cookies, perhaps they could prepare some to share with others. Whatever ideas they generate, encourage the children to do them as they leave class.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Sing this song to the tune of “Sarasponda” as your closing prayer. If you chose the optional activity, substitute “cookies” with the items you created.

These are cookies, these are cookies, these are cookies made with love.
These are cookies, these are cookies, these are cookies made with love.
We will share them, with people that we love.
Christ called on us to be prepared and share our love with all.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 28)

LESSON 52
19 November 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 25:14–30

Lesson Focus: God trusts us to make Responsible Choices in using our talents. Making Responsible Choices requires us to break free from our fears and our wish to “play it safe” and take risks as Jesus did.

Objectives

The learners will...

- realize that scripture stories require study to understand their meaning.
- explore the gifts and talents they have.
- discuss how to move past fear and hesitancy when sharing our gifts and talents.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:14–30 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 118–119, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- Favorite story to read or tell
- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Variety of Frisbees™ or other flying discs (preferably different sizes/materials)
- Paper plates
- Art supplies to decorate plates (markers, crayons, colored pencils, stickers, etc.)

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children to class and hand out a few Frisbees™ (discs). Take the children outside, or to a location where they can spend a few minutes throwing them. Ask the children to pay close attention to what the different discs do when they throw them.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Return to class and gather to listen to the scripture story. Read “An Upside Down Story” based on Matthew 25:14–30 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 240–241.

Note to teacher: Finish the story halfway through p. 241 with the rich man’s statement, “I don’t ever want to see

you again. You can go work for somebody else. Give me my money and just get out of here!” If you read the final section of the story as written, it will confuse the focus of this lesson.

Ask the children:

- What did you think of this story? Acknowledge concerns students may have about the way the third slave was treated.
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach people with this story?

Tell students that sometimes we have to look for the meaning in scripture stories. Even teachers have to study in order to understand what the scripture passage is trying to teach us. Read this excerpt from the *Sermon & Class Helps*:

Through this parable, Jesus is trying to help people trust in what God has already done for us...

The return on investment by the slaves who received five and two talents was amazing. Although the master praises their efforts, his response seems understated given the significance of their

earnings. The focus of the story quickly moves to the slave who chose to bury his single talent. The master's response to this slave seems extreme and harsh from the perspective of the slave who was trying to keep the master's talent safe. The slave's action seems lazy and misguided from the perspective of the master who trusted the slave to make responsible choices about the use of the talent.

As we go deeper in the story, we realize the slave who buried the talent makes his choice out of fear. The slave does not trust the nature of his master. He is afraid of what the master might do so the slave chooses what he thinks is the least risky path by burying the talent to protect it. The master asks why the slave would lose the safe opportunity to earn interest in the bank if he thought the master was so demanding. Ironically, we recognize the slave's fear blocked him from making a responsible choice.

Ask the question again:

- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach people with this story?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Let the children know that the version of the story we read talked about bags of money, but the Bible uses the word "talents." Let them know that the biblical version also refers to money. It is important to remember that God gives us more than money to share generously. God also gives us gifts and talents.


Pull the discs back out. Say to the children, "These discs may not look like much. Some of them may be worn and well used. What did you notice about them when we were playing with them earlier? What did they do?"

Help the children understand that a Frisbee™ is meant to fly. Ask the children if the Frisbees™ would be able to do their job if they were buried? Acknowledge that they look different, they may even fly differently, but they were all meant to fly.

Ask the children:

- What gifts has God given you that you can use?
- Have you ever felt afraid to use your gifts? How can you move past your fear?

Hand out paper plates and art supplies. Tell the children to pretend that this Frisbee™ (disc) is them. Ask them to decorate them with the talents they have.



Going Deeper

Ask students these additional questions:

- Where is God acting in your world and calling you to risk getting involved?
- What do you fear about taking risks to use your gifts to help change the world?
- How do you overcome your fear and follow the Holy Spirit's leadings to use your gifts to engage in mission?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

When the students have finished their paper discs, ask them to share how they can use their talents to grow God's love in the world.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Take the children back to where you threw Frisbees™ (discs) earlier. Ask each child to say a thank you prayer to God for their talent as they fly a Frisbee™ (disc).

Note to teacher: For this activity use the real Frisbees™ (discs) rather than the ones the students made. The paper plates won't fly quite as well, and you want their prayers to soar!

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 29)

LESSON 53
26 November 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 25:31–46

Lesson Focus: Jesus is a loving shepherd who cares deeply about his flock. Our choices matter. We are called to serve “the least.” God is in the world in the form of people who are dispossessed, vulnerable, and weak.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand the analogy of the sheep and the goats.
- discuss what it means to help the “least” in society.
- spend time creating cards for those in need.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Items for sorting (such as blocks, silverware, art supplies, etc.)
- Construction paper or card stock
- Art supplies (crayons, markers, stickers, etc.)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:31–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 120, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children to class and invite them to sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle place a pile of items that could be sorted (such as socks, blocks, silverware, or art supplies). It is preferable to have items that could be sorted in more than one way (color, shape, size, or use). Ask the children how they could sort the pile into two groups. Take suggestions and have several children show how the items could be sorted.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Share with children that in today’s scripture story Jesus did a bit of sorting, too. Tell the students that in Jesus’ time sheep and goats were the most common domesticated animals. Flocks in Palestine would contain both goats and sheep. Owners raised sheep for wool, milk and its byproducts, dung, meat, bones, and horns. Although goats were hardier, they were not as desirable or valuable as sheep.

Read Matthew 25:31–40 from the NRSV Bible. When you have finished reading, let the children know that the early Christian listeners would understand that the king, as a shepherd, would separate the more valuable sheep from the goats. Ask the children these questions:

- Why sheep and goats? What characteristics do sheep have? (*listen and follow their leader*) What are goats like? (*stubborn and resist being told what to do, eat almost anything, even garbage*)
- What message is Jesus teaching in this scripture story?
- When and where have you encountered Jesus in the form of the “least”?



Going Deeper

Ask students these additional questions:

- Is your congregation engaged in acts of compassion, as outlined in this scripture?
- Does your congregation show hospitality to strangers?
- Have you ever been surprised in your service and ministry to others?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Ask children to make a list of Community of Christ Enduring Principles. Write the list in a place where all can see and refer to later in the lesson.

Grace and Generosity

Sacredness of Creation

Continuing Revelation

Worth of All Persons

All Are Called

Responsible Choices

Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)

Unity in Diversity

Blessings of Community

Verbally share with students a list of actions and have them decide if it the action is more like a sheep or a goat. Examples might include:

- Help a neighbor rake leaves (s)
- Ignore a new student at school (g)
- Donate food and clothes to a shelter (s)
- Take flowers to someone in the hospital (s)
- Keep all your money for yourself (g)
- Make cards for the sick (s)

Let the children know that today you will be working on your sheep skills by creating cards for members of the congregation that are sick or homebound. Help students generate a list of persons who might appreciate receiving a card. Spend time decorating and writing meaningful messages on the cards. While the children are working

on their cards, discuss which Enduring Principles they are practicing by helping others.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Ask each child to share at least one way they will be a sheep in the coming week.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Read the following selection from “Whatever You Do” CCS 355 as a closing prayer. Go around the circle with each child reading a line until the prayer is complete.

1. Whatever you do to the least ones of these, I tell you in truth that you do unto me!
2. Lord Jesus, you taught us! May we learn anew that when we serve others, we also serve you.
3. When poor, waiting children pray hunger will end, when those long forgotten cry out for a friend,
4. when thirsty ones whisper, “O Lord, where are you?”
5. we hear, in their longing, that you’re calling, too.
6. “Lord, when did we see you?” Your teaching is clear that when we serve others, we’re serving you here.
7. And when your church heeds you and helps those in pain,
8. then out of the chaos, hope rises again!

AMEN.