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## “Serve Others”

### Children’s Sermon on Matthew 25:31-46, the Sheep and the Goats

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**Main Objective:** This message reminds us that God uses people to do His work. We are charged with passing Christ’s love and service on to others, just as the Great Commission invites us to be part of God’s plan. The story that occurs in Matthew 25 reminds us that Jesus endured hunger and shame while He was on Earth. We obviously do not live in first century Middle East, and cannot change the life of Jesus as a human. However, when we take care of others, we do it as though we do it for Christ, because it is for Him! This message invites kids to love and serve the Lord by what they do for other people.



**Law/Gospel Theme:** This passage can potentially seem a little nerve-racking, as it entails the judgment of the Second Coming and seems to convey a sense of works-based righteousness. However, the emphasis is not on what we do, but on who we do things for. We serve others not out of obligation, but out of love for God. We have a blessed opportunity to communicate the love of Jesus because when we care for one another, we recognize all people are made in God’s image. We hope for the return of Christ because we know He has done more for us than we can ever do for others.

**Optional Materials:** Pictures of people in need (refugees, homeless, imprisoned, sick, etc.); optional items with which to serve or engage others (sporting equipment, supplies, clothing).

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 25:31-46

- You can watch a teaching demonstration of this [children’s sermon](#) on our [YouTube](#)
- Don’t miss the [Bible craft ideas](#) for this same passage
- See our full [Sunday School Lesson on Matthew 25:31-36](#)
- Compare [“Sheep and Goats” from Sermons4Kids](#)
- Compare [Matthew 25:31-36 Children’s Sermon from rfour.org](#)



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# Matthew 25:31-46 Children's Sermon: Serve Others, Serve Christ

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*Greet children and begin with a few questions:*

Hello, children of God! Here's a question: If Jesus showed up here today, how do you think we might treat Him? What would we do to make Him feel welcomed and loved? If He asked for something, would we provide it? Well, I have another question: have you ever seen Jesus? What do you think He looks like? (*Take some answers, maybe holding up a picture of Jesus that kids are familiar with.*)

We aren't exactly sure what Jesus looked like, and people have said different things about what He might have worn and been like in appearance. But I have a few other pictures here. Do you think He looked like....This? Or maybe this? Or this? *Display several pictures of people in need, perhaps including refugees, homeless people, people in prison, or a few of "average"-looking people.* It might seem like these would be people we try not to think about too much, or maybe we feel sad for them, but ignore them if we saw them out and about. We certainly wouldn't think of Jesus when we saw these types of people, right? Would we help them?

Did you know that Jesus told us when we do things for other people, it's like we are doing things for Him? It seems crazy, but it's true! In the Gospel today, Jesus was describing for people what it might be like someday, when He comes back to Earth. He said that He would gather everyone together, and look at how our lives have been lived. Jesus promised to bless those who had served and cared for Him, but He said it would not go well for those who ignored Him when He came. The people listening to this message were confused, since they didn't remember seeing Jesus or giving or denying help to Him. Jesus would tell the people that whatever they had done to help others, they actually did to help Him. We might be a lot more motivated to help people in need if we recognized that in doing so, we were helping Jesus!

But what does this mean for us? Does it mean we'll get in trouble if we don't do enough to help every needy person we see? Well, of course we can't help everyone that asks. And we know that we are saved by the grace of God and the blood of Christ, not by anything that we do. However, it is important to take care of other people, because it shows that we love God. He has loved us and given us all we could possibly need. Because of that, we want to share His love with those around us. God lets us be part of His plan to serve people. He sends people our way



who need God’s care, and then we have opportunities to help them. Sometimes this means giving to people who don’t have much. Sometimes it means just showing someone that we are willing to listen if they need to talk, or saying a kind word to someone who is sad. We know that all people are made in God’s image, and even people who might seem hard to love are His. Even people who are hurt, or sad, or stinky! They all belong to God, and we recognize His Lordship when we take care of them. So keep your eyes open! There are chances around us all the time to love and serve Jesus by loving and serving His children. We are special agents of His work. We can be joyful and hopeful about His eventual return, and meanwhile we love Him and His people. Why don’t we say a prayer to thank God for that, and we can ask Him to help us take care of His people?

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## Children’s Prayer Moment

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(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for letting us be part of your work

When we serve other people, we serve you

Help us look for ways to do that

And to care for those around us

Help us to share your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!



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# Bible Verses/story to Reference:

## Matthew 25:31-36

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*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’*

*<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

-Matthew 25:31-46





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

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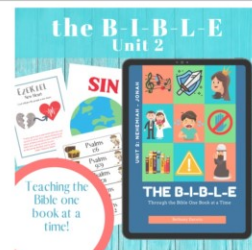
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