

Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Lesson
27

Purpose To teach the children that serving others helps us be prepared for the time when Jesus Christ will judge us.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully read Matthew 25:31–46. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
2. Additional readings: Jacob 2:17–19; Mosiah 4:16, 26; and Doctrine and Covenants 104:17–18.
3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.
 - b. Pictures 7-26, The Last Judgment (Washington Temple mural), and 7-25, The Second Coming (Gospel Art Picture Kit 238; 62562).

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Invite the children to share with the class something they did during the past week to develop or share a talent.

Attention Activity

Read the following or similar situations to the children (use situations that are within the children’s experiences). Ask them what they think they should do if:

They see a younger child who is thirsty but can’t reach the water.

They know a child who hasn’t been to church for several weeks.

They know someone who doesn’t have enough to eat.

They see someone who doesn’t have a warm coat, and it is very cold.

They know someone who has been home for a long time with an illness or disability.

- What would Jesus want you to do? Why do you think you should help others in situations such as these?

Remind the children that in the last two lessons they have learned about two of the parables Jesus used to teach the people about his second coming. This lesson teaches the third parable in Matthew 25, and together all three parables teach us how we can be prepared for Jesus’ coming and the time when he will judge us. One of the best ways to prepare is to serve others.

Scripture Account Show the pictures The Last Judgment and The Second Coming at appropriate times as you teach the children the parable of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25:31–46. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)

Discussion and Application Questions Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.

- What do you think it will be like when Jesus comes again?
- Jesus teaches that at his coming he will separate nations as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32). In this parable whom do the sheep represent? (Matthew 25:33–36.) Whom do the goats represent? (Matthew 25:33, 41–43.) Why will Jesus be separating the sheep from the goats? What is the main difference between the sheep and the goats?
- What did Jesus mean when he said that those on his right hand had fed him, clothed him, and so on? (Matthew 25:37–40.) Who are “the least of these my brethren”?
- What kind of service did the righteous give? (Matthew 25:35–37.) What are we required to do to be counted among the Lord’s sheep? Help the children think of ways they can perform such acts of service. Share examples of service you have observed, and invite the children to share examples they have seen.
- What will be our reward if we serve others? (Matthew 25:34, 46.) What will happen to those who do not serve others? (Matthew 25:41, 46.)
- Whom should we serve? Whom do we know who could be helped by our service? (Matthew 25:40; see also Mosiah 4:16.) (See enrichment activity 1.)
- How did Jesus serve others? (Review some of the scripture accounts of Jesus healing the sick, blessing the children, feeding the 5,000, and so on. Emphasize the love Jesus showed for people as he did these things.) How can his example of serving others help you?
- How can we bless others by our service? How has serving another person blessed you? How does giving service to others make you feel? How do you feel about those you serve?

You could use enrichment activity 4 to encourage the children to apply this lesson in their lives.

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Share and discuss the following story with the children:

“I have many memories of my boyhood. Anticipating Sunday dinner was one of them. Just as we children hovered at our so-called starvation level and sat anxiously at the table, with the aroma of roast beef filling the room, Mother would say to me, ‘Tommy, before we eat, take this plate I’ve prepared down

the street to Old Bob and hurry back.' I . . . would run down to Bob's house and then wait anxiously as his aged feet brought him eventually to the door. Then I would hand him the plate of food. He would present to me the clean plate from the previous Sunday and offer me a dime as pay for my services. My answer was always the same: 'I can't accept the money. My mother would tan my hide.' He would . . . then say, 'My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you.' . . . I remember, too, that Sunday dinner always seemed to taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand" (Thomas S. Monson, "The Long Line of the Lonely," *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, p. 4).

2. Arrange to have a member of the Relief Society presidency or a member of the bishopric come to class to explain how the Relief Society gives compassionate service. Have the visitor explain how the Church gives help to those in need, including how fast offerings are used.
3. Give the children each a piece of paper and a pencil, and have them list ways they can serve others at home or in the neighborhood. Challenge the children to perform at least one act of service this week.

4. Discuss the following quotation:

"There will be a wise and just God to sit in judgment on all men. . . . The wicked may prosper for a time, the rebellious may seem to profit by their transgressions, but the time is coming when, at the bar of justice, all men will be judged, 'every man according to their works' (Rev. 20:13). No one will 'get by' with anything. On that day no one will escape the penalty of his deeds, no one will fail to receive the blessings he has earned. Again, the parable of the sheep and the goats gives us assurance that there will be total justice" (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 304–5).

5. Prepare two boxes or containers. Label one box "Sheep" and the other box "Goats." Place the "Sheep" box on your right and the "Goats" box on your left. On separate pieces of paper write good and bad actions (include some actions where the category is not so obvious). Have the children each read an action and decide if it is a "sheep" action or a "goat" action and put the piece of paper in the appropriate box.

Use the actions listed below or create some of your own:

Telling your parents the truth.
 Not admitting it when you have done something wrong.
 Fighting with your brother or sister.
 Saying "I'm sorry" when you have hurt someone's feelings.
 Telling only part of the truth.

6. Help the children memorize Matthew 25:40.
7. Sing or read the words to "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 78).

Conclusion

Testimony

Bear your testimony that Jesus wants us to serve others and that we are blessed when we do so. Share with the children your feelings about the opportunities you have to serve.

Suggested
Home Reading

Suggest that the children study Matthew 25:35–40 at home as a review of this lesson.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.