

Bible background

Matthew 25:31-46

Aim of lesson

To teach that Jesus values practical kindness.

Preparation required

You will need colouring materials.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Begin with the 'parable'. Jesus once told a story about a farmer who had a field of goats and sheep. He wanted to put all the sheep in the sheep pen and the goats in the goat pen.
2. Ask the children if they can help him? Let the children complete the activity sheet.
3. Jesus said that he is like that farmer. When he comes back to be king of all the world he will sort all the people into two groups: the kind and helpful people and the unkind and unhelpful people. He will put the kind and helpful people on the right and the unkind and unhelpful on the left. Jesus will say to the ones on his right 'Come into my Father's kingdom because when I was hungry you gave me something to eat' but they will say 'When did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?' Jesus will tell them 'When you did it for someone else you did for me' or use the exact words of the memory verse for this lesson. Continue with 'When I was thirsty...'; 'When I had nowhere to stay...'; 'When I had no clothes', 'When I was ill', 'When I was in prison...'. Use the whole conversation each time encouraging the children to prompt with what they think they should do for the person who is thirsty etc and to say the patterned reply each time.

Use a similar pattern for the conversation with the people on the left, with Jesus beginning by saying 'Go away, you can't come into my Father's kingdom because...'
4. Teach the song 'Can You Help' from Lesson 46.

Alternative activities

1. If you have some toy sheep and goats or some cut out pictures, get the class to sort them into 2 groups.
2. Make a collage picture, either individually or as a class, of some sheep and goats.
3. Make sheep masks. If you don't want to cut out a face shape and worry about eye holes, elastic etc, use a paper plate and let the children glue on ears, eyes, wool etc. Then attach a strip of very thick cardboard or some dowel so that the children can hold them up.
4. Let the children draw pictures of something kind and helpful they could do at nursery, school or home or draw pictures of somebody who has been kind to them. It is probably a good idea to talk about some examples first. You might want to use the circle game (see below) to help discussion.
5. Play the circle game. They children can either tell you a) about someone who has been kind to them or b) how they could be kind to someone. Depending on the size of the group and their concentration span you may be able to go around the circle twice and cover both options.

Relevance to the children's lives

At the end, ask who wants to live for ever with Jesus in his Father's kingdom. Ask what sort of people they must be to be chosen. Ask for examples of kindness and helpfulness that they can do. Make sure they know they can be forgiven for having forgotten in the past.

Prayer

Ask for their ideas on what to pray about. Encourage them to say a prayer in class and to ask God to help them to be kind and helpful so they can be in his kingdom.

Verse

'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25:40.