

**7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)****Lesson Plan:** Jesus' Teaching on His Return (Matthew 25)**Learning Goals:** Students will evaluate what Jesus taught about serving the "least of these" and how we can do that in today's world.**Question:** Activity (Stations)

Prayer

Activity: "Least of These"

Items Needed: fish crackers, cups of water, strips of cloth (3 inches wide and about 3 ft. long), bandages, boxes with locks and keys, small pieces of paper, magic markers, poster board

Students will move through five different stations where they will learn loving and caring for people in need. Group students into pairs (same gender) and release them into the room with five stations set up around the perimeter of the room. Play some quiet music to set the atmosphere. Spread the pairs out over the five stations and tell them that they must visit all 5 stations in the 20 minutes allotted.

**Station 1:** Set up cups of fish-shaped crackers and cups of water (one each for each person in the group). Have a sign at the station that says on the top, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." At the bottom of the sign write, "Feed your partner and give him/her something to drink."

**Station 2:** Hang strips of colored cloth (three inches wide and about three feet long) with photos of people who look different or weird. On top of the sign write, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me." At the bottom of the sign write, "Put a cloth around your partner's neck like a scarf."

**Station No. 3:** Have at least two bandages for each person. On the top of the sign write, "I was sick and you took care of me." On the bottom, write, "Put two bandages on your partner's face."

**Station No. 4:** Have several boxes with locks and keys. Provide some pencils and small sheets of paper. Write on the top of the sign, "I was in prison and you visited me." On the bottom of the sign write, "On a small piece of paper, write one or more things that can imprison a person or hold him captive. Put your piece of paper in the locked box."

**Station No. 5:** Have several magic markers and a large blank poster-board. On another poster, write: "Truly, whatever you did for the least of these, you did it for me." At the bottom, write: "Think of someone in your world who needs help from you or others. Write the person's initials on the blank poster board and take a moment to pray for him or her."

Follow Up Questions:

- What station or activity was most memorable and helpful to you?
- Why do you think God wants us associating with the poor, needy, and outcast?
- What stereotypes do we need to overcome to effectively work with needy people?

**Read Matthew 25:31-46**

### Additional Questions

- Based on this story, how will the people of the earth be divided when Christ returns?
- How can we know from this story if we are the sheep or the goats? What will Jesus say to us if we are a sheep or a goat?
- How would your life change if you treated each person in your life as if he/she were, in fact, Jesus?

Points to make:

### Follow like sheep

Does this mean the way to heaven is through good works? Absolutely not. The key is in the analogy: Sheep are animals that live with a flock mentality, which means they stay together and follow the shepherd. They do this to stay safe and cared for. They know their shepherd's voice and follow him always. This is exactly what Christians are to be like. We are to be like sheep, with Jesus as our Shepherd. We follow him so we stay safe, cared for, and joyful. The people referred to as sheep are people who follow Jesus. They know his voice and stay close to him, doing what he does. That is why they were able to care for the needy and not even know it—they were simply following their Shepherd.

### Don't be a Goat

Goats, however, are much more independent and stubborn. They go their own way and don't like to follow. The people referred to as goats lived lives independent of Jesus—doing things on their own, choosing not to believe in Jesus as the Savior. That is why they didn't notice when Jesus wanted them to care for the needy. They chose not to follow the Shepherd while they lived, so they were sent away for eternal punishment.

### Follow Jesus

Jesus wants us to look after the needy. He made it clear that when we care for the very least, we're caring for him. The only way to know what to do is to follow Jesus the way sheep follow a shepherd. God's sheep are the ones who will receive the reward. Believing in what Jesus did for us and following him always is the only way to heaven.

### Application Questions:

- Who are the needy people around you?
- What resources do you have available to you to serve the needs of others?
- What act of kindness or mercy toward the needy can you do this week?

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### Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Least of These
- What is the primary difference between the sheep and the goats?

\*Lesson adapted from *The Complete New Testament Resource for Youth Workers: Volume 1* (edited by Jack Crabtree)