

Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

This is the culmination of Jesus' teaching in Matthew, (and for us it is also the finale of the church year) and Jesus does not mince words telling those gathered around him about what we are all called to do and what we all can do each and everyday. This is not rocket science. It's about treating each person we meet as if they were Jesus, because they are and therefore should be given all the same respect and honor as our Lord.

Note: This is also the last day in the church year, so Option 2 of the lesson focuses a bit more on that if you wish to help the children prepare for the New Year we begin next Sunday on the First Sunday in Advent.

Theme: Service and Giving Thanks

Before: You will want to look over the wide variety of ideas and narrow them down so you can think through what supplies you may need. Depending on which activity you choose, you will need long lengths of streamers or ribbon for each child in a color they can write upon, Notecards or nice paper, envelopes, strips of paper, markers, crayons, pens, stapler or tape.

Beginning: Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was and what they had for dinner the night before or breakfast that morning.

Opening Prayer: *Loving God, we thank you for our time together to hear your word and learn more about you. Be with us as we discover more about you and what it means to live with you in our lives. Amen.*

The Story: Matthew 25:31-46

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too.

Read Matthew 25:31-46. Note: A great resource for this story is Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Children of God Storybook Bible.

Reflection Questions

- I wonder what you remember about our story today?
- I wonder what message Jesus was trying to get across?
- I wonder what it meant when Jesus said, "just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."
- What would the world look like if we did all the things Jesus instructs us to do? Imagine what it would be like if the hungry were fed, the thirsty were given something to drink, the stranger was welcomed, the naked were given clothing, the sick were taken care of and the people in prison were visited.
- What would that world look like? How would be different than it is now?
- What can we do to engage in doing these things today?

Getting Closure: Imagine what it would be like if the hungry were fed, the thirsty were given something to drink, the stranger was welcomed, the

naked were given clothing, the sick were taken care of and the people in prison were visited.

- What would that world look like? How would be different than it is now?
- What can we do to engage in doing these things today?

Closing Prayer: *Gracious God, We thank you for our time together today. Help us to remember to serve those around us as just as we would serve you. Be with us as we go into the world and help us see you in each person we meet. Amen.*

Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not

welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Written by the Rev. Shannon Kelly