



Date: _____

Series: Advent
Winter Year 3, Lesson 31

When We Give to Others in Jesus' Name, We Give to Jesus

Primary Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46

Key Verse: Matthew 25:40, "The king will answer them, 'I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did for me.'"

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

During the Christmas season, there is often a greater public awareness of social needs in our midst. Kids need to know that they, too, can help other people through prayer, contributions, direct care, and personal mission efforts. This is so important. Jesus described it this way—when we do something for another person in need, we are doing it for Jesus himself. Because we have received the gift of Jesus' love, we cannot help but give it away by serving him through serving others.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus in us: Jesus came as a gift into the world serving us through his life, death, and resurrection.

Jesus in us: God's Holy Spirit fills us with his love so that we can be his servants.

Jesus through us: Especially during Christmas, our servant-like attitudes cause us to minister to people in need just as if we were serving Jesus himself.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: (optional) a picture of Mother Teresa

Show the picture and tell the following brief story of Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa started a ministry of helping people in India. God called her to help the poorest of the poor. These people did not have homes but lived on the street. Often they were so sick, they would hopelessly lie in the street waiting to die.

Mother Teresa and the people who worked with her went to help these people. While hundreds of other people would walk around these poor, sick, and dying people in the streets, Mother Teresa would help them. She would take them in to her special places to clean up their sores and give them comfort. Most of them still died anyway because they had been too sick for so long.

Someone asked Mother Teresa, "Why do you bother? They are going to die anyway. Why do you take them in and give them food, medicine, and clothing when you know they will die in just a few days? Isn't that wasting food and medicine that could be used on others?"

Mother Teresa explained, "You do not understand who I am serving. Every time I serve one of these people, I see the face of Jesus. I am serving Jesus by serving them. If that means just giving them some

comfort in the last hours of their lives, then that will be enough. When I serve them I know that I am serving my Lord. He is the one who said, ‘Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did for me.’”

Today in our worship service we will think of the ways we can serve others. When we do this in Jesus’ name, it is just like we are serving Jesus.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Give the children a brief time to think of ways they could serve others and ways they have neglected to do so. Bring them into confession by letting certain children mention different people that we have neglected to care about.

After confession of sins, give the announcement of God’s forgiving power using Matthew 20:28.

Jesus came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people. Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, we can be forgiven. We can have the power to serve others just as if we were serving Jesus himself.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Your choice of music.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Supplies needed: picture of Jesus

Set the picture of Jesus on the altar or where the offering is collected. As the children bring their offerings forward, remind them that, as they give this money to help this month's mission project, it is as if they are giving this money directly to Jesus.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies needed: two paper plates and a ball approximately the size of a tennis ball per group of six

“Tennis Ball Service”

For this relay race, give each team of six kids a paper plate and ball approximately the size of a tennis ball. Line kids up in a row and have the first person from each team race from one side of the room to the other while keeping their ball balanced on the plate. Without touching the ball, the kids must roll it onto their teammate's plate. Any time a ball falls off a plate, the child must move back five steps before continuing. The winner is the team to finish the relay first.

In applying the game to the learning event of the day, make the comparison between delivering the balls balanced on the plate and us serving other people using the gifts that God has given us. Describe what those gifts might be (*material wealth, talents, spiritual gifts, tithes, clothes, toys, etc.*). Ask children to describe any events in which they personally participated in helping other people (*soup kitchen, homeless shelter, etc.*).

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Read Matthew 25:31-46, using the following objects to illustrate Jesus' story:

- *Hunger - a piece of bread*
- *Thirst - water*
- *Homeless - blanket*
- *Clothes - a coat*
- *Sick - medicine*
- *Prison - a key*

You might also divide kids into two groups so they can get a picture of how God will divide all people into “sheep” and “goats” on the last day.

Especially note that our salvation is based not on what we do, but through our faith in Jesus. Our faith in and service to Jesus is how we are either sheep or goats. The sheep will have served Jesus by serving others. The goats will have neglected to serve him by serving others.

Be sensitive when dividing the children to use phrases like “let’s pretend” and “imagine this.” Children sitting on the goat side should not feel rejection from God.

Application:

Application 1:

After the reading, ask the children what side they will be on the last day when Jesus comes.

Whether we are sheep or goats is decided right now by our faith in Jesus. On the last day we will be able to give Jesus a great gift when he recalls the ways we served others.

Application 2:

Read the Christmas book *Jacob’s Gift* by Max Lucado and published by Tommy Nelson, Inc.

The illustrations by Robert Hunt are beautiful and may be put on Power Point with the author’s permission.

Summary:

In the story, Jacob’s gift is a manger that he has crafted from wood to earn his apprenticeship. Jacob ends up giving the manger to someone in need who had a baby born in a barn. His gift becomes a cradle fit for a king, Jesus himself.

The learning point of this story is that when one gives a gift to another of God’s children, he/she is giving a gift to God.

The following questions may be used to follow up the reading of the story:

Observation Questions:

- **Why did the other boys laugh at Jacob?** *(He got lost in his world of woodworking.)*
- **Who did the rabbi say was coming to visit?** *(His nephew, a master carpenter from Nazareth.)*
- **One boy was to be chosen to help with a special building project. What was that project?** *(The building of a synagogue, a Jewish church.)*
- **What did Jacob decide to build as his entry in the competition?** *(A feed trough for animals on wheels.)*
- **What did the rabbi say to Jacob after the other boys had left?** *(God gives gifts. Jacob's gift was the ability to build. God gave it to him for the purpose of sharing his gift with others.)*
- **What woke Jacob after he fell asleep in the carpenter shop?** *(Light from a star.)*
- **When he followed the light, where did it take him and whom did he find there?** *(To a stable behind the inn, where he found Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus.)*
- **What did Jacob decide to do at that very moment?** *(Give his feed trough to Baby Jesus for a bed.)*

Interpretation Questions:

- **Why did he do that?** *(Because of what the rabbi had told him: God had given him his building gift to be a blessing to others.)*
- **Why do you think Jacob was chosen to be the one to help build the synagogue – because his project was best or because he used his gift to be a blessing to others?**



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids share a time when they used a gift God gave them to help someone else. Or, have them tell about a time someone else helped them while using a special gift from God.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- picture of Mother Teresa (optional)

Offering:

- picture of Jesus

Learning Game:

- paper plates
- balls approximately the size of tennis balls

Bible Presentation:

- a piece of bread
- water
- blanket
- a coat
- medicine
- a key

Application:

- Christmas book *Jacob's Gift* by Max Lucado and published by Tommy Nelson—order from http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?item_no=58301&netp_id=146460&event=ESRCN&item_code=WW illustrations by Robert Hunt are beautiful and may be put on Power Point with the author's permission

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