

“Inherit the Kingdom”

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats Matthew 25:31-46

Level C

Ages 11-14

Series Theme: You shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.

Lesson Focus: When we love the Lord and other people we can inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Reading Summary: When the Son of Man comes in His glory, all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you blessed of 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 drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?” And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Lesson 7		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Video and Discussion	Sheep and Goats directions p. 2 video online at www.bitly.com/SheepGoats	device for watching a video online
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2	Bible or copy of Matthew 25:31-46
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Service Activity conclude a long-term service project or choose a project you can start and finish this week	We Will Serve the Lord directions p. 3 <i>We Will Serve the Lord</i> p. 5	supplies will vary depending on the project you choose
	Make review the central message of the parable of the sheep and the goats by creating a reminder wrist band	Washer Wrist Band directions pp. 3-4 <i>Washer Wrist Band Instructions</i> pp.6-7	washers; cord, string, or yarn; scissors; fine point permanent markers
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Take the Message Home introduce the quotation for the week	Take Home Cards p. 8	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Sheep and Goats—Video and Discussion

View the video online at www.bitly.com/SheepGoats. Choose one or two questions for discussion.

1. Have you ever thought about seeing the Lord? If so, what would you like to talk to Him about?
2. How did the main character in this video expect to see Jesus?
3. What impact did Jesus' words from Matthew 25 have on her?
4. If you had directed this video, what might you have done differently?

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Matthew 25:31-46 and the statement about what the Writings for the New Church teach about the neighbor at the bottom of this page

To what animals did the Lord compare people in this story? Sheep and goats.

Which animals sat on the right hand of the Son of Man? The sheep. Hands represent the ways in which we think about serving others.

In what ways are sheep and goats different? Sheep are gentle, have soft wool, eat grass, get along peacefully with other sheep, are herd animals and stick together when out grazing in a field, etc. Goats eat almost anything—including poisonous plants, clothing and trash. They are intelligent and learn from their experiences, such as where to find weak spots in a fence. They do not stay together as a group, like sheep do, but spread out in a field. They also attack with their horns if threatened.

Spiritually speaking, people represented by “goats” learn *how* to live a heavenly life, but they *do not do it*. “Sheep” learn *how* to live a heavenly life from the Word and *they do it*. The right hand in the Word corresponds to the love from which we do things. The sheep on the Lord’s right hand represent those people who love and do what the Lord teaches.

In what ways did the Lord teach people how to live a heavenly life while He was living in the world? Review the stories in this series. The Lord fed the hungry (feeding of the 5000); gave a woman healing truths (Samaritan woman at the well); told a story about helping a stranger (the good Samaritan); told another story about a father forgiving his son (prodigal son); healed a girl who was sick (Jairus’s daughter); freed a man from being imprisoned by evil spirits (casting devils into swine).

The Lord used His hands to help people, giving us many examples of how we can use our hands to serve others. When we are loving and kind with our hands they become like angels’ hands, and when we leave this world we will become angels in heaven.

The Lord is called the “Lamb of God” because He is gentle, kind and patient. He is the source of all the goodness and kindness there is. We become His “lambs” or “sheep” when we do what He asks us to in the Word.

The Neighbor: The “hungry,” “thirsty,” “stranger,” “naked,” “sick” and “imprisoned,” represent different kinds of good in the neighbor that we are to love. In other words, every neighbor that we love falls into one of these categories. We extend charity to them based on the particular kind and level of good that we see in them and according to the particular need for good that we see in them (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3419, *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 90). This is how we love them rightly and wisely.

Rev. Grant Odhner

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities



We Will Serve the Lord

Choose a service project from several alternatives.

If your congregation chose a *Serving Others Projects* (see pp. 9-10), this is an ideal time to conclude your congregational effort. Involve students in ending the project, e.g. gathering up canned food and putting it into bags, loading cars, etc.



Alternatively, you could choose a one-time service activity to use today. Look for a list of activity ideas on *We Will Serve the Lord* (p. 5). You may want to consult with teachers of other age groups and do this project with all of the Sunday school groups.

1. Why is helping others important? (Loving others by serving them can bring us the kind of happiness the angels have in heaven.)
2. Discuss the service activity you have chosen, asking students to think specifically about how it will help or serve others, e.g. how they hope it will make the people feel, etc.
3. Give the students directions for what they should do.
4. Thank the students. Praise their efforts and admire the contributions they have made.



Washer Wrist Band

The six actions described in Matthew 25 represent different kinds of good in the neighbor that we are to love. Every neighbor we are to love and serve falls into one of these categories. When charity is practiced at the highest level, it is actually directed at the Lord Himself in other people. Students will create a washer wrist band on which they will write the six kinds of goodness we are to love in others.



Materials Needed

We Will Serve the Lord, p. 5 offers various activity choices. Materials will vary depending on your project selection.

Prepare in Advance

Some projects require more planning than others. Talk to your refreshment head if you are planning food, and to your Sunday school coordinator or pastor if you are preparing for a festival service.

Charity
New Church Concept
 Anyone who has charity toward the neighbor is moved by an affection for goodness and truth because they come from the Lord, and such a one turns away from evil and falsity because these come from himself. When he does this, humility is present in him. *Arcana Coelestia* 4956

Materials Needed for Each Student

Washer Wrist Band Instructions pp. 6-7; six washers; seven (or fourteen) craft rubber bands in several colors so students can choose; plastic "s" or "c" closure (often comes with craft rubber bands); fine point permanent marker to share

Prepare in Advance

See next page.



Washer Wrist Band *continued*

1. Make a washer wrist band before class to show to the students.
2. Rubber bands vary in thickness. If your craft rubber bands are thin, you may want to double them and use two. Try pairing rubber bands of different colors to make a one-of-a-kind wrist band.
3. Show students the wrist band you have made. Demonstrate how to connect the washers and rubber bands to create a band.
4. Distribute washers, rubber bands and *Washer Wrist Band Instructions* (pp. 66-67). Help students as needed.
5. Remind students that the helpful actions described in this parable—feeding the hungry, etc.—also represent spiritual things we can do to serve. For example, sharing true ideas with someone is like giving them a drink of refreshing water. With the Lord’s guidance, we can learn to help people both naturally and spiritually.
6. Suggest students wear the wrist bands to remind them of how we are to serve the neighbor.

Video Directions

See how to construct at www.bitly.com/WasherBracelet. *Note:* We suggest using seven rubber bands instead of nine.

Prepare in Advance

Follow the *Washer Wrist Band Instructions* pp. 66-67 and make a sample to show students. **Note:** You will find it helpful to watch the video recommended above. However, the video may seem juvenile to your students. Use your discretion about whether to show it to them. Your demonstration should work in its place. Also, we suggest finishing the wrist band in a slightly different way than the video.

Mercy: All who have charity have mercy, that is, all who love their neighbor are merciful toward him. This is why the Word describes the practice of charity as acts of mercy.... Charity consists essentially in desiring the welfare of one’s neighbor, in having an affection for what is good, and in acknowledging that since what is good is one’s neighbor, those who are governed by good are consequently one’s neighbor, but varyingly so, depending on the amount of good that governs the individual person. Therefore since charity consists in having an affection for what is good, it also consists in feelings of mercy for those in distress. The good of charity holds such feelings within it because it comes down from the Lord’s love toward the whole human race, a love which is ‘mercy’ because the whole human race is in distress.

Arcana Coelestia 5132

4. Wrap It Up

Take the Message Home

Read this quotation aloud: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21).

How can the kingdom of God be within you? In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the King (representing the Lord) says to those who are like sheep, “Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). An inheritance is something that is most often given to children by their parents. The kingdom of heaven is something that the Lord (our heavenly Father) wants to give *all* of us. He wants us to experience as much of the happiness of heaven as is possible on this earth. And He wants us to live to eternity in heaven when our life on earth ends. But to accept our inheritance we must do our part—which is to choose to live our lives in ways that align with the life of heaven that is taught in the Lord’s Word.

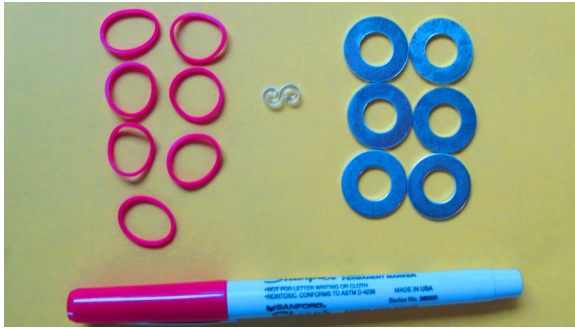
Give *Take Home Cards* (two per page, p. 8) to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up where they will see them this week.

We Will Serve the Lord

Conclude this series of lessons by providing service opportunities for students of all ages. Use an idea from the chart below or encourage the students to think of a way they can make a difference to their church community. Organize the project so that students of all ages can participate.

	Young Children	Older Children	Teens
Provide food after church	Arrange prepared snacks on a plate, put out napkins or cups.	Prepare snacks (e.g. clean and cut up fruit or vegetables, put cheese on crackers, bake, etc.).	Plan and purchase snacks. Prepare and serve them, or supervise younger children doing this task. Clean up afterwards.
Be a junior usher	Light or snuff candles.	Hand out programs. Light and snuff candles.	Distribute programs. Welcome and assist newcomers. Carry up the offertory basket.
Provide music for the service	Practice, “I was hungry...” (www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungryMV). Sing the song for the congregation at the end of the service or during refreshment time.	Practice, “I was hungry...” (www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungryMV or www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungry). Sing the song for the congregation.	Practice, “I was hungry...” (www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungry). Sing the song for the congregation at the end of the service or during refreshment time.
Clean and tidy a toy or supply closet	Tidy up the nursery after babies have used it, or do a deep “tidy” of the toy bins and shelves. Identify and remove broken toys.	Tidy up the nursery after babies have used it, or do a deep “tidy” of the toy bins and shelves. Identify and remove broken toys.	Organize a supply closet. Sort crayons and markers and throw away supplies that no longer work.
Prepare decorations for a festival service	Look for a repetitive job that is easy to master, e.g. putting candles in cardboard holders for a Christmas Eve service.	Prepare signs for a harvest or Thanksgiving food drive.	Design festival decorations for your church’s newsletter or sanctuary or pews.
Prepare thank-you gifts for small group leaders or Sunday school teachers	Make thank-you pictures.	Plant bulbs or flowers.	Make gift labels or tags for teacher gifts, e.g. candle in a jar, candy in a jar, etc.

Washer Wrist Band Instructions



1. You will need

- six washers
- a connecting piece that might look “s” shaped (like the one here) or “c” shaped
- a permanent marker
- seven or fourteen rubber bands (If your bands are thin but you want a thicker look, double them, using fourteen bands.)

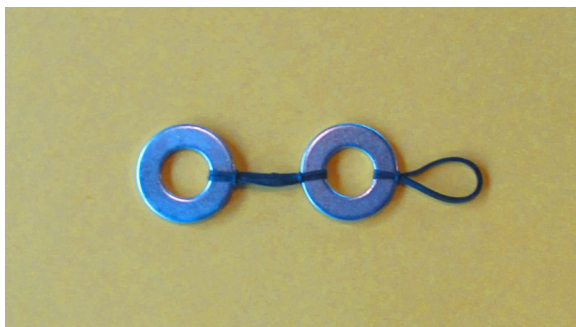
Choose a single color of rubber bands or mix-and-match if different colors are available.



- ## 2.
- Take a rubber band and put it half way through the hole in a washer. Slip one end of the rubber band through the other end and tighten to make a knot next to the washer.

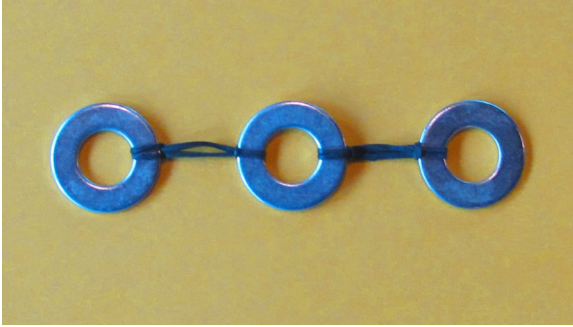


- ## 3.
- Put the free end of the rubber band through the hole in a second washer. Stretch the rubber band and slip it over the first washer. Pull the washers away from each other until the rubber band is tightly fastened between them.

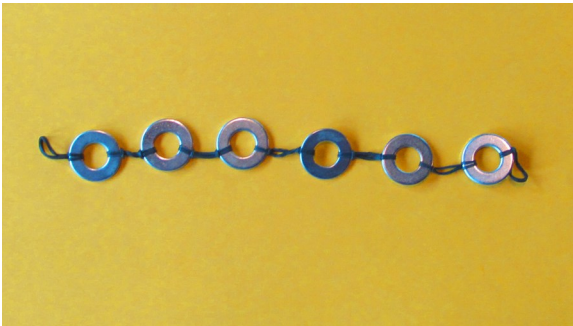


- ## 4.
- Using the same method, attach another rubber band to one of the washers.

Washer Wrist Band Instructions *continued*



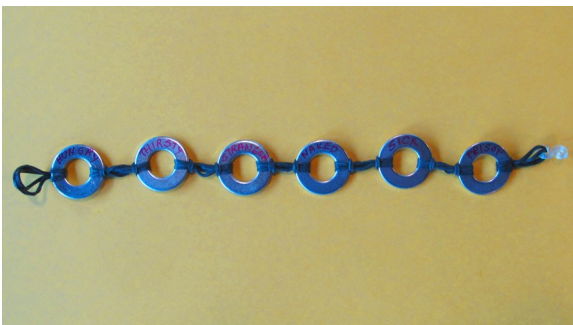
5. Continue to build the bracelet by attaching a third washer. You will need to slip both of the washers through the rubber band to connect all three washers.



6. Continue adding washers until six washers are linked together. Add a rubber band to each end. These will be used to attach the “s” or “c” connector.



7. Using a fine tip permanent marker, write one need from Matthew 25:35-36 on each washer. The needs are Hungry, Thirsty, Stranger, Naked, Sick, and Prison. (Sample showing doubled bands.)



8. Slip the rubber bands on to an “s” or “c” connector shown in picture 1 so that you can connect the washers to make a wrist band. (Sample showing doubled bands.)



“Inherit the Kingdom”

Read: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20-21

Reflect: In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the King represents the Lord. He says to those who are like sheep, “Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). An inheritance is something you are given by your parents or other family members. Your Heavenly Father wants to give you the kingdom of heaven. But you have to be willing to accept this inheritance. To accept, a person must choose to live by the rules of heaven—the Ten Commandments. In the long run, you accept either heaven or hell *within you* by the choices you make.

Having heaven inside you means allowing the Lord to inspire loving feelings and wise thoughts toward others. Those feelings and thoughts inside come out in kind words and helpful actions.

Respond: The parable of the sheep and the goats points out what we need to do to truly inherit the kingdom. If we seek to serve and help other people, we will be blessed. Each day, we can ask, “Lord, what can I do to serve You today, what can I do to bring heaven to earth today?”

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Having heaven inside you means allowing the Lord to inspire loving feelings and wise thoughts toward others. Those feelings and thoughts inside come out in kind words and helpful actions.

Respond: The parable of the sheep and the goats points out what we need to do to truly inherit the kingdom. If we seek to serve and help other people, we will be blessed. Each day, we can ask, “Lord, what can I do to serve You today, what can I do to bring heaven to earth today?”

Serving Others Projects

These lessons lend themselves well to carrying out a larger-scale service project throughout the series. Consider setting up a project in which children of all ages can participate as leaders and helpers with adult support as needed. Choose whether to

- support students in organizing a fund raising event, the proceeds of which are donated to charity.
- do a project involving direct donations, such as canned food or clothing.

A list of possible fundraising events and suggested charitable causes and organizations is provided (below and on the next page) to help you brainstorm activities for your group.

Fundraising Events	Activities
Empty Bowls Event	Host a simple soup and bread meal and charge a fixed price. All proceeds go a food charity. Make ceramic bowls which people can purchase (see “Food” section on next page).
Talent Night	Organize a talent night. Charge admission, solicit donations of food or raffle items, and sell refreshments.
Car Wash	Host a car wash. Generate more funding by asking sponsors to make additional donations for meeting targeted fundraising goals.
Cake Auction	Everyone bakes a cake, using a cake mix, and decorates it creatively. Hold a cake auction during which people bid on cakes via a silent auction (everyone walks past all cakes in the room three times and bids via bidding sheets) <i>or</i> host a live auction using paper plates as number paddles.
Pancake Breakfast	Host breakfast before church or on a Saturday and charge a fixed fee or ask for donations.
Pasta Dinner	Host a pasta dinner and charge a fixed price.
Art Auction	Students create pieces of art work and auction them off. May be held in conjunction with a breakfast or dinner event.
Bike-a-thon	Solicit sponsorship for a bike-a-thon.
Run-a-thon	Solicit sponsorship for a run-a-thon.
Rocking-Chair-a-thon	Solicit sponsorship for an indoor rock-a-thon. Youth get paid to keep a rocking chair rocking by the minute, quarter hour, or half hour. Teams of three might keep the chair rocking for up to twenty-four hours.
Babysitting Morning/Evening	Provide drop-off babysitting at the church or encourage youth to donate their babysitting takings from a church-held event.
Raffle	Solicit donations and hold a raffle.
Lemonade Stand	Set up a lemonade stand after church.
Baked Goods Sale	Bake goods and sell them after church or in conjunction with another event.
Youth Auction	Have youth auction themselves off to church members to do yard work, pet sitting, babysitting, house cleaning, etc.
Dessert and Coffee Fundraiser	Bake desserts and host a social evening.

Charitable Organizations

Focus	Charity	Mission
Orphanages	Helping Children in Crisis http://helpingchildrenincrisis.com/	The General Church Sacred Care orphanage is run by the Rev. Samson Abuga in Etoro, Kenya, in conjunction with the General Church Sacred Care Board. Funding is needed for a dormitory and dining hall, as well as ongoing support for educating, feeding, and providing for the needs of twenty orphans.
	Loving Arms Mission http://lamchildren.org	Loving Arms Mission is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Bryn Athyn, USA. It provides care to orphaned, abandoned and at risk children in Nepal—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The children’s homes are well-run by dedicated staff to provide the best possible care.
Food	Local food banks	Local food banks welcome donations at any time of year.
	Host an “Empty Bowls” event to raise funds and donate them to the food charity of your choice http://www.emptybowls.net/	Potters and other craftspeople work with the community to create handcrafted bowls. Guests are invited to a simple meal of soup and bread. In exchange for a cash donation, guests keep a bowl as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world. The money raised is donated to an organization working to end hunger and food insecurity.
	International charities, e.g. Heifer International http://www.heifer.org	Heifer International helps bring sustainable agriculture and commerce to areas with a history of poverty. Donors fund animals that provide food and reliable income through agricultural products that can be traded or sold. This sustainable income brings new opportunities for building schools, creating agricultural cooperatives, forming community savings, and funding small businesses.
Water	Many organizations sponsor well drilling and rain barrels for areas in need of fresh water. e.g. US Peace corps https://donate.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=donate.contribute.projDetail&projdesc=SPF-WAT	The very basic needs of clean water and accessible sanitation are absent from many communities around the world. This often leads to severe community health problems. Volunteers work with communities to design locally appropriate solutions to provide safe, affordable, and sustainable water and sanitation. Contributions help volunteer and community projects—such as latrines, aqueducts and wells—and basic sanitation training.
Clothing	Coat drive http://onewarmcoat.org/	Volunteer leaders organize a coat drive and collect coats. Donors clean out their closets and give coats. Social service agency volunteers and staff distribute the coats to those in need.
	Shoe drive http://soles4souls.org	Soles4souls collects new and used shoes and clothes and distributes them directly to people in need. By provisioning qualified micro-enterprise programs, jobs are created in poor and disadvantaged communities.
Hospitalized Children	Many hospitals welcome donations of books and toys for patients.	
	Ronald McDonald House Charities http://www.rmhc.org	Ronald McDonald House Charities provide resources for keeping families close to their hospitalized children.