



# When Did We See You, Lord?

**Goal:** To practice seeing Jesus in others.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus' parable of the judgment of the nations is the only parable where he refers to himself as a "king." This parable shows that daily actions matter. The great difference is between those who have met the needs and served others and those who have not done so.

In need are those who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, and imprisoned. These indicate specific needs but also, of course, represent needs of all kinds. Basic dimensions of life are indicated here, showing that while these are foundational needs, other needs can spring from them.

Jesus said those who are "righteous" meet needs, and in having done so to "one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Others, who have not met needs, "did not do it to me." Neither group was aware they were encountering Jesus in the needs of others.

We are aware, now. God's grace reaches us in providing opportunities to serve others, and in so doing, to serve Christ. Our gratitude for God's grace in Christ moves us to meet needs and serve God's children. Whoever is in need, and whatever the need, we help.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children do not grow up unaware of those in need. Whether they see a person on a street corner asking for help with food, gather clothes or food for people in need, or help take a meal for someone who is sick, the experiences they have help make this parable become real.

When children are surrounded by adults who model faithful Christian living in response to the needs of those who are hungry, thirsty, alone, sick, in need of clothes or shelter, or in prison, then they grow up knowing that following Jesus means we are active in our response.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This is the Fifth Sunday in Lent. You have an excellent opportunity to invite children to think about the season of Lent as a time of personal reflection to consider how Jesus wants us to live. This parable of Jesus reminds us of the simplicity and complexity of following Jesus. Young children will be able to tell stories of times when their family did something kind and helpful for someone else. You could invite these stories to be shared in response to this open-ended statement, "We love Jesus when we. . . ." Older children will be able to wrestle with this parable and why Jesus told it. This parable offers a great chance for them to think about a practice they would like to take up that involves helping someone else.

*O God, give me eyes to see your beloved Son in  
the children you have entrusted to my care. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

[bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies](http://bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies)

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 5, 19, 25

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

purple cloth

candle

magazines and  
newspapers

## Responding

### Claiming

cards prepared from  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1** and  
**GN 2**

### Praying

internet-connected  
device, YouTube video  
“Matthew 25:31–46” ([bit.ly/SeeingJesusInOthers](http://bit.ly/SeeingJesusInOthers))

### Offering

pitchers

### Extra

copies of **GN 3**

Note: bit.ly web addresses  
are case sensitive.

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Praying God’s Grace” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**MS A B**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite the children to help set the scene. On a table, place a purple cloth, a Bible, and a candle to signify the light of Christ. Tell the children that this is the Fifth Sunday in Lent, a time to think about how Jesus wants us to live. Explain that today you will be learning about seeing Jesus in others.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

As the children work, write each of the following words at the top of separate pieces of construction paper: *hungry, thirsty, lonely, in need of clothing, sick, and in prison*.

Point out the words you wrote. Invite the children to look through the magazines and newspapers to find pictures of people who are hungry, thirsty, in need of clothing, sick, imprisoned, or lonely. Have the children sort the pictures according to the need they have identified and glue them on the piece of construction paper with that need written on it. Add the pictures to the worship space.

### Singing

**MS T**

Play, sing, and dance to “Thank You, Jesus”—**SCM 25**.

**A** *Adapt any activity to suit the children’s needs. Ask yourself, “How can I change this activity so that this child can do it?”*

### Praying

Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ presence with us. Invite the children to stand and breathe deeply. Encourage them to feel God with them. Invite the children to repeat your words and actions as you pray:

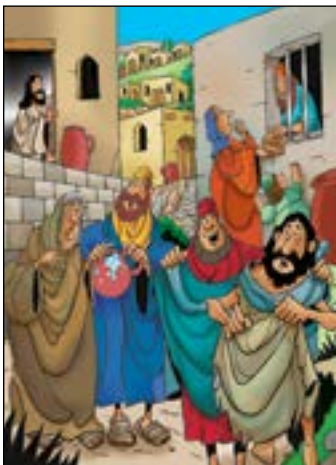
Dear God, (*bow heads and fold hands*) /  
thank you for loving us. (*cross arms to give yourself a hug*) /  
Help us to open our eyes to see you, (*open eyes wide and look around*) /  
open our ears to hear you, (*cup hand to ear*) /  
and open our hearts serve you (*cross hands over heart, then open them out*) /  
in everyone we meet. (*shake hands with one another*) /  
Amen.



### Preparing to Hear the Story C

To set the Bible story in context, explain that Jesus knew that he would not be with his followers much longer. Ask the children to consider what they would want to tell others if they knew that they might move away or not be together much longer, perhaps because they are moving away as opposed to anticipating separation through death. If the conversation goes that way, be sensitive to feelings that may be evoked by the children.

In today's story, Jesus tells his disciples how to show their love for him even after he is no longer with them.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

### Hearing the Story L

Invite a child to find Matthew 25 in the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship center. Read **SCM 5** or listen to the story audio. Use your voice, expressions, and feelings to make the story more engaging. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Tell the children you will read the story again. Invite them to take turns finding one of the posters made in "Welcoming and Preparing" as they hear it described in the story. For example, as you read the first half of each "I was" phrase, pause and have a child hold up the poster that completes the phrase.

**A** Adapt any activity to suit your children's needs. Ask yourself, "How can I change this activity so that this child can do it?"

### Reflecting on God's Grace C

Discuss:

- ▼ What kinds of people were mentioned in the story? (*hungry, thirsty, lonely, needing clothes, sick, in prison, people who helped, people who did not help*)
- ▼ What does hearing this story make you want to do?
- ▼ What do you think Jesus wants you to do?

Invite each child or pair to select one of the posters. Using the poster, have the children come up with an action showing how they might help the person or people on their poster.

### Singing L M MS

Play "We Are Blessed to Be a Blessing"—**SCM 19**. Ask the children to listen for all the things that Jesus did and that we are called to do for others. Ask them to come up with movements for all the things that he did. Sing, incorporating the movements to the song.

Turn off the candle.



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

### Claiming God's Grace

LG C

Through telling stories, the children will explore ways they can help others as Jesus taught us to do.

Form pairs. Lay the cards from **GN 1** and **GN 2** face down. Invite each pair to choose one card and then create a story that explains how a person in the picture was helped as Jesus taught.

At the end of each story, have the pair say: "I was (*say the need*) and you helped me by (*say how the person helped*)."

After the stories have been told, ask the children what are some ways that they can try to see Jesus in others and help people this week.



Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.

### Praying God's Grace

L VI

Tell the children you will watch a video like today's story. Show the YouTube video "Matthew 25:31–46" ([bit.ly/SeeingJesusInOthers](https://bit.ly/SeeingJesusInOthers)). Read the words in the video along with the children.

Close with prayer. Invite the children to repeat your words and actions as you pray:

Dear God, /

Help us to see you in others. / (*place hand over eyes and look around*)

When we see someone who is hungry, / (*hold tummy*)

may we give them food. / (*hold both hands out in offering*)

When we see someone who is thirsty, / (*place hand on throat*)

may we give them something to drink. / (*hold out hand as if holding a cup*)

When we see someone who is lonely, / (*bow head*)

may we be their friend. / (*give a high five to a neighbor*)

When we see someone who is sick, / (*place back of hand on forehead*)

may we take care of them. / (*pat neighbor on shoulder*)

When we see someone who is hurting, / (*look sad*)

may we help them feel better. / (*hold both thumbs up*)

Help us to see you in others. / (*place hand over eyes and look around*)

Amen.

VI While watching a video with no words can be powerful for a sighted child, a visually impaired child will feel lost. Provide plenty of descriptions of the actions so that all children can understand what is happening.



### Offering God's Grace

LG

Help the children fill pitchers with cold water. Take the water, along with small cups, to a place in your church where people gather. Invite older children to pour water into the cups, while the rest of the children pass out water to those who come by. Encourage the children to remind everyone “Jesus loves you!” Afterward, talk about whether giving people water was hard or easy, and why. Consider together some other ways that you might offer Jesus’ love to people.

#### GN 3 Solution:

bars, blocks, door, hat, jug, mustache, sandals, sheep, water, window

### Extra Activity

LG

Provide copies of **GN 3** and pencils. Allow time for the children to find the ten differences in the two pictures. If time allows, provide markers or colored pencils for the children to color the pictures.

**LG** *Providing opportunities for children to lead, offer help, and express generosity helps build their confidence. This also helps them learn that they are gifted members of your community.*

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

L LG

Ask the children to help clean the space.

Gather in a circle and wonder together how seeing Jesus in others would be a helpful practice during Lent. Ask them to read the words on the pictures in the worship space. Then say the following litany together. After each line, prompt the children to respond, “Help us see and serve those in need.”

God, we pray for the hungry.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

God, we pray for the thirsty.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

God, we pray for the stranger.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

God, we pray for those who need clothing.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

God, we pray for the sick.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

God, we pray for those who are in prison.

**Help us see and serve those in need.**

Amen.

Challenge the children to look for opportunities this week to serve others in their homes, school, neighborhood, and the world.

As they leave, give each child a blessing, saying, “(Name), the grace of God is with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).















