



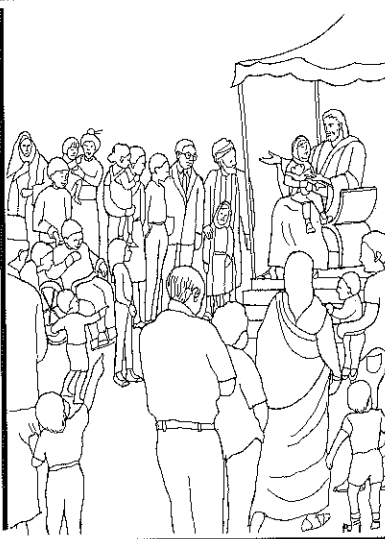
CHRIST THE KING

RESPONSE: Psalm 23

You are my shepherd;
you are my friend.
I want
to follow you always,
just to follow
my friend.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

“When you help
my brothers and sisters,
every time you do it to me.”
Alleluia, alleluia!
“Every time you do it to
me.”



EVALUATION

We are providing this brief evaluation form for use after you have celebrated this Sunday's liturgy with the children.

Notes for future reference:

What went well?

What needs improvement?

LITURGICAL SEASON BACKGROUND

This is the last Sunday in Ordinary Time, the feast of Christ the King. During the past weeks we have been reflecting on life in the kingdom of God and our share in building that kingdom here on earth. Two Sundays ago we recalled the story of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus, learning how Jesus changes us and desires to live in our hearts. The kingdom of God dwells in each of us who desires to change our hearts. That is where we begin to build the kingdom on earth — in our own changed hearts.

Last Sunday we listened to another parable. It is the story of the owner who gave his servants each different amounts of money to put to good use. When the owner returned and found that the one servant — to whom he had given a small amount of money to be responsible for — did nothing with his money. The owner took the money back and gave it to the servant who had been given the most responsibility.

In today's readings we hear how the King of Heaven will sit in judgment of the people to whom God has given varying amounts of responsibility. Those who served well will enjoy the fullness of the kingdom of God. The church closes the liturgical year with this graphic image of the King of Heaven, as a shepherd, separating the good sheep from the goats.

The feast is somewhat transitional in that it not only ends the year but serves to flow into the season of Advent when we prepare for the coming of Jesus not only in the flesh of a child but at the end of time when all things will have been accomplished. So do we pray in the last words of the Book of Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus."

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Although Palestine was urbanized in the time of Jesus, its setting was nonetheless rural and its economy dependent upon agriculture. The pastoral roots of the people were still deep and blossomed in their figures of speech. Flocks of sheep (and goats) roamed the hillsides. The work of a shepherd was familiar to those who heard Jesus speak. The language of both readings draw upon this centuries old pastoral way of life.

We hear Ezekiel today speak of God as a shepherd. God says, "I myself will take care of my sheep." The reading conveys a caring image to those who know about tending sheep. While sheep are docile, they are vulnerable and require an unusual amount of care and attention, particularly in the wild where, led by their shepherds, they wandered and grazed where they could find food.

Their wool, so valuable a resource, also required extraordinary care. It often harbored disease that irritat-

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ed the sheep's hide. The thick wool easily got caught in bushes and brambles, sometimes entangling and trapping the sheep, leaving them dependent upon their shepherd for rescue. We can easily see how the earthy experience of sheep and shepherd provided rich and concrete imagery that conveyed the Israelites' relationship with God. Moreover, David, the second and greatest king of Israel, had been a shepherd.

The Gospel sustains the image of shepherd in the way it describes how the King, at the end of time, will separate people, "like a shepherd separates sheep from goats." This shepherd King will share his reign with the sheep — those docile, vulnerable creatures who need so much care, as do the poor. Those who are worthy of the kingdom are those who depend upon the shepherd and who, like the shepherd, have spent their lives serving those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The environment for the Feast of Christ the King might include a banner with a crown, as well as a candle, a plant or group of plants, and perhaps some incense.

You might display the *SUNDAY Scripture Poster* which this week is an illustration of the Gospel, showing Jesus as King holding a child on his lap and surrounded by people of different cultures. The poster could be sent home with a different family each week to color for the next celebration. The book of God's word, displayed facing the assembly, is the focal point of the gathering space.

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

You might use the same centering/gathering song that you used for the previous Sundays during this season.

Suggestions:

- "Song of the Body of Christ" (*Sing God a Simple Song*, #30, Treehaus Communications). This would be an appropriate song for the closing Sundays of the liturgical year. When used as a centering song, rather than as a processional, you might use the movement and gestures suggested in *Sing God a Simple Song*:

We come to share our story; (*Gesture with both hands toward lips, then carry gesture forward, away from body.*)
we come to break the bread; (*Cup hands together, then open them.*)

we come to know our rising from the dead. (*Raise hands heavenward as if holding something.*)

- "To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #46, Treehaus Communications). You might follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God A Simple Song*.

FIRST READING *Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17*

The reader may be either a child or an adult; in

either case, the person should know ahead of time in order to prepare carefully. The tone of the reading might be one of sympathy and care for a loved one.

PSALM RESPONSE

The psalm is not only a response to the first reading; rather, "responsorial" is descriptive of the way the psalm is prayed, with the children responding to the cantor or leader. You might use the same psalm through several Sundays. *Suggestions:*

- "Psalm 23: Your Are My Shepherd" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader's Guide*, Year A, page 132, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

- "Psalm 122: We Shall God Up With Joy" (*Sing God a Simple Song*, #6, Treehaus Communications).

Suggested gestures:

We shall go up with joy . . . (*Lift hands upward.*)
to the house of our God. (*Hands might be brought together, folded, heads bowed.*)

- "Psalm 103: Bless the Lord, My Soul" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #36, Treehaus Communications).
- "Psalm 122: I Rejoiced" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #6, Treehaus Communications).

You might follow the gestures as recommended in *Sing God a Simple Song*.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Suggestions:

- "When You Help My Brothers and Sisters" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader's Guide*, Year A, page 132, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

- "Alleluia" (*Sing God a Simple Song*, #42, Treehaus Communications). You might follow the gestures as recommended in *Sing God a Simple Song* which suggests simply swaying back and forth for each "alleluia."

- Alleluia verse from "Peace Is Flowing Like A River" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #51, Treehaus Communications). You might follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God A Simple Song*.

GOSPEL *Matthew 25:31-40*

Usually the presider reads the Gospel. The tone of the reading can reflect the emotions of the dialog: on the one hand, a benevolent king who wants to embrace his followers and, on the other hand, the people who finally face their self-serving way of life.

HOMILY OUTLINE

See the SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide, Year A, pages 132 and 133, for "Focus of the Readings" and "Reflecting on the Readings With Children." When reflecting on the scriptures with children **we** take our cues from the children's responses. In so **doing**, you might use some of the questions below to enrich **their** appreciation of God's word.

WE LISTEN TO GOD SPEAK

- What might the children in the assembly hear God saying to them in today's readings?
- How might you engage the children in the biblical experience with open-ended questions?

Examples for this week's readings:

Concerning the first reading:

- Why do you think God **chose** the image of a shepherd when he spoke to Ezekiel **about** how the people of Israel will be treated?
- How would you feel if **you** were one of the Israelites and heard how God would **care** for you?
- Why do you think God **will** judge between the sheep and the goats? How would **you** feel if you were a goat? A sheep? What do you think **God** means? What do you think God will do with **the** goats?
- What does this reading **tell** you about who God is? About God's care for **people**?

Concerning the Gospel:

- What do you think it **was** like for the disciples to hear what Jesus was telling **them**? How would you have felt?
- Who do you think is **the** King that Jesus is talking about?
- What do you think it **will** be like when the King comes surrounded by all the angels?
- What do you think it **will** be like for people who are invited to share in the **kingdom**? What will it be like for those who are not invited?
- What do you think the **King** is talking about when he says, "When you do these **things** for any of my brothers and sisters in need, you **do** it for me"?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says "those who do these things will live with God forever"?

WE REFLECT ON THE REIGN OF GOD

- How can you invite the children to look out of the biblical experience at their lives today?
- How can you use the biblical imagery of today's readings to explore with children their experience of God's presence in our lives today?

Examples for this week's readings

Concerning the first reading:

- How can we know that God is our shepherd?
- What do people do who feel cared for by a loving, shepherd-like God? How do they show their gratitude to God?
- In what way are you one of God's sheep? What is that like for you?
- How does God personally attend to the flock today, feeding them, recovering those who are lost, healing those who are hurt?
- How has God healed you when you have felt hurt? What was that like for you?
- How do you feel about being judged by God?

Concerning the Gospel:

- In what ways do you feel invited by God to come and share in the kingdom he has prepared for you?
- In what ways do people today help others who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, sick, in prison? In what ways have you been helpful?
- What is it like for you to help someone? What is it like for you not to help someone when you could?
- When have you felt that when you did something for someone you were doing it for God?
- Imagine living with God forever. What will that be like for you?
- What sort of place do you think Jesus has prepared for you? What do you hope it will be like?

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WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

- How might you attune yourself to encourage the children's own creative responses to God's word?
- How might the Spirit be moving the children to respond to God's word in praise and thanksgiving?

Examples for this week's readings:

Concerning the first reading:

- What can we do to be good sheep?
- What can you do when you feel lost, like a sheep gone astray? What would you want God to do?
- What can you do to show God you are grateful for God's loving care?

Concerning the Gospel:

- What can we do to give glory to the King when he returns?
- What can we do at home, in school, or in your neighborhood, to share in the kingdom that the King has prepared for us?
- When you think of sharing in the glory of the kingdom of God, what do you hear God ask of you?

CREED

Invite the children to profess their faith by creedal statements that echo the readings. Reflect on what the readings say about God as Creator, Jesus as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Giver of Life. Express these statements so that the children can give their assent to them. This week's readings, for example, offer these options:

- God, who loves us and personally cares for us as a shepherd watches over the flock.
- Jesus, who will come as a King in glory to judge all people.
- Holy Spirit, who fills us with God's own life and guides us in the way of the Shepherd.

PRAYERS OF FAITHFUL

The proclamation of the word leads us to change our lives and express our gratitude in the celebration of the Eucharist. After the children have offered their prayers and concerns, you might also offer petitions based on the scripture texts. See notes for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time for guidelines on preparing petitions.

In formulating the prayers, you might draw from the verbs or "action words" and biblical images in this week's readings. For example: *watch over, care for, heal, judge, invite, separate, come in glory, live with God forever.*

NOTE: Arrange to have the Sunday Scripture Leaflets given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage the children and parents to use these leaflets through the week to continue reflecting prayerfully on God's Word. In addition, emphasize the use of the Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal, pages 138 and 139, (Treehaus Communications, Inc.) as a way of assisting the family's deeper reflection on God's word at home.



Liturgy of the Word

November 20, 2011

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

• "To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #46, Treehaus Communications).

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: O God, you are our Shepherd. All the people of the earth are your people, your flock. Help us to follow your way and to care for each other as you care for us. We want to live with you forever. We pray to you in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

FIRST READING *Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17*

Today's Reader: _____

Presider: Today God tells us something wonderful that God personally will do for us.

PSALM RESPONSE

Presider or Leader of Song: **God watches over us as a loving shepherd, so we sing in praise.**

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

• "When You Help My Brothers and Sisters" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children* and *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year A, page 132, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL *Matthew 25:31-40*

Today's Reader: _____

Preliminary Comments: **Jesus tells us how we can serve God by caring for one another.**

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HOMILY

Focal Points: Our God cares for us personally, walks with us, protects us, rescues us when we are lost, like a faithful shepherd attends to sheep. At the end of time, when the Shepherd Jesus returns as a King in glory, all people who have served one another with the care of a shepherd will share in the glory of the kingdom.

Outline:

CREED

Presider: Let us proclaim our faith in our shepherd-like God.

• Do you believe in God, who personally attends to us as a shepherd guides and protects sheep?

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in God, who . . .

• Do you believe in Jesus, who came to be our shepherd and will come again as our King in glory to share his reign with those who have helped one another?

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in Jesus, who . . .

• Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who guides us in the way of God's own flock.

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, who . . .

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Presider: Our God finds those who are lost. So do we trust in God to hear us when we pray. (After the children have offered their prayers, you might also add prayers based on today's scripture texts. For example:)

+ May the leaders of nations and all peoples know that you are our Shepherd, loving and kind; we pray.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

+ May your church serve you faithfully as you have served your people as a loving Shepherd; we pray.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

+ May we in our families and neighborhoods care for one another in the way you care for the sheep of your flock; we pray.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

CLOSING PRAYER

Presider: O God, you are our Shepherd. You personally guide us with loving care. And now you lead us to your Holy Table to share with us the Sacred Food of Christ our King. Our hearts are full of love for you. We thank you and praise you in the name of Jesus, here and now, and forever.

All: Amen.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

NOTE: Arrange to have the *Sunday Scripture Leaflets* given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage the children and parents to use these leaflets and the *Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal* throughout the week.

CHRIST THE KING

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord, you are gentle
and do not ask us
to do more than we are able.
Give us the love
to see Jesus, your Son,
in the hungry and the thirsty,
in strangers and the poor,
in those who are sick
and criminals in prison.
Just as he died for those
who needed him most,
so may we work and pray
for the people
with the most troubles.
We pray this prayer
to you through Jesus
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The people of Israel saw in their leader the role and function of both shepherd and king. David, for example, is spoken of as both shepherd (which he was) and king (which he became.) The role of the king was not only to rule but to guide, feed, and care for his people. God is also spoken of in shepherd imagery (e.g. Psalm 23.) Here in this passage God says, "I myself will shepherd my flock."

In the Gospel reading, the last judgment, Jesus is both Shepherd and King. He will judge between sheep and goats. The focus is on the *real* manifestation of our faith in acts of charity; on that we will be judged.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did you hear? Encourage the children to reflect back on what they heard without comment or question. Throughout the homily, try to bring in the things said by the children.

FIRST READING: *Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17*

This is a reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

Our God says:

"I, myself, will take care of my sheep.
As a shepherd watches over the flock,
so will I watch over my sheep.
I, myself, will feed them and give them rest.
I will find those who are lost
and bring them back.
I will heal those who are hurt.
I will be a good shepherd to my sheep.
But remember, I will judge
between one sheep and another,
and I will judge between the sheep
and the goats."


The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 23*

RESPONSE:



You are my shep-herd, you are my friend. I want to fol-low you



al - ways, just to fol - low my friend. (Fine)

VERSES:



to Response

1. I have all I need. You are my shep-herd, your hand is with me.
2. When path-ways are dark, you are there guid - ing me, keep-ing me safe.
3. You give me to eat. You make me wel-come, you fill me with joy.
4. Your good-ness I know. Your love will be with me all of my life.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



1. "When you help my broth - ers and sis - ters,
2. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



(Fine)

1. ev - 'ry time you do it to me."
2. "Ev - 'ry time you do it to me."

OSPEL: *Matthew 25:31-40*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples,

“When the King comes in glory,
he will sit on his throne
with all the angels around him.
All the people of the world will come to him,
and he will separate them
just like a shepherd separates the sheep
from the goats.

Then the King will say to the sheep,

‘Come and receive your share of the kingdom
which I have prepared for you.
For when I was hungry, you gave me food.
When I was thirsty, you gave me a drink.
When I was a stranger,
you made me feel welcome.
When I had nothing to wear,
you gave me clothes.
When I was sick, you took care of me,
and when I was in prison,
you came and visited me.’

“The people who hear these words will ask,

‘When did we see you hungry and give you food?
When did we see you thirsty and give you a drink?
When did we take you in
and make you feel welcome?
When did we give you clothes to wear?
When did we see you sick or in prison
and come to visit you?’

And the King will answer,

‘When you do those things
for any of my brothers and sisters in need,
you do it for me.
And those who do these things
will live with God forever.’ ”

the Gospel of the Lord.

Who are the people Jesus shows concern for in this Gospel reading?

Help the children to see that all of these people are needy in some way and depend on others.

Can you think of other stories in the Gospel where Jesus showed special love and concern for the poor, the hungry, and so forth?

It is important that the children realize that this text is a summary of all that Jesus taught and did in his life. They should not get the idea that this is a judgment scene which will catch people off guard. Jesus was always identified with the poor, the outcasts, and taught his followers the same. Some people rejected him during his life on earth for this identification. Today’s Gospel isn’t God’s acceptance or rejection of us but *our* acceptance or rejection of what Jesus taught and who he is.

Do we have people in the world, our city or neighborhood, who are hungry, thirsty or who need help?

Help the children to be as specific as possible here. Especially help them to identify those persons in their parish who do things for others.

What do you think Jesus means when he tells us, “When you do those things for any of my brothers and sisters in need, you do it for me”?

This is a difficult concept. The children may not be able to verbalize this truth yet, but reflection on it will nourish the seed.

Jesus invites all people, young and old, to meet him in the poor, the hungry, the lonely, strangers. How can we show our love and our faith in the words of Jesus?

It is most important that children be able to experience themselves responding in action to the Gospel. Children must also be invited to respond according to their capacity. Discourage responses from outside their capacity. For example, sending money to foreign places. Children should be encouraged to help directly and with their own means, e.g. welcoming newcomers to school, helping a child who is hurt or feels rejected. They should not feel guilty for the problems of the world.

What does Jesus say to those who do what they can for others? This is what the children should remember: that Jesus has prepared a place for his followers and wants us to be there.