



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Christ the King, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



### Intermediate Session

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

Matthew 25:31-46

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Jesus our Shepherd, you care about the weak and poor.

Help us to do our part to help make things better for your children in need.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is the phrase from the Nicene Creed about Christ coming, "To judge the living and the dead." To begin invite the children to create a collage of images of people serving the weak and poor. Provide poster board, scissors, glue, and magazines with pictures of people serving others. Write in bold letters on the poster board "Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me." Invite the children to cut out pictures of people caring for the weak and poor and then have them glue the images on the poster board. Discuss:

- How does caring for the poor show that we care for Jesus?
- How did Jesus care for the weak and poor?
- Who are the people you know who show that they care for Jesus through their actions?

Allow time for discussion. When we care for the weak and poor we care for Jesus. At the end of time, we will be judged by how we care for those most in need.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how God's people will be found and cared for by God the Shepherd.

Read Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17.

Allow for silence.

### Scripture Discussion Starters

- How will God the Shepherd care for God's sheep?

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- What will happen to the lost, injured and weak sheep?
- What will happen to the strong?

In the gospel today listen to find out how Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats.

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Allow for silence.

- How will Jesus separate the sheep from the goats?
- What will Jesus say to the sheep?
- What will Jesus say to the goats?
- How will Jesus know those who show love and care for him?

## **Scripture Background**

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the **Catechist Background** section.

The Church celebrates the feast of Christ the King on this last Sunday of the liturgical year. Today's feast focuses on an aspect of Jesus' identity. We recognize and honor Christ as king and shepherd of all.

In the first reading Ezekiel delivers the Lord's promise to return, to shepherd the people once again. God is the shepherd tending the sheep, giving special attention to those who are in need of the shepherd's care. This passage brings a comforting message to the Israelites in exile, that they will not always be scattered sheep. God, the shepherd will gather them up and bring them back to their land.

In today's gospel Jesus describes himself as king and shepherd. Jesus is the shepherd who separates the sheep and goats and the king who will judge people. The judgement will be based on whether or not the people care for the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the prisoner, and the weak of this world. To care for those in need is to care for Jesus himself. To neglect the needs of others is to neglect Christ. "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." Today's gospel implies that by doing the simple acts of love and kindness called for here we are choosing to belong to God's kingdom.

## **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- How is God like a good Shepherd?
- How is Jesus like a king?
- What simple acts of love and kindness show that we love Jesus?



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[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life.**]

### Doctrinal Discussion Starters

#### ***"To Judge the Living and the Dead"***

This phrase from the Nicene Creed expresses our Catholic belief that Jesus Christ will judge the works and hearts of all. The Church helps us to understand the mystery surrounding the nature of our life after death. We believe that there are two judgments that occur, particular and final.

In particular judgement, at the moment of our death Jesus will assign our souls to their final destiny. This judgement is based on what we have done in our lives. Whether we have chosen to cooperate with or reject God's grace. At the particular judgement we either receive heaven, purgatory, or hell.

Final judgement refers to the end of time when Christ will return to judge everyone who ever lived. Each person will be judged by the way that he or she has lived the gospel message to love God and neighbor.

- How does the Church help us to understand the mystery of life and death?
- What is particular judgment?
- What is final judgment?



### Sacrament Connection

God has created us with the freedom to choose. Sometimes we freely choose to do what we know is against God's will. When we sin we hurt our relationship with God and others. In the sacrament of reconciliation we heal and restore our broken relationships. We receive God's forgiveness.

### **The Gospel in Life**

How can you care for Jesus by helping someone who is poor or sick this week?