



a Kendall Hunt Company

Christ the King, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

Matthew 25:31-46

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God our Shepherd, you love and care for us, and you call us to follow you.

Help us to show through our actions that we are your followers.

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." Divide the large group into small groups of four or five. Explain to the youngsters that through our actions we show that we are followers of Jesus. In small groups invite the young people to list the physical and spiritual needs of the poor. Have them design a plan of action that young people can get involved in to address one of those needs. Invite the small groups to share their plan with the large group. Discuss:

- How did Jesus care for the poor?
- Why are we called to help the poor with their physical and spiritual needs?
- Who are the people in your community who help the poor?

Allow time for discussion. When we care for the poor we care for Jesus. When Jesus comes again to judge the living and the dead, we will be judged by how we cared for those most in need.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how the sheep are cared for by God the Shepherd.

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

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How will God the Shepherd seek out God's sheep?
- What will happen to the lost, injured, and weak sheep?
- What will happen to the strong?

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In today's gospel hear how Jesus the Good Shepherd will come again to separate the sheep—from the goats.

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Allow for silence.

- How will Jesus the Shepherd separate the sheep from the goats?
- What will Jesus say to the sheep?
- What will Jesus say to the goats?
- How will Jesus judge people when he comes again?

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. They hear 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 the 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." This 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

- What does the image of Shepherd tell us about God?
- How will Christ the King judge his followers?
- How can our actions show that we choose to belong to God's kingdom?

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



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Doctrinal Discussion Starter

“To Judge the Living and the Dead”

This phrase from the Nicene Creed expresses our Catholic belief that Jesus Christ as our Lord has the right to 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.

- What do Catholics believe about life after death?
- What is particular judgment?
- What is final judgment?
- How can you choose to cooperate with God’s grace?

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.