Lesson 9
Parables – Sheep & Goats

Objective

Study Matthew 25: The parable of the sheep and goats. See that the wise help other Christians.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- Sheep & Goats Visual Aid – one for class
- Sheep & Goats Activities – one per student
- Take Home Sheet 2 – one per student
- Sheep & Goats Board Game – one per every 2-3 students
- Sheep & Goats Game Card – one set per every 2-3 students cut before class

- Bibles – enough for everyone to have one
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Pencil Crayons
- Stickers (for attendance)
- Attendance Chart – one for class
- Songs about Parables Sheets – one per every 2-3 students and for teacher
- Small Coins, Buttons, or Pebbles – a different one per student for board game

Optional Supplies

- Snack: Popcorn and Pretzels – enough for each student mixed in paper cups
- Scoop – for teacher
- Paper cups – one per student
- Napkins – one per student

Teacher Tips

★ See Lesson One to Review

1) Introduction to Lesson

Prep

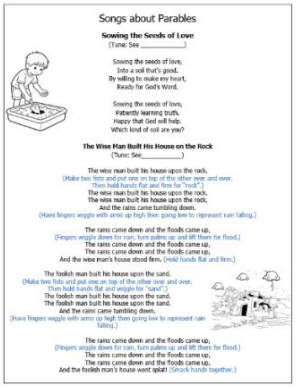
Last time you were to keep track of what students wanted to do with their talents and help them find an adult in the church willing to work with them on achieving their goal. Make sure you check on them and see if they used their talent this week and if the church member you introduced them to was able to help them. If not, find another church member or be willing to help yourself.

Class

As students enter, welcome them and thank them for coming. Take attendance.
We are studying parables that were taught by Jesus. Parables are a simple story with a spiritual meaning. Jesus used these simple stories to help teach people about the Kingdom of God and other spiritually important topics.

Can anyone remember the main point of the parable of the talents that we studied last time? Let students answer.

We noticed that the wise are prepared and willing to use what God has blessed them with. We have all been given skills, abilities, and talents. God wants us to use them for the Kingdom.


Songs about Parables

Sowing the Seeds of Love
(Tune: See _____)

Sowing the seeds of love,
Into a soil that's good.
By willing to make my heart,
Ready for God's Word.

Sowing the seeds of love,
Patiently learning truth.
Happy that God will help.
Which kind of soil are you?

The Wise Man Built His House on the Rock
(Tune: See_____)

The wise man built his house upon the rock.
(Make two fists and put one on top of the other over and over.
Then hold hands flat and fists for "rock".)
The wise man built his house upon the rock.
The wise man built his house upon the rock,
And the rains came tumbling down.
(Have fingers wiggle with arms up high then going low to represent rain falling.)

The rains came down and the floods came up,
(Fingers wiggle down for rain, turn palms up and lift them for flood.)
The rains came down and the floods came up,
The rains came down and the floods came up,
And the wise man's house stood firm. (Hold hands flat and firm.)

The foolish man built his house upon the sand.
(Make two fists and put one on top of the other over and over.
Then hold hands flat and wiggle for "sand".)
The foolish man built his house upon the sand.
The foolish man built his house upon the sand.
And the rains came tumbling down.
(Have fingers wiggle with arms up high then going low to represent rain falling.)

The rains came down and the floods came up,
(Fingers wiggle down for rain, turn palms up and lift them for flood.)
The rains came down and the floods came up,
The rains came down and the floods came up,
And the foolish man's house went splat! (Smack hands together.)

Let's sing a song to get us started! Let's sing: Baa Baa Good Sheep (and if time I Just Wanna Be a Sheep)
Hand out Songs about Parables. Sing songs once or twice.

2) Class Time – The Sheep and Goats 15-20 minutes

Prep

Gather Bibles and Visual Aid. Hand out Bibles as needed.

Class

Show Sheep and Goats visual.
What are these two kinds of animals?
Sheep and goats.

Does anyone know some of the differences between sheep and goats? What qualities do sheep have? Let students answer.
What qualities do goats have? Let students answer.

Today we will study the parable of the sheep and goats. Jesus uses real differences between sheep and goats that would have been familiar to Jesus' original audience. Here are some key characteristics of sheep and goats.

Sheep Characteristics:

- **Flock-oriented: Sheep naturally stay together in groups and follow a leader.**
- **Docile nature: They're generally gentle and less confrontational.**
- **Dependent: Sheep need guidance and protection; they can easily wander off and get lost.**
- **Stay on level ground: Sheep prefer flat terrain and don't climb much.**
- **Easily startled: They react quickly to perceived threats.**
- **Sheep are known to follow the shepherd.**

Goats Characteristics:

- **Independent: Goats are more solitary and self-reliant.**
- **Stubborn and assertive: They're known for being headstrong and challenging authority.**
- **Climbers: Goats are agile and will venture onto steep, dangerous terrain.**
- **Confident: Less easily frightened, more willing to explore alone.**
- **More aggressive: Can be territorial and confrontational. They literally butt heads together at times.**

Ask students to turn to **Matthew 25**.
Show visual second page as you or volunteers read:

Matthew 25:31-46

In ancient Middle Eastern farming, shepherds would separate sheep from goats at night because goats needed different shelter and care.

Jesus is not being mean towards animals but is using their known qualities to show the difference between those who are real Christians and those who pretend to be Christians or are unbelievers. The sheep following the

shepherd parallels believers who follow Christ's teachings. The goats' independent nature illustrates those who rely on themselves rather than God and those who don't recognize their need to help others.

Jesus tells us what is going to happen on Judgment Day, when Jesus comes to take all Christians to heaven. It is based on how we acted during our lifetime on earth. He says this judgment will happen to all the nations. All of us will be judged.

Questions:
Who did the King (Jesus) bless in verse 34? Those who helped others by feeding, clothing, inviting, and visiting those in need.
What was the righteous people's response? They were surprised and didn't understand that by helping others, they were helping the King (Jesus).

Jesus said that those who help "the least of these my brothers", in this parable, Jesus is speaking directly about those who help Christians. In another parable we will see that Jesus wants us to help everyone, but here, He is specifically mentioning those who are His brothers. In the New Testament, brothers in the Christian sense always refers to those who belong to Christ and follow Him, not just humankind. We know this from verses like Matthew 28:10, John 20:17, Romans 8:29, and Hebrews 2:11. (If you or other students have questions you can go through these verses to show it is indeed for Christians.)
So in verse 40 Jesus says when we help other Christians, we are helping Christ!

Who did the King say was cursed in verse 41-43? Those who didn't help.

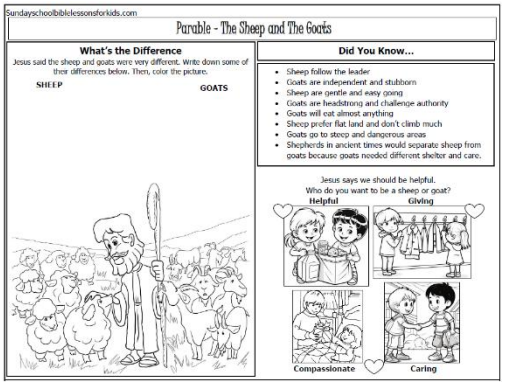
All over the world, those in Jesus' church need help with food, clothing, water, visiting and help when sick. Some need visiting in prison because they are persecuted for being a Christian. Remember Paul the apostle was put in chains and arrested and put in prison. So was Peter the apostle and others, just because they were Christians. Or, as Christians as we move or travel to new areas to share the gospel or move because of persecution, we need other church members to welcome us even though we are a stranger. There are many ways we in the church can help each other locally and globally. The judgment of people in part is based on whether they loved Christ by helping others in the church.

Why is it important to help others in the church? Jesus says that is how we show we are Christians, belong to the Kingdom, and by doing so are actually showing kindness to Jesus! Christians are wise and need to help others in the church.

Sheep 🐑 are real Christians.
Goats 🐐 are fake Christians.
Which one are you going to be?
If you feel like a goat now, you can change and be a sheep and help others in the church pleasing God and doing things for Christ. There is time to change and be a kind and helpful.

Allow for questions. You can contact Sundayschoolbiblelessonsforkids@protonmail.com if you need help with any questions.

3) Sheep and Goats – Activity Sheets 10-20 minutes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Parable - The Sheep and The Goats

What's the Difference

Jesus said the sheep and goats were very different. Write down some of their differences below. Then, color the picture.

SHEEP GOATS

Did You Know...

- Sheep follow the leader
- Goats are independent and stubborn
- Sheep are gentle and easy going
- Goats are headstrong and challenge authority
- Goats will eat almost anything
- Sheep prefer flat land and don't climb much
- Goats go to steep and dangerous areas
- Shepherds in ancient times would separate sheep from goats because goats needed different shelter and care.

Jesus says we should be helpful.
Who do you want to be a sheep or goat?

Helpful Giving

Compassionate Caring

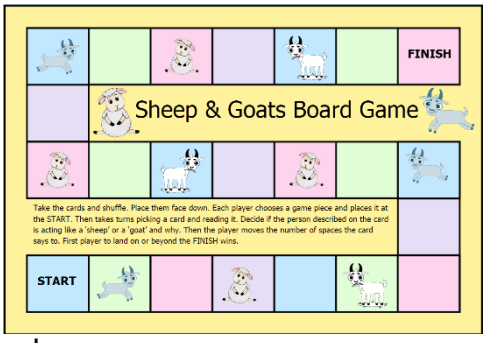
Hand out one sheet to each student along with pencils and crayons. As a class read directions aloud and help as needed.

Remember pictures or words will include the six things Jesus mentioned the sheep did:
Feed and water those in need
Provide clothes
Visit the sick and those in prison because of persecution
Welcome the stranger who comes to our church

Say, while students are doing the drawing in the sheep activity: **We all can help and serve others in the church.**
What are ways we can feed those in need? Some ideas: find out who in the church needs food and bring a bag of groceries each week to them, organizing a baking or cooking schedule and bring food to those who need it, save money and send it to those Christians in other areas or countries who might not have food.
What are ways we can make sure everyone has water to drink when they need it? Some ideas: work with Healing Hands International, a church organization that helps provide water to different areas of the world, make sure any in the church who struggle to get water can have some by raising money, offering to supply some, etc.

What are ways we can provide clothes to those who need some? Similar to above.
How can we welcome those we haven't met yet who show up to church? Greet them, invite them over to your home or out for lunch to get to know them, offer to help them get what they need in the city you are living, offer to show them the places they might need to use for daily living – the school, grocery store, etc. Make greeting cards and cookies or treats and hand them out to visitors.
How can we know who is sick and visit them? Ask the church leaders or someone in the church who knows who is sick and offer to visit them, make cards for them, call them, make something nice for them, pray for them, etc.
How can we learn of Christians in prison and encourage them or help them? Similar to above.

4) Sheep and Goats Board Game 10-20 minutes



Prep
Gather game pieces (buttons, coins, or pebble), board games, and cut out playing cards. 1 board game and set of cards for every 2-3 students. 1 game piece per student.

Tell students after splitting them into groups (ensuring at least one student is able to read the cards well). Take the cards, shuffle them and put them face down beside the board game. Each of you choose a game piece and put it at the start line. Go through the cards each student taking a turn, read the scenario, answer it and move your game piece the direction and number of spaces it tells you to. If you run out of cards before the first player has reached the finish line, shuffle them and stack them again and keep playing.

When they finish ask:
In each of these scenarios, the "sheep" kid had to do something that wasn't easy or popular. Why did you think it is important to be like a "sheep" even when it is scary or inconvenient? Let students answer.
Did it get annoying to have to go back spaces every time you got a goat card? How does that relate to our lives today? Let students answer.

When we act like goats, there are consequences. We aren't helping Jesus, we are being selfish, the person who needs help isn't getting any and we aren't becoming better people but worse! There is no benefit or good reason to act like a goat! Let's remember and catch ourselves. If we recognize we should do good but don't – we are being a goat. Stop it and choose to be a sheep instead. When we do something right, especially when it is hard or inconvenient, we are actually helping Jesus and will be able to move forward in our lives when we do.

If time sing the "Baa Baa Good Sheep" and "I Just Wanna Be a Sheep" songs again.

5) Optional: Memory Verse 5 minutes

Matthew 25:34-36, Luke 12:15, and **Luke 14:27,33.**

Practice the verses by going through them a few times out loud as a class. Then have each student say one of the words in the verse until the whole verse is read. Have them keep going around the room faster and faster until it has been said a few times for fun. Come up with actions for each phrase as a class. *If you choose bring treats for those who remember the verses over the coming week(s).

6) Closing Prayer

**Before the prayer, make sure the activities have been cleaned up. Ask if there are any prayers the students want to share and if so write them down.

Thank You God that You tell us how we can please You and Your Son. May we be wise and help other Christians. We pray that You will help us find ways to use our talents helping others in the church. We pray that we will be good and faithful servants doing good and looking for ways to help.

Thank You for Your Son who teaches us the right way through Your Word the Bible. Be with those who were not able to attend today. Be with our families, friends, and those in the church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

7) Optional Snack: The Flock 5 minutes

Prep
*Check for allergies. Gather and mix popcorn and mini pretzels into paper cups. One per student with napkins.

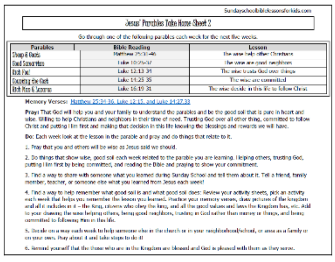
You've all done a great job this morning learning that God's Kingdom is full of those who are wise and willing to help other Christians even when it is not convenient. In each of your cups are "sheep" and "goats." The popcorn is the _____? Sheep! And the pretzels are the _____? Goats! The pretzels represent the hard horns of the goat. While you eat your snack, separate and eat the popcorn, then the pretzels, just like the Shepherd separated them.

Hand out snacks.
Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss and review questions while snacking.

What was the parable about today? Let students answer.
Why is it important to help others in the church? Jesus says that is how we show we are Christians, belong to the Kingdom, and by doing so are actually showing kindness to Jesus! Christians are wise and need to help others in the church.
Any questions about today's parable?
What was the favorite thing you learned or did today? Why?

8) Take Home Sheet 2 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student and tell them to share this with their parents and go through a section each week for the remainder of our learning about Jesus' parables.



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Jesus' Parables Take Home Sheet 2

Go through one of the following parables each week for the next five weeks.

Parables	Bible Reading	Lesson
Tough Guys	Matthew 25:31-46	The same help other Christians
Bad Securities	Luke 16:19-31	The rich man trusted wrong
Evil Foe	Luke 12:13-35	The wise trusts God over things
Focusing on God	Luke 15:23-35	The ways are connected
Bad Plan Learning	Luke 16:19-31	The wise decide, in life to follow Christ

Memory Verses: Matthew 25:31-36, Luke 12:15, and Luke 16:27-31

Pray That God will help you and your family to understand the parables and be the good soil that is pure in heart and obey. Willing to help Christians and neighbors in their time of need. Thankful God over all other thing, committed to follow Christ and putting Him first and making that decision in this life knowing the blessings and rewards we will have.

Do: Each week look at the lesson in the parable and pray and do things that relate to it.

1. Pray that you and others will be wise as Jesus said we should.

2. Do things that show wise, good soil each week excited to the parable you are learning. Helping others, trusting God, putting Him first by being committed, and reading the Bible and praising to show your commitment.

3. Take a way to share with someone what you learned during Sunday School and tell them about it. Tell a friend, family member, teacher, or someone else what you learned from Jesus each week!

4. Take a way to help remember what good soil is and what good soil does. Review your activity sheets, pick an activity each week that helps you remember the lesson you learned. Practice your memory verses, draw pictures of the kingdom and all of its subjects as it – the king, citizens who obey the king, and all the good values and laws the kingdom has, etc. Add to your drawing the ways helping others, being good neighbors, trusting in God rather than money or things, and being committed to following Him in this life.

5. Decide on a way each week to help someone else at the church or in your neighborhood/school, or areas as a family or on your own. Pray about it and take steps to do it!

6. Reward yourself that the those who are in the Kingdom are blessed and God is pleased with them as they serve.

9) Optional Songs 5 minutes

Practice singing the Old or New Testament Books of the Bible.
Sing songs from the Song Sheet.

10) Things to Remember

Thank students for coming.
Remind them to take their activity sheets home.
Make sure students leave with a responsible person.

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!