

LIFE OF CHRIST
from the gospel of
Matthew

LESSON 45

**THE SHEEP
AND THE GOATS**

MATTHEW 25:31-46

Life of Christ

The Sheep and the Goats

Matthew 25:31-46

Younger Verse

If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you.

John 14:15

Older Verse

If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you.

John 14:15

Lesson Goals

Learn that Jesus will gather His people when He returns
Understand what He meant by sheep and goats
Recognize that if we love Jesus, we will show it by loving others

Welcome Time

Have you ever had to throw away your old clothes or toys? Did your parents tell you to separate the things you wanted to keep from the things to be thrown away or given away? Today, we will learn about how Jesus will separate two groups of people.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

The last few weeks, we have learned that Jesus is coming back. **Does anyone know when Jesus will come back?** Jesus said that *no one knows* when He will return (except God), so we must be ready all the time! Remember the bridesmaids with their lamps? Some were prepared and some were not. We must be prepared for Jesus to come back. We get prepared by following Him and making Him part of our life.

Jesus continued to teach about His return. He told His disciples that He would separate the people who know Him from those who do not. He compared this to separating sheep and goats. When a shepherd gathers his sheep, he does not want any goats in the flock. He has to separate them. He puts the sheep on one side, and the goats on the other side.

Jesus explained that when He comes back, He will gather all the people of the world. He will separate those who believe in Him (on His right) from those who do not believe in Him (on His left).

On that day, Jesus will say, "I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."

The believers will then answer, "When did we see *you* and do these things?"

Jesus will answer, "When you helped someone in need, you were helping *me* and showing *me* that you believed in me and wanted to do what I said."

Those who do *not* believe in Jesus will be on His left. He will say to them, "Go away. You will be punished in the fire that burns forever. I was hungry, and you gave

me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.”

The people will say, “When did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes, or sick, or in prison?”

Jesus will respond, “When you refused to help anyone who was in need, you were refusing to help *me*.”

These people will be forever in the fire, because they never trusted Jesus and followed Him. The believers will be with God forever in Heaven.

God tells us we all have a choice—to follow Him or not to follow Him. He also tells us that He will separate His believers from those who do not believe. The best thing is that God loves us so much that He has made a way for us to be believers and go to Heaven. We do this by believing in Jesus and trusting Him with our lives. We ask Him to come into our life and change us to be like Him. **We will want to help others and be faithful to whatever God says.** Would you like to believe in Jesus? We can talk about it anytime!

Review Questions

1. Jesus said that one day He will gather all the people together and separate them. Who will be on His right? (The believers) Who will be on His left? (non-believers)
2. What types of animals does He say represent the believers? (sheep) What animals represent non-believers? (goats)
3. Jesus said that when we help someone, we are really helping who? (Him)

Prayer Time

Thank God for teaching us how to be ready for His return. Pray that we will obey Him by helping those in need.

Life Application

In John 14:15, Jesus says that if we love Him, we will obey His commands. Then in the next chapter, He says, “This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

If we have accepted Jesus into our life and received His gift of love, it will show. We will reflect His love to others. That is what Jesus meant when He said if you have helped someone else, you have really helped Him.

Think of someone in need of help or kindness. Have you reached out to that person like you should? If you love Jesus, you must love that person by helping them in their time of need. *That* is putting our faith into action.

Planning for Next Lesson
Jesus is Anointed
Matthew 26:1-13

Preschool Lesson for The Sheep and the Goats

Ask the group to say “Ba-ba” when you say the word “sheep” and “Na-na” when you say the word “goat.”

Jesus wanted to help His friends know what it will be like when He comes back. He told another story to help us understand what will happen and how to be ready!

Jesus’ story is about sheep (ba-ba) and goats (na-na). When a shepherd gathers his sheep (ba-ba), he does not want any goats (na-na) in the flock. He has to separate them. He puts the sheep (ba-ba) on one side and the goats (na-na) on the other side.

Jesus explained that when He comes back, He will gather all the people of the world. He will separate those who believe in Him (on His right) from those who do not believe in Him (on His left).

On that day, Jesus will say, “I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.”

The believers will then answer, “When did we see *you* and do these things?”

Jesus will answer, “When you helped someone in need, you were helping *me* and showing *me* that you believed in me and wanted to do what I said. You will be in Heaven with me!”

Those who do *not* believe in Jesus will be on His left. He will say to them, “I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.”

The people will say, “When did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes, or sick, or in prison?”

Jesus will respond, “When you refused to help anyone who was in need, you were refusing to help *me*.”

Jesus says that if we love Him, we must show it by helping people when they need it.

Thank God for teaching us how to be ready for His return. Pray that we will obey Him by helping those in need.

Hands-on Activities for The Sheep and the Goats

For smaller kids, bring copies of sheep and goats. Let them sort out the two groups like the shepherd did in the story.

Act out the story. Then ask the goats how they feel about being “goats” (and the same with the “sheep”). Talk about how to get to Heaven, by believing in Jesus alone. Be sensitive to those who may want to make decisions.

A fun idea would be to bring things for each act of kindness Jesus mentioned. When appropriate, let the kids act each one out. For example, get several kids to pass out the snacks, drinks, etc.

Hungry—give them a snack

Thirsty—give them juice or water

Alone—give a hug to someone

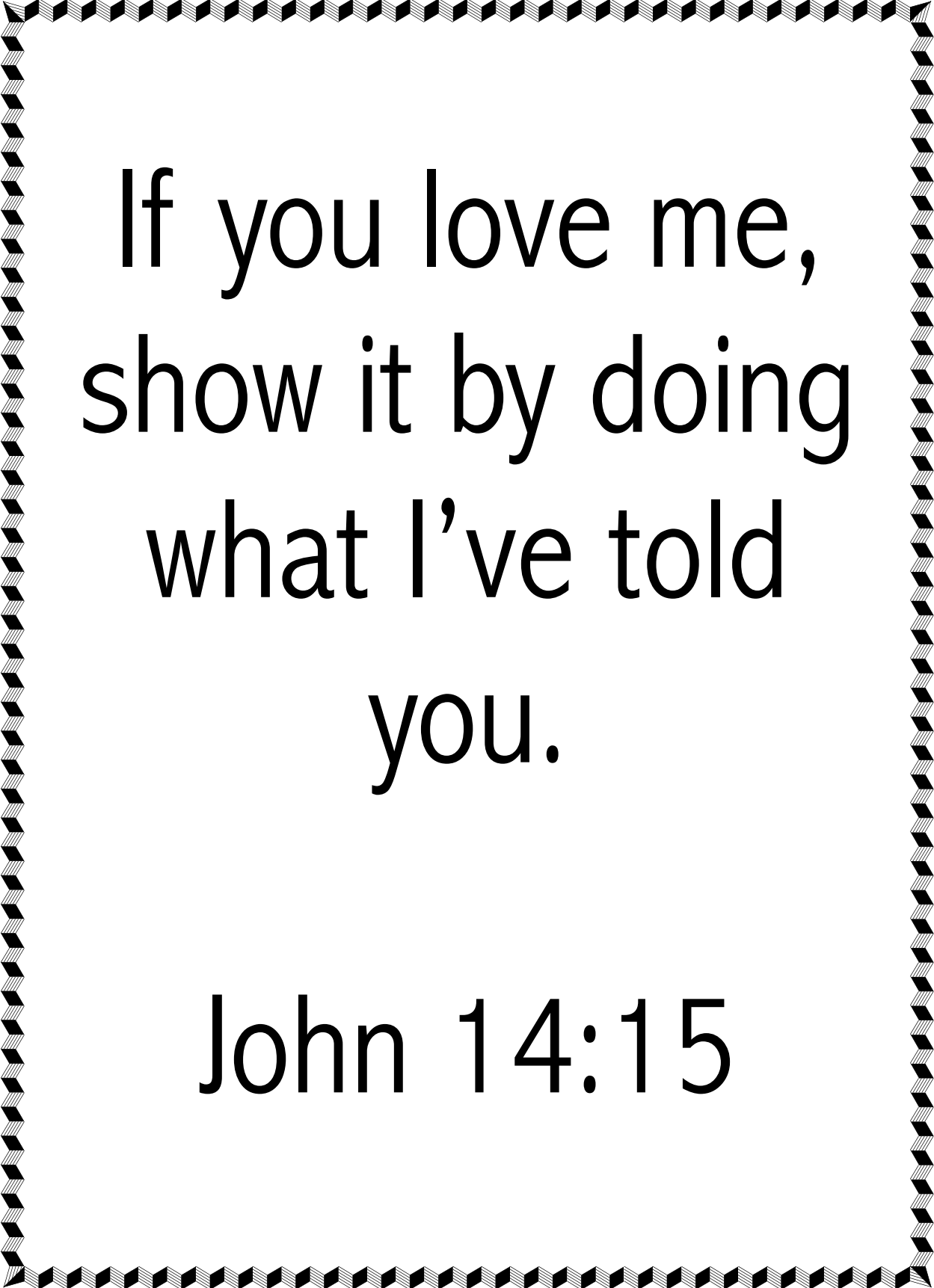
Without clothes—bring some shirts they can try on (or keep)

Sick—give everyone a band-aid

Prison—tell someone “Hello”

If your group knows someone who is sick, have them make get-well cards. If possible, take them to deliver the cards and visit the person. Pray together with them.

Have the class think of ways they can show the love of Jesus to others. Bring poster board or a dry-erase board and write them down. If possible, keep the list visible the next few weeks for your class as a reminder. You might also want to type them out and copy them for the kids to take home the following week.



If you love me,
show it by doing
what I've told
you.

John 14:15

Y Y D E R R P D R P E B
R O A N M U L K I Y L E
O B U S L O V E M E S C
T E Y D T Y T H I N G A
D D L D O F N A R R E U
E O T L N I T Y E G G S
E V I O T D N A C O O E
J E W H A T T G A D T L
N T O M C L O R D O L O
E U H Y U S N B A N D W
P R S O Y N D R E O O E
D N N E M D N A M Y O W

If you

by

I've

love me

doing

told

show it

what

you

Y	Y	D	E	R	R	P	D	R	P	E	B
R	O	A	N	M	U	L	K	I	Y	L	E
O	B	U	S	L	O	V	E	M	E	S	C
T	E	Y	D	T	Y	T	H	I	N	G	A
D	D	L	D	O	F	N	A	R	R	E	U
E	O	T	L	N	I	T	Y	E	G	G	S
E	V	I	O	T	D	N	A	C	O	O	E
J	E	W	H	A	T	T	G	A	D	T	L
N	T	O	M	C	L	O	R	D	O	L	O
E	U	H	Y	U	S	N	B	A	N	D	W
P	R	S	O	Y	N	D	R	E	O	O	E
D	N	N	E	M	D	N	A	M	Y	O	W

If you

by

I've

love me

doing

told

show it

what

you