



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

LESSONS FROM THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR *Christ the King (Sunday before Advent)*

On Christ the King Sunday, you may teach a lesson on Christ the King in addition to or in place of an Old Testament lesson.

Summary of Today's Story

Christ the King Sunday is the last Sunday of our Church year, and since our Church year revolves around the life of Jesus Christ, it is fitting that the church uses its last Sunday in hailing our Lord and Savior as King of all creation.

But what kind of king is he? The readings in our lectionary for this Sunday make it very clear: Jesus is the king of heaven, whose crown of glory was made of thorns, who rode in triumph on a donkey rather than on a majestic horse, and whose life was humility and service rather than power and riches.

In Year A, the reading is **Matthew 25:31-46**. In this reading from Matthew, Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats. In the story, the king says to his people, "Whatever you have done for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did to me."

In Year B, the reading is either **John 18:33-37** or **Mark 11:1-11**. In John, Jesus tells Pilate, "My kingdom is not from this world." In Mark, Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on the day that we now call *Palm Sunday*.

When We Celebrate

We celebrate Christ the King on the Sunday before the beginning of Advent.

In Year C, the reading is either **Luke 23:35-43** or **Luke 19:29-38**. In the first reading from Luke, Jesus, hanging on the cross, is mocked for not saving himself. The soldiers taunt, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" But one criminal acknowledges the true kingship of Jesus: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." In the second reading from Luke, Jesus enters Jerusalem on a colt and is hailed as the king by the people. (This is also the Palm Sunday reading from Luke.)

Often this Sunday is celebrated in church by a procession of children bearing banners or crowns, as we proclaim and worship the King of the Universe. This occasion is a joyful and exciting time for us all, as it expresses why we worship Jesus Christ as "My Lord and my God."



The Episcopal Thread

The Feast of Christ the King was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 and rapidly became part of the lectionary of other denominations, including the Episcopal Church. It is celebrated on the last Sunday of Pentecost by a service of pomp and majesty. In fact, the majestic worship of the Episcopal Church makes a celebration of Christ the King a natural fit for Episcopalians. So does the Episcopal Church's commitment to the poor and needy, which brings to mind Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 (one of the readings for this day): "And the King will say..., 'just as you did it to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'"

A number of hymns pay homage to Christ the King and are sung on this day. Among the most well-known are: "Crown him with many crowns" (Hymn 494, *The Hymnal 1982*, New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985) and "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!" (Hymns 460 & 461, *The Hymnal 1982*, New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985).



Gathering

As children enter the classroom, engage them in a simple, quiet but fun activity connected with today's lesson.

Younger children might enjoy decorating a crown in preparation for this celebration of Christ the King. (For a pattern and directions, see the craft Crowns for Kings on page 6 in the activity section at the end of this lesson.) Older children always enjoy a few minutes of fellowship time before the class begins. This social time is important for building relationships and community.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, such as:

- Dear God, today we celebrate your Son Jesus Christ as King of the universe and King in our hearts. Make your presence felt among us so that we can celebrate the kingship of your Son with joy and gladness today and always. This we ask in the name of your Son and our King Jesus Christ. *Amen.*



Telling the Story

Read or tell today's story, drawing from the readings of Year A, B and C. You may want to use story aids to bring the story to life for the children. You'll find suggestions on pages 3-6 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.

After reading or telling today's story, proceed to Prayer, saving any discussion for later, while having snacks.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

small table with a cloth to cover it
 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
 matches
 Bible
 cross
optional: flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read one or two verses of the lectionary reading for this Sunday (Matthew 25:31-46) to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses, though we recommend keeping the reading short.

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:
 (*Read the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks to God for God's presence in our lives during the past week. Help children to recognize God's work in their daily lives by asking them to share any experiences in which they have felt God guiding them.

- Welcome prayers of intercession. Ask for prayers for anyone in need or trouble, either for themselves, their family or friends, or people in the neighborhood, community or the world.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Put out the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as this

one adapted from a prayer found on page 835 of the *Book of Common Prayer*:

- Give us grateful hearts, O God, for all your gifts, and make us mindful of the needs of others, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

This is a good time, while sharing a snack, to begin a discussion about what we are celebrating today. Ask:

- How do we usually see kings?
- What kind of king is Jesus?
- How is he different from other kings?

You may want to remind the children of what Jesus told his disciples, "You know that among the Gentiles, those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45). This is the kind of king that Jesus is—a king who became servant of his own creation.



Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.

After the Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today's story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 3-9 in the Appendix where we've provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS WEEK'S SESSION



Memorization

There is no memorization for this lesson.



Weaving Our Faith

Before your closing prayer, help the children pull the strands of this lesson together by asking these questions such as:

- What was today's story about?
- What do we celebrate today?
- How is Christ seen as our King?

To help the children remember today's story, remind them of these key words or phrases:

- *king*
- *kingdom of God*
- *serve*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into

the church worship service or back to their homes in the knowledge of God's love and protection. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Thank you, Jesus Christ, for coming into this world as our King. Stay with us this week, and show us the way to your kingdom in heaven.

Amen.

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The children respond:

- And also with you.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

CROWNS FOR KINGS

for Preschool, Primary

Children make crowns and decorate them with stickers and sequins.

Materials:

yellow construction paper, 12" x 18"
markers or crayons
sticker stars, sequins, etc.
scissors
stapler or tape
crown pattern (below), enlarged
optional: glitter glue

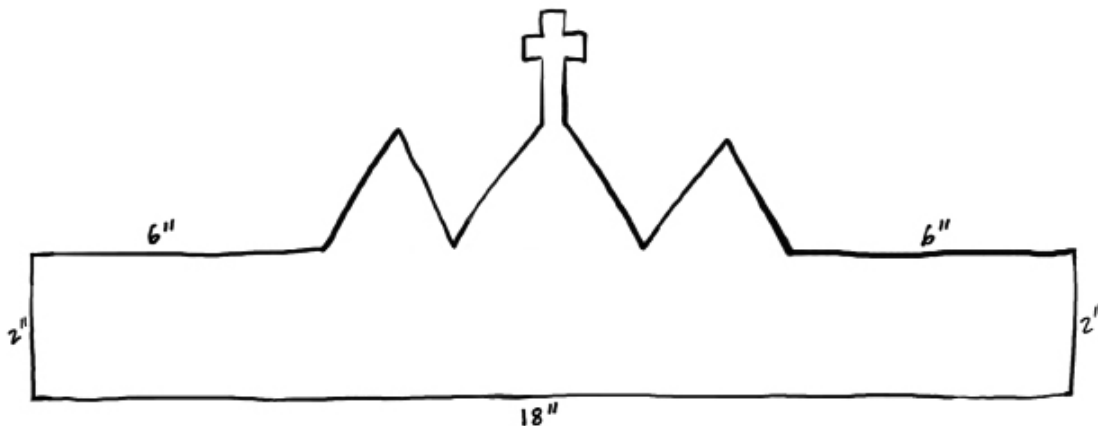
Preparation:

Makes copies of the crown pattern on heavy paper, one copy for each child.

Directions:

Hand out the crown pattern and invite the children to make crowns. Help the younger children as needed:

1. Ask each child to cut out and trace the crown pattern onto yellow paper and cut it out.
2. Have children decorate their crowns with sticker stars, sequins, etc.
3. Staple or tape each crown to fit the child's head.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

CHRIST THE KING BANNER

for Elementary, Intermediate

Children make a banner to celebrate Jesus as our King.

The banner might be carried in the worship procession or hung in the classroom or in the hallway. If necessary, make arrangements for the children to be in the procession, at least one week in advance.

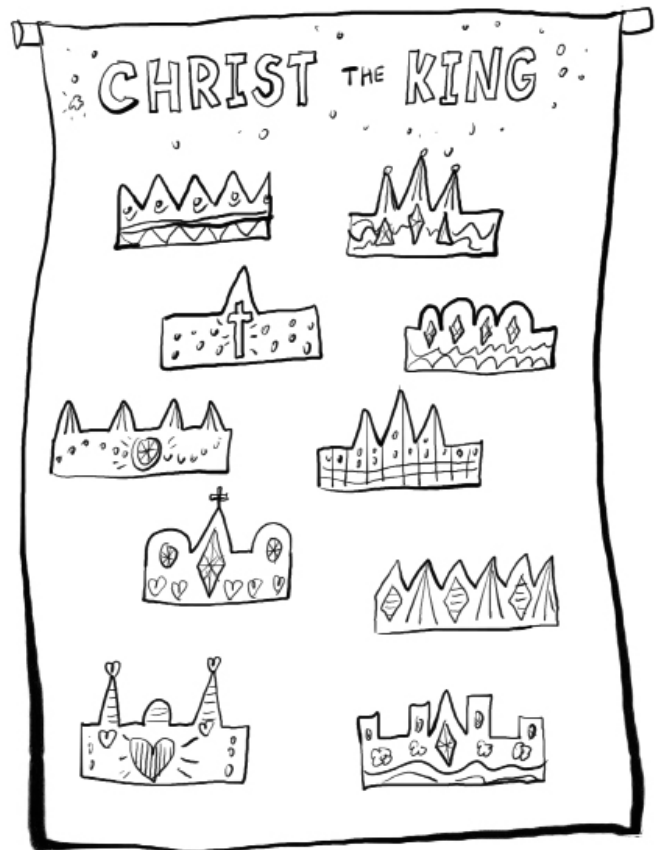
Materials:

- long strip of felt
- thick fabric dye in squirt bottles or fabric pens
- 9" x 12" felt rectangles, 1 per child
- scissors
- fabric glue
- dowel
- decorative materials: sequins, jewels, stars, etc.

Directions:

Invite the children to work together to make a banner of crowns for Jesus. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut crowns from felt.
2. Choose a title for the banner, such as *Jesus is our King*. Use fabric dye or pens to write the title across the top of the banner. Be sure to leave enough felt at the top for hanging.
3. Attach the dowel stick to the top by folding the felt over the dowel and gluing it in place.
4. Trim your crowns with decorations.
5. Glue the finished crowns to the banner.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

FOLLOW KING JESUS

for Primary

Children play this game as a reminder that Jesus is our King and that we can choose to follow him.

Directions:

Invite the children to play the Follow King Jesus game:

1. Children sit and close their eyes. Explain that whoever you touch will be *King Jesus*. Emphasize that no one else will know who *King Jesus* is.
2. At your signal, the children open their eyes and begin to move around the room looking for *King Jesus*.
3. *King Jesus* moves around the room, too. Whenever *King Jesus* winks at someone, that child begins following King Jesus.
4. As soon as other children realize who *King Jesus* is, they follow too, until all the children are following *King Jesus*. Repeat with a new *King Jesus*.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

THE WORK OF THE SHEEP VISIT THE SICK

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make a special gift to give to homebound or sick members of the community.

Materials:

greeting card:

white paper
crayons or markers
pencils

gift bag:

plastic baggies
thin ribbon
cookies

tissue flower:

colored tissue paper
scissors
green pipe cleaners

Preparation:

For younger children, help them cut the tissue paper into 6" squares or fold the paper crosswise, then lengthwise, to make a card.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a gift bag, card and flower.

For card:

1. Have children draw a cheerful picture on the paper. Older children may add a special greeting.

For tissue flower:

1. To make a tissue flower, use two or three squares of tissue paper.
2. Place them on top of each other, then fold accordion-style.
3. Fold a pipe cleaner around the middle of this folded paper and twist to secure. Then carefully spread out the tissue, beginning with the inside "petals," to make a fluffy flower. If the pipe cleaner is long enough, you may fold it to create a leaf.

For gift bag:

1. Put a few cookies into a baggie, along with the greeting card.
2. Tie a ribbon to secure the bag, and insert a tissue flower into the knot.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

GIFTS FOR THE KING

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make shoe box gifts to give to members of the congregation. Encourage children to make as many boxes as possible.

Materials:

- shoe boxes
- construction paper
- markers, stickers, sequins, or other decorative items
- scissors
- glue
- list of suggested gifts (p. 11)
- box labels (p. 12)

Preparation:

Make several copies of the gift lists and box labels. Cut them apart.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a shoe-box gift. Help the younger children as needed:

1. Cover each box with construction paper and decorate.
2. On the top, put a label that indicates which type of box it will be (p. 11).
3. On the inside of each lid, glue the appropriate suggested gift list (p. 12).
4. Put these boxes in a prominent place in your church and promote it as a donation drive for Christ the King. Congregational members are to take a box, fill it, then bring it back for distribution. You may also make this a classroom donation drive, asking the children to take home a box and fill it.

Note:

If this is a congregational donation drive, be sure to publicize it. Designate a place for people to pick up the box and to drop it off once it is filled. A public spot will showcase the generosity of the congregation, especially if you create a large sign for your project.

Alternatively, you may use paper bags, butter cookie tins or any other container that may be easily decorated.

If this is a church school project, designate in advance who your recipients will be: a food bank, the homebound in your church, a homeless shelter, a low-income residential project, a transitional housing project for women with children, a mission for runaway teens. etc.

GIFTS FOR THE KING

List of suggested gifts

food box:

- canned tuna or other meat
- can of beef stew
- macaroni and cheese mix
- cookies (everybody needs a treat once in a while)
- granola bars
- canned soup
- canned fruit or vegetables

lunch box:

- crackers
- granola bar
- bottle of water
- prepared pudding
- napkin, spoon
- prepared tuna or chicken snack package
- cookies
- napkin

personal needs box:

- bar of soap
- hand sanitizer
- deodorant
- shampoo
- conditioner
- hand or body lotion (unscented)
- soft socks
- portable tissue packet

care box:

- bandages
- anti-bacterial ointment
- portable tissue packet
- teabags
- cough drops
- a prayer shawl or knit scarf
- optional:* a nice mug

school box:

- pencils
- crayons
- markers
- small rounded scissors
- tape
- water-based glue
- plain white paper
- lined paper (wide-ruled)
- ruler

GIFTS FOR THE KING BOX LABELS

LUNCH BOX

FOOD BOX

CARE BOX

SCHOOL BOX

PERSONAL NEEDS BOX



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for Children

CHRIST THE KING SEEDS OF SERVANTHOOD for Primary, Elementary

Children plant the seeds of caring and serving as they make sunflower planter gifts.

Materials:

- sunflower seeds for planting
- small clay planters
- potting soil
- large spoons for handling the soil
- small rocks to place in planter hole
- newspaper to protect the table surface
- paints
- paint brushes
- water
- glue
- optional*: small sunflower or flower seedlings

Preparation:

Spread newspaper on the table before beginning this craft.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a sunflower planter to give to someone they love. Give the children these directions:

1. Paint the outside of the planter with colorful decorations. *Suggestion*: paint crowns to represent Christ the King.
2. Paint the words *Plant a Seed for the Reign of Christ* on the outside of your planter. Let dry.
3. Put a few small rocks on the bottom of the planter to cover the hole. Then carefully spoon in potting soil.
4. Add a few sunflower seeds. (*If you wish, add seedlings for instant results.*)
5. Water as needed.



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for Children

WHO IS CHRIST THE KING? BOOK for Primary, Elementary

Children make a book to understand and celebrate Christ the King.

Materials:

- white paper
- crayons
- copies of crown and king pictures (pp. 15-16)
- scissors
- tape or glue
- hole punch
- ribbon or string

Preparation:

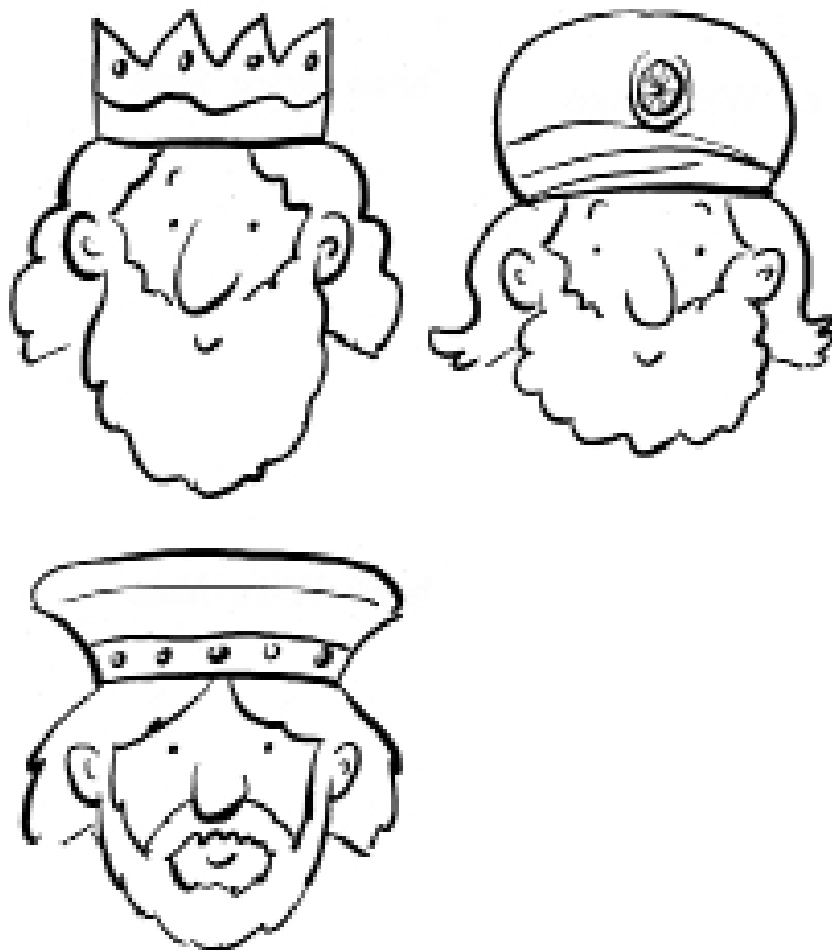
Make copies of the pictures, one copy for each child.

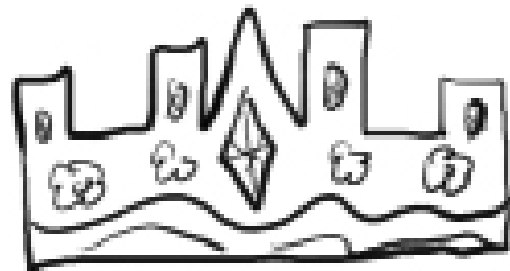
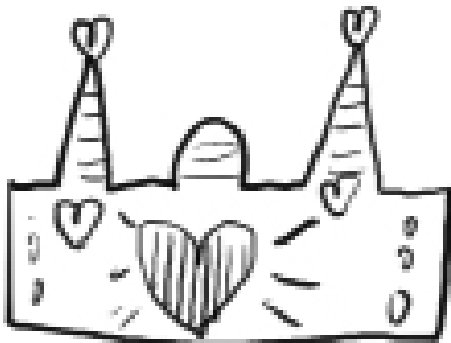
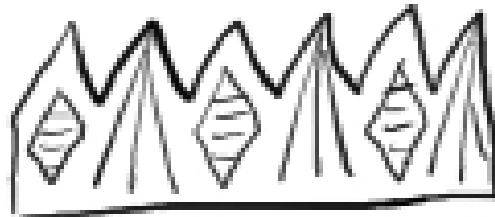
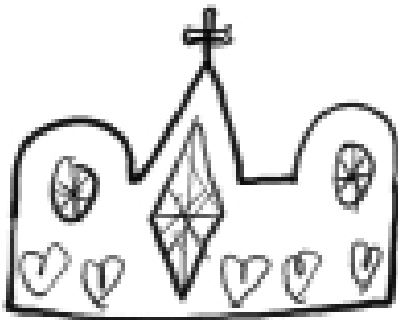
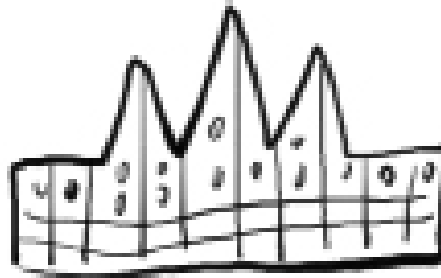
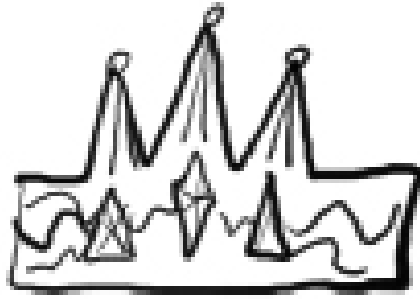
Directions:

Invite the children to work together to make a Who is Christ the King? book:

1. Cut out the crown and king pictures. You may use all of the pictures, or just a few, depending on how big the book will be.
2. Fold the white paper in half, as for a card. (*At the end, each child's paper will have a picture on the front, and a picture of a crown or king on the inside.*)
3. On the inside, glue a picture of a crown or king.
4. On the front cover, draw a picture of someone acting out one of the following scenes from the parable of Matthew 25. (*You may want to find and copy photos of these scenes for children to glue onto the front cover, if drawing is too difficult for them.*):
 - giving someone food
 - giving someone water
 - visiting someone in the hospital or at home sick
 - visiting someone in prison
 - inviting someone inside a home

5. On one separate folded piece of paper, make a cover sheet for the book with the words *Who is Christ the King?*
6. Punch a hole in the upper left corner of each folded page. (*Collect the children's pages and place them one on top of the other, with the cover page on top.*)
7. Thread a length of ribbon through the holes, to make a book.







WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

BE A SHEEP, NOT A GOAT for Intermediate

This conversation is based on the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25. First read the passage to the children, then use this sheet to talk with them about what it means to be a sheep—and how one might be a goat.

Imagine that you are at school. What would you do if you saw each of these things happening?

- A boy in the lunchroom has no food to eat. Yesterday he didn't, either.
- A classmate cheats at four-square, and now nobody will talk to him.
- A classmate has been sick for a whole month.
- A classmate is walking home in the pouring rain. She doesn't have a coat or an umbrella, and she is crying.
- A new girl is sitting by herself. She is shy, and she looks like she misses her old school and her old friends.
- A boy is wearing the same ragged shirt to school every day. You find out that it's his only one.

Let's imagine that we are the sheep or the goats that Jesus told about:

- If you were a goat, what would you do (and you can do more than one thing)?
- If you were a sheep, what would you do (and you can do more than one thing)?