



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

2022 Curriculum - Children's Activities

Matthew 25:35-36

Lesson Objectives: Helping/welcoming others

1. Children/families will explore what it means to be connected through assembling a puzzle together.
2. Children/families will explore Matthew 25:35-36, learn how we are called to help meet each other's needs and how responding to this call connects us to God and one another.
3. Children/families will color (and/or create) a banner for their learning space so all people know they are welcome

GATHERING ACTIVITY (10-15 minutes)

As the children enter the space, say "WELCOME" to each child. Allow children to gather at one table as they enter the space. Have one puzzle on the table and let the children begin assembling the puzzle together. The puzzle should be on the appropriate level for the children. It may be helpful to have a few pieces already connected. (NOTE: remove one — or a few — of the puzzle pieces)



Once all have gathered, finish connecting the puzzle.

We want the children to notice the missing piece.

ASK: What do you see? Let the children respond.

ASK: Are we finished putting our puzzle together? They should notice that the piece is missing and respond as such. Place the missing piece(s) in the puzzle to complete it.

Once the whole picture is revealed, discuss what is in the picture. Remind the children that all of the pieces are necessary to make the puzzle whole. Not only are the pieces important, but we all cooperated to make sure the pieces were connected. And Matthew 25:35-36 reminds us that we are supposed to stay connected to make sure we all get what we need.

SCRIPTURE EXPLORATION (25 minutes total)

SAY: Before we explore the Scripture, let's say a prayer.

Say the prayer below or invite one of the children to pray.

Dear God, thank you for our time together. Thank you for connecting us. Help us hear your words and learn your ways. Open our eyes to see our neighbors and give us a heart to respond. Bless our offering today to bless our community. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



- Read Matthew 25:35-36 (NRSV) – reading exploration (15 minutes)

35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Allow children to pair the words from resource list 1A with words and/or pictures from resource list 1B. They will need to be pre-cut, so the children can match according to the Scripture. You can use a table, wall, floor — any flat and clear space. Depending on the number of children you can either:

- A) Have RESOURCE LIST 1A already affixed to the surface of your choosing and give the children slips of paper from RESOURCE LIST 1B. The older children can get the words and the younger children can match the pictures. Or ...
- B) Mix it up. Have some slips from RESOURCE LIST 1A and some slips from RESOURCE LIST 1B affixed to your surface and allow the children to fill in the missing slips. See the pictures for an example.

When I needed a neighbour
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

• Play the song “When I Needed a Neighbour” – singing exploration* (10 minutes)

When I Needed a Neighbour (with Lyrics)

*If you are not able to play this song via YouTube, please find the words in RESOURCE 2. Sing to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”

CLOSING ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

“We Choose Welcome” coloring sheet

While coloring, ask the children where they will hang their banner or sign. Feel free to have the song selected playing in the background.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, please help us to recognize our neighbors and give us the courage we need to welcome people. We are all needed to complete your puzzle of Creation and we are all connected through your love. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



EXTENSION OPTION

Children/families will identify signs, symbols or other indicators of “WELCOME” at their church/home (Sunday school class). Walk around the church and count the number of welcome signs you see. Also consider how people (like ushers) help welcome others.

Question to consider: How do our neighbors know they are welcome here?

If there are no noticeable indicators of welcome, talk to your church leaders about creating welcome signs so our neighbors know they can come to church.

—Natarsha Prince Sanders is currently DEdMin student at Columbia Theological Seminary and writing fellow at Collegetown Institute, Collegetown, MN. She is the Executive Director of Centering the Sacred, a ministry that focuses on spiritual development and growth for people of all ages.