

# The sheep and the goats


**Bible verses:**

Matthew 25:31–46

The King will judge all people


**Aim:**

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables and think about how we love God and love others


**Today's fruit:**

Faithfulness



Today's session is all about sheep and goats.

Through Jesus' parable, we learn what it looks like to follow him – like a sheep – and what it means to turn away from Jesus – like a goat! We think about ways to share God's love with people in need, staying close to him and showing his faithfulness to everyone we meet.

We can live out the fruit of faithfulness by loving God and loving others.

**Each child will need:**

- White and buff-coloured card, cotton wool, PVA glue, wooden stick/s, pens and scissors
- *Explore It ideas* handout

**You will need:**

- To organise two large sheets of paper each with two columns: similarities and differences
- To decide how much prep work and support your children will need to make the puppets – see Action it
- Today's fruit sign: *Faithfulness*



## Start it

**Say:**

Today we carry on learning more about the parables of Jesus. Last week was all about the shepherd and today is all about the sheep – and the goats! To get us started, we're going to see how much you know about the similarities and differences between sheep and goats.



Split the children into teams and give each team a large sheet of paper divided into two columns with the headings 'Similarities' and 'Differences'.

Ask the children to watch the clip carefully and remember all the similarities and differences between sheep and goats. They must not start writing until the clip has finished. The winning team is the one that can remember the most similarities and differences between sheep and goats.

## Video

***Sheep vs Goats (differences and facts for kids)*** by The Adventure Brothers (3:58)

Here are just a few of the similarities and differences mentioned in the clip.

### Similarities

- They are closely related.
- They are roughly the same size.
- They are (usually) domesticated.
- They both have four compartments in their stomachs.
- They both have rectangular pupils.
- They both can make milk and cheese.
- They both can have horns.



### Differences

- A sheep's tail usually hangs down. A goat's tail usually sticks up.
- Most sheep do not have horns. Goats usually have straight horns.
- Some goats have beards.
- Sheep have a divided upper lip.
- Sheep have thick woolly coats that need shearing.
- Goats have hairy coats.
- Sheep graze eating the grass.
- Goats graze and browse as they like to eat leaves as well as grass. They can also climb to find food.
- When sheep get lost, they are happy to see their shepherd.
- When goats get lost, they resist being brought back to the shepherd.
- Goats are curious and more independent, but sheep prefer to be with the rest of the flock.
- A baby sheep is called a lamb, and a baby goat is called a kid.



**Ask:**

As well as lots of similarities and differences, what fun facts did you discover about sheep and goats?

**Sing it****Say:**

Sheep like to be close to their shepherd, but goats like to wander off and do their own thing. As part of God's flock, we follow the Good Shepherd, and we can trust in him. Our memory verse reminds us that we can depend on God. Let's share it together.

**Memory verse**

**'Depend on the Lord.**

**Trust him, and he will take care of you.'**

(Psalm 37:5 *ICB*)

**Say:**

Our song for today is one that we have shared before. It's all about trusting God.

**Song**

**'I'm Trusting You' (Roar VBS group publishing)** by Lifetree Kids (3:43)

**Share it****Ask:**

- Have you ever been put into a group for a game or an activity? If so, how did they separate the groups?
- Was it by age, by height, or was it random?
- In today's story, there are two groups. Think back to our Start It activity. What do you think the two groups might be?

**Video**

***Sheep and Goats (Bible story)*** by LifeKids (2:54)

**Say:**

In this parable Jesus speaks about the time to come when he will be on the throne and people will be separated.



**Ask:**

What did Jesus mean when he said that the people would be separated like sheep and goats?

**Say:**

What separates the people will be the way they glorify God.

**Read:**

**‘Then the King will say to the good people on his right, “Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. 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.”**

**‘Then the good people will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?”**

**‘Then the King will answer, “I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.”’**

(Matthew 25:34–40 ICB)

**Ask:**

- What kind of people does Jesus want us to care for and love?
- When Jesus said that he was hungry, thirsty and homeless, why did the people get confused?
- What did Jesus mean when he said this?

**Say:**

Jesus speaks about those who are hungry, thirsty, lonely, unclothed, sick and imprisoned. All these people need love and care, just as if each of them was Jesus.

**Ask:**

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, ‘Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me’ (Matthew 25:40 ICB)?

**Say:**

This parable teaches us to respond to those who are in need.

**Ask:**

- How can we respond to people who are in need?
- Jesus said that when we respond to someone who needs help, it is as if we are loving and caring for him. How does that make you feel? Does it make you see other people differently? If so, how?



**Say:**

In this parable, Jesus said there are two different types of people – those who are close to God and those who aren't.

**Ask:**

- If you're someone who is close to God, and loves God, what sort of things might people see you doing?
- What sort of person might you be?

**Say:**

If we are not careful, we might read this parable and think that God only loves us if we are close to him. Think back to last week's parable, in which Jesus was described as the Good Shepherd.

**Ask:**

What did Jesus do when one of the sheep went missing?

**Say:**

We know that our actions don't always match up with who we are. Sometimes people make mistakes or make the wrong choice. The important thing is that we keep choosing kindness, just as Jesus did.

## Action it

Explain that the children are going to make sheep and goat puppets to remind them of the parable Jesus told. There is a lot of flexibility with this activity, and, considering the skills of your children, you can decide how much you would like to prepare in advance. You can also decide whether you want the children to just make a sheep or a goat, rather than both.

The clip provided shows you how to make the sheep and goats. As well as describing how to make the goats and sheep, the clip recaps the main teaching in the story. This may be useful to play as the children make their sheep and goats.

## Video

*Children's Space: The Parable of the Sheep and Goats* by Bradford Cathedral (4:42)



## Pray it

Display the *Faithfulness* sign.

**Say:**

In last week's story we read about the parable of the lost sheep. We saw an example of God's



faithfulness and discovered the lengths he is willing to go to look after his lost sheep. This week, we read a parable calling us to follow Jesus' example by loving and caring for people in need.

### Ask:

When we show faithfulness to God, it means we trust what God says and try to follow what is right. If we are faithful to God, what things might we do?

### Say:

For our time of prayer today, we're going to sing a song that reminds us of God's faithfulness. As you sing all the ways that God shows his faithfulness, ask God to help you to show that same love to others.

## Song

'Goodness of God' by Eleven22 Kids (3:16)

Bring the session to a close in prayer.

## Key dates (optional)

### Together 2025

This weekend, members of The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland gather for a conference in Birmingham. If you are there, listen out for stories about God's faithfulness and how people are being faithful to God.

## Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



*Explore It* is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



## The sheep and the goats

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Matthew 25:31-46



**Aim:**  
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**Today's fruit:**  
Faithfulness



### Discover

This month we are learning all about the parables of Jesus. Watch the clip to discover more about parables.

**What is a Parable? (Bible answers for kids)** by Maranatha Chapel Kids (0:46)

How could you live out the message of the parable of the sheep and the goats?



### Create

This week we discovered the similarities and differences between sheep and goats. Watch the clip again and create a 'true or false' quiz to try out on the people at home.

**Sheep vs Goats (differences and facts for kids)** by The Adventure Brothers



### Song for the week

**'I'm Trusting You' (Roar VBS group publishing)** by Lifetree Kids



### Memory verse

**'Depend on the Lord.  
Trust him, and he will take care of you.'**

(Psalm 37:5 /CB)

**LIVING  
OUT FAITH**

*Kids Alive!* Online – [salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive](http://salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive)

*Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



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& Youth