

Sheep and Goats

In today's story we find out what Jesus meant when he compared people to sheep and goats. It can be found in the New Testament in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25 verses 31 – 46. If you don't have a Bible you can read it online.

In Jesus' day sheep and goats roamed the open countryside during the day to find food and water. The difference was the sheep were looked after by a shepherd and at night were taken back to the sheepfold for safety. The sheep recognized the shepherd's voice and learnt to trust him and follow him. Goats on the other hand were independent, stubborn and aggressive. Jesus' audience would have understood this difference in character when he told his story.

Jesus wants us to be like the sheep, to follow him, to listen to what he says, to trust him and to learn from him. He says don't be like the goats who think they know everything, who push others around and who do just as they please without caring about anyone else.

Jesus is asking us to be aware: can we see the people around us who need our help, our understanding and care. "When did we see you hungry and not feed you? When were you homeless and we ignored you? And (even more challenging), when were you in prison and we did not visit you?" When we see the people around us we can show kindness and friendship when it's needed.

Jesus doesn't mean we have to go visit everyone in prison, feed every hungry person in the world, or take into our homes every homeless person, but we do need to open our eyes and see those under our noses to whom we can extend a friendly helping hand and share what we have.

If you want to read a story about being aware of the people around us who need help, read the story of Papa Panov. It can be borrowed from the BUC church library. There are also some versions of the story on YouTube.

Puppet figures for the story:

You will need:

Sheep and shepherd figures, A4 paper, cardboard or cardboard cereal box, colouring pencils or textas, scissors, glue stick, pop-stick

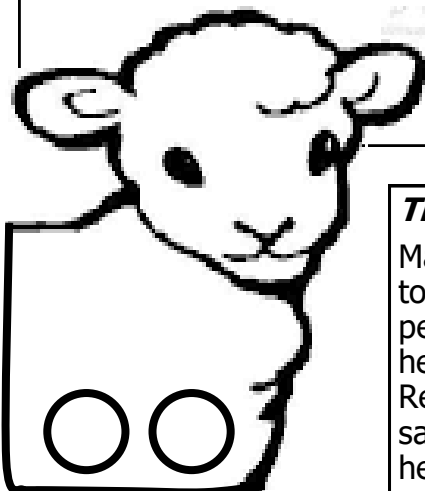
Print the sheep puppet and Shepherd figure onto cardboard, or print on paper and glue onto cardboard from a cereal box or similar. Colour the pictures. Cut them out. Cut out the finger holes in the sheep puppet. Glue a popstick onto the shepherd.

To make a goat finger puppet see

<http://www.dragonsaretooseldom.com/script-billgaotsgruff-patterns-biggoat.html>

Download the picture and follow the instructions as for the sheep finger puppet.

Use the figures to show how the sheep follow Jesus and learn from him, while the goats go their own way, not caring about anyone else but themselves.



Think some more:

Make a list of the sorts of things you can do to follow Jesus and see and care for the people around you who need a friend or a helping hand.

Remember, you do have to keep yourself safe. Always talk to an adult you trust before helping someone you don't know.

