

CHRIST THE KING

Thirty-Fourth or Last Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 14-16abce

*The Lord will
shepherd his flock.*

The LORD says this:
 "I, the LORD God, will look for my people
 and take care of them myself.
 As a shepherd looks for sheep that have wandered away,
 I will search for my scattered people.
 I will rescue them from all the places where they went
 on that dark and gloomy day.

"My people will be like sheep grazing and resting
 in good pastures and on Israel's mountains.
 I, the LORD All-Powerful,
 will lead them there and watch over them.

"I will look for the lost sheep
 and bring back the ones that have wandered off.
 If any are hurt,
 I will bandage their wounds.
 If any are weak,
 I will help them.
 I will take good care of my people!"

The word of the Lord.

Respons

Psalm 23

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 15:20-24a

Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:
Christ has been raised to life!
And he makes us certain
that others will also be raised to life.

Just as we will die because of Adam,
we will be raised to life because of Christ.
Adam brought death to all of us,
and Christ will bring life to all of us.

But we must each wait our turn.
Christ was the first to be raised to life,
and his people will be raised to life when he returns.
Then after Christ has destroyed all powers and forces,
the end will come.

The word of the Lord.

Alleluia

Mark 11:9, 10

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

*Blessed is the one who inherits
the kingdom of David our father;
blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

✦ A reading

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+ A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples:
"When the Son of Man comes in his glory
with all of his angels,
he will sit on his royal throne.

"The people of all nations will be brought before him,
and he will separate them,
as shepherds separate their sheep from their goats.

"He will place the sheep on his right
and the goats on his left.
Then the king will say to those on his right,
'My father has blessed you!
Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you
before the world was created.

When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat,
and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink.
When I was a stranger, you welcomed me,
and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear.
When I was sick, you took care of me,
and when I was in jail, you visited me.'

"Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask,
'When did we give you something to eat or drink?
When did we welcome you as a stranger
or give you clothes to wear
or visit you while you were sick or in jail?'

"The king will answer,
'Whenever you did it for any of my people,
no matter how unimportant they seemed,
you did it for me.'

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:31-46

*The Son of Man will sit upon
his seat of glory and he will
separate all into two groups:*

continued

"Then the king will say to those on his left,
'Get away from me!
You are under God's curse.
Go into the everlasting fire
prepared for the devil and his angels!
I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat,
and I was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink.
I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me,
and I was naked,
but you did not give me any clothes to wear.
I was sick and in jail, but you did not take care of me.'

"Then the people will ask,
'Lord, when did we fail to help you
when you were hungry or thirsty
or a stranger or naked or sick or in jail?'

"The king will say to them,
'Whenever you failed to help any of my people,
no matter how unimportant they seemed,
you failed to do it for me.'"

Then Jesus said, "Those people will be punished forever.
But the ones who pleased God will have eternal life."

The gospel of the Lord.

Children Celebrate!

Liturgy of the Word with Children

Today's Readings

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 14–16abce
Psalm 23:1–2ab, 2c–3, 5–6
1 Corinthians 15:20–24a
Matthew 25:31–46

Bless the Poor and You'll Be Blessed

Preparation

Children's Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children's Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.



Prepare with Prayer

The LORD is sitting in his sacred temple on his throne in heaven. He knows everything we do because he sees us all. (Psalm 11:4)

Scripture Background

The Book of Ezekiel was written during the tumultuous times that produced the destruction of Jerusalem and the Chosen People's 70-year exile in Babylon. Preceding today's passage is a section in which God scolds the leaders of Judah, particularly King Zedekiah, for being careless shepherds of the people.

Too long these rulers had grasped after power and wealth while neglecting the poor and the weak in their midst. Out of pity for his misruled people, God promises to send them a new king from the line of David, someone who will govern as wisely and well as David once did. Christians later came to understand these words as a prophecy about Christ and the messianic kingdom he would inaugurate.

Today's reading from 1 Corinthians turns on a comparison Saint Paul makes between Christ and Adam. Through Adam, sin and death came into the world, but through Christ, grace and eternal life.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples about the Final Judgment. When he says that the people of all nations will be brought before the Son of Man, he indicates that the final reckoning will include believers and unbelievers alike.

One standard will be applied to all, however—how well each person, while alive, treated his or her neighbors. The examples of

Prepare the Meeting Space

In the worship area, on a table draped with a white or gold cloth, place:

- ▶ a Lectionary
- ▶ a battery-operated candle
- ▶ a potted plant or vase of fresh flowers
- ▶ a statue or portrait of Christ the King.

Have ready for use during the Gathering activity:

- ▶ modern-day prose version of the story behind the song "Good King Wenceslas" (Visit bit.ly/1qxiBme and right click the page to print the story. Because of time constraints, use only the last part of the story, beginning with the paragraph whose opening words are, "The next day, the feast day of Saint Stephen")

Suggested Music

See page 62 for more information.

Gathering: "LOVE God" (Seeds CD-2, Track #21) or "The Great Commandment" (Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #18)

Gospel Acclamation: "Gospel Acclamation; Alleluia" (Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #24)

neighborly love that Christ gives form the basis for what we know today as the Corporal Works of Mercy. These are seven good deeds required of every faithful Catholic: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit those in prison, and bury the dead.

Not only should one perform these actions individually but one also should strive to build a society in which no one ever suffers from insufficient food, water, clothing or shelter or feel the loneliness of abandonment, especially during times of sickness or imprisonment. On the rock of unflinching love, the Kingdom of God is built.

Children's Connections

Once a young boy's dad came home after a heavy round of drinking and collapsed on his bed to sleep it off. The rest of the family, ignoring Dad as they usually did when he came home like this, sat in the living room watching TV.

Soon there arose from the back bedroom the sound of moaning and the words, "I'm thirsty; somebody get me a drink!" The teenagers looked at each other and giggled, most likely thinking that Dad was getting what he deserved. Their mother rolled her eyes at yet another episode in her trying life with this man.

The youngest boy in the family, however, felt sorry for his dad and went to the kitchen to get him a glass of water. Even while his older brothers and sisters laughed at him for wanting to help, he continued on his mission. By the time he approached his dad's bedside, most of the water had spilled out of the glass he carried in his shaky hand. When the man gruffly shouted, "You call this a drink of water?" and threw the glass against a wall, the boy scrambled out of the room in fear.

This true story illustrates the empathy that comes naturally to most children. It also illustrates the cynicism, which can begin in one's teenaged years, that diminishes empathy. How many times should a person be kind to an addict who refuses to get his act together? Perhaps Jesus' answer would be, "Seven times seventy."

Saint Teresa of Kolkata would add that we should try to help those in pain even if success isn't certain. The boy failed to quench his father's

More About ...

Good King Wenceslas

The song about Wenceslas is often played at Christmastime even though it is not about the birth of Christ. It does, however, illustrate the kind of love Christ brought into the world. Such love gives without hope of receiving in return. It gives freely and spontaneously, as soon as a need is detected, without regard for the needy person's physical or psychological condition, wealth, social status, race, religion, creed — or even likability.

When preparing today's Gathering activity, you might find these online resources helpful:

- For a free audio download of a professional storyteller's account of Good King Wenceslas, plus complete lyrics to the song, go to bit.ly/1qxiBme.
- For a music video of the song, search the Internet or YouTube.com for "Good King Wenceslas." There are many from which to choose, including a Bing Crosby version and one by the Irish Rovers.

thirst, failed to persuade his family that doing so was the right thing to do, and failed to change his father's alcoholism. The boy was too young to understand the term "enable," much less be able to weigh its merits against what seemed to him a simple act of kindness. His faithfulness to the spirit of today's Gospel—and we have God's Word on this—will be remembered on the last day.

The Children's Leaflet

The children's leaflet for this week helps them learn Jesus' teaching about helping others through, a summary of the Gospel, prayer, and a creative activity.

Distribute copies of the leaflet. If time permits, read with the children the summary of this week's Gospel. Point out the artwork about Jesus and ask the children what Jesus is doing in the picture.

Activity

We will be judged by how we treat others. This is such an important message for parents to give their children that this week's activity is for parents and children to work together on finding a way to help others in their parish or community. The children's activity spells out once again what Jesus tells us in today's Gospel.



The Liturgy of the Word

Gathering

Invite the children to be seated in the worship space. Tell them that today we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. He is king of Heaven and earth and rules over everyone with wisdom and love.

Long ago in the land of Bohemia, there lived another wise and good king, a saintly man named Wenceslas, who tried to imitate Christ in his care for his people. Still today, there is a song that people sing about him, often at Christmastime. Please listen carefully as I read you the story that the song tells.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Bow your heads for the Opening Prayer. Our response to each short prayer will be, "How great is your love, O Lord." Christ our King, you care for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: You look for those who are lost and bring back those who have wandered off. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: You bandage those who are hurt and protect the ones who are weak. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading

Leader: In today's First Reading, God promises to help his Chosen People during a time of trouble for them.

Read Ezekiel 34:11-12, 14-16abce. Then say, "The word of the Lord."

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The Psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning, sing or announce the response.

Leader: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Children: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Leader: *Read Psalm 23:1-2ab, 2c-3, 5-6.*

Second Reading

Leader: In today's Second Reading, Saint Paul tells how Christ will come again and raise us to new life in God's kingdom.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-24a. Then say, "The word of the Lord."

Children: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Gospel Acclamation, proceed to the Proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclaim the Gospel

Leader: In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a story to explain what will happen to all the living and dead when he comes again.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And with your Spirit.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Children: † Glory to you, O Lord.

Leader: *Read Matthew 25:31-46. Then say, "The Gospel of the Lord."*

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Begin by reading again aloud verse 45 of the Gospel. Then review the good deeds mentioned in the Gospel by asking these questions:

- ▶ What should you do when you know of someone who's hungry?
- ▶ What should you do when you know of someone who's thirsty?
- ▶ What should you do when you know of someone who's new to your neighborhood, town, or school?
- ▶ What should you do when you know of someone who doesn't have enough good clothes to wear?
- ▶ What should you do when you know of someone who is sick?
- ▶ If you're a grown-up, what should you do if you know someone who is in jail?

The true story given in Children's Connections about the young boy might be too frightening for the children to hear. Some in the group could be living in a home with an alcoholic parent. Relay instead a time when you, too, tried to help someone yet was rejected. Stress the idea that it's the effort that counts in God's eyes, not always the actual results. Also help children see that they are not too young to begin doing the good deeds described in today's Gospel.

Profession of Faith

Leader: Please stand for the Profession of Faith. Respond to each question with the words, "I do." Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who loves all the people he ever created?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who will come again on the last day to judge the living and the dead?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, who helps us live lives of loving service?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the community of God dedicated to showing the world that God is love?

Children: I do.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: As members of God's holy family, the Church, let us pray for all those who need our prayers. Our response to each petition will be, "Hear us, O Lord." That our Holy Father, all bishops and priests, and all sisters and brothers will do all they can to help the poor and needy, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: That all the world's poor and needy will receive what they need to live in peace and happiness, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: That each of us here will take every chance we get to help and serve others, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: *Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:*

Loving God, we praise you and thank you for making Christ your Son our Lord and King. May we so live our lives that others may see in us his kindness and compassion. This we ask through the same Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. If you haven't already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to watch this week's Gospel Reflection video and complete the Family Corner activities as a family.

November 22, 2020

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

Children Celebrate!

Liturgy of the Word with Children

Today's Readings

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 14-16abce

Psalms 23:1-2ab, 2c-3, 5-6

1 Corinthians 15:20-24a

Matthew 25:31-46



We Pray

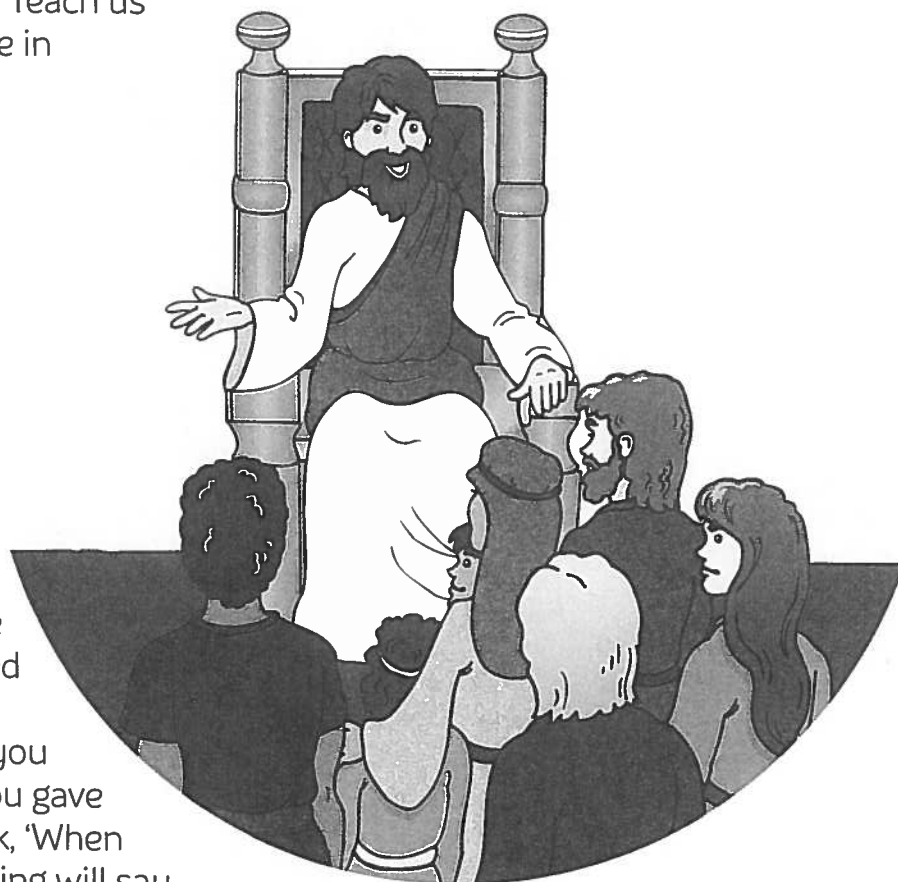
Remind us, O Lord, that when we help the poor, we are also serving you. Teach us to always help people who are in need. Amen.



The Word of God This Week

Bless the Poor and You'll Be Blessed

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man returns, he will sit on his throne like a king. To those who followed his teachings he will say, 'My father has blessed you. Enter the kingdom of Heaven. When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty you gave me a drink.' The people will ask, 'When did we do these things?' The king will say, 'Whenever you did it for anyone, you did it for me.'"



Visit pflaum.com/fall2020 for this week's Gospel Reflection, Saint Spotlight, and more.

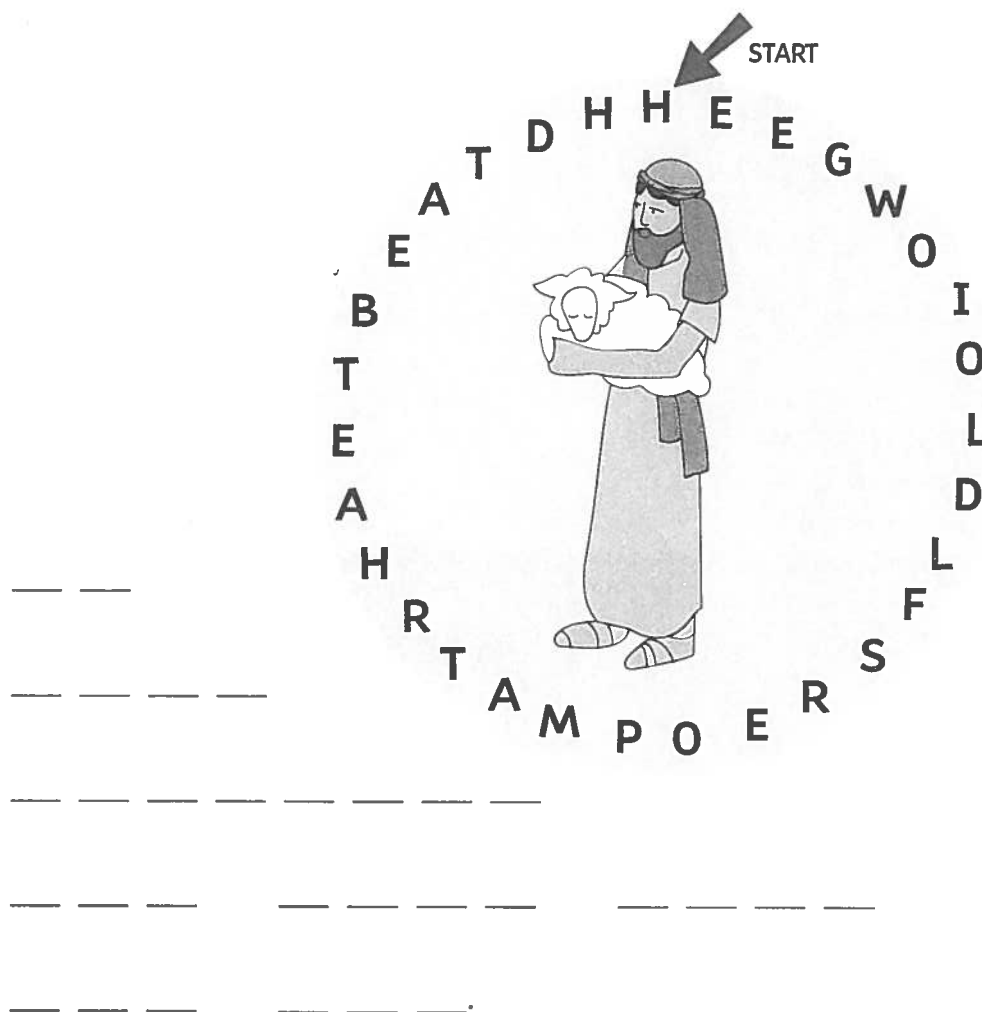
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Activity

In today's Gospel, Jesus described what he will do at the end of time when we are judged. Starting at the arrow, choose every other letter to find out what he said.



Family Corner

Faith Focus

Although children have a generous spirit, willingness to help others must be nurtured by the environment in which they live. If parents are giving and caring about others, this attitude will filter through to the children. Becoming part of groups that help others will just seem like the natural thing to do. If parents teach their children that all people are to be respected and considered neighbors, then children will not see caring about others as a burden.

Family Activity

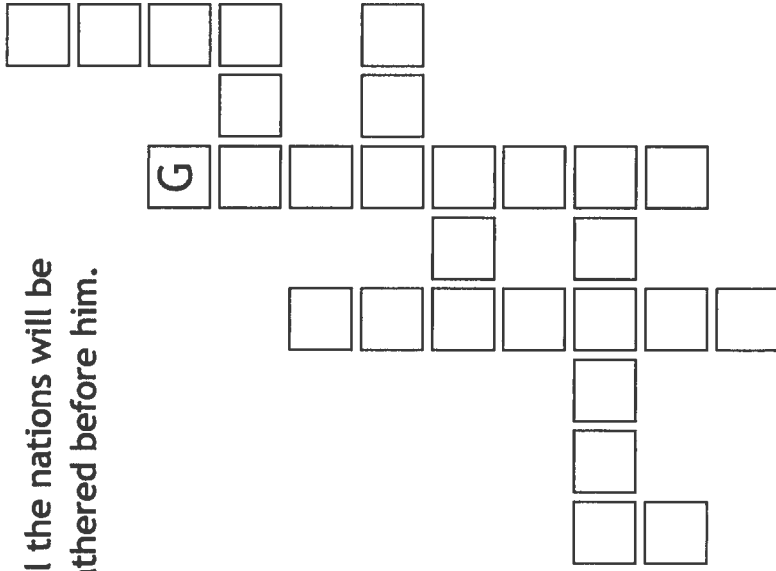
Review the Gospel message for today and talk about how all family members can honor Christ the King by loving as Jesus loved. Search your parish bulletin or local newspaper to find a way to help others. Here are two ideas: Decide on an evening when you will write letters of support or make cards for men and women serving in the military. Contact a local children's hospital and ask if you can do a book collection for their patients.

GROWING WITH THE *Gospel* CYCLE A

PUZZLE

Fit this Gospel message into the empty squares:

All the nations will be gathered before him.



MISSION

Read Matthew chapter 25, verses 31 through 46 with your family. Decide how you will make a difference. Share as Jesus asks.



COLOR

Read the Gospel of the week and color the image.





DRAW

Draw a picture of yourself visiting someone in the hospital.



GOSPEL

Share food with the hungry. Give clothes to the poor. Visit people who are sick.

Share the good news about Jesus with people who have made bad choices. Jesus came to forgive them. God will see the loving things you do. He will reward you one day in heaven.



PRAYER

God, help me to share what you have given to me.



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER