

"Lord, when did we see you hungry?"

Matthew 25:37

CATECHIST BACKGROUND

In this prayer service, students will reflect on what they have learned and from whom they have learned about Jesus.

Before gathering the students in the prayer center, prepare the prayer table with a green cloth, a Bible open to Matthew 25, a candle, and copies of the Universal Mission activity for each young person.

Gather the young people in the prayer center. Invite them to recall what they have learned about Jesus in religion class, at Mass, and in their families. Then invite each to name a person who has taught him or her about Jesus and what that person has taught. Be prepared to give an example of your own. Explain that today's prayer is a prayer of thanks for all who help us learn about Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

- Light the candle, and sing a song you have chosen for today's prayer or a simple Alleluia.
- Lead the young people in praying the Sign of the Cross, and then offer the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you challenge us to spread the Gospel by sharing God's mercy and love with others—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and caring for the sick. Thank you for the teachers, catechists, friends, and family members who have taught us how to follow you by word and example. Lead us always, that, by your example, we may help those who are in need to find comfort and peace in your unending love. For you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

WORD OF GOD

- Invite the students to listen for what Jesus teaches in Matthew 25:34-40. Sing an "Alleluia" sung at your parish, and proclaim the Gospel as follows:

"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

- Invite volunteers to share what they think is the meaning of the story. Then ask, "Why are we called to help the poor and sick with their physical and spiritual needs?"
- Tell the students that this is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus ascribes to himself the status of a king rendering judgment.

Tell them that as followers of Jesus, it is our responsibility to help build his kingdom by lovingly spreading the Gospel—teaching people about Jesus and serving the needs of “the least of these” of this world. Explain that this is the universal mission of the Church.

- Invite the students to name all the ways in which we can feed the hungry, welcome those who are lonely and forgotten, care for the poor and sick, and visit the imprisoned.
- Invite the students to name all the ways in which we can teach people about Jesus.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Distribute copies of The Corporal Works of Mercy activity. Give the students a few minutes to read the directions, brainstorm ideas, and write their story. After the students have completed the activity sheet, invite them each to share their headlines and identify how the people in their stories lived the Corporal Works of Mercy.

CONCLUSION

- Remind the students that catechists prepare young people to live the Gospel and Corporal Works of Mercy in daily life and to prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Ask the students to recall the people who have taught them about Jesus and the importance of serving those in need. Together, make the Sign of the Cross, then invite the students name these people aloud.
- Invite a student to lead the class in offering the following prayers of thanks for those who have taught them to serve the universal mission of the Church through the ministry of catechesis. Invite the other students to respond, **“Thank you, Lord.”**

For the many saints who gave their talents and time to teach others about Jesus through their words and actions, we pray:

Thank you, Lord.

For those in our parish who teach us about God’s unending love and who help us serve others as Jesus taught, we pray:

Thank you, Lord.

For our families, for the seeds of faith they plant in our lives, and for all they do to teach us how to follow Jesus, we pray:

Thank you, Lord.

For catechists everywhere, who help create communities of faith marked by listening, sharing, praising you, and treating one another with a spirit of love and care, we pray:

Thank you, Lord.

For each of us, that we may look for chances to teach others about God’s love and serve those in need, we pray:

Thank you, Lord.

Help us lead by the example of our catechists so that others will come to know, love, and serve you.

Help us lead by your example, Lord, so that the poor and suffering might find comfort, rest, and peace.

For you are Lord, for ever and ever.

Amen.

- Conclude by leading the young people in praying the Sign of the Cross.