

# "Lord, when did we see you hungry?"

Matthew 25:37

## CATECHIST BACKGROUND

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

Before gathering the children in the prayer center, prepare the prayer table with a green cloth, a Bible open to Matthew 25, a candle, and copies of the Prayer of Blessing & Gratitude activity for each child.

Gather the children 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, such as a familiar song sung at your parish or a song about the Word of God.
- Lead the children in praying the Sign of the Cross, and then offer the following prayer:

*Lord Jesus, you ask us to share your love by serving others when they need help—like giving food to the hungry and taking care of the poor and sick. You taught your disciples, and you teach us, through the example of your life and through your Word in the Gospels.*

*Open our hearts as your catechists teach us how to build your kingdom by serving those in need. 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, "Who is the king in this Gospel reading?" (Jesus) Help the children understand that Jesus is referring to himself as the king in this Scripture passage.
- Ask, "What does 'these least brothers of mine' mean?" Explain that this phrase refers to those among us who have the greatest needs.
- Ask, "Why are we called to help the hungry, homeless, poor, and sick?" (Accept all reasonable responses.) Explain to the children that serving those in need is also a way to serve Jesus. Tell them that Jesus asks us to serve him by helping all people have the things that we all need such as food, water, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. Help them understand that this is the universal mission of the Church to which we are all called.

## PRAYER ACTIVITY

Distribute copies of The Corporal Works of Mercy activity. Read the description and instructions to the children. Then invite them to draw one way that they can fulfill the Corporal Works of Mercy. Give the children ideas of ways that they can serve others, such as volunteering at a soup kitchen or food pantry, donating to a food or clothing drive, or visiting a homeless shelter.

## CONCLUSION

- Lead the class in offering prayers of thanks for those who have helped them learn about Jesus. Invite them to respond, **"Thank you, Lord."** (You may also wish to invite the students to raise their hands in a gesture of thanks and praise when they pray the response.)

*For the many saints who taught others about Jesus through their words and actions, we pray:*

**Thank you, Lord.**

*For those in our parish who help us live our faith by teaching us about Jesus, we pray:*

**Thank you, Lord.**

*For our families and all they do to teach us how to follow Jesus, we pray:*

**Thank you, Lord.**

*For catechists all over the world who serve those in need and teach others about God's love, we pray:*

**Thank you, Lord.**

*For each of us, that we may look for chances to serve those in need, share God's love, and spread Jesus' teachings, we pray:*

**Thank you, Lord.**

*Lord, you ask us to help others when they are in need. Thank you for the catechists who teach us how to follow you by serving others. May what they have taught us help us grow to become examples of your love to others, today and always.*

**Amen.**

- Conclude by leading the children in praying the Sign of the Cross.