**

**1st MARCH 2015
 ‘UNITED APPEAL FOR MISSION SUNDAY’**

## Theme: Being the people Jesus calls us to be

Children’s address ideas

## Introduction

These are ideas that can be used and adapted to help children understand the focus of the United Appeal teaching this year – Being the people Jesus calls us to be – using the story of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25. They are outlines to get you started on how you might interact with the children in the service and help them understand both the biblical teaching and what it might mean for them to contribute to the United Appeal Sunday.

Teaching children these truths is an important part of their discipleship but to enable their understanding to be more developed, you will need to adapt these ideas to suit the exact age range and the children in your congregation.

Both ideas incorporate interaction – one with a visual example and one that allows for movement. These are two key ways that will help children to not only hear the message that you are sharing but will help them to remember what the teaching is afterwards. Both also offer the same take home option to encourage them to participate as well as some other ideas to contribute with the rest of the congregation.

Feel free to adapt these in any way that works best in your situation.

* Aimed at the full primary school age range of 4-11 years.

# Idea 1

Preparation beforehand:

* Outline of a person – displayed so everyone can see. *Appendix 1*
* Have a marker that you can use to write ideas on the person.
* Have the Bible passage from a translation that is easy for the children to understand, e.g. The International Children’s Bible.
* Have enough Smarties tubes for the children if you choose to use that idea.

With children:

Say to the children that there are lots of people in the world who do not have as much as we do. Can you think of some of the needs that people in the world have?

* Have some examples ready if the children are not too forthcoming with their answers.
	+ Write on the body the things that often people need
	+ E.g. write food on the stomach area
	+ E.g. write no school on the head
	+ Etc....
* Do you think the Bible tells us anything about how we can help these people?
	+ Allow the children to come up with some answers
* Agree with the children that there are lots of times in the Bible when Jesus tells us that being someone who follows Him means that we need to look for people who do not have all that we have and to help them.
* In fact the passage that we are thinking about in church today says that when we help someone who is hungry or thirsty or in prison or has no clothes that we are not just helping that person. Jesus said that it means we are doing it for Him.
	+ Read Matthew 25:34-36 and 40
* When Jesus lived on earth He helped lots of people and wanted to show them how much God loves them. When we love Jesus and follow Him that means that we should want to do the things that Jesus did too. We need to love people and help people who do not have as much as us – because we want to do what Jesus has told us to do.
* Our Church (the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) runs a fundraising project each year when we raise money to help people here to learn more about God and following Him and also to help people overseas who may not have enough food, or be able to go to school or may not have a house to live in. It is called the United Appeal. “Appeal” means to ask – so everyone in every church is asked if they can give a little bit of what they have to help others. “United” means altogether – we give our money to support mission both here in Ireland and overseas through lots of different projects because together, as one big church family of lots of congregations, we can help many more people than each of us could on our own.
* You may not think that you have very much but you can still help:
	+ Give your pocket money
	+ Fill a Smarties tube with 20ps (you could give each child a Smarties tube and have them bring it back full!)
	+ Pray for people who do not have as much as we do
	+ In Sunday school/children’s church ask if you can do something together to raise some money to help others
	+ Encourage each other to make a difference

*Appendix 1*



# Idea 2

Preparation beforehand:

* Have the Bible passage from a translation that is easy for the children to understand, e.g. The International Children’s Bible.
* Have enough Smarties tubes for the children if you choose to use that idea.
* Think through examples to the questions you are asking the children to help prompt as necessary.

Say to the children: There are lots of things that the Bible tells us about how we should live when we follow Jesus. Some of them are easier to do than others. Can anyone think of things that are easy to do when we follow Jesus?

Allow the children to suggest things. You are looking for answers like:

* Reading the Bible
* Praying
* Coming to church/Sunday school/children’s church/other children’s organisations

Some of the things that Jesus asks us to do though are more difficult to do. Can you think of any of those?

* Giving away the money that you are saving for something you really want
* Telling your friends that you follow Jesus and that you go to church
* Being friends with the person that no one else likes in school and risk your friends making fun of you

*Be prepared for other answers of things that you may not think of but the children will find difficult to do as Christians in their situations.*

These things can be hard to do. They can also be hard for adults who follow Jesus when they go to work, or talk to friends and neighbours – or when they are saving up for something that they really want as well!

Jesus tells us though that when we do something that is difficult for us but helps someone else who is in need, maybe they have no food or friends, that it means something really special. He says that when we help someone else it is like we are helping Him and that is what He wants us to do.

Listen to this.... read Matthew 25:34-36 and 40. Get the children to act out the actions of how Jesus said the people helped.

Jesus is so happy with those who help others because it is as if we are doing it for Jesus. He says that those people receive His Father’s blessing and get to be with Him forever for being faithful and obeying what Jesus has told them to do. Jesus also says that people who do not help others are not His true followers and that they do not deserve God’s blessing because they have not obeyed.

When we follow Jesus, He does not say it will always be easy. In fact He asks us to do some really hard things. But when we do, we are doing what He has told us to do and that is what it means to obey.

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	+ Encourage each other to make a difference