

Jesus will judge the world



Here's a Sunday School lesson emphasizing grace, service, and our calling as Christians to reflect God's love through our actions. This lesson aligns with Lutheran theology, which teaches that our good works flow from faith and gratitude for God's grace. It focuses on the theme that people are judged according to their faith, a concept central to Lutheran theology. This lesson highlights that faith in Jesus Christ, not works, is the

basis for salvation, and our good works are a response to that faith.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will:

1. Understand that salvation comes through faith in Jesus, not through good deeds—serving others is an act of faith, not something we do to earn God’s favor.
2. Learn that good works are a response to faith, not a requirement for salvation. Our faith compels us to serve others.
3. Be encouraged to trust in Jesus as their Savior and live out their faith joyfully.

Lesson Outline

1. Opening Activity: What Do You See?

- **Materials:** Blindfolds, small obstacles.
- Pair kids up and have one lead the other through an obstacle course while blindfolded, emphasizing trust.
- **Discuss:**
 - How did you feel trusting someone else?
 - Just like trusting your partner, having faith in Jesus means believing in Him even when we don’t see everything clearly.

2. Bible Story: The Sheep and the Goats

- **Read the Story:**

Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud, stopping to explain key points:

- Jesus is the King who will separate people like a shepherd separates sheep and goats.
- The sheep helped others (hungry, thirsty, sick, etc.) because of their faith.
- The goats ignored these needs and missed opportunities to serve Jesus.

- **Discussion Questions:**

- Why do you think the sheep helped others?
- How can we see Jesus in people around us?
- Does helping others earn us a place in heaven? (Emphasize grace through faith, not works.)

3. Key Lutheran Teaching: Faith Produces Good Works

- Explain: Lutherans believe that we are saved by God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our good works are a way to say "thank you" to God for His love and forgiveness.
- Share: "The sheep didn't help others to earn their way to heaven—they helped because their hearts were full of faith in Jesus!"

4. Activity: "Helping Hands" Craft (15 minutes)

- **Materials:** Construction paper, markers, scissors, glue.

- Have students trace their hands on paper and write one way they can help others on each finger (e.g., “Share food,” “Pray for the sick”).
 - Create a poster or individual crafts titled: “We Serve Jesus by Serving Others.”
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5. Game: Sheep and Goats Sort

- **Materials:** Cards with scenarios (e.g., “Give food to a hungry person” or “Ignore someone in need”).
 - Kids sort the cards into “Sheep” or “Goats.”
 - Discuss how our faith motivates us to be like the sheep and serve others.
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- **Reflect:**
 - “What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?”
 - “How can we show our faith through our actions?”
 - “How can we show Jesus’ love this week?”
 - Remind the class that helping others is a joyful response to God’s love for us.
 - Pray together, thanking Jesus for His grace and asking for hearts ready to serve thanking God for the gift of salvation through Jesus.
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Teacher Notes

- Emphasize that our salvation is not earned by good works; it's a gift of grace. Good works are how we reflect God's love in the world.
 - Keep the tone joyful and focused on gratitude for God's love.
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4. Craft: Faith Cross (15 minutes)

- **Materials:** Paper, markers, and decorative supplies.
- Have kids draw or decorate a cross and write "Faith in Jesus" at the center. Around the cross, they can add phrases or images that represent how their faith inspires good works.

Prayer (5 minutes)

Take-Home Activity

- **Faith Reminder:** Provide a small card with Ephesians 2:8-9 and encourage kids to place it somewhere they'll see it daily.
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Teacher Notes

- Emphasize that we are saved by faith alone, through God's grace, and not by anything we do.
- Use relatable examples to explain faith, such as trusting a parent or friend.

- Keep the tone positive and focused on gratitude for God's gift of salvation.

Objective:

- To explore the Lutheran interpretation of Matthew 25:31-46.
- To understand the Lutheran emphasis on good works as fruits of faith.
- To understand Salvation is a work of God, damnation is a human result of rejecting salvation.
- To encourage students to apply these teachings to their faith and daily lives.

Target Audience: This lesson is suitable for high school or adult students in a Lutheran religious education setting.

Materials:

- Bibles (or printed copies of Matthew 25:31-46)
- Whiteboard and markers
- Visual aids (images or illustrations related to the lesson of the sheep and the goats)
- Handouts with discussion questions
- Art supplies (colored pencils, markers, etc.)

Augsburg Confession

Article XVII. Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

1 Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and 2 will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, 3

but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.

4 They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils.

5 They condemn also others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed. (Source: <https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/of-christs-return-to-judgment/>)

Apology Augsburg Confession

Art. XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment

66 The Seventeenth Article the adversaries receive without exception, in which we confess that at the consummation of the world Christ shall appear, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give to the godly eternal life and, eternal joys, but shall condemn the ungodly to be punished with the devil without end.

Lesson Structure:

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Begin with a discussion about the concept of judgment and its relevance to faith (believers) rejection (unbelievers) and actions Hebrews 11:6.

- Introduce the topic of Matthew 25:31-46 as a teaching on good works as fruits of faith in the Lutheran tradition. Unbelievers can't do good works Hebrews 11:6.

2. Reading and Discussion (15 minutes)

- Have the students read and discuss Matthew 25:31-46, focusing on the elements of the passage that emphasize acts of love and mercy. Note that in both cases Jesus talks of the deeds done to the least of these, not the greatest.



<https://animalagalliance.org/small-ruminants/>

- Believers Romans 3:22-24
 - Separated first then placed on the right children of God by faith in Jesus
 - They are blessed **eulogeó** Strong's 2127 "appointed to eternal salvation by my father,"

- They inherit **kléronomeó** Strong's 2816 “ hence, it became a formula denoting **to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom:**”
- This inheritance was theirs before they were born thus not earned or worked for.
- They produce fruits of faith of which they have no knowledge. There is no record of their wrongs
Romans 8:1
- **Unbelievers**
 - Also separated to the left.
 - Depart Strong's 4198 **poreuomai:**
 - Cursed Strong's 2672 **kataraomai**
 - The eternal fire was not prepared for them nor was it made from the beginning, but after creation made rather for the evil angels, thus God is not responsible for their appearance there.
 - They had no deeds Hebrews 11:6
- Discuss the context in which Jesus gave this teaching.
- Neither believers nor unbelievers will be able to judge hearts even at Judgment Day, therefore God will reveal hearts by works.

3. Exploring Lutheran Theology (15 minutes)

- Write key terms on the whiteboard: "Faith and Good Works," "Sanctification," and "Theology of the Cross."
- Discuss the Lutheran perspective on faith and good works, emphasizing that good works are the natural outgrowth of faith.

- Explore the Lutheran concept of sanctification as a lifelong process of becoming more Christlike.
- Explain the concept of the "theology of the cross" as central to Lutheran theology.
- Discuss the error of believing that if God chose some to life, He predestined the rest to damnation.

4. Application and Reflection (15 minutes)

- Distribute handouts with discussion questions or have students work in small groups to discuss:
 - How does the Lutheran interpretation of Matthew 25:31-46 shape your understanding of good works and faith?
 - How can you live out acts of love and mercy in your daily life?
 - Good works only flow from love for God.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts on practical ways to demonstrate love and mercy to others.

5. Creative Activity (15 minutes)

- Encourage students to create artwork, posters, or written reflections on the theme of good works as fruits of faith. They can express their understanding and thoughts through art or writing.

6. Closing and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Summarize the key points of the lesson.

- Have each student share one practical action they plan to take in response to the Lutheran perspective on Matthew 25:31-46.
- Conclude with a prayer or meditation, focusing on living out faith through acts of love and mercy.

Homework (Optional): Assign students to read Lutheran writings on sanctification and reflect on how the concept relates to their faith journey.

Assessment: You can assess students' understanding through their participation in discussions, the quality of their creative activity, and their commitment to living out their faith through acts of love and mercy, in accordance with Lutheran teachings.

"From the Confessions: The Defense of the Augsburg Confession

Concerning Love and the Fulfilling of the Law

But the adversaries urge that it is the prerogative of good works to merit eternal life, because Paul says, "He will render to every man according to his works" (Rom 2:6). Likewise, "Glory and honor and peace for every one who does good" (Rom 2:10). "Those who have done good shall

come to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29). “I was hungry and you gave me food,” and so forth (Matt 25:35). In these and all similar passages in which works are praised in the Scriptures, it is necessary to understand faith of the heart along with the outward works, for Scripture does not speak hypocrisy, but of the righteousness of the heart along with its fruits.”

<https://www.solapublishing.com/devotions/lessons-in-the-lutheran-confessions/a436.html>

For this concept, the Athanasian creed says: " He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire." "The following verses explain how we are saved by grace alone and not by works.

Eph 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man

should boast. 10 For we are **his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." However, Pieper writes as follows: "But the righteous are judged only according to their good works because **these works are the proof of their faith in Christ**; the evil works of the believers are not even on the Judgment Day brought to light again because through the believer's justification they have been cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19), that is have been forgiven." Christian Dogmatics Vol. III page 540

The following Bible passages apply.

KJV Matthew 25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Matthew 25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

KJV 2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things

done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The point is that we are saved by grace alone, but we will all be judged by our works. The Judgment is about works, not faith, or else how will God judge the heathen?

The scales of justice must be equal for Christians and non-Christians at the judgment. Otherwise, there would be two different standards of judgment, the Christians being judged by their faith and the heathen being judged by their works.

The heathen can't be judged by faith because they don't have any faith. Both Christians and the heathen will be judged equally by their works.

Both the heathen and the Christians will be judged by their works at the Judgment. The heathen will have no works because they had no faith. Heb 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Christians will have good works because they have the full righteousness and work of Christ given them by grace alone through faith in Christ. Christians will also have actual good works in which they participated that God accepts because God gives all Christians good works to do, works which He accepts according to Eph. 2:10 above.

Therefore, the end of the Athanasian Creed is absolutely correct. It presupposes the faith of the believer and the unbelief of the heathen. The existence of, or lack of, good works will be evident to all at the Judgment. Not only without faith is it impossible to please God, it is impossible to be saved, according to Mark 16:16.

Think of it this way: **Good works come as standard operating equipment on every Christian that God makes."**

<http://www.lutherquest.org/walther/articles/-400/jmc00352.htm>

In neither case can any except God EVER see into the heart. Thus the manifestations of the heart are used as evidence of what the heart contains.

Final Judgement	Reference	Faithful	Damned
Come on His throne	Mt. 25:31-32		
Animals	Mt. 25:33	Sheep Right	Goats Left
Direction	Mt. 25:34 41	Come	Depart
Judgement applied	2 Cor. 5:10	yes	yes
For living and dead	Rm 14:10	yes	yes
Based on good works	Mt 25:35-45	works by faith	no good works
Why God sees it this way		Rom. 8:1 no condemnation for those who are in Christ	Heb. 11:6 Without Faith it is impossible to please God
what happened to evil deeds		Rev 12:11 cast out Mch 7:19 forgiven	Mt 25:41 result in damnation

In Lutheran theology, **faith**, **trust**, and **belief** are interconnected concepts, each with its nuances. Here's a comparison and contrast of these terms as they are understood in the Lutheran tradition.

Faith

- **Definition:** Faith (NOUN) (from the Greek *pistis*) is Spirit-given persuasion and assurance in God's promises, especially the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- **Biblical Basis:**
 - *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through **faith**—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."* – Ephesians 2:8

- **Key Lutheran Teaching:**
 - Faith is not merely intellectual acknowledgment; it is a wholehearted trust in God's grace, initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
 - Faith receives the gifts of God (forgiveness, life, and salvation) offered through Christ.
 - **Practical Understanding:** Faith is the foundation of the Christian life, where one rests entirely on God's work, not human effort.
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Trust

- **Definition:** Trust is the active reliance on God's promises, grounded in faith. It reflects how faith is lived out in daily life.
 - **Biblical Basis:**
 - *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."* – Proverbs 3:5
 - **Key Lutheran Teaching:**
 - Trust is a fruit of faith and manifests in how believers depend on God during trials, decisions, and uncertainties.
 - It involves a personal relationship with God, where His Word and character are seen as dependable.
 - **Practical Understanding:** Trust means confidently leaning on God in every situation, knowing He is faithful and good.
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Believe

- **Definition:** (VERB) To have divine persuasion (from the Greek *pisteuo*) is to accept something as true. In the context of Christianity, it means acknowledging the truth of who God is and what He has done.
- **Biblical Basis:**
 - *"**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."* – Acts 16:31
- **Key Lutheran Teaching:**
 - Belief is the intellectual acceptance of God's Word, that produces faith.
 - True belief is more than knowing about God—it involves surrendering to Him in faith.
- **Practical Understanding:** Believing is the initial acknowledgment of God's truth, which leads to deeper faith and trust as the Holy Spirit works in the heart.

Comparison Table

Aspect	Faith	Trust	Believe
OT Word	530 אֱמוּנָה	6960 יִקְוֶה	539 אָמֵן
NT Word	pistis 4102	peithó 3982	4100 pisteuó
Definition	divine persuasion	To have confidence (seems to be based on something other than faith.)	the act of believing in Jesus Christ for salvation
Focus	Confidence in God's grace	Reliance on God in daily life	Acknowledging God's truth
Source	Gift of the Holy Spirit	Outcome of faith OR human persuasion	Holy Spirit
Nature	Heart and Spirit assurance	Daily dependence	Spiritual confidence
Biblical Example	Abraham's faith in God's promise (Romans 4:20-21) (Habbakuk 2:4)	David trusting God against Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45-47)	Thomas believing after seeing Jesus (John 20:27-29)