

LIVING A CARE-FULL LIFE

WEEK 9 | FAMILY

CHAT:

Gather the family with some space to chat together.

You'll need some pieces of paper and colours. For younger children you might want some glue and cotton wool/pads. Choose one or more points to chat and discuss.

Imagine you are The Shepherd looking at a mixed flock of both sheep and goats. Discuss what you might see. Maybe use some paper to write the thoughts down:

What are the differences between a sheep and a goat? Think about how they look and what they produce and the related value to the shepherd.

What might be reasons for separating these animals?

For younger members of the family:

Draw and colour a sheep – perhaps stick some cotton wool/pads on it to keep them active and engaged whilst others chat.

Using fingers, get some white poster paint and create an oval shape for a sheep. When its dry, add a sheep's face and legs.

In verses 40 & 45, Jesus uses the phrase 'the least of these brothers of mine' or in the Message translation it writes 'someone who was being overlooked or ignored'.

Discuss who you think this might refer to:

- In your neighbourhood
- In UK society generally
- In the world

How does Jesus describe the difference between sheep and goats? Look at these verses together: Sheep: Matthew 25:34-40; Goats: Matthew 25:41-46 Perhaps draw 2 stick men to represent them.

Spot the subtle differences:

- What did the person need?
- Did they get it? If yes, how do you think that changed?
- What is the ultimate difference in how Jesus talked about these two groups of people (see verse 46)?
- As a result of the discovery, discuss whether you would rather be a sheep or a goat and the reasons why.

Share a story: Think of a time you really needed help (home, school, college, work) – you were desperate for help, perhaps an emergency or a time you felt overlooked/forgotten. Tell the story of how help arrived and how you felt after getting that help. Remember that if it's a personal story of being overlooked it may be hard to tell, bring up memories and need sensitivity.

PRAY:

Here are a few prayer activities to do with your family:

Pray together for someone you know who is sick or unwell.

Write a prayer for someone who is unwell and send it to them.

Each take a biscuit. Every time you bite, chew it a little longer than usual and whilst you chew, pray silently for someone you know who is struggling to find food to eat today.

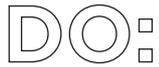
Prepare a cold drink for everyone. Every time you take a sip, pray for someone to be refreshed.

Next time you eat as a family together, pray for those who are hungry and thirsty and need a place or family to eat with before you start eating your food.

Make a number of paper people chain from paper using scissors. Label it with people you know who live alone and put it in a place to remind you to pray for them.

Sit together quietly and put your hands out in front of you: Thank Jesus for his kindness and mercy.

Quiet breathing prayer: As you breathe in, breathe in his mercy for you. As you breathe out, ask Jesus to help you show more mercy to people around you.



Here are a few activities to choose from to do with your family:

Depending what you choose, you'll need some paper, pens and scissors, cards or notelets, time to bake/make food.

Choose someone in the family and show exceptional kindness to them. If you can't think of something specific, ask yourself the question 'How would I like to be treated at breakfast/the weekend if I were them?' Then ask them if they thought they deserved it and what it felt like. Change over to a different member of the family so everyone gets to feel the kindness towards them.

Draw around your hand on a piece of paper and cut it out. Write on it something you will do this week to consider the 'least of these' people. Remember, start with small and realistic goals with your ideas. Keep one another accountable with this.

Think practically. What can we do to consider 'the least of these' and show mercy. For example:

Sort out unwanted clothes, games and collect them ready for a charity shop drop.

Phone up the local food bank and ask them what supplies they need. Add them to a weekly shop. Collect the items together and drop off the food together as a family.

Make some food for someone who isn't expecting it, feels forgotten or alone.

Each week contribute into a family fund and then send it to a charity that supports marginalised people, locally or internationally.

Draw, make, colour, write a card or letter to someone.

Make a family list of who you will share hospitality with, someone you haven't invited before - either for a coffee, play date, a meal in or at a local restaurant.

Phone someone you know is unwell or send them a card to tell them you are praying for them.

Although talking about prison may be more difficult, consider looking at prisonfellowship.org.uk to write a letter to someone in prison, or support a child who's parent is in prison.

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