Help the children experience what it means to see Christ in another person. This retelling of the Leo Tolstoy short story, “Where Love is, God is,” provides a tangible way to connect young people with generosity and relationship building as a strategy for building peace with justice.

Put the following in a basket or box. During the story, take out each item as it is used to serve others.

- Can of soup
- Box of tea bags
- Loaf of bread
- 3-4 pairs of socks in different sizes and patterns (you can have fun with these)

**Matthew 25:31-46**

**SAY:**
We heard a story from the Bible this morning that reminds me of another story. It is a little long, so I will change it for our short time. It is based on a story by Leo Tolstoy called “Where Love is, God is.”


Maureen was an old woman in a small village (feel free to adapt the type of town to your setting). One very cold winter evening, she wrapped herself in a blanket, sat in her rocking chair and fell asleep.

She heard the voice of Jesus say, “I am going to visit you tonight.”
If Jesus were going to visit you, what are some things you might do?
(Allow the students to respond.)

Exactly! So, Maureen woke up and began getting ready.

She put on a pot of soup, boiled some water for tea, made a loaf of bread and began knitting a special gift for Jesus because her specialty was knitting. That’s why she is called, “Maureen, the knitter.”

As she worked, she heard a beautiful sound. Children from the nearby school were singing, door to door. Maureen was so impressed. She knew that like many children in her neighborhood, they did not have a lot of money. But they were making the town a little warmer with their beautiful voices. She went outside and offered them each a cup of tea (take out the box of tea) to warm them up and soothe their throats. “I was saving it for a guest, but I have other things for him,” she said.

She went back to her work and heard crying outside. A woman whom she had never seen was carrying a little baby. Maureen asked what was wrong. The woman said she was traveling to visit her parents, but her car broke down and the mechanic had already left for the day.

Maureen invited the woman inside to warm up by the fire. She offered her some bread (take out the loaf of bread) since the soup was not ready. As the woman warmed up, Maureen made a phone call. After hanging up the phone, she told the woman, “My daughter will be here in a moment. She fixes cars and will help you.”
As the woman went outdoors to meet with Maureen’s daughter, Maureen returned to making the gift for Jesus. When she looked out the window, she saw Ricky, a man with whom she had grown up. Ricky often forgot where he was, and he sometimes wandered from home. She invited him in and gave him some hot soup (take out the can of soup) while she called his caretaker to come pick him up.

Finally, she finished her gift for Jesus. She made an assortment of socks because she wasn’t sure what his favorite pattern might be or what size feet Jesus has. It felt good to know she could share this talent for knitting with such a special person. This was her finest work, and on such a cold night, she felt they would keep Jesus warm and stylish. (Take out the socks)

She glanced out the window and saw a family wearing shoes with holes in them and no socks. And what do you think she did?
(allow the children to respond)

That’s right. She gave them the socks she had made.

**She looked at the clock and saw it was almost midnight.**

As she sat to read her Bible and waited for Jesus, she opened the Bible. After reading it she closed her eyes and thought about the people she met that day. She heard Jesus say:

“I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was sick and you cared for me,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was in need and you helped me.”
Today, we are thinking about how to build up peace and justice (fairness) in our community and in the world.

**ONE WAY WE DO THIS IS BY TREATING OTHERS THE SAME WAY WE WOULD TREAT JESUS.**

We have these items that will be delivered to the food pantry for our neighbors in need. We pray that this bread, tea, soup and socks will bring the recipients a bit of peace and comfort. As a church, we also want to work to create a world where everyone has what he or she needs.

I hope that you will look for ways to create peace and fairness when you are at school or camp this week.

**PRAY**

Will you pray with me?

“Thank you, God, for reminding us to help other people and share your love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”