

# Theme Overview

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The theme of “When Did We See You?” is such an important one for the church and us, as people of faith, to consider.

From the opening proclamation of “Emmanuel, God with us,” to the closing declaration of Jesus saying, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age,” a major theme of Matthew’s gospel is “God with us.” The question then becomes, “how is God with us?”

God is with us among the “least of these.” God is with us when we see and care for others. God is with us, empowering us to see others and ourselves, as we are also the “least of these” at times.

Part of the good news of this parable is that God’s care for the “least of these” means that God cares for each of us in our experiences of vulnerability.

When have you been hungry or thirsty; felt like a stranger or been excluded? When have you felt naked and exposed; sick or imprisoned? In each of these circumstances, God sees you.

Jesus pointedly asks those around him (and us), “how will you welcome others?” and “how will you be seen by others?” because God sees who we really are.

The Matthew 25 Initiative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) calls its churches to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor. The priorities of this initiative include eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, and building congregational vitality, all by seeing Jesus in everything we do.

What a gift to lead young people in this exploration!

**Session 1:** See & Be Seen // Psalm 139

**Session 2:** Know & Be Known // Luke 24:13-35

**Session 3:** Bless & Be Blessed // John 10:7-18 and Psalm 23

*And they will say, “Lord, when did we see you?” Matthew 25:44*

