



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 12: Active Faith

Suggested Week of Use: May 17, 2026

Core Passage: Matthew 25:31-46

News Story Summary

Over the course of six years (1535-1541), Michelangelo painted *The Last Judgment* on the wall above the altar of the Sistine Chapel. This apocalyptic masterpiece, a dramatization of Jesus's second coming, covers 5,000 square feet and shows Christ standing as the focal point over some three hundred lesser figures. Earlier this year, a team of restorers worked to clean the painting. The lactic acid in the sweat of nearly 25,000 tourists a day reacted with the calcium carbonate in the chapel's walls and ceiling. This created a white, chalky film that had dulled the painting's brilliant colors since its last restoration in 1999. Slowly, using special paper and distilled water, workers were able to bring *The Last Judgment* back to life. Humidifiers and a new filtration system also have been installed to protect the painting in the future.

For more about this story, search "*The Last Judgment* restoration."

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *What event have you been looking forward to? What event do you tend to dread?* Lead adults to share what makes the difference between the two. Ask: *How do you picture Jesus's return?* Share the information about the restoration of *The Last Judgment* from the news story summary. (If possible, find a photo of the painting to show the group.) Point out that this painting is a vivid picture of the righteous being separated from the unrighteous when Jesus comes back. Explain that this session focuses on Jesus's parable of the sheep and the goats, which inspired this work of art.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, review the dramatic imagery in *The Last Judgment*. Explain that in the painting, the righteous on the right ascend to heaven, while the unrighteous on the left descend to hell—just as Jesus described in His parable. Ask: *How should knowing the destiny of the lost motivate believers to share the gospel?* Encourage the group to identify the ways Jesus said believers could serve others in the parable. Discuss how meeting those needs can support other believers and provide a solid witness within the community. Close the session in prayer, asking the Lord to show the group ways they can be His hands and feet in the world.