

The Good Shepherd

Grades
1-2

SHEPHERD • EASTER 4 • YEAR B

JOHN 10:11-18



What is happening in this story?

Jesus uses the analogy of a shepherd to explain who he is: someone who cares for his sheep. While analogous to describing God in the Old Testament, unique to this text is Jesus' phrase "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." It's a foreshadowing of Jesus' death. Unlike the "hired hand" (John 10:12-13), which might be an allusion to Israel's former unfaithful rulers, Jesus truly knows his sheep, and this intimate knowledge brings a deep, abiding love for the sheep.

Why does this story matter for kids?

This story can be of comfort to kids. It tells them who Jesus is and what he does for them. He is a good shepherd who knows them and cares for them in ways no one else could. Jesus defines his identity by both his title of "shepherd" and his actions. Kids are learning who they are in the context of family relationships, peer groups, and so on. They define themselves as daughter, brother, student, and friend. While these labels help us understand ourselves, they are also responsibilities. We are supposed to be good sisters, brothers, and friends, and our actions help decide that.

What is the lectionary connection?

During Easter we bask in the glow of the resurrection. "Alleluias" surround us, and we proclaim the Christ who rose again so that our lives could also be transformed. The Good Shepherd snatches sheep from the jaws of death and gifts them with new life. That's a powerful image of what God does for us, in small and profound ways.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Jesus used a lot of metaphors in his teachings, but some kids this age may not know what a "metaphor" is. Give simple and well-known metaphor examples throughout today's lesson. Examples might include: Jesus is a shepherd, we are sheep, and hearts are love.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Permanent marker (black)
- Construction paper (2 sheets per kid)
- Glue sticks
- Markers
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Felt (white, cut into a small oval)
- Mini marshmallows
- Brass fasteners

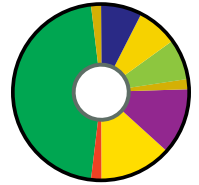
Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Lay out construction paper and markers. As kids arrive, invite them to use the supplies to draw just the body of a sheep. Then ask kids to add a self-portrait as the head of the sheep.

In our story today, there are sheep. But the sheep actually represent us!

Invite kids to gather near the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, season (Easter), color (yellow), and icon (butterfly). **Today, it is still Easter! Easter actually lasts for fifty days. The season of Easter reminds us that Jesus is always with us. He lives, even though he died!** Hold up felt oval. **We call Jesus "the good shepherd." Shepherds take care of sheep. Let's glue this white oval on our chart as a symbol for sheep.** Choose one kid to glue on the oval. **Our sheep is missing a few things!** Draw the sheep's legs and head with a permanent marker.

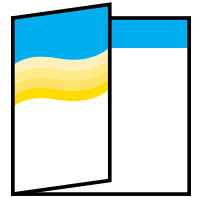


Ask kids to echo what you call out:

Alleluia! Repeat. **Jesus lives!** Repeat.
Alleluia! Repeat. **Jesus lives!** Repeat.
Al-le-lu-ia! Repeat.

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Hold up leaflet and point to the box. **Sometimes we send care packages to people who live far away. We can send them to our family and friends, or to people we don't know. Have you ever sent a care package? What did you put in it? Or what might you put in one?** Allow kids to respond. **Cookies, first aid supplies, raincoats—these are all good ideas. Fill in your box with your own ideas, and fill in the label with the name of someone you would send it to!** Have kids draw items or write words in the box, then fill out the label with a real or imaginary address. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The video kids have a lot of questions today. Let's see where they go to get some answers.

View Episode 10, "Shepherd Camp," on the Whirl Year B Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What word did Pastor Donna mention thirty times?**
- **What looks like a question mark to Victor?**
- **Where do the kids go to find answers to their questions?**
- **Why do you think the kids are so confused about what a shepherd does, and about what Jesus does?**
- **Why do you think Jesus compares himself to a shepherd and us to sheep?**



Pass out Whirl Story Bibles to kids.

Let's find our story today! Help kids find "Leading Like a Good Shepherd" on page 362. Start by pointing out the graphic that shows the butterfly in the yellow circle for the Easter season. Before you read, invite kids to look for a wolf and some water.



Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Jesus wants us to feel three ways: safe, strong, and _____?
- Who said, "I am the good shepherd"?
- Jesus asked his friends and disciples, "What does a good shepherd do?" Can you answer Jesus' question?
- Who are the leaders in your life? How do they lead you?
- How can you help Jesus lead people to the love of God?

Play together!

It's time for a game of Sheep Rescue Team! In this game, kids save sheep from rising floodwaters by working in pairs to transport mini-marshmallow sheep, using only their chins. One teammate in each pair puts the marshmallow on the other teammate's chin, then runs to the safety zone to cheer on his or her teammate. The teammate with the sheep walks carefully without using their hands, carrying the sheep to safety. If the sheep falls off, the cheering teammate must put the sheep back onto the walking teammate's chin. Have kids switch roles, and play again.

BIBLE BIT

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Open your Bible to Psalm 23 and read the rest of this famous poem about how God cares for God's sheep!

WATCH IT AGAIN

Pay attention to Monty's summer camp lesson. **What did he learn about shepherds? How is his description different from, or similar to, Jesus' description of shepherds?**

OUR CHURCH

Sheep are small when compared to shepherds! As a class, brainstorm different ways to care for the smaller kids at your church. Plan to put at least one idea into action.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. Hold up the leaflet and point to the illustration. **Where have we seen this picture before?** Allow kids to respond. Then point to the image of Ada. **Ada wants us to write about someone in this picture!**
2. **Pick one person in the picture and draw a circle around them. Then make up a story about the person you chose. Tell your readers about how you imagine Jesus was a good shepherd to this person. Be sure to give the person a name!**
3. When most of the kids have finished writing their stories, gather the class in a circle and invite kids to share their stories with one another.
4. **Jesus is a good shepherd and leader! How can we be good shepherds and leaders like Jesus?** Allow kids to respond. **Great ideas! We can care for other kids, help others have access to safe drinking water—there are many ways to be a good shepherd.**
5. **Shepherds take care of sheep. Jesus takes care of us. And we can take care of others!**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What were your favorite parts of our story today? Allow kids to respond. **Do you remember what a good shepherd does? A good shepherd cares for sheep and keeps them safe. How can we lead like good shepherds lead sheep?** Allow kids to respond. **We can be good shepherds like Jesus!**

Pass out the leaflet panels and markers.

There are different kinds of leaders who lead different kinds of groups. Match the leaders on the blue side of this page to the people (or animal) they lead on the red side. Who leads you? Add the name or picture of one of your leaders in one blank space and yourself in the other.

Send kids out:

Ask kids to echo what you call out.

Alleluia! Repeat. **Jesus lives!** Repeat.

Alleluia! Repeat. **Jesus lives!** Repeat.

Al-le-lu-ia! Repeat.

Pray together this repeat-after-me chant: **Jesus, you serve like a shepherd. Help me to serve like a shepherd! Amen.**

Thank kids for serving each other today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.