

Lesson 10 [Chapter 10] "The Good Shepherd"

Remember:

In John Chapter 9, Jesus heals a man born blind by making mud with spit, putting it on his eyes, and telling him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. Jesus explains the man was blind not because of sin, but so God's power could be shown. The man gains sight, believes in Jesus, and is questioned by skeptical religious leaders.

Lesson Goal:

Recognize the Shepherd's Voice and follow Him!

Lesson opener:

Good Shepherd Relay

The goal of this relay race is to be the first team to have each "shepherd" (child) get their team's balloon sheep to the "green pastures" at the other side of the room and back again. Divide children into equal teams.

Give each team a blown-up white balloon with a sheep face drawn on it in permanent marker, and a cane or stick of some sort. A cheap, plastic walking stick would be best, or a Christmas candy cane outdoor decoration. If you want to get really fancy, you can use large paper or newsprint to make a green pasture, full of flowers and still waters to place at the opposite side of the room from your students. This is not a necessary step, though.

Play one round, watching carefully to see how the shepherds treat their sheep. Are they in such a hurry that they hit the sheep hard, expecting the balloon to move faster, or are they gentle with their little balloon lamb? After everyone has had one turn, discuss the differences in how they treated the sheep. Have the kids comment on which method worked best. It is easier to get to and from the other side of the room, the green pastures, when they gently guide the sheep. When they whack or push the sheep too hard, it has a tendency to go off in the wrong direction. Remark that this is how Jesus guides us: with a gentle nudge.

Lesson Body:

This chapter is considered as the extension of the Lord's discourse with the Pharisees . The Pharisees had displayed at the end of the previous chapter [9] great hostility towards the Lord and opposed Him as they considered themselves the teachers and shepherds of God's church. Jesus confirmed that they were blind to the truth as they were not convinced by the miracle of the born blind, they did not want to follow God.

In this chapter, Jesus compares Himself to a Good Shepherd and the Jewish leaders to thieves or wolves who came to steal His sheep.

Jesus the True Shepherd 10:1-6

Jesus is using a metaphor here. He explains that robbers or thieves might try to steal sheep from a flock. The roles of shepherds were to take care of sheep and make sure wild animals or thieves did not snatch them away. Sheep tend to follow wherever their guard leads them, trusting the shepherd and letting him lead. Jesus says that sheep know the shepherd's voice, as we should know His voice.

Ask: Have your parents ever talked to you about staying close to them in a crowd? What should you do if a stranger tries to talk to you and your parents aren't close? A shepherd was a guardian for the lambs. They would listen carefully for his voice.

Jesus wanted people to know how much He cared for them, and to understand why He had come. He came to care for us and ultimately to die for us. Sometimes, the shepherd would lie down in front of the gate to protect the flock from danger or escape. Jesus said that He did the same thing. In fact, He said that He would lay down His very life. A great shepherd is willing to go up against enemies in order to keep the sheep safe. Jesus conquered death to give us life.



The word 'door' refers to the Holy Books. These are the doors that bring us to God. Through the holy Word we get to know the shepherd and recognize those who are not. Also, Jesus is the door and doorkeeper.

The sheep, who are unreasoning creatures, know their owner and adhere to him. Because they do not know the voice of strangers, they flee from them. Jesus called them by name [Personal relationship], He doesn't need to compel them to follow Him, He simply calls them and they obey. We must know how to differentiate His voice from the voices of thieves.

Studying Scripture through the teaching authority of the Church and its father and faithfully receiving the Sacraments are the best ways to become familiar with His voice.

Jesus the Good Shepherd 10:7-21

Jesus wanted to emphasize that He was the "real thing." If danger came, a servant or other guardian would be more likely to run away than stay and fight off a foe for the flock. The true shepherd would genuinely care for the lambs. Jesus is that true

shepherd. This is a comforting image for us, because we know that Jesus cares for us deeply and knows us.

Ask: Do you have any pets? You probably love and care for your pets, and they know that you do...Jesus loves us so much more than that! And He wants to care for us.

There is a lot to learn from this short passage. Before we go on, let's get a good idea on what sheep are like. When Jesus compares us to sheep, He is not paying us any compliments. Have any of you ever seen sheep at a petting zoo or farm? (Allow a few students to briefly share.)

1. Sheep aren't the cleanest of animals, aren't they? They are **smelly and dirty**. Every time they lay down, they get grass, burs and dirt caught up in their wool, even bugs too. They can't help it. If someone doesn't get rid of these bugs, sheep can go blind. So, without the shepherd's help, sheep will stay dirty.

Let's think about us now. Can we clean ourselves of our spiritual dirtiness? Is there anything we can do, all by ourselves, to wash away our sins? Of course not. We must go to Jesus, our good shepherd, to be cleansed of our sins.

2. Not only are sheep dirty, but they are also **pretty dumb** too. I know it seems silly, and "dumb" is not a word I ever want any of you to use when talking about yourself or anyone else. But with sheep, it really is true. Sheep don't think for themselves. They just follow other sheep who seem to be in charge. This means that sheep will even follow other sheep right over the edge of a cliff without another thought. Can you think of ways we follow others without thinking? (Allow responses.)

Sometimes we are so eager to fit in, to be cool or liked that we do or say things that other people do or say without even thinking about it. It is very important for us to think through our actions and words and even our beliefs. I don't want any of you to follow others just because what they say seems right! Whenever you make a decision about something to say, do, or believe, be sure to pray, read your Bible and ask for the church's guidance to decide whether what you are doing or saying or believing lines up with what the Bible says or not.

3. Another interesting fact about sheep is that they are **directionally challenged**. The poor things couldn't find their way out of a wet paper bag. If they wander off from the flock and shepherd, it's hard, if not impossible, for them to get back on their own. This is what our good shepherd, Jesus, does with us when we start to wander away from Him. He comes after us and carries us back to the fold, and then He celebrates that we are back in right relationship with Him.

Now imagine if the shepherd didn't come after the little lost sheep. The sheep would probably be okay, right? I mean, if a cat or dog get lost, they can fend for themselves pretty well for a while, can't they? a dog, if it feels it's being attack, will bare its teeth, growl and bite an attacker. So, a sheep, if it's going to be attacked by a wolf, will fluff

itself up to look big and mean, and then it will start growling, show off its sharp, pointy teeth, and charge the attacker, right?

No way! Sheep don't have sharp, pointy teeth or claws. They can't even run away; they aren't fast enough on those scrawny little legs. If a shepherd doesn't come after a lost sheep, that sheep is destined to become wolf chow.

How are we like sheep in this way? When we wander from the flock, when we stop going to church and spending time with other Christians, we have a harder time living like Jesus wants us to. We can't protect ourselves from the dangers and temptations of the world. If we want to be like Jesus, which is what life is all about, then we need to spend time with Jesus and others who are learning to live like Him.

4. The last fact I want to share about sheep is pretty funny, and also a good picture of us. If a sheep falls down and **ends up on its back**, it can't get up again on its own. It will just lay there, flailing its little legs, until either someone helps them up, or they die. When we get into a place in life where we feel like we are flat on our backs, either through our own sins or through tough times, we can't save ourselves. We are totally dependent on Jesus Christ to save us, to lead us, and to keep us clean.

Now we see how much we are like sheep, let's look at shepherds and hired hands. The crowd Jesus was speaking to would have understood all about bad shepherds and what they meant spiritually. If Jesus is the good shepherd, who do you think that bad shepherds were? At that time, they were the Pharisees.

Bad shepherds are the people who don't really care for the sheep, but for what they can get from the sheep. They want the sheep's wool and their meat and their milk, but they don't want to put in the work required to help the sheep grow.

Can anyone tell me what Jesus says the good shepherd does? Look back at your Bibles, at John 10:11-16, to remind you. (Allow the students to respond after looking up the reference for themselves.)

Twice in this passage, Jesus says that the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He says it twice because it is so, so important for us to remember. In fact, this may be the most important thing we ever learn.

Jesus, our good shepherd, sacrifices His life for ours. Based on everything we have learned about sheep, and how much we are like sheep, why do you think we need Jesus to lay down His life for us? (Allow responses.)

Sheep are dirty, dumb, directionless and defenseless. We too, are full of sin, we make wrong choices instead of trusting and following Jesus, we easily get lost, and there is nothing we can do to protect or save ourselves. Without our good shepherd, we will die.

The wolves, or temptations and sin, come in and threaten to kill us, but then Jesus our good shepherd steps in and dies in our place. Jesus knows that if He doesn't protect us, we will die because of our sins.

He came to lead us, teach us, keep us safe and give us everything we need to live a good and healthy life. Jesus is alive today, and He lives in us when we choose to listen to and follow Him. We need to listen to Jesus voice by reading the Bible, coming to church, and praying. We are His well-loved and well cared for sheep when we follow Him.

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep 10: 22-30

If You are the Christ, tell us plainly. why do you deceive the simple- hearted in order to win them as your disciples?

They knew that the Messiah would be a king. But they believed, according to their minds, that He would be an earthly king. Therefore, they asked Him to give them a clear answer to that effect. This would enable them to report Him as someone who is a rebel and traitor to the Roman authorities.

The Lord indicated that He had informed them previously by words as well as by deeds. He had proclaimed previously that He is the Son of God and the Son of Man who possesses the power of life within Himself; and that He has the Authority to judge.

The Lord puts the blame on them because they deprived themselves from belonging to His flock due to their lack of faith. He offers here the gift of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Closing:

Today we are going to close in prayer in a slightly different way. I am going to read Psalm 23, which is a song that praises God for being our good shepherd and tells of the great things He does for us. Bow your heads and praise God as you listen.

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.

²He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

³He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

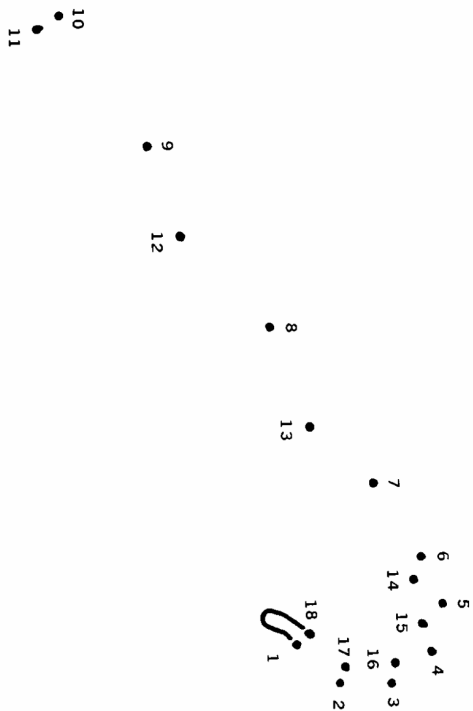
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Memory Verse: 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

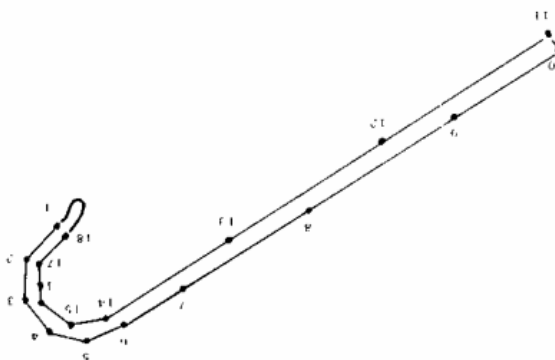
Activities:

	Word Search Puzzle Shepherd - Father - Jesus - Sheep - Door - Gatekeeper Wolf - Voice - Name - Flock - Robber - Thief <table border="1"><tr><td>H</td><td>F</td><td>A</td><td>I</td><td>Q</td><td>Z</td><td>W</td><td>F</td><td>D</td><td>P</td><td>F</td></tr><tr><td>V</td><td>U</td><td>Q</td><td>S</td><td>W</td><td>M</td><td>I</td><td>J</td><td>S</td><td>O</td><td>T</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>F</td><td>S</td><td>H</td><td>E</td><td>P</td><td>H</td><td>E</td><td>R</td><td>D</td><td>S</td></tr><tr><td>R</td><td>L</td><td>W</td><td>O</td><td>L</td><td>F</td><td>R</td><td>S</td><td>R</td><td>O</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>J</td><td>O</td><td>N</td><td>O</td><td>X</td><td>A</td><td>H</td><td>U</td><td>R</td><td>O</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>C</td><td>B</td><td>A</td><td>C</td><td>T</td><td>M</td><td>S</td><td>A</td><td>R</td><td>Q</td></tr><tr><td>T</td><td>K</td><td>F</td><td>B</td><td>M</td><td>H</td><td>J</td><td>F</td><td>S</td><td>B</td><td>M</td></tr><tr><td>V</td><td>O</td><td>I</td><td>C</td><td>E</td><td>E</td><td>V</td><td>A</td><td>H</td><td>S</td><td>W</td></tr><tr><td>T</td><td>H</td><td>I</td><td>E</td><td>F</td><td>R</td><td>E</td><td>B</td><td>E</td><td>H</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>A</td><td>S</td><td>H</td><td>C</td><td>M</td><td>J</td><td>R</td><td>E</td><td>C</td><td>P</td></tr><tr><td>I</td><td>G</td><td>A</td><td>T</td><td>E</td><td>K</td><td>E</td><td>E</td><td>P</td><td>E</td><td>R</td></tr></table>	H	F	A	I	Q	Z	W	F	D	P	F	V	U	Q	S	W	M	I	J	S	O	T	F	F	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	R	L	W	O	L	F	R	S	R	O	N	J	O	N	O	X	A	H	U	R	O	N	S	C	B	A	C	T	M	S	A	R	Q	T	K	F	B	M	H	J	F	S	B	M	V	O	I	C	E	E	V	A	H	S	W	T	H	I	E	F	R	E	B	E	H	X	D	A	S	H	C	M	J	R	E	C	P	I	G	A	T	E	K	E	E	P	E	R
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Finish The Picture. What do shepherds use sometimes to keep their sheep from running off and getting lost? To find out, finish the picture below by connecting all the numbers, starting with number 1.



Picture Differences. A good shepherd takes good care of his sheep. Below are two pictures of a good shepherd, but there are 6 differences in the pictures. As soon as you find something different, circle it. See if you can find all 6.



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