

Jesus: The Good Shepherd*

LESSON OVERVIEW

Key Point: ⇨ **You can trust Jesus who is the Good Shepherd**

Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Story: John 10:7-15

Challenge Verse: John 10:11—"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

ITEMS NEEDED

Each class needs the following:

Attendance Chart

Bible Book Chart

Play-Do

Memory Verse Sign

BEFORE CLASS

- Prepare the Attendance Chart with the name of each student from your roll.
- Post the Bible Book Chart in an easily readable area.
- Set up for the Opening Activity with Play-Do containers.
- Pray for each student by name.

NOTE: If possible, see if someone can bring a sheep to come and visit your class.

Then let every child who want to pet it, have an opportunity. Also, be sure to wash their hands after it leaves.

AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

- Greet each student by name as they enter.
- Give each student an attendance sticker for the attendance chart, and feel free to add guest names to the chart. This will give them a sense of belonging.
- Get to know any guests and help them fill out a guest form.
- Be sure to smile—Your smile and attitude sets the atmosphere as students enter.

OPENING ACTIVITY

*As your students arrive, tell them to make the ball of clay into a face that looks like it's scared.
(Be sure to be very complimentary about every child's work.)*

As the children are working:

- Give their nametags if they don't have them already.
- Fill out a guest card for any student not on your roll.
- Let each student put a sticker on the attendance chart.
- Begin discussing the following:

Tell them about a fear you had as a child, but keep it brief—one minute or less.
(For example, were you scared of the dark, of being left alone, of the first day at school or a new Sunday School class, of a scary movie, or that something bad would happen, etc.)

Ask the students: **What are you afraid of?** (As the children are working, give several an opportunities to share their fears.)

SAY: Today we are going to learn that when you are afraid
⇒ **You can trust Jesus who is the Good Shepherd**

Control Tool

SAY: From now on anytime I say "You can trust Jesus..." I want you to say,
"Who is the Good Shepherd."

Practice a few times. Challenge them to say it louder.

SAY: ⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Tell your students to leave the Play-Do at the tables and come to the circle.

SAY: We want to get to know you better so I'm going to pass the beanbag to someone in the group. When you get it say your name and your favorite food. Then you get to toss it to someone who hasn't gone yet.

*After everyone has gone, have children answer a second question:
What is your favorite TV show or movie?*

For Younger Children
Only ask the children to answer one question each time you go around the circle:
Question 1—What's your name?
Question 2—What's your favorite food?
Question 3—What's your favorite TV show/movie?

CLASS RULES

SAY: We are so glad you are a part of our class. We're going to have a great year, but we have three rules that everyone needs to follow. These are our *Class Rules*:

Everybody say "R"

Respect God—Obey God in all that you do.

Everybody say "R"

Respect Your Teachers—Do what your teachers ask you to.

Everybody say "R"

Respect Each Other—Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Teaching Tips
Rules give students a sense of security since they know what is expected of them.

BIBLE SKILLS

Ask the students: **Can anyone tell me where the Gospel of John is found in the Bible? Is it in the Old Testament or the New Testament?** (*Refer children to the Bible Book Chart.*) (Answer: New Testament)

Ask the students: **Can anyone tell me what the word "Gospel" means?** (Answer: Good News)

SAY: Anytime I say "Gospel" I want you to shout, "*Good News!*"
Practice once.

SAY: The Gospel (*Good News!*) of John is the "Good News" of John about Jesus. In fact, there are four—everybody hold up four fingers and say "Four"—Four Gospels (*Good News!*) in the Bible.

Repeat after me: The Gospel (*Good News!*) of Matthew... The Gospel (*Good News!*) of Mark... The Gospel (*Good News!*) of Luke...and The Gospel (*Good News!*) of John.

SAY: Each of these four books is about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So, even though Jesus only died once (Everybody hold up one finger), the Bible tells the story in four (Everybody hold up four fingers) places—in each of the Gospels (*Good News!*).

SAY: Our Bible story today is about Jesus.

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: As I read what Jesus says from the Bible, listen for two key words. When you hear the word *Sheep* I want you to make a sound like a sheep. On the count of three, everybody make a sheep noise. 1-2-3. Baaaaaaa. But every time you hear the word *Shepherd* I want you to get up from your chair, run and touch a wall, and then without sliding, falling, tripping, bumping into anybody, or picking anyone's nose, come and sit down as fast as you can. Let's practice: *Shepherd...Sheep.*

Read from your Bible John 10:7-15

SAY: ⇒ You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)

SAY: I am going to test your sheep knowledge. I'm going to ask you some questions about sheep and see if agree or disagree. Between each question I will say "Freeze" then "Sit down."

(You may need to read the questions more than once.)

- *If sheep are cold enough, they will try to pile on top of each other trying to stay warm and those on the bottom of the pile many times die.* —If you agree, stand up. If you disagree, stay sitting down.

Freeze—Sit down. Correct Answer: **Agree**

- *If one sheep walks off a cliff, other sheep will follow*—If you agree, hop on one leg. If you disagree, hop on both legs.

Freeze—Sit down. Correct Answer: **Agree**

- *Most animals can smell water including sheep*— If you agree, go to the wall on my right. If you disagree, go to the wall on my left.

Freeze—Sit down. Correct Answer: **Disagree** (*Most animals can smell water, but not sheep. That's why they need a shepherd to lead them to it.*)

- *If sheep go too far into water, they'll drown*—If you agree, turn in a circle. If you disagree, flap your arms like a bird.

Freeze—Sit down. Correct Answer: **Agree** (*Their wool fills with water and they sink.*)

- *If a sheep senses danger like a wolf or mountain lion, it will run*—If you agree, sit down. If you disagree, raise your hands in the air.

Freeze—Sit down. Correct Answer: **Disagree** (*A sheep will freeze. They don't have any defenses, so they basically just wait to be eaten.*)

Ask the students: **So what do you think about sheep?** (They're not very smart.)

ILLUSTRATION #1—SHEEP ON HIS BACK

Choose one volunteer—Have the student lie on his back with both arms and legs in the air. (Don't choose a girl in a dress for this.)

SAY: Did you know that if a sheep rolls too far over on its back, it won't be able to get up? It's true. Sheep need a shepherd—someone to take care of them.

We need someone to take care of use too and

⇒ You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)

ILLUSTRATION #2—LISTEN TO MY VOICE

Choose one volunteer—Have the student close his eyes. Then spin him around several times and ask him, while keeping his eyes closed, to find his way back to his seat. He shouldn't be able to do it. Then spin him around some more and go to his seat. From his seat call out to him and tell him to follow your voice.

(*If you have time, feel free to do this with more than one student.*)

SAY: The Shepherd guides the sheep. Jesus is our guide and when you listen to Him, you'll find what you're looking for in life. Everything you've ever wanted in life is only found in Jesus.

⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

ILLUSTRATION #3—A NEW NAME

Choose four volunteers—But have them stay in their seats.

SAY: The Shepherd names his sheep, so I'm going to give you a new name. You'll be Fluffy, Buffy, Muffy, and George. What do you think of your new names?

SAY: But the Shepherd knew each of his sheep by name—even if he had a hundred or more. They were important to him, and you are important to God. He knows more about you than you know about yourself. He knows every hair on your head, and He loves you and has great plans for your life. But the only way you'll be a part of those plans is if you give your life to Him and follow Him, just like the sheep follow the voice of their Shepherd.

⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

He's the best part of life.

LESSON ACTIVITY

Tell your students that they are going to get to help you build a sheep pen. Explain that sheep pens in Jesus' day were like a large circle with only one opening that was the size of a person lying down. Instruct them to use the chairs in the classroom to make their sheep pen.

Once they are finished, use today's control tool to focus their attention on you.

⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

Try it again, but louder this time:

⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

Stand by the opening to the sheep pen.

Choose 1 volunteer—To be the shepherd. Have everyone else line up at the gate of the sheep pen and have the Shepherd stand by the front person in line.

SAY: At the end of the day, the Shepherd would lead the sheep to the sheep pen. It was shaped like this but much taller and with thorns on top around the edges, so that there was only one way in—the gate.

Life Lesson: In the same way, there's only one way into heaven—By giving your life to Jesus.

Instruct the kids to enter the pen through the gate, one at a time.

As they are entering SAY: As they entered the Shepherd would check them for cuts and wounds and if they had any, he would pour oil on it. Then he would feed them special berries that he

would gather throughout the day. Finally, he would lay down across the doorway. (Have your volunteer lay down in the entry.) Nothing could touch the sheep unless it came through him.
Life Lesson: If you have given your life to Jesus and are walking with Him, nothing can touch you unless He allows it.

Have the Shepherd join the others by sitting inside the sheep pen.

SAY: Jesus said that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

CHALLENGE VERSE

Choose 1 volunteer—To hold the memory verse sign and read the verse together:

Read John 10:11 from your Bible

SAY: That's exactly what Jesus did. He died to make a way for you to know Him, to have real life, and to go to heaven.

SAY: So if you have given your life to Christ, then you are one of Jesus' sheep.

⇒ **You can trust Jesus...(Students: who is the Good Shepherd!)**

Trust Him every day and live for Him.

SAY: If you have never given your life to Jesus, then you're like a sheep without a shepherd. The Bible says that you are lost, and the best thing you can do is to trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior and give your life to Him.

BIG QUESTION: So how do you know if it's the right time to give your life to Christ?

(1) *Have your students hold out one hand, palm up.*

SAY: On the one hand, you know you've done wrong things.

Raise your hand if you've ever done something wrong. We've all done wrong things. God is perfect, but we're not.

(2) *Have your students hold out the other hand, palm up.*

SAY: On the other hand, you know you need a Savior.

Only someone as perfect as God would deserve to go to heaven and since none of us are perfect, none of us deserves to go to heaven. That's why we need a Savior—someone who can take the wrong things we've done away, and only Jesus can do that. That's why Jesus is the only way to go to heaven.

(3) *Have your students make two fists and point their thumbs toward their chest.*

SAY: Then it's like there's something inside that's saying, "You need to give your life to Jesus." (This would be a great time for you to share your personal salvation testimony.)

Go through these motions a second time, more quickly. "On one hand...on the other hand...then something inside..." That's when you can know that you're ready to give your life to Jesus.

PRAYER TIME & WRAP-UP

Use any extra time to help your students memorize the verse for today.

SAY: On the count of three I want everyone to sit in a chair, facing me. (Be very specific about how to do this and what direction to face.)

SAY: This Wednesday night, when Breakout begins, you'll get your *CROSSwalk* Challenges of what to memorize and what patches you can earn, but here is some early information. This semester one of your *CROSSwalk* Challenges is to memorize Psalm 23.

Ask the students: **Who knows how to find Psalms in the Bible?** (Answer: Hold your Bible sideways and open it to the middle. Usually, this is the book of Psalms.)

Have the students try to find the book of Psalms.
Then have them close their Bibles and do it again. This time tell them to find Psalm 23.

Ask the students: **Does anyone know who wrote Psalm 23?** (Answer: David)

Ask the students: **Who can find David on the Bible Time Line?** (Have a student point him out.)

Read Psalm 23 to your students.

Ask them to raise their hand when they hear a way that the Shepherd takes care of the sheep and a way the Lord takes care of us.

SAY: Jesus loves you and cares about everything in your life.
What are some things we can be praying for this week?
Is there anything that you are afraid of that you want to talk to Jesus about?

List Prayer Requests Here

Thank Jesus for being the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep.

Pray that your kids will trust God this week—that when they're afraid, they will trust Him; that when they're being pressured to do wrong, they will follow Him; and that they will walk with Him every day.

EXTRA TIME

Use any extra time to help your students memorize the verse for today.

- *Who can remember some of the things a shepherd does for the sheep?* (Answers: He is the gate for the sheep. He lays down his life for the sheep. He knows the sheep by name. He guides them to food and water. He takes care of their wounds—Jesus does all this for us too.)
- *How is Jesus like the shepherd who lays down in the doorway?* (Answers: He is the only way into heaven. He laid down His life for us. Nothing could touch the sheep unless it came through the shepherd.)

We read earlier in the Bible where Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

- *In Jesus’ day who would try to steal sheep?* (Answers: Thieves, bears, wolves, mountain lions.)
- *Who is the thief Jesus is talking about?* (Answer: The devil)
- *What did Jesus say He offered?* (Answer: Life)

NOTES for those teaching younger children:

- As you teach help your students to understand that Jesus being the Good Shepherd isn’t saying that He takes care of sheep. It’s an example: We are kind of like sheep because we need someone to take care of us and Jesus is the only One who can really do that.

*Lesson adapted from Kids Kount Publishing, Kingdom Quest, “I AM” series, “The Good Shepherd” Lesson 4.



I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:11