

**SERIES: JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE**  
**LESSON 1—THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

**Bible Reference:** John 10:7-15

**Key Verse:** John 10:11—[Jesus said,] "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

**OVERVIEW**

- Introduction Video
- Prayer Part
- Opening Activity
- Bible Story
- Key Verse
- Small Group Activities

**ITEMS NEEDED:**

3 Psalm 23 Posters

Sheep Craft items:

- 1 Sheep Sheet for each student
- Cotton Balls, Items to color with
- Googly Eyes

## **PRAYER PART—"The Lord is my Shepherd..."**

*Greet your students.*

SAY: Today we're going to begin with a Bible drill. If you don't have your Bible with you today, that's okay but be sure to bring them with you to church each week. For those of you who do have a Bible, when I say "Go," I want you to find the book of Psalms as fast as you can. Get your Bible ready...Get set...Go!

ASK: **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. If not, you'll be close.)

*Have your 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. For younger children, you might take a moment to explain how to recognize the chapter number and the verse numbers.*

ASK: **Does anyone know who wrote Psalm 23?** (Answer: King David)

*Choose three volunteers to hold the Psalm 23 signs.*

*Ask your students to read Psalm 23 with you.*

*While you read ask them to raise their hand when they hear a way that the shepherd takes care of the sheep that reminds them of a way the Lord takes care of us.*

ASK: **What are some ways that a shepherd takes care of his sheep that reminds you of how God takes care of us ?** (He provides for us; He guides us; He leads us; He protects us, etc.)

ASK: **What do you think David meant when He wrote, "The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall lack nothing."?**

SAY: The shepherd provided for his sheep everything they needed everyday to stay alive—Food, water, a place to rest and a place to be safe. As we pray today, you can know that the Lord is a Good Shepherd who always takes care of His sheep.

OPTION: If you want, during this series, take a few minutes to ask for prayer requests. You might even want to keep a list in your room to refer back to each week to help your students see how God answers prayer.

## **PRAY**

SAY: Everybody bow your heads and close your eyes. Now with your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm going to call out some of today's prayer requests and as I do, I want you to pray silently for them. *(Pause...Call out some of the prayer requests and then pray.)*

**OPENING ACTIVITY** (Optional):

SAY: Raise your hand if you're good at unscrambling words. Today we have three words that we want you to unscramble:

Tell your students to raise their hands when they think they know the answer.

**CHALLENGE #1**

Write the following letters on your marker board: OODG (Answer: Good)

**CHALLENGE #2**

Write the following letters on your marker board: SEJUS (Answer: Jesus)

**CHALLENGE #3**

Write the following letters on your marker board: HTTUR (Answer: Truth)

**CHALLENGE #4**

Write the following letters on your marker board: DHESRHEP (Answer: Shepherd)

SAY: Every time you come to church we want you to learn the TRUTH. And today we're going to learn how JESUS is the GOOD SHEPHERD.

**CONTROL TOOL**

Anytime you say, *You can trust Jesus* / Your students reply: *Who is the Good Shepherd!*  
Leader: *You can trust Jesus* / Students: *Who is the Good Shepherd!*

## BIBLE LESSON

(Based on John 10:7-15)

SAY: As I read what Jesus says from the Bible, listen for two key words.

YOUNGER STUDENTS: 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 stand up, clap your hands three times and sit back down as fast as you can.

OLDER STUDENTS: When you hear the word '*Sheep*' I want you to shout out, "Sheep!" On the count of three, let's practice. 1-2-3. "Sheep!" But every time you hear the word '*Shepherd*' I want you to shout out, "Shepherd!" Let's practice. 1-2-3. "Shepherd!"

Let's practice: *Shepherd...Sheep.*

### Read from your Bible John 10:7-15

#### CONTROL TOOL

Leader: *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.  
(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: **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...

#### CONTROL TOOL

Leader: *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.

#### CONTROL TOOL

Leader: *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.

#### Control Tool

Leader: *You can trust Jesus* / Students: *Who is the Good Shepherd!*

## 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 and tables in the classroom to make their sheep pen.

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

Leader: *You can trust Jesus* / Students: *Who is the Good Shepherd!*

Try it again, but louder this time:

Leader: *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.) The shepherd was the door of the sheepfold and 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 it first comes through Him.

*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. This is what Jesus did for you and me so that we could be forgiven and have true life in Him.

*Time your students to see how quickly they can move all the chairs and tables back in place.*

## KEY VERSE

**ASK: 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 a Bible Book Chart, if you have one in your room.) (Answer: New Testament)

**ASK: Can anyone tell me what the word “Gospel” means?** (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 lesson and key verse today both come from the Gospel of John.

REPEAT after me: John 10:11 / [Jesus said,] / “I am the good shepherd. / The good shepherd / lays down his life / for the sheep.”

**ASK: How is Jesus a Good Shepherd?**

**ASK: How did Jesus lay down His life for the sheep?**

**ASK: Why did Jesus do this?**

SAY: Jesus died to make a way for you to know Him, to have real life, and to go to heaven. So if you have given your life to Christ, then you are one of Jesus’ sheep. 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. When this time comes, I want you to know that you can talk to any one of your leaders. We'd love to share with you more about how you can receive God's gift of salvation.

#### CONTROL TOOL

Leader: *You can trust Jesus* / Students: *Who is the Good Shepherd!*

SAY: This week we wanted you to see how Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Next week we'll begin to learn how Jesus is the perfect example for how we should live every day.

#### **Dismiss to Small Groups**

SAY: Right now it is time for our small groups, so I'm going to dismiss you one row at a time.

*Dismiss rows of chairs to the tables in the rooms. Give them specific directions where to go.*



## **SMALL GROUP**

### **OPTION #1—Craft**

Give each student a “Sheep Sheet” which is a piece of paper with a sheep outline on it. The students will create their own sheep by gluing cotton balls to the sheep on its body, coloring the feet and face and gluing on the eyes. If you have time, you can also have them write on the bottom ways that Jesus takes care of them. A variety of free downloadable sheep images, both realistic and cartoon, can be found by searching online for “Sheep Images” or “Sheep Coloring Pages.”

### **OPTION #2—Game: Sheep Call**

*Each student will need a partner. Have the kids give their partners a nickname. Be sure that these are kind nicknames and the partner has to agree to it as well. Some examples might be Batman and Robin, Ice Cream and Milkshake, Burger and Fries, Bob and Larry, Tom and Jerry, Fruity and Pebbles, etc.*

*Once the partners have nicknames, send one partner to one wall and the other partner to the opposite wall. Be sure to move away any chairs or obstacles between the two sides.*

SAY: Everybody point to your partner. They should be on the wall across the room from you.

SAY: On the count of three I want you to close your eyes. This is a test of honesty. Nobody will be watching to see if you cheat but God sees everything. Winning a game is never worth doing something wrong. So, on the count of three everyone close your eyes. 1-2-3...Close your eyes.

SAY: Now with no one looking around and no one opening your eyes, when I say “Go” you have to find your partner by calling his or her nickname. Your partner will be calling your nickname. Listen for their voice and try to find them. But there is NO RUNNING, NO PUSHING, and don’t go too quick—I want to make sure that nobody trips or falls. Be careful. Just listen for your partner. It’s not a race; the winners are those who find their partners. Then when you think you’ve found your partner, open your eyes and if you’re right, raise your hands. (You might also want to move around some of the students so that they are not directly across from their partners. If you teach older students, you can also spin a few around a few times to throw off their sense of direction.)

Ready...Keep you eyes closed...Be honest...and “Go!”

### **DISCUSSION**

**ASK: Was it hard to find your partner? What if we had played and you couldn’t say anything—would that have been harder?**

**ASK: How does it make you feel that God knows your name?**

**ASK: What would have happened if you would’ve walked away from your partner instead of towards him? Could you have won? Would you have found what you were looking for?**

SAY: Some people, even some of His sheep, walk away from Him but they’ll never find what they’re looking for in life until they come back to Him because you were created to have a relationship with God. He loves you but you have to make the choice to walk with Him.

If you have extra time, you can play this game again with new partners. Or if you want, you can try to play it silently. The best way to do this is to give the boys and girls separate turns.

### **OPTION #3—Small Group Discussion**

*(NOTE: Each week in this series, we will be giving discussion questions from Psalm 23. Use these as a springboard for deeper discussions and pull in questions from each individual lesson as well.)*

During this series, in small groups, we'll be walking back through Psalm 23, line by line. Let your students specifically point out how the Lord does for us what the shepherd did for the sheep. Ask them specific questions about their lives. Avoid yes or no questions. Dig deep. Ask them for stories and examples from their lives, the lives of others and the lives of those in the Bible. Even though we'll look at some of these parts during the prayer time each week, this is an opportunity to pull from your students their fears, struggles, dreams, and an evaluation of where they are in their relationship with the Lord. Below are some ideas to help with this: (Most of these questions are aimed more toward older students.)

### **PSALM 23—Part 1**

**The Lord is my shepherd:** —How does this make you feel? What does this mean for your life? Is the Lord everyone's shepherd? Who are His sheep? How do you become His sheep? Are you His sheep—Do you belong to Him? Why or why not? How do you know?

**I shall lack nothing.** —Does this mean you'll always get everything you want? If you could ask God for anything right now, what would it be? Do you feel like your life is lacking anything? Why? If you could change anything about your life right now, what would it be?

**He makes me lie down in green pastures.** —If sheep didn't get rest, they would become weak and die. It was important, especially during the heat of the day, that they had shade and water. What can you learn from this about what God desires for you? What makes you feel stressed? Or worried? The next time you feel "stressed out", what might help? In what ways does God give you a place to rest? What are some cares you might need to cast on God?

**Prayer**—Take prayer requests and pray with your students.