

John 10:1-10 – Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Bible Story

Read the script below which includes the Gospel reading for May 3, 2020 as well as discussion and questions to help them learn about how Jesus is their Good Shepherd.

Do you have any toy sheep? Have you ever seen a real sheep? What are sheep like? The person who takes care of sheep is called a shepherd. Shepherding was an important job in Bible times, and many real people in the Old Testament of the Bible were shepherds. King David was a shepherd and wrote a beautiful psalm in which he compared himself to a sheep (Psalm 23). He realized that God watches over us like a shepherd watches over his sheep. So how does a shepherd watch over his sheep? Well, sheep are not very strong animals. They also aren't very quick, and they tend to wander away from the flock on their own. On top of this, they don't have sharp teeth or claws or anything else that might help protect them from predators like wolves and robbers. Because of all of this, sheep aren't very good at keeping themselves safe. They need someone else to look after them. That's what a shepherd does.

We are also like sheep. We can't always see and protect ourselves from the different predators that sneak up on us. And I don't really mean real wolves and thieves. The wolves and thieves in our lives are the things that try to take us away from God—things like the devil, the sinful people around us, and our own sinful nature that makes us want to break God's law. These are dangerous robbers and wolves that love to attack helpless sheep like us!

Thanks be to God, He has provided a shepherd to protect us! In John chapter 10, Jesus tells us that He is our Good Shepherd. He cares for us and keeps us safe from the things that try to sneak up and grab us. Read the Bible story for this week to hear Jesus talk about the difference between a good shepherd and a thief.

John 10:1-1-5, 10 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ...¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Jesus says in this story that the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd, because they know the shepherd and trust him! The shepherd leads his sheep in the right way. He also talks about those predators and thieves that sneak into the sheep pen and try to steal and destroy the sheep. The sheep run away from them because they don't know them and they know that they won't be safe if they follow them.

Jesus doesn't want us to listen to and follow the thieves in our lives that try to take us away from God. He wants us to listen to His voice so that we can have abundant life in Him. Jesus' voice tells us that we are God's children, that He loves us very much, and that He died on the cross so that we might be forgiven and live forever with Him. Because we are saved from our sins and the power of death, there is nothing else in this world that can hurt us! We are protected by our Shepherd Jesus. And Jesus gives us another shepherd, too.

Pastor Willsea is our shepherd! Pastor's voice is just like the voice of our Good Shepherd Jesus. He also tells us the truth about Jesus, so we can trust Him to lead us the right way, just like a good shepherd should.

Questions for Discussion

- Why does the Bible often use sheep as an analogy?
- How are we like sheep?
- How can we know that we are following the voice of the "Good Shepherd?"

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for being our Good Shepherd and for loving and caring for us so much. Help us to follow Your voice. Guide us today and always. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Activities

Snacks

Marshmallow Sheep – Build sheep out of marshmallows and pretzels or toothpicks

Pasture Snacks – Serve popcorn and marshmallows on a green napkin or piece of paper; pretend that the pieces are sheep in a green pasture

Crafts

Sheep puppets – Decorate paper bags with sheep "ears" and eyes, and glue on cotton balls

Lamb craft – Tape a craft stick to the back of a small paper plate. Have children draw lamb eyes, nose, and mouth on the plate. Give them slightly pulled-apart cotton balls to glue around the face and to the back of the plate. Say, *Jesus is our Good Shepherd. We are His sheep! Jesus loves us. What are some ways He takes care of us?*

Sheepfold – Create a sheep pen on a piece of paper using popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, sticks, or cotton swabs. Arrange them to look like an enclosure for your sheep and tape or glue them down. Place cotton ball "sheep" onto the paper within the fence. Glue the sheep down. Decorate the sheep with legs, heads, and tails, if desired. Add a verse and/or caption.

Game

Shepherd the Sheep – Set out cotton balls, egg cartons, and spoons. Have children pretend to bring the sheep (cotton balls) into their pens (egg cups) for the night. Have them count the sheep in each pen. Ask, *How does our Good Shepherd, Jesus, care for us?*