

Jesus Is Our Good Shepherd

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- sheep pattern
- cardboard
- white cotton balls
- scissors
- glue and tape
- white chenille wires



Scriptures

Lk 15:3-7; Jn 10:14

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus is our Shepherd; He always guides His sheep and takes care of their daily needs

Behavioral Objective(s)

To recognize and list the blessings God has given us; to thank God for all our blessings

Memory Verse

"The Lord is my shepherd." (Ps 23:1)



Bible Knowledge

Sheep and Shepherds

From the beginning, the Israelites have kept sheep. In fact, the very first shepherd was Abel (Gen 4:2). In ancient times, sheep were very important commodities, and they represented wealth. From sheep, people obtained meat and milk for food, wool and skins for clothing, and horns for flasks and trumpets. Sheep were also used in sacrifices to God. They were offered as burnt offerings (Lev 1:10), sin offerings (Lev 4:32), guilt offerings (Lev 5:15), and peace offerings (Lev 22:21).

In this parable of the lost sheep, there were one hundred sheep. This was considered a medium-sized flock. Larger flocks could consist of over three hundred animals. In any case, a shepherd's job was not easy. A shepherd had to lead the sheep to water and pasture during the day. At night, he had to count and guard the flock, sometimes in the open fields. A shepherd could not have true rest since he was always on the lookout for wild animals.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd who knew His sheep and would lay down His life for them (Jn 10:7-18). Jesus also commanded Peter to feed His sheep (Jn 21).

Jesus made it clear in the parable of the lost sheep that He is a friend of the lost. That is why He often associated with the outcasts and despised groups of society. Jesus especially wanted to tell this parable to demonstrate the lengths to which He, a good shepherd, is ready to go to recover the straying sinner.



Understanding Your Students

Four- and five-year-olds are still too young to comprehend the deeper spiritual significance of the parable-- God's concern for those who are lost in sin. But your kindergartners can begin to understand how God's love is like that of a shepherd's and we are like His sheep.

Take time to talk about what shepherds do and how hard their jobs are. It is almost a 24-hour job because the sheep need protection from wild animals that could attack at any time. This is because the sheep are not very smart nor can they protect themselves. The sheep also need to graze and drink so the shepherd has to constantly make sure they have enough food and water. Also talk about how safe the sheep would feel, knowing that the shepherd is hard at work, taking care of

them. After the students have a pretty good understanding of the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep, relay that God is like a shepherd. He does not sleep and is always there watching over us, His sheep. Just like the real animals, He does not stop caring for us and taking care of our needs. To help the students grasp the concept, discuss concrete examples of how He provides for our needs (e.g. we have food to eat, just as the sheep had grass and water; we have a house to live in, just as the sheep have a sheep pen). And just like the one lost sheep, if we need help, God will come to look for us.

Although this is an abstract relationship for young students to really comprehend, over time, with clear explanations, they will come to know Jesus as their Good Shepherd.



Vocabulary

Shepherd

someone who looks after sheep

Secure

to be safe

Celebrate

to have a party, where people have fun and a good time



Before You Teach

Have we ever really thought deeply about how much our heavenly Father loves us? Sometimes, it is hard to truly appreciate all that God has done for us because our relationship with Him isn't something we can always "see." That is why in the New Testament, Jesus Christ often uses parables and stories to illustrate God's love for His children.

One such example is the story of the shepherd and his lost sheep. The shepherd was the keeper of one hundred sheep. He worked hard daily to take care of all their needs. And when he lost one of them one day, he became frantic and did not stop looking for that sheep. When we read the story, it seems matter-of-fact that the shepherd should do his best to find that sheep. But let's take a moment and really think about that situation. If we had one

hundred of something and lost one of them, we might be a bit sad. We might even try very hard to look for it at first, but we would likely comfort ourselves with the fact that we still had ninety-nine left. And after a while, we would probably stop searching and move on. But in this story, Jesus clearly tells us that for the sake of even one lost soul, God will not give up, even if it means taking our whole lifetime.

Before we became believers, we may not have even realized how much God has loved us. We take our blessings for granted, and our good fortune as a part of life. Yet during that entire time, God has been looking for us, hoping that we can return to Him. And when we confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, it is a very sweet time because then we come to know all that God has done for us.

Let us always remember God's love and grace so that we may be renewed daily with His strength and guidance.



Bible Story

What Shepherds Do

Play a short game before class. Before the children arrive hide a stuffed/plush sheep somewhere in the room. The teacher can play the role of the shepherd, looking for the lost sheep and calling for the sheep to come. The shepherd can then ask the children if they saw his lost sheep and ask them to help him find the sheep. When the sheep is found, the children can help bring the sheep back to the class to listen to the story.

(Hold up a picture of a shepherd.) In that game we just played, I was a shepherd. Who can tell me what a shepherd does? That's right, he takes care of sheep. Sheep are very cute and beautiful creatures made by God. They need a shepherd to protect them from wild animals, like wolves that want to eat them, and also to help them find grass to eat and water to drink. A shepherd's job is not always easy since he always has to watch the animals. What does the shepherd do if his sheep are lost? Let's imagine the shepherd had all of his sheep except for one. Do you think the shepherd would go looking for just one sheep? (Allow for opinions. Don't be upset if a child says the shepherd would not look for the sheep, since he still has others. The children will soon hear the Bible story.) Sometimes, one of the sheep will have their nose down to the ground, eating peacefully. As the sheep eats, it might begin to walk to find more grass and wander away from the other sheep. Whenever this happens the shepherd needs to find it and bring the lost sheep back to where he belongs.

In today's class, we are going to hear a story that Jesus told about a shepherd who lost one of his sheep. We learned from other lessons that Jesus taught people about God and His kingdom. One of the ways Jesus liked to teach people was through story telling. The Bible records many stories that Jesus told. Today we will hear about one of them.

The Good Shepherd

There was once a shepherd who looked after one hundred sheep! That is a lot of sheep for one man! But he loved them and took great care of them all. Every day, he would lead them to places

where they could find fresh green grass to eat and clear water to drink. He kept watch over them in case wild animals attacked any of them. He would never leave them alone. He would spend all his time with them. But those are not the only things he had to do. Every night, the shepherd would bring his sheep back to the sheep pen. (Explain that the sheep pen is where the sheep are kept.) He would count each of his sheep as they went into the pen. After making sure all one hundred sheep were together, safe and sound, he would lock the gate securely. That would keep the sheep safe at night. Because the shepherd spent so much time with the sheep, he knew every single one of them really well, even though there were one hundred of them. If he ever ran into another shepherd and his sheep, he would still be able to tell which ones were his. There was no way he would get them mixed up! The sheep also knew the shepherd because they spent every day with him. They knew his voice, and all he ever had to do was call out and the sheep would follow him.

The Shepherd Looks For His Lost Sheep

One day, probably after a nice warm day of eating flowers and grass, the sun was beginning to set. It was time to take the sheep back to the pen. As usual, the shepherd started counting his sheep; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... 98, 99...! Oh no, what happened to the hundredth one? The shepherd looked around. There was one sheep missing! Even though he had one hundred sheep to take care of, the shepherd knew just which little sheep was lost because he knew all of his sheep. So what do you think the shepherd did? First, he put the ninety-nine sheep in the pen so they would not get lost. Then he went looking for this little sheep. He went searching and calling. It was probably getting dark too so it was not easy to see the way. But he went back along all the paths and the fields that they had been on that day, calling and listening really hard to hear a little "baaaa." The shepherd was probably feeling very worried and anxious. What if there was a wolf who saw the sheep first? The wolf might chase the sheep and eat it for dinner. Even though it was only one sheep, this sheep was like a friend. He knew the sheep well and did not want anything bad to happen to it. The shepherd did not give up and he kept walking and calling.

The Lost Sheep Is Found

As the shepherd called out, he heard the softest noise. He stopped moving and listened again. There it was! He could hear a little "baaaa." He ran over to where the sound came from and looked all around. It was probably not a big sheep so the shepherd had to look very very hard. Then saw where the little sheep had wandered. The shepherd was so happy when he saw the sheep that he shouted, "There you are! You were lost, but I found you!" The shepherd gave the sheep a big hug.

"I'm going to pick you up, and carry you back home."

The shepherd put him over his shoulders and the little sheep felt safe and secure again. The shepherd carried the sheep all the way home, back to the pen where he was safe with all the other sheep.

The shepherd was happy because he had found his lost little sheep. He was so happy that he called all his neighbors and his friends together and said, "My sheep was lost but now it is found!" They

were all so happy for him too and celebrated with Him!

Jesus Is Our Shepherd

Why do you think Jesus told this story about the lost sheep? Jesus told this story because He wants us to know how much He loves us. In the last lesson, we learned how much Jesus cared about the children. He wanted them to be near Him. We also know that Jesus loves all the people. In this story, there were many sheep. We are like the sheep. But the sheep need someone to look after them and love them. Jesus loves us very much so He is like our shepherd. He always watches over us and makes sure we are okay. When the shepherd in the story lost one sheep, he wanted to find that sheep. Jesus is telling us the same thing. If we are lost, Jesus will also come and find us. He loves us so much that He would never leave us alone. We can trust Him, just like the sheep trust their shepherd. So let's remember that Jesus is our Shepherd.



Check For Understanding

1. **What does a shepherd need to do?** (He needs to take care of his sheep, feed, and protect them.)
2. **How many sheep did the shepherd have in this story?** (100)
3. **How many sheep went missing?** (1)
4. **What does a good shepherd do if his sheep is missing?** (He would find the lost sheep.)
5. **How do you think the shepherd felt when he found his lost sheep?** (He felt really happy.)
6. **Who came to celebrate with the shepherd after he found his sheep?** (His neighbors and friends.)

7. **Why did Jesus tell this story?** (He wants us to know that He loves us very much. He is like our Shepherd and we are His sheep. He always watches over us and takes care of us.)
8. **God loves us and takes care of us. He loves us the way a shepherd loves his sheep. That's what the Bible means when it says, "The Lord is my Shepherd." We are not real sheep, but it means Jesus cares for us and looks after us just like how a shepherd cares for his little sheep. Can you think of some ways God cares for us?** (Allow students to answer. Some possibilities: He gave us parents, and our parents take care of us. We can be thankful that Jesus will never leave us, but is always protecting us like a Good Shepherd.)



Life Application Story

A New Family

One day, Juan was playing outside on the front lawn. His mom was sitting on the bench on the porch, reading a magazine. Ricky, his older brother, had gone to basketball practice so Juan decided to play with his new marble collection outside. As he was lining up his marbles, he saw a big red truck pull up to a house three houses down.

There was a new family moving into the house! Juan saw a mother and a boy, and a large yellow dog. Two big men helped them move in their things. Juan watched for a while but then he had to go in and do some homework.

A little while later, Juan's mom called him.

"Juan, let's go introduce ourselves to the new neighbors and welcome them!"

"Okay. I want to go and see their dog. He looks friendly," said Juan as he put on his shoes.

"Yes, and it looks like there might be a new friend for you to play with too," said Mrs. Lopez as they walked out the door with a plate of fresh, yummy brownies. Juan grabbed his mom's hand as they crossed the road together.

As Mrs. Lopez was about to ring the doorbell, a lady came out from the backyard door, holding a big box.

"Hi, you must be the new neighbor. I am Mrs. Lopez and this is my son, Juan," Mrs. Lopez said.

The lady put down the box and wiped her hands on her jeans.

"Hi, it's nice to meet you. I am Lisa Roberts. Wait, there is someone I would like you to meet," Mrs. Roberts said.

"Joseph! Come down and meet our neighbors."

After a few seconds, a boy with black hair came out with the big yellow dog following close behind him. His head hung down and he didn't say anything. He stood next to his mom.

"Joseph is still sad that we had to move. He is missing his friends," Mrs. Roberts explained. Then she turned to Joseph and said, "Joseph, why don't you show Juan where your room is? I am sure he would love to see all your things."

Juan patted the big yellow dog on the head as

the two boys headed inside the house.

As they walked, Juan said to Joseph, "Are you sad, Joseph?"

Joseph replied, "Yes, I miss my friends."

Juan smiled and said, "Don't worry, you can make some new friends! I can be your friend. And I have a big brother too, but he's at basketball practice now."

For the first time, Joseph smiled back at Juan and led him up the stairs to his room. In his room was a bed, a desk and many, many boxes. Juan saw that there was a poster on Joseph's desk that said, "Jesus loves me." There was even a huge rainbow on it.

"I made that in church," Joseph explained.

"I go to church too," Juan said. "I have a poster that I made too. It's above my bed but mine has a sheep on it. I made it in RE class and it tells me that Jesus is always watching over us and taking care of us because we are His sheep."

The two boys began to take things out of the boxes. They were having a good time unpacking when Mrs. Lopez and Mrs. Roberts came in to check on them.

"It looks like you have a new friend to play with Joseph," said Mrs. Roberts.

"Yeah, I am not as sad now," said Joseph.

"Remember what I told you? Jesus is always watching over us, no matter where we are and He will always give us the things we need. We need to remember to thank Him for all the wonderful blessings He gives us."

Mrs. Lopez agreed and invited their new neighbors to church so that they could all thank God.

Questions to Think About

1. **Why was Joseph, the new neighbor, a bit sad?** (He just moved and missed his friends.)
2. **What did Juan find out about Joseph after he went to see his room?** (He learned that Joseph goes to church, just like he does.)
3. **What did Mrs. Roberts say about Jesus after she saw Joseph and Juan playing together?** (She said that Jesus always gives us many blessings and knows the things we need. We do not need to be sad or worried. He will take care of us.)
4. **What has God done to take care of you?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

The Shepherd Looks For His Lost Sheep

Review the story of the shepherd and his lost sheep. Read the captions out loud. After each caption, ask the students if the shepherd is happy or sad. Have them circle the right face. How did the shepherd feel at the end?

1. The shepherd looks after one hundred sheep. (happy)
2. Oh no! The shepherd lost one of his sheep. (sad)
3. The shepherd looks every where for his sheep. (sad)
4. The shepherd is very happy he found his sheep. (happy)



Activity 2

How Does God Bless Us?

God blesses us in many ways. Below are some things He has given us. We should thank God for all the wonderful blessings we have. Fill in the blanks.

1. I thank God for my _____ (friends).
2. I thank God for giving us _____ (Jesus).
3. I thank God for my _____ (family).
4. I thank God for the _____ (food).



Activity 3

The Shepherd and His Sheep

Materials:

1. sheep pattern and cardboard
2. white cotton balls (can be purchased at drug stores)
3. glue, tape and scissors
4. white chenille wires (other colors are okay too)

Directions:

1. Provide a sheep pattern for each student.
2. The students should glue the paper pattern onto cardboard to make the sheep more sturdy. They can cut out the sheep pattern.
3. Take two chenille wires and bend them into a

“U” shape, so they will form the two legs.

4. Turn the sheep pattern over and tape the chenille wires to the back of the body. Make sure the loop parts of the legs that are showing are just big enough to fit the students’ index and middle fingers (that is how they can “move” their puppets).
5. Turn the sheep over again. Now the students can glue cotton balls all over the body to give the sheep some “wool.” Make sure they do not cover the face.
6. When the students are finished, the teacher can review today’s story. The teacher can be the shepherd and the students can each be a sheep. They can put their fingers through the leg loops and move their puppets. They can say “Baaa” to pretend they are the sheep. One student can be picked to be the lost sheep. They can choose to hide their sheep somewhere in the room. Then the shepherd will go looking for that sheep. Review the story for as long as the students are interested.
7. Be sure to also talk about how Jesus is our Shepherd and cares for us too.



Fingers will fit in here.

Activity 4:1

The Shepherd Looks For His Lost Sheep

Read the captions out loud. After each caption, ask the students if the shepherd is happy or sad. Have them circle the right face.



1. The shepherd looks after one hundred sheep.



2. Oh no! The shepherd lost one of his sheep.



3. The shepherd looks every where for his sheep.



4. The shepherd is very happy he found his sheep.



Activity 4:2

How Does God Bless Us?

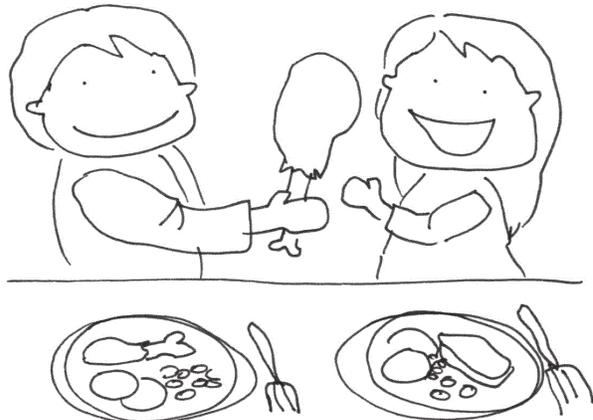
God blesses us in many ways. Below are some things He has given us. We should thank God for all the wonderful blessings we have. Fill in the blanks.

friends
Jesus
family
food



1. I thank God for my _____.

2. I thank God for giving us _____.



3. I thank God for my _____.

4. I thank God for the _____.

Sheep Pattern

