

One and ninety-nine



Bible verses:

Matthew 18:1-4,10-14

Who is the greatest?



Aim:

To know that children matter to God

Today's fruit:

Love



Today's story reminds us that children are extremely precious to God.

We will think about the moment when Jesus called a small child to stand before him and said, 'The greatest person in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.' We'll also discover another one of Jesus' amazing stories that teach us just how much we are loved.

God's love is shown in the way the shepherd leaves the 99 and searches for the one lost sheep.

Each child will need:

- A pom-pom maker or two cardboard discs
- Wool, strong thread/string/twine (if the wool breaks easily), sharp little scissors, black felt or card, googly eyes, glue dots or PVA glue – or a glue gun (optional) – black pipe cleaners (optional)
- Sticky notes or paper cut into sheep shapes and glue/Blu-tak, pens/pencils
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- To watch *How to make a pom-pom sheep* by Red Ted Art (7:05)
- To watch *How to make a pom-pom maker tutorial* by Red Ted Art (6:48) if using cardboard discs
- Extra supervision for any child using sharp scissors or a glue gun
- Today's fruit sign: *Love*
- A large sheet of paper and pens

Start it

Start the session by playing the theme tune to the cartoon series *Shaun the Sheep*.

Video

***Shaun the Sheep* original theme song** by Shaun the Sheep Official (0:39)

Say:

Shaun the Sheep is one of the most famous sheep in the world. He has his own hit TV show and is part of two blockbuster films. Despite his huge success it all started way back in 1995 when he appeared in the Wallace and Gromit film *A Close Shave*. The following clip shows Shaun's first ever appearance. Watch it carefully and see if you can answer the questions.

Video

A Close Shave - the birth of Shaun the Sheep - Wallace and Gromit, a Nick Park film (2:57)

Questions:

1. What does Wallace have ready to eat on his bedside table? **Cheese and crackers**
2. What is Gromit doing in bed? **Knitting**
3. How does Shaun escape from the big truck? **He breaks through the side of the truck**
4. Who stopped the dog in the truck going to get Shaun back? **The woman who is driving the truck**
5. How does Shaun get into Wallace and Gromit's house? **Through the dog flap**
6. What business are Wallace and Gromit running? **Wash 'N' Go - a window cleaning service**
7. Why does Gromit stop knitting? **He runs out of wool**
8. What is the main headline on Gromit's newspaper? **Wool shortage**
9. What does Wallace ask to eat for breakfast? **Porridge**
10. What happens when the porridge machine goes wrong? **It keeps shooting porridge at Wallace**
11. Why did the porridge machine go wrong? **The wires had been chewed**
12. Who is responsible for chewing the wires? **Shaun the Sheep!**



Sing it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month tells us how much Jesus loves us and how we can show that love to others. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 ICB)

Say:

In our session today we'll be thinking about that phrase 'As I have loved you'. God loves us a huge amount and we are precious to him. Our song for today reminds us just how much we are loved.

Song

'Your love for me' worship song with motions by Lifepoint Kids, LifePoint Church (2:35)

Tell it

Say:

There's a saying that actors use in the world of theatre and film that goes like this: 'Never work with children and animals.'

Ask:

Why do you think they say it?

Say:

It's a little unfair to compare children to animals in such a negative way when you are all amazing and have so much to offer the world.

Ask:

In what ways do adults sometimes overlook children? How do you get frustrated by this?

Say:

Today we are totally ignoring the 'never work with children or animals' rule as they both play an important part in our Bible story. Rather than being seen in a negative way, both children and animals are presented as being very special to Jesus.



Read:

'At that time the followers came to Jesus and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

'Jesus called a little child to him. He stood the child before the followers. Then he said, "I tell you the truth. You must change and become like little children. If you don't do this, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The greatest person in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.'"

(Matthew 18:1-4 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What do you think Jesus was trying to say to the adults listening?
- What do you think adults could learn from children?

Say:

Jesus told those listening that they needed to become like children in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead of acting as if they knew everything, or thinking a lot of themselves, Jesus said they should be humble and eager to learn, as children are.

Ask:

In what way are children humble?

Say:

Jesus then told a story, teaching that lost people, and children, matter to God.

Read:

'Be careful. Don't think these little children are worth nothing. I tell you that they have angels in Heaven who are always with my Father in Heaven. [The Son of Man came to save lost people.]

'If a man has 100 sheep, but one of the sheep gets lost, he will leave the other 99 sheep on the hill. He will go to look for the lost sheep. And if he finds it, he is happier about that one sheep than about the 99 that were never lost. I tell you the truth. In the same way, your Father in Heaven does not want any of these little children to be lost.'

(Matthew 18:10-14 *ICB*)

Ask:

- How does Jesus explain how important and precious children are to him?
- Were you surprised that the shepherd left the 99 sheep to go and look for one sheep? What does this tell us about God's love?
- What does it feel like to know that you are deeply loved by Jesus?

Action it

Say:

The children are going to make their own pom-pom sheep to remind them of God's love for them. Watch the instruction video in advance, plus there is a second clip if you are using cardboard discs.

Please provide additional supervision for children using the sharp scissors or a glue gun.

Videos

How to make a pom-pom sheep by Red Ted Art (7:05)

How to make a Pom-pom maker tutorial by Red Ted Art (6:48)

When the children have finished their pom-pom sheep, gather them back as a group. As they look at their sheep, remind them that they represent God's love for us. Encourage the children to take their pom-pom sheep home, to help remind them. There is also a follow-up activity on the *Explore It Ideas* handout.

Display the *Love* sign. Explain how God helps us to show his love to others through the Holy Spirit.

Pray it

On a large sheet of paper draw a two-circle Venn diagram – two large overlapping circles. Label the left circle as 'children' and the right circle as 'adults'.

Using sticky notes or sheep-shaped paper, collect prayer ideas for children and adults, eg in your church, the wider Salvation Army, or elsewhere. You may want to link this activity to the *Together 24* Congress that is taking place in Wales this weekend.

For each idea, place it either in the 'children' or 'adults' circle. It is hoped there will be prayer points that are applicable for both adults and children, and these can be places where the circles overlap.

Finish by sharing in a time of prayer together and encouraging the children to read out the prayer points.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.

One and ninety-nine

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Matthew 18:1-4,10-14
Who is the greatest?



Aim:

To know that children matter to God



Today's fruit:

Love



Create

In today's session you created your own pom-pom sheep, to remind you how much you are loved by God.

Create a habitat for your sheep to live in. You could use some cardboard from the recycling bin or create a backdrop for your sheep.



Relax

Today was all about sheep! Have a movie night with the people at home and watch one of the following films together.

Grab five minutes before the film starts to tell your family all about the story of the lost sheep.

- *Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon*
- *Shaun the Sheep Movie*
- *A Close Shave*



Song for the week

'Your love for me' worship song with motions by Lifepoint Kids, LifePoint Church



Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 /CB)



Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

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(John 13:34 ICB)



Start it

Put out a handful of blocks/cubes. Ask the children to look at (but not count) them and then to close their eyes. Take one away and ask them to say what they notice. Can they tell if there are the same number or if one is missing? Repeat several times, sometimes taking one, sometimes not - all the while increasing the number on display - ideally to about 100. Do they always know when one is missing? Imagine if the blocks/cubes were people - God would always know if one wasn't there!

Today we are going to hear about how much children matter to God.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Matthew 18:1-4,10-14.

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- What do sheep like to eat?
- Do you have 100 of anything at home?
- What is the largest number you can think of?
- What sort of things might we lose at home?
- How do we feel when we find them again?
- What are children good at that adults are not?



Sing It

'The wise man built his house upon the rock' by Tiny Tree Tunes uploaded by Lithos Kids. Just the first two verses (1:35)

'All through history' Nicky & Becky Drake by Worship For Everyone (3:36)



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Hide objects around the room that the children have to find.
- Pretend you are sheep and one person is a shepherd keeping them together.
- Collect/gather or stack up 100 items, eg shoes / socks / jenga blocks ...
- Compare one with 99 to see the difference.