

Jesus the good shepherd



Bible verses:

John 10:1-21

The shepherd and his sheep



Aim:

To learn that Jesus was prepared to give up his life



Today's fruit:

Goodness



In today's story Jesus compares himself to a good shepherd, protecting his sheep from thieves and robbers.

Jesus describes himself in lots of different ways and tells stories to help his followers understand who he is. Jesus was willing to give up his life to protect his sheep – that's us – and he wants us to listen carefully to his voice as we learn to follow him.

Goodness is seen when we serve others without reward.

Each child will need:

- Chunky chocolate cookies; vanilla buttercream; ready-to-roll black or brown icing; mini marshmallows; equipment to help with decorating the cookies – **Please be aware of allergies**
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- A cuddly sheep toy, a blindfold (ideally have one for each child, for hygiene) and a chair
- *Memory verse poster* from Session One
- Today's fruit sign: *Goodness*



Start it

Play a game of *Steal the sheep*. Ask the children to stand/sit in a circle around a chair and place the cuddly sheep underneath. Ask someone to be the shepherd – to sit on the chair and be blindfolded.

Choose someone in the circle to try and steal the sheep. If the shepherd hears someone attempting to steal the sheep, they point to where they think the thief is. If correct, the thief who has been caught makes a 'baa' sheep sound. Still blindfolded, the shepherd has three guesses to identify the thief. Repeat the game several times, with different children being the thief and the shepherd.

Say:

In our session today we'll hear a story Jesus told about a good shepherd protecting his sheep from thieves.



Sing it

Display the *Goodness* sign.

Say:

Our Bible story today shows how much God loves us and how he protects us, like a shepherd looking after his sheep.

Say:

Today's song reminds us that God is good. We can show God's goodness to others in the way that we love and serve them without expecting anything in return.

Song

'God is Good' Cross Culture Norway VBS Music Video Group Publishing by Lifetree Kids (3:22)



Tell it

Say:

Jesus often used stories to help the people understand who he was and how he wanted them to live.

Ask:

Why did Jesus explain such difficult teachings in stories?

Say:

Our story today is all about a shepherd looking after his sheep.

Ask:

- Why did Jesus choose a shepherd and sheep story to tell the people?
- Do you think he would choose the same story setting today? If not, why not?

Read:

'Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheep fold by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the door

is the shepherd of the sheep. The man who guards the door opens it for him. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. He brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. They follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. They will run away from him because they don't know his voice." Jesus told the people this story, but they did not understand what it meant.'

(John 10:1-6 ICB)

Ask:

- What did Jesus mean when he said that only the shepherd enters by the door?
- How did the sheep know who the shepherd was? Whose voice did they ignore?
- When Jesus told people this story, the Bible says that they did not understand what it meant. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us in this story?

Say:

There are lots of different people in our lives who have opinions about what we should and shouldn't do. Many of them love us and want the best for us, but that isn't always the case. In this story, Jesus reminds us to listen carefully for his voice so that we can follow him.

Read:

'So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth. I am the door for the sheep. All the people who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. The person who enters through me will be saved. He will be able to come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. But I came to give life - life in all its fullness.'"

(John 10:7-10 ICB)

Ask:

- Jesus explained that 'a thief comes to ... kill and destroy. But I came to give life in all its fullness.' What does fullness of life mean for you?
- Are there parts of your life that don't always feel full? How do you think Jesus wants to change that?

Read:

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. The worker who is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd who owns them. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

'I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, as the Father knows me. And my sheep know me, as I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this flock here. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one

shepherd. The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can take it back again. No one takes it away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father commanded me to do.'

(John 10:11-18 *ICB*)

Ask:

- How is the good shepherd different from the person hired to look after the sheep?
- How do they react differently when the wolf arrives?
- What do you think Jesus was trying to tell us about the way he looks after us, his sheep?
- What was Jesus willing to do to protect the sheep?

Say:

Let's find out how the people reacted when they heard this story.

Read:

'Again the Jews did not agree with each other because of these words Jesus said. Many of them said, "A demon has come into him and made him mad. Why listen to him?"

'But others said, "A man who is mad with a demon does not say things like this. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"'

(John 10:19-21 *ICB*)

Say:

At the time, the people didn't understand what Jesus meant when he talked about laying down his life for his sheep. As Christians today, we know the next part of the story and what happened to Jesus.

Ask:

Knowing the story of Easter, what did Jesus mean when he said he was willing to die for his sheep?

If you feel that the children need an additional explanation as to why Jesus died for us, then watch the following clip. It also ties together the themes from Sessions One to Three, including an explanation of the Kingdom of God.

Video

Why Did Jesus Die? by Minno – Bible Stories for Kids (5:55)



Action it

To remind the children about the story of the good shepherd, they are going to decorate sheep biscuits. The instructions are in the link below, but you will need chunky chocolate cookies, vanilla buttercream, ready-to-roll black or brown icing and mini marshmallows.

Easter lamb cookies by [Tesco.com](https://www.tesco.com)

Pray it

Say:

During our prayer times this month, we are thinking about what it means to accept others as Jesus loves and accepts us.

Display the *Memory verse poster* and share it together.

Memory verse

'Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God.'

(Romans 15:7 ICB)

Say:

We're going to share our memory verse song for this month.

Song

'Bible Memory Verse Romans 15:7' Kids Sing-along by Kingdomcity Kids (1:11)

Say:

In today's story Jesus compared himself to a shepherd protecting their sheep. He looked out for the sheep and paid attention to the moments where they were in danger. As followers of Jesus, we can live like him and seek to protect those who are being mistreated.

Say:

Take a moment to think about someone you know who is having a tough time because of the behaviour of others.

Invite the children to pray for that person - they do not need to share their name - and then bring the session to a close in prayer.

Explore it

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



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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
John 10:1-21



Aim:
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Today's fruit:
Goodness



Guess

In today's Bible story every sheep knew the voice of the shepherd. How good are you at recognising voices? See how many of the Disney characters you can guess, just from their voices. You could try the quiz with one of your friends.

Can You Guess the Disney Voice? Guess Who's Talking! By The Quiz Show



Create

Ask someone at home to help you to make your own sheep puppet to remind you of the story of the good shepherd.

How to Make a Lamb Chop Puppet by Easy Kids Craft



Memory verse

'Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God.'

(Romans 15:7 ICB)



Song for the week

'God is Good' Cross Culture Norway VBS Music Video Group Publishing by Lifetree Kids (3:22)

LIVING OUT FAITH

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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Today's fruit:
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Memory verse

'Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God.'

(Romans 15:7 *ICB*)



Start it

Jesus told a story about a shepherd who cared for his sheep and protected them from thieves and robbers. Jesus is our good shepherd who looks after us.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of John 10:1-21.

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

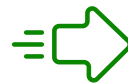
- What is your favourite story?
- Why did Jesus tell stories?
- How does a shepherd look after their sheep?
- How do the sheep know who the shepherd is?
- In what ways is Jesus like a shepherd to us?



Sing It

'Shine! (from the inside out)' by Nick Jackson uploaded by Tangy Crayfish (2:20)

'Holy Spirit' for children by Aji and her friends. Sing only the chorus (0:44-1:15)



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Hide a cuddly sheep somewhere in the room and see if your friends can find it.
- Put on a blindfold and see if you can guess which one of your friends is making a noise like a sheep.
- Draw a picture of Jesus as the good shepherd looking after the sheep.
- If you have space, play a game of tag: make some people shepherds and others thieves. The shepherds tag the thieves, so they have to stand still.