

He Knows Your Name



- Theme:** The shepherd knows his sheep. Fourth Sunday of Easter
- Object:** A branding iron or some sample brands written on cards. (you can find examples on the web or make up some of your own such as "Diamond M," "Lazy S," or "Rocking R.")
- Scripture:** He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." John 10:3b-5 (NIV)

Some of you may have seen a branding iron. A branding iron is used to put an identifying mark on cattle and sheep. When a calf is branded, they put the branding iron in a fire and burn the brand into the side of the calf. Ouch! I'll bet that hurts! When a brand is put on sheep, they dip the brand into a special paint and put the brand on the sheep's back. That sounds a little better, doesn't it? Okay, let's talk about branding sheep. Here is a photo that shows a sheep being branded. ([Click Here](#))

Do you know why they put a brand on the sheep? They do it so that they will know who owns the sheep. Each rancher has his own special brand. So, if a sheep wanders off and becomes lost or stolen, the brand will prove who owns the sheep.

I don't know whether they put brands on sheep in Jesus' day or not, but Jesus once told about a shepherd who went to a sheep pen to get his sheep. He said that the shepherd knew his sheep and called them by name. When he had called them out, he walked ahead of them and they followed him because they recognized his voice. Jesus said that if a stranger called to the sheep, they would not follow him. In fact, Jesus said they would run away from him because they did not recognize the stranger's voice.

That is a beautiful picture of our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is our shepherd. He loves us and cares for us -- he even knows our name. Jesus calls us to follow him and if we belong to him, we will know his voice and we will follow him.

Sometimes, Satan may try to get us to follow him. He may try to get us to do things that will do us harm. If we belong to Jesus, we will not follow Satan. In fact, we will run from him.

Heavenly Father, we are thankful that we have a Shepherd who knows our name. Help us to follow him when he calls. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams

Sermon Title: ["He Knows Your Name"](#)

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10

SHEPHERD'S VOICE GAME: Take turns having children try to recognize someone else's voice behind a door. They could say the Bible verse in a disguised voice, or a sound or noise to see if the "sheep" can guess who's voice that is! Discussion about today's lesson with the shepherd and the sheep!

WWJD chart: Have children write ideas about things in one column that they would like to do or are told or asked to do by their friends. Across the paper in the other column, have children write if JESUS would WANT them to do that or not (YES or NO)!

GATE BIBLE VERSE HUNT: The teacher can build or construct a "gate" (anything to resemble a "gate" will be fun for the kids in this learning process) that the children can take turns going through, in order to pick ONE card up with a word from their Bible verse today. After all the words have been found behind the gate, then children will put them on a poster board in ORDER and recite the Bible verse together. Children can take turns SAYING the Bible verse and IF they are able to recite it alone, they can draw a "section" of the GATE over the top of the bible verse that is displayed on the poster board, and continue to recite the verse until all of the gate is completed over the Bible verse!

TOOTHPICK GATE: Let children draw or trace sheep on a piece of paper OR use sheep stickers if available. Then have children paste toothpicks over the sheep pictures to look like a gate over the sheep!

CARD CHOICES: Give each child a recipe-size card with JESUS/SHEPHERD (with happy face) written on one side and FALSE TEACHER (sad face), written on the other side. As the teacher says a phrase (examples such as harms us, keeps us from harm, climbs over the fence to get the sheep, steals the sheep, loves us, provides everything we need; watches over us, cares for us, tries to hurt us, leads us astray, tricks us, what's what is best for us, etc), have children hold up their card with either JESUS or FALSE TEACHER to show which things Jesus does and which things that False teacher will do!

"SHEEP IN THE GATE" ART: Give each child a piece of construction paper and a small amount of a cotton ball. Children can tear apart the cotton ball and glue/paste little amounts of cotton on their page. Show children how to draw little legs and ears on the sheep and then let each child glue some craft sticks over the top of the sheep to form a gate! Write or trace the BIBLE VERSE at the top of the page or "in and around" the cotton sheep!

TRUTH OR LIE: Teacher can tell something about the story or our Bible verse today and have children run to the TRUTH poster-side-of-the-room if they think it is TRUE; or if the teacher tells something about Jesus or our story about a shepherd, etc and if the children think it is a LIE, they'll run to the LIE poster-side-of-the-room! (This gets the "bugs" out of the children as well as helps them to listen very CAREFULLY for the truth or a lie!)

Steal the Sheep



Theme: Jesus keeps us safe from harm. 4th Sunday of Easter, Year A
Object: Use a small whiteboard to draw a diagram of how "Steal the Sticks" is played.

Scripture: The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

I remember a game we used to play during recess at school. The game was called "Steal the Sticks." Let me explain how the game is played. The class is divided into two teams and a line is drawn on the ground on each side of the playground. A pile of sticks is placed in a circle near each team's line. The object of the game is to steal a stick from the other team's circle without being tagged. If a player is behind his own team's line, he is safe and cannot be tagged by the other team. If a player is tagged, he has to stay with the other team until he is rescued by being tagged by one of his own team members. When one team has stolen all of the other team's sticks, the game is over. Otherwise, the team that has the most sticks at the end of the game is the winner. We had a lot of fun playing "Steal the Sticks," but in real life, stealing is never fun. It is very serious business.

I am reminded of a story that Jesus told that we might call "Steal the Sheep." Jesus said that sometimes a person climbs over the fence into a sheep pen. "Anyone who does that must surely be a thief and a robber" Jesus said, "because the shepherd who cares for the sheep would not climb over the fence, he would enter the gate." Jesus went on to explain that the gatekeeper knows the shepherd and will open the gate for him. The sheep know the shepherd and will recognize his voice and follow him. The sheep will never follow a stranger -- they will run from a stranger!

The Bible says that when Jesus told this story, the people didn't understand it. Do you think you understand what Jesus was talking about? Well, let me tell you what I think this story means. I think that in this story, we are the sheep and Jesus is the shepherd. Jesus loves us and he wants only what is best for us. He will watch over us and care for us and keep us from harm. He will provide everything that we need. The one who would climb over the fence and try to steal the sheep is a false teacher. He is one who will try to lead us astray and trick us into following him instead of following Jesus.

When someone tries to get you to follow him, listen to what he says and then ask yourself, "What did Jesus say?" If what he is saying is not the same as what Jesus said, watch out! Remember the warning that Jesus gives at the end of our Bible lesson today, "A thief comes only to rob, kill, and destroy. I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest."

Dear Jesus, we know that you are the good shepherd. We love you and want to follow you each and every day. Help us to watch out for those who want to lead us astray. Amen.