

The Good Shepherd



Theme: Jesus lays down his life for his sheep - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Object: Pictures of dogs, cats, or some other animals which someone might own as a pet.

Scripture: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:14-15 (NIV)

How many of you have a pet? There are many animals that make good pets. The most popular are cats and dogs, but birds and fish are also quite popular. Some children like hamsters or Guinea pigs for a pet. If you live in the country and have a lot of room, you might even own a large animal such as a horse.

If you choose to have a pet, it is a big responsibility. You must be willing to take care of it. You have to feed it and make sure it has plenty of water. You must keep it clean and take it to the veterinarian when it is sick. You have to make sure your pet is kept in a safe place and, if it wanders off and gets lost, you must go and look for it and bring it back home.

As I think about having a pet and taking care of it, I am reminded about something that Jesus said about himself. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." A shepherd is a person who takes care of sheep. Sheep can't take care of themselves. They need someone to watch over them and care for them. They need someone to protect them from harm. Jesus said he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. He said that he was even willing to lay down his life for his sheep. Jesus must really love his sheep!

As you might have guessed, Jesus wasn't really talking about sheep. He was talking about you and me. We are his "sheep." He loves us, he takes care of us, he makes sure that we have everything that we need. He was even willing to give his life so that you and I could live with him forever in heaven.

There is no doubt about it. Jesus really loves his sheep!

Dear Jesus, we are thankful to you for being our Good Shepherd. Thank you for loving us and taking care of us. Most of all, we thank you for laying down your life for us so that we can have everlasting life in heaven with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

HIDE AND SHEEP: The children will all find a good hiding place and one child will be the "Shepherd" and will try to find the sheep. When a sheep is found, that sheep will join with the "Shepherd" in finding more sheep.

SHEEP TAG: The children will play a game of tag. One child will be designated as "The Shepherd" and will try to tag the other children who represent the sheep. When one of the "sheep" is tagged, that child will lie down right where they were tagged. Continue to play until all of the sheep are lying down. Children can make the Baa-baa sheep sound while laying down. Allow different children to be the "shepherd" if time allows.

SHEEPS VOICES: Have the children sit in a circle representing sheep in a pen. One of the children will wear a blindfold and will be the shepherd. The teacher will point to one student at a time to make a baa-baa sound. The shepherd will listen to the baa-baa sounds of the sheep and will try to guess what sheep is "calling".

SHEEP RELAY: Divide the children into two teams. The teacher will provide a cut-out of a sheep for each team and tack it to the wall. The teacher will give each team exactly the same number of cotton balls. Each child will take a turn running to their team's sheep and gluing one cotton ball to their sheep. The child will then run back to tag the next team player who will go and glue

a cotton ball on the sheep. When the relay game is completed, the teacher will place the cotton ball sheep on two large poster boards with John 10:11 written on the board but with several words missing. Let the children provide the missing words.

COTTON SHEEP: Let the children trace a picture of a small sheep, cut it out, and glue cotton balls on it. Then the teacher will let the children place their sheep on a poster board with a drawing of a sheep pen. The children will then find words written on cards to the Bible verse (John 10:11 or John 10:14) around the room and place them in the correct order on the poster board.

HAND PRINT SHEEP: Items needed are white tempera paint, a sponge applicator, construction paper, and a fine-point black marker. Step by step procedure: 1) The children will use the sponge applicator to spread a thick coating of white tempera paint to one hand. 2) Place the hand on a sheet of construction paper and press down. 3) Lift the hand and wash it off. 4) When the hand print has dried, use the marker to draw details such as eyes, ears, nose, on the sheep. Note: The thumb forms the neck and head area, the palm is the body, and the four fingers are legs.

YARN SHEEP: Let each child cut out a black sheep from card stock. Then, beginning at the neck of the sheep to the tail of the sheep, wrap thick white yarn around the sheep and tuck the end of the yarn into the body of the yarn/sheep. Add wiggly craft eyes if desired.

SHEEP MASK: Give each child a white paper plate with the center cut out. Have the children cut out ears from construction paper and glue them to the edge of the plate. They will then glue pieces of cotton all around the edge of the plate. The children will then hold the plate up to their face allowing their face to show through. Explain to the children that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are his sheep!

CLOTHESPIN SHEEP: The teacher will provide each child with two clothespins, a magic marker, and a piece of poster board to make the body of the sheep, black construction paper for the ears, and some cotton balls. Using a pattern provided by the teacher, the children will trace the body of the sheep (no legs) and cut it out. They will then cover the body with cotton balls, glue on the ears. Use the magic marker to color the clothespins to create the legs. Attach the clothespins to the bottom of the sheep's body which will enable the sheep to stand alone

Taking Care of the Sheep



Theme: The shepherd cares for his sheep. (4th Sunday of Easter)

Object: A shepherd's crook

Scripture: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:14-15 (NIV)

Do you know what a shepherd is? Of course you do. A shepherd is one who takes care of sheep. Who can tell me what this is? (hold up the shepherd's crook) This is called a shepherd's crook. The crook is very useful to the shepherd in taking care of the sheep. If the sheep tries to go in the wrong direction, the shepherd can reach out with the crook and gently pull it back onto the right path. The shepherd also uses the crook to help protect the sheep from a wolf or some other wild animal that might try to harm them. You see, it is the shepherd's responsibility to care for and protect the sheep.

How many of you know who (name the church's pastor) is? That's right! Our pastor. Did you know that the

word we use for the one who leads our church means the same thing as the word that is used for someone who takes care of sheep? So if the pastor is the one who takes care of the sheep, what do you think that makes us? Right! We are the sheep! It is our pastor's job to take care of us just as it is the job of a shepherd to care for the sheep.

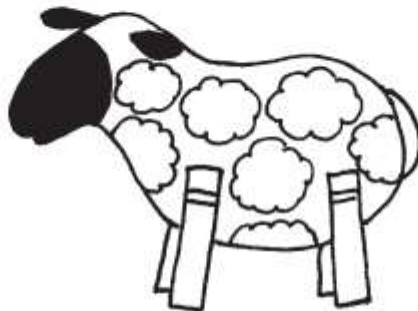
Our pastor doesn't use a shepherd's crook like this one. The Bible is our pastor's crook. When we stray away and go off on the wrong path, our pastor uses the teaching of God's Word to reach out and gently pull us back and get us going in the right direction. Our pastor also uses the Bible to protect us from our enemies. When Satan attacks us and tries to get us to do things that would harm us, our pastor uses the Bible to teach us what God wants us to do.

Our pastor has a good guide to follow in knowing how to take care of the sheep. That guide is Jesus. Listen to what Jesus said about himself, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me -- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep."

The Bible also says, "The LORD is my shepherd," but God has also called our pastor to help him in caring for his sheep. We are thankful for Jesus, "the Good Shepherd," and we are thankful for our pastor too!

Dear Father, we are thankful for Jesus. We know him and he knows us. He laid down his life for us. We also thank you for (pastor's name) that you have called to be the shepherd for our church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Clothespin Sheep



Objective: Students will create mini-sheep from clothespins.

You'll need: Clothespins (2 per student) black paint, dye, or magic marker
poster board body (see example)
white glue
wiggle eyes
black construction paper for ears
wool or cotton balls

Procedure:

1. Paint or dye 2 clothespins per student.
2. Trace body pattern on white poster board. Cut out.
3. Cover body with white glue and attach wool or cotton balls.
4. Glue on wiggle eyes and black ears.
5. Clip on clothespin legs and let dry.
6. Display your "flock" of sheep and invite other classes to visit.