

The Parables of the Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep

John 10:1-31



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

John 10:1-31; Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:12-14

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

OLDER CHILDREN: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Little Sheep"](#)
- ["Only One Shepherd"](#)
- ["The Lost Lamb"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves Me"](#)
- ["Who Does Jesus Love?"](#)
- ["I Love Jesus"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Jesus' Ministry & Last Week Bible fact cards](#) (provided under "N.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Parables of Jesus A Beka flash-a-card series: series #1 (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the lesson book*)
- Pictures of sheep, shepherds at work
- Raw wool or a wool rug

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: Jesus loves me and takes care of me.

OLDER CHILDREN: Jesus knows everything about me. He loves me, and He takes care of me.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Have you ever been to a farm or a zoo? The animals need people to take care of them. A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep. Jesus told some special stories about shepherds and sheep. We are going to talk about one of those stories today.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson. Find information about the life of a shepherd during Bible times (see the *Discovery* article under the Recommended Additional Visuals, refer to a Bible Encyclopedia, the Internet, etc.), and share as much information as is appropriate with your class. (Shepherding in the Bible lands today is very much the same as it was in Bible times. So pictures should be available from reference books in your local library or on the Internet.)

In Bible times, sheep were very important animals because they provided wool (for clothing and tents) and meat. Shepherds had an important job and a lot of responsibility taking care of their sheep. In today's lesson, we will learn how Jesus compares Himself to a shepherd and how we are compared to sheep.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:



NOTE: John 10 is a continuation of Jesus' teachings in chapter 9, after He healed the man born blind. Jesus used the words "truly, truly," "verily, verily," or "most assuredly" in 10:1 and 10:7 to tie the two chapters together—not to introduce a completely new, disconnected thought.



NOTE TO PRESCHOOL TEACHERS: Most preschoolers cannot understand symbolism and will not be able to understand many of the comparisons that parables make. Use only the most basic information about shepherds and sheep to relate Jesus' loving relationship to us. Most of the children probably have pets, and they know what would happen if they did not take care of their pets (hunger, getting lost, being hurt or in danger, etc.).

1. Jesus and His apostles were in the Temple area and were still being followed by a large crowd. Jesus said that there was no way anyone could please God without choosing to follow His Son. In spite of His powerful message and the miracles He performed, most of the Pharisees refused to believe in Jesus.
2. Jesus compared Himself to the door/gate of a **sheepfold**, i.e., the only way into the loving care and protection promised by God. Jesus also called Himself the Good Shepherd. He used

two everyday things familiar to the Jews (a door to a sheepfold and a shepherd) to teach a powerful lesson about obeying a loving God.



Sheepfold: a pen or enclosure to protect sheep from wild animals, especially at night



NOTE: The door and the shepherd were easy for the Jews of Jesus' day to relate to, but they were also familiar from Old Testament scriptures:

- God is often portrayed as the Shepherd of Israel (Genesis 48:15; 49:24; Psalm 23:1; 28:9; 77:20; 78:71; Isaiah 40:11).
- The Jews (the nation of Israel) were God's chosen people under the Old Law and were called God's "flock" (Psalm 74:1; 78:52; 79:13).
- Religious leaders and false teachers who divided and destroyed God's people were often portrayed as enemies of the flock (Jeremiah 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34).

3. During cooler winter months, sheep were often kept inside a sheepfold at night. Shepherds had to constantly watch out for robbers and wild animals. Sometimes thorn branches (briars) were put on top of the stone walls to discourage thieves. It was very common for the shepherd to lie down in front of the gate/door as another way to keep thieves out. He would use his staff, rod, and sling to fight off wild animals. Jesus is like the door to the sheepfold, that keeps His sheep (His followers) safe from spiritual danger. But we cannot be in the sheepfold and be protected by Him without going through Him (becoming a Christian).
4. Sheep often wander away from the flock, and the shepherd has to be willing to go find the sheep. If a sheep gets into water, it will quickly drown because its wool is so heavy. The shepherd has to guide his sheep away from deep water to good pasture, away from danger (Psalm 23). Jesus, again, compared Himself to a Good Shepherd that will search for a sheep if it is lost. In other words, if a Christian (His sheep) stops behaving like a Christian (he leaves the sheepfold), Jesus will try to help bring the sheep back into the fold.
5. The shepherd was willing to do anything necessary to protect his flock. His sheep were his livelihood, providing food, clothing, and an income for his family. But a "hired hand" who did not have so much invested in the flock might not be so willing to risk his own life for the sheep. Jesus compared the hired hand (John 10:12-13) and strangers (John 10:5) to ungodly religious leaders and false teachers who were not interested in the spiritual welfare of God's people. [Jesus used the analogy of wolves in sheep's clothing in Matthew 7:15, as did Paul in Acts 20:28-30.]
6. In contrast, Jesus compared Himself to:
 - the Door through which His sheep could enter for protection and security (John 14:6).
 - the Good Shepherd Who knew each one of His sheep individually and would do anything to save them—even give His life to protect them, which is what He did.
7. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." But thieves (false teachers, ungodly leaders) do not care about the sheep like the Good Shepherd does.



NOTE: The Greek in John 10:10 literally says "that they may **keep on having** life," i.e., **eternal life** (John 10:28). "Abundant" here means life overflowing!

8. The Good Shepherd knows and cares for every one of His sheep. Jesus knows each one of us, cares about each one of us, and died for each one of us. As in the parable, Jesus will look for the one that is lost and needs His help.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#)

Ages 2-5:

- [“Parable of the Lost Sheep Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Sack puppets. Help the children make sheep sack puppets. For two- and three-year-olds, draw eyes and mouths on the sacks ahead of time; four- and five-year-olds can probably draw the eyes and mouths on their own. Help the children glue cotton balls (“wool”) on the sacks.
- Sheep and Shepherd Tic-Tac-Toe: Divide the class into two groups: the sheep and the shepherds. Draw a Tic-Tac-Toe diagram on the board. Let each group have a turn answering review questions. For each correct answer, the sheep or shepherds mark the game board. [If you can find stickers of sheep and shepherds, you can put sheep stickers on “O’s” and shepherd stickers on “X’s” that you have cut out of cardstock. If using a magnetic board, put magnetic tape on the back of the O’s and X’s. Otherwise, masking tape or teachers’ putty will work on another kind of board.] (Tic-Tac-Toe board and [instructions](#) provided in activity sheets)
- Little lost lamb: Before class, hide a small, stuffed sheep somewhere in the classroom (or on a pretty day, hide it outside). After telling the story, stop and tell the class you have a sheep that is lost. Ask the children to help you find it. As your class looks for the lost sheep, talk about how you miss the sheep and how important it is to find it. When the sheep is found, act very excited, and tell them thank you for finding the sheep. Then talk about how happy God is when we stop doing wrong things and obey Him (i.e., when we’re not lost any more).
- Shepherd and lost sheep game: Make 8-10 cutouts/diecuts of men (shepherds) and the same number of sheep. Write review questions on the shepherds and answers on the sheep so children can help the shepherds “find” their sheep by matching the correct questions and answers. ([Shepherd cutouts](#) and [Sheep Cutouts](#) provided in activity sheets)

1st-2nd Graders:

- Sheep and Shepherd Tic-Tac-Toe: Divide the class into two groups: the sheep and the shepherds. Draw a Tic-Tac-Toe diagram on the board. Let each group have a turn answering review questions. For each correct answer, the sheep or shepherds mark the game board. [If you can find stickers of sheep and shepherds, you can put sheep stickers on “O’s” and shepherd stickers on “X’s” that you have cut out of cardstock. If using a magnetic board, put magnetic tape on the back of the O’s and X’s. Otherwise, masking tape or teachers’ putty will work on another kind of board.] (Tic-Tac-Toe board and [instructions](#) provided in activity sheets)
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- Bible Baseball: Write review questions on index cards and divide them into “singles,”

“doubles,” “triples,” and “home runs,” depending on the difficulty of the questions. Divide the class into two teams. Assign places for first, second, and third bases and home plate in the classroom **or** draw a baseball diamond on the board. When a team is “up to bat,” a member of that team selects a card and tries to answer the question. If he answers correctly, he takes the base indicated (first, second, third, or home plate). If he answers incorrectly, he is out. After three outs, it is the other team’s turn to “bat.”

- “[Lost Sheep Maze](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Pizza Review Game: Make two large cardboard circles or use clean cardboard circles from real pizza boxes. Cut out two “pizzas” from poster board the same size as the circles. Cut the “pizzas” into triangular “slices.” Divide the class into two teams. Take turns asking each team review questions. For every review question they answer correctly, they can add a slice to their pizzas. The first team to have a complete pizza wins.
- “[Good Shepherd and Lost Sheep Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Concordance Search: Divide the class into groups. Give each group a Bible concordance. Ask them to find scriptures related to the lesson (example words: “flock,” “shepherd,” “door,” “sheep,” etc). Let each group read several of the scriptures they find.
- Bible Baseball: Write review questions on index cards and divide them into “singles,” “doubles,” “triples,” and “home runs,” depending on the difficulty of the questions. Divide the class into two teams. Assign places for first, second, and third bases and home plate in the classroom **or** draw a baseball diamond on the board. When a team is “up to bat,” a member of that team selects a card and tries to answer the question. If he answers correctly, he takes the base indicated (first, second, third, or home plate). If he answers incorrectly, he is out. After three outs, it is the other team’s turn to “bat.”
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- “[Good Shepherd and Lost Sheep Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - John 10
 - *The Parable of the Lost Sheep*, by Claire Miller, Arch books (DISCLAIMERS: angels are not said to have wings in the Bible; use caution with the note to parents, as the wording can be misleading)
 - *The Little Lost Lamb*, by Goldthwaite, A Bible Board Book
 - “Shepherds” article from the [February, 2014](#) issue of *Discovery Magazine*
 - *Jesus, the Good Shepherd*, by Robert Mitchell, Arch books
 - *Jesus Teaches His Disciples*, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing House (DISCLAIMERS: skip pp. 26-27, 40-41; change “hell” to “Hades” on p. 50)

FINGERPLAYS:

“LITTLE SHEEP”

Jesus is the Shepherd. (hold up index finger, right hand)
I am His little sheep. (hold up thumb, left hand)
He is always near me. (bring finger close to thumb)
When I’m awake or asleep. (eyes wide open, then lay head on hands)

“ONLY ONE SHEPHERD”

This is the shepherd. (hold up index finger, right hand)
These are his sheep. (hold fingers on left hand down, slightly spread)
They follow him all the day. (move both hands to the right)
Another shepherd (hold up middle finger of right hand instead of index finger)
May call to them, (stop sheep to listen)
But the sheep just turn away. (turn left hand around, move quickly away)

SONGS:

“THE LOST LAMB” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Mary had a Little Lamb”)

The shepherd had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb.
The shepherd had a little lamb, who wandered far away.

The shepherd was so very sad, very sad, very sad.
The shepherd was so very sad; his little lamb was gone.

The shepherd went to look for him, look for him, look for him.
The shepherd went to look for him; he sought him everywhere.

Then the shepherd jumped for joy, jumped for joy, jumped for joy.
Then the shepherd jumped for joy; he found his little lamb.

We are God’s little lambs, little lambs, little lambs.
We are God’s little lambs; He loves and cares for us!

“JESUS LOVES ME” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Anna B. Warner

Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong.
They are weak but He is strong.

CHORUS:

Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus love me when I'm good.
When I do the things I should.
Jesus loves me when I'm bad,
Though it make Him very sad.

(CHORUS)

“WHO DOES JESUS LOVE?” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey
(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

Who does Jesus love?
Who does Jesus love?
Jesus loves _____, (fill in blank with child's name)
That's who Jesus loves!
(Sing enough times to use every child's name)

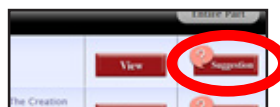
“I LOVE JESUS” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey
(Tune: “Are You Sleeping?”)

I love Jesus,
I love Jesus,
Yes I do, yes I do!
Praise His name forever,
Praise His name forever,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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John 10:1-31



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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OLDER CHILDREN: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

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OLDER CHILDREN: Jesus knows everything about me. He loves me, and He takes care of me.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 5 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

Review Sunday’s lesson (see [N.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)

Spend more time talking about the relationship between sheep and the shepherd, about God’s love and care for us. Emphasize to the children that God gave them families to take care of them. If they ignore instructions and warnings from their families, they may get hurt or find themselves in bad situations. They must obey the grown-ups who are in charge of taking care of them, just as sheep must obey the shepherd if they want to stay safe.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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