

SESSION TITLE: The Good Shepherd

Bible Passage: John 10

Story Point: Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Key Passage: John 14:26

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom.

Chant actions

Guide children to sit and pat their knees in rhythm while chanting with you:

“We’re going to the sheep pen,

We’re gonna be safe there.

Uh oh! A thief! Run away!”

On the last line, point and act scared, then guide preschoolers to pat their knees frantically as if running away. After a moment, return to a normal rhythm and repeat, exchanging the word *thief* for *wolf* or other dangers. Finish by replacing the last line with: “Finally! The gate! Come on in.”

Say • Whew, I’m glad we made it to safety! There were a lot of dangers along the way. Sheep need shepherds to protect them and guide them safely home. Jesus taught that He is the Good Shepherd. He protects God’s people and guides them safely home to God’s kingdom. ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom.***

Pretend to care for pets

Set out a variety of toy animals, blocks, washcloths, paper shreds, and play dishes for children to play out caring for pets.

Preschoolers may build fences or barns for the animals with blocks, “bathe” them with washcloths, and “feed” them with paper shreds on dishes. Talk about how to care for animals well while children play.

Say • Do any of you have pets at home? Do you help take care of them? A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep. He makes sure they have food and water, and he keeps them safe and clean. In our Bible story today, Jesus said He is the Good Shepherd. Listen to the story to find out who is Jesus’ sheep.

Sing “Through the Gate!”

Sing the following lyrics to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down”:

“Jesus says He’s like a gate, like a gate, like a gate!

Jesus says He’s like a gate for His sheep.

“Come and enter through the gate, through the gate, through the gate!

Come and enter through the gate to be saved.

“The thief comes in to steal and destroy, steal and destroy, steal and destroy.

The thief comes in to steal and destroy God’s precious sheep! [*Leaders drop arms around a child.*]

“Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who saves His sheep!” [*Leaders release the child.*]

Say • **Jesus is the Good Shepherd.** God sent Him to save sinners. Jesus gave up His life so His people could be forgiven and have life with God forever. Those who trust in Jesus are His sheep. They listen to Him, follow Him, and obey Him.

Listen carefully

Choose a child to be the *thief* and close his eyes. The rest of the children are *sheep* and will crawl on their hands and knees. Explain that you are the *shepherd*. When the *thief* says “sheep,” all the children should bleat and move away from the *thief*. The *thief* will try to tag the *sheep* by following the sounds they make. If a child is tagged, you will call that child by name and lead him into the “pen” (a corner) until the next round.

Say • Jesus told a story: “If a person climbs into a sheep pen, he is not the shepherd; he is a thief,” Jesus said. “When the sheep hear the shepherd’s voice, they follow him. If the sheep hear a stranger’s voice, they run away.” **Jesus is the Good Shepherd.** Those who trust in Jesus are His sheep. They listen to Him, follow Him, and obey Him.

Make a sheep handprint

Invite children to color a grassy scene on blue construction paper. Paint a child’s palm white and fingers and thumb black. Help her press her handprint onto the paper, fingers down. Wipe her hand and give her one or two googly eyes to adhere to the thumbprint. Suggest she glue cotton balls to the palm. Write the story point on each child’s artwork.

Say • Your handprint is not like anyone else’s. God made each person different, and He knows everything about you! **Jesus is the Good Shepherd** who calls His sheep by name. Those who trust in Jesus are His sheep. He said, “I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me. My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me. I give them life forever.” I pray that each of you will trust and follow Jesus!

Try a new snack

Before the session, visit the international section of your grocery store and choose a few foods for preschoolers to try, such as naan bread from South Asia, nori (toasted seaweed used for sushi wraps), chips or crackers in different flavors, and imported candy. Be sure to include maple syrup or a maple-flavored cookie to represent Canada.

Post an allergy alert. Wash hands. Encourage children to sample the snacks as they wish, but do not force children to eat something they do not want to eat.

Say • These are snacks from other countries. People from many different countries live in the one city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. People in God’s kingdom love all people, no matter where they come from or where they live. We can love people from all over the world. ***What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom.***