

Grades 3-4

The Good Shepherd

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
John 10:11-18

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Easter 4

Lesson Focus
Jesus cares for us.

Bible Memory Verse
**I am the good shepherd.
I know my own and my
own know me.
John 10:14**



gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids try a circle activity to learn the Bible Memory Verse (BMV).	Activity Page 	Marker, chart paper, masking tape, pencils
Opening Conversation Kids review previous week, build relationships, and review the BMV.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	Pencils
Opening Prayer Kids try to follow their shepherd about during a brief prayer about a shepherd and sheep.	None	None

open the bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Good Shepherd Story Kids read the story.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils
Safe from Danger! Kids read and discuss the contemporary story retelling about the firefighter.	Leaflets	None
What Makes a Good Shepherd Good? Kids do the word scramble related to the story to decode a secret message.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils

activate faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Fun Facts Kids play a game to learn lots of facts about sheep.	Leaflets	None
Peep's Lost Sheep Kids find flocks of sheep to discover a hidden message.	Leaflets	Pens, pencils, or markers

send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids review the BMV and look at the Faith on the Go options.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils
Closing Prayer Kids pray for guidance, protection, and care from Jesus.	Family Pages 	None

gather (10 minutes)

arrival activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the downloadable Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

Write the Bible Memory Verse (BMV) (with one small addition) on two pieces of chart paper:

"I am the good shepherd," said he.

"I know my own and my own know me."

Post them in visible places within your space.

Welcome! I'm glad to have you here today. We're going to start with a little game.

The game can start with you and two other kids. Invite other kids to join as they arrive. Once the game is started, you can step out and let the kids play on their own.

To play the game, sit or stand in a circle. Each person has their left hand low, palm up, and right hand high, palm down. Each person says one word in the BMV rhyme. As the person says a word, he or she claps the left hand of the person to his or her right. This continues around the circle as the BMV rhyme is said.

As kids get better, add two rhythmic claps after "he" and "me."

Next, try speeding up! Repeat this until kids can say the verse as quickly as possible.

opening conversation

Before we get started, I'd like to hear about your week. I'll say each day of the week. If that was the worst day you had this week, stand up and tell us what made that the worst day. Then you can sit down. We'll do the same thing in reverse. I'll say the days of the week and you stand and tell us what made that day your best day. Go through the process as described. If kids don't want to share, they may simply remain seated.

Pass out Spark Bibles. Cover up the BMV on the chart paper.

Who can remember this week's Bible Memory Verse from our opening circle activity? (Try not to look at the paper!) Ask each kid to say the verse. Then invite kids to find John 10:14 on page 1185 and place an "I Memorized It" sticker by it.

Spark Resources:

Activity Page



Supplies

Marker

Chart paper

Masking tape

Pencils

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Pencils

opening prayer

In our Opening Prayer, you be the sheep. I'll be the shepherd. Without getting up, see if you can follow me! Say a line of the prayer from one spot, then shift positions and continue. Kids should hop or scoot on their backsides.

Jesus our Shepherd,

You call us away from danger,

Carry us when we're weak,

And watch over us always.

You care for us.

You are our good shepherd!

Amen.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

open the bible (15 minutes)

the good shepherd story

Gather in a circle. **We've already been hearing about sheep and shepherds today. Let's find out why. We're going to be reading in the fourth Gospel. Can anyone name the four Gospels?** Allow time for kids to respond. **The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. All four Gospels tell us about Jesus and his teachings. Take a guess what the word "gospel" means.** Accept all guesses. **The word "gospel" comes from Greek, and means "good news." Let's read today's story and figure out what the good news is.**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Help kids find John 10:11-18 on page 1185 in their Spark Bibles. Ask for volunteers to read the passage verse by verse. The whole group can say "baa!" at the end of each verse.

Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd." Was Jesus really a shepherd who actually tended sheep? Allow time for kids to respond. **Jesus' job wasn't actually a shepherd. But he talked about being a shepherd because he knew that the people would understand what a shepherd does to care for his flock. How might Jesus be like a shepherd?** (*He cares for us, his sheep. His followers are like a flock that needs a shepherd. He knows us. He protects us from danger. He laid down his life to protect us.*)

Hand out the leaflets, one per kid, and discuss the I Wonder questions found on the first page of the leaflet.

safe from danger!

Direct kids' attention to the story "Safe from Danger!" on the front of their leaflet. **Let's read the story on the first page of our leaflets.** Read the story about the firefighter from the leaflet. Then discuss these questions, allowing time for kids to discuss each: **Who has ever wanted to be a firefighter? Why do you think so many kids have wanted that job? Why would someone willingly put him or herself in danger? Why would or wouldn't you still be a firefighter if you knew you would be hurt on the job? What other jobs that involve helping people could be dangerous?** (Answers might include medical helicopter crews, police officers, military service, lifeguard, search-and-rescue teams, ski patrol, and so forth.) **Jesus loves and cares for us so much that he died for us.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

what makes a good shepherd good?

Let's try to solve the scrambled sentences in order to find what makes a good shepherd good. If you're stuck, look again at John 10:11-18 in your Bibles.

As kids are working to solve the puzzle, discuss the following questions: **Are there other people in your life that act like your shepherd?** (Answers might include parents, grandparents, older siblings, or even friends.) **What motivates them to help you?** (Answers might include "love.")

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Answer Key

The good shepherd:

Protects the lives of his sheep.

Cares for his flock.

Knows his sheep.

Calls his sheep by name.

What makes a good shepherd good? LOVE

activate faith (15 minutes)

fun facts

Let's read over the Fun Facts on the third page of the leaflet. When you're done, you'll set your leaflet down and mix around the room like grazing sheep. The boys will be one flock and the girls will be another. I'm going to quiz you, and you have to answer as a flock, but you can't get together until I say, "Flock!" Okay—graze and mingle! All the sheep in your flock should raise hands when you think you have the correct answer.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Disperse the two groups. Read a question from the list below and then say, "Flock!" The two teams must regroup into their "flocks," decide as a group on an answer, and then raise hands to give the answer first. Repeat for each quiz question.

True or false: sheep don't like to be alone. (True.)

What fabric is made from shearing sheep? (*Wool.*)

Are sheep mentioned in the Old Testament or New Testament? (*Trick question: both!*)

Is a male sheep called a lamb, a ram, or a ham? (*Ram.*)

True or false: sheep are stupid. (*False.*)

To what animal are sheep most closely related? (*Goats.*)

Is a sheep more likely to live seven years or seventy years? (*Seven years.*)

True or false: shepherd sleep in barns. (*False.*)

True or false: sheep smell like roses. (*False.*)

True or false: a sheep is a vegetarian, or herbivore. (*True.*)

Which famous king tended sheep in his youth? (*David.*)

Is the sound a sheep makes called a bleat, a skeet, or a creek? (*A bleat.*)

Whom did the angels first tell about Jesus' birth? (*Shepherds.*)

True or false: sheep like to sleep on their backs. (*False; sheeps's bodies aren't designed to get up from lying on their backs.*)

True or false: a mother sheep usually has seven or eight baby lambs at one time. (*False; they usually have one or two.*)

peep's lost sheep

Point kids to the "Peep's Lost Sheep" puzzle on the third leaflet page. **Let's try out this puzzle on the third page of the leaflet.** Explain to the kids that they need to know each sheep to solve the puzzle. Hold up the leaflet to a light source to see a letter on the other side of each sheep. To spell each word in this puzzle, find a group of sheep that look the same, record their letters, and unscramble them. (For example, the 4 sheep with yellow headbands have the letters O-Y-U-R that spell YOUR.)

Answer Key

Jesus is your shepherd.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Pens, pencils, or markers

send (5 minutes)

closing conversation

Gather the kids' attention to close the lesson. **Today we've had fun understanding why Jesus talked about himself as a shepherd who cares for us. What other illustration could we use to understand Jesus?** (*Jesus could be like a good parent, a teacher, a doctor, or a nurse.*) Review John 10:14. **Can anyone remember the Bible Memory Verse? How would you explain to someone who didn't know about Jesus why he might have used stories about sheep and shepherds to help people understand him?**

If they haven't done so already, encourage kids to place a sticker next to the BMV and to write any notes in the margin that they'd like to remember about the verse or facts about sheep.

Next, look at the Faith on the Go! section of the leaflet together. Invite volunteers to read the ideas. **These are ideas to help us live out this story in our lives. Which ones would you like to try this week?** Remind the kids to report back next time.

closing prayer

Let's end in prayer, asking Jesus to continue to guide, protect, and care for us. When I pause, you can say how you would like to ask Jesus to guide and protect you. For instance, you might say, "in school." Let's pray together:

Jesus, you are our Good Shepherd. You know us and call us by name. You care for us and keep us from danger. Let us know you are with us this week. Guide and protect us in these ways: _____. Kids name ways now. **May we follow your voice this week and always. Thank you for your loving care. Amen.**

As you say good-bye to kids, make sure they take home the leaflet and the Family Page.

Spark Resources

Spark Bible
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None