

Focus: Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD: Easter Medley—Cycle A
Gospel: Children's Bible Storybook
Book: 100 Bible Stories/100 Bible Songs
Sheepfold
Cotton Balls/Blue Tape

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Jesus meeting some friends as they walked along and he taught them about God's way. This week the Gospel tells us that Jesus loves us and cares for us always, if we follow him.*

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, you care for us and keep us safe.
Thank you for giving your life for us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.*

Song/Movement

Come Christians, Join to Sing, track: 1, from EASTER CD CYCLE A

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Come, Christians, join to sing
Alleluia! Amen!
Loud praise to Christ our King;
Alleluia! Amen!

Praise yet our Christ again,
Alleluia! Amen!
Life shall not end the strain;
Alleluia! Amen!

Let all, with heart and voice,
Before His throne rejoice;
Praise is His gracious choice:
Alleluia! Amen!

On heaven's blissful shore
His goodness we'll adore,
Singing forevermore,
Alleluia! Amen!
Alleluia! Amen!
Alleluia! Amen!

Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

The Lord is my shepherd.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Many of us know what it is like to have a pet to feed and play with. We make sure that nothing harms our pet because we love them. Jesus loves us more than we love our pets. Shepherds were very common in the place that Jesus lived, so he used to the example of the shepherd so that others would know that God loves us and cares for us like a shepherd for his sheep.*

Sing Alleluia for Easter Season:

"Hallelu, Hallelu" Track 2 on CD Labeled EASTER SEASON CYCLE A,

Say: *We haven't been able to sing Alleluia during Lent, but now it is Easter and we celebrate that Jesus is Risen!*

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah,

Praise ye the Lord!

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah,

Praise ye the Lord!

Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah, repeat 2 times

Praise ye the Lord!

Repeat three times

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of John.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: The Children's Bible Storybook, pp. 286-287, *The Good Shepherd*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *How does Jesus describe himself?*
- *What does a shepherd do for his sheep?*
- *What would someone who was hired to care for someone else's sheep do?*
- *Do the sheep recognize their shepherd?*
- *What does Jesus offer those who follow him?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's gospel, Jesus tells us that he is our Good Shepherd. The sheep would recognize the shepherd's voice and follow him. In those days, the shepherd would walk in front of the sheep and lead them.

Jesus knows us by name. We are the sheep of his flock. Jesus asks his followers to listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow him. The wild animals represent people who try to hurt us or try to make us make wrong choices and turn away from Jesus. In today's gospel we see that Jesus is our leader who is willing to lay down his life for his flock (us). Jesus is the Good Shepherd who protects and cares for his followers with unending love.

Gospel ActivityActivity 1:**The Lord is My Shepherd**

Read the story –“David’s Shepherd” Page 94 from the book 100 Bible Stories/100 Bible Songs.
(Optional) Play the song: Disc 1 Track 43

Chorus

The Lord is my shepherd (3x)

And I shall not want

The Lord is my shepherd (3x)

And I shall not want

He restores my soul and guides me
where I go.

(Chorus)

Verse:

He makes me lie down in green pastures

He leads me beside still waters

The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not
want.Sheep Corral:

Use to show sheep being led to a safe area, show shepherd guarding them, protecting them (there is a beige one that is the wolf). This is how Jesus takes care of us. The Holy Spirit is the fence: the fence symbolizes the love and strength Jesus gives us. He surrounds us in his peace and love to protect us.

Activity 2:**Gathering the Sheep.**

Using the masking tape outline a sheepfold on the floor. Explain that the sheepfold is like the Church and the children, like good shepherds have to go out and find all God’s sheep and lead them to Jesus. We lead others to Jesus by our actions. Sharing, including everyone in play, helping others etc.

Scatter cotton balls around the sheepfold and have the children gather one cotton ball each.

Then have them line up at the gate and have each child tell you something about Jesus or what he teaches us then allow them enter the gate.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: “I Believe!”)

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who raised Jesus up and made him Lord and Christ?*
Do you believe in Jesus, who knows us and calls us by name?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us recognize the voice of Jesus?

Sending Forth

Say: *Let’s all show others that Jesus is our shepherd this week and do something to help take care of someone else. What are some things you can do?*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play “*Rejoice in the Lord Always*” track 3 from EASTER CD CYCLE A while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.