

Focus: Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
Cycle B Easter Season CD
Book: The Children's Bible Storybook
Book/CD: 100 Bible Stories/100 Bible Songs

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about an appearance of Jesus to his disciples. This week we are going to hear about Jesus as the Good Shepherd. He shepherds his flock (us) in the ways of God.

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.

Thank you, God, for your love that is always with us. Helps us to show your love to others as Jesus shows us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Song/Movement

Join in the Dance, track:1, from Easter Season Cycle B CD

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. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

Join in the dance of the earth's
jubilation! This is the feast of the
love of God.
Shout from the heights to the ends
of creation: Jesus the Savior is risen
from the grave!
1. Wake, O people; sleep no longer,
greet the breaking day!
Christ, Redeemer, Lamb and Lion,
turns the night away!

2. All creation, like a mother, labors
to give birth.
Soon the pain will be forgotten, joy
for all the earth!
3. Now our shame becomes our
glory on this holy tree.
Now the reign of death is ended;
now we are set free!

Alternate Creative Movement

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

Memory Verse

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

I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

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

Say: *Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He call us to be his sheep. Jesus leads us to what is good, like a shepherd leads his sheep to good grazing grass and clean drinking water. We are smart sheep if we trust and follow our Good Shepherd.*

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:

- *Why does Jesus call himself the “good shepherd?”*
- *How does a good shepherd care for his sheep?*
- *What does Jesus do for his flock?*
- *How does Jesus know his sheep?*
- *How do you feel knowing that Jesus is watching over you?*
- *How do people show love for you?*
- *How do you show love for others?*
- *How does God show love for you?*
- *How do you show love for God?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's gospel Jesus describes his love for those who belong to him. Jesus compares himself to a good shepherd who cares for his sheep. Jesus lays down his life for his sheep. This passage uses the image of shepherd to describe God's love. A good shepherd takes good care of his sheep. God truly loves and cares for us. Jesus tells us that he is a good shepherd. He loves and cares for us like God does. We are like sheep that listen to Jesus' voice and belong to the one family of God.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

The Good Shepherd Says:

This game is played like Simons Says. The good shepherd (you) gives instructions. Anyone who follows a direction that wasn't preceded by the words, "the Good Shepherd Says," or doesn't follow one that was, becomes an assistant shepherd watching to catch the next lost sheep.

Sample Actions:

Hug your neighbor
Close your hands in prayer
March in place
Say peace be with you to your neighbor
Say Alleluia
Clap your hands
Jump one time
Shake hands with your neighbor
Raise your hands up high
Listen to Jesus (cup hand around ear)

Activity 2:

I am the Good Shepherd

Read page 152 in the book: 100 Bible Stories/100 Bible Songs
Play the song on Disc 2 Track 24 (Disc in back cover)

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 sent Jesus to lead us?*
Do you believe in Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us tell others about Jesus?

Sending Forth

Say: Remember that Jesus is our shepherd and we are his sheep. He loves us and we love him. We show our love for him by doing kind things for others. What are some things we can do to help others? Think about what you can do this week to show Jesus you love him.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Rejoice in the Lord" track 3 from Easter Season CD Cycle B 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.