

My Sheep

Big Idea *Jesus cherishes all those who follow Him.*

Bible Passage *Jesus Is the Good Shepherd—John 10:1–18*

Lesson Summary

Jesus evidently presented this discourse in a public setting—possibly in Jerusalem shortly after He healed the man who had been born blind (see John 10:21). In Christ's first attempt to communicate His message, many people did not understand (10:6). So, Jesus spoke to them again, this time in more concrete terms (10:7-18). The Jews were openly divided in their responses to Jesus' address—some were supportive while others were very disturbed.

The analogy of a good shepherd points to Old Testament passages such as Psalm 23. God promises to shepherd His people, Israel. Jesus uses this same metaphor and contrasts the benevolent purposes of the good shepherd with the deceitful interests of a robber, thief, or wolf (10:10). In proclaiming Himself as the Good Shepherd, He hints that the religious leaders are like thieves with ulterior motives for the sheep.

The thief climbs over the wall of the sheepfold; the good shepherd goes through the door (10:1-2). The sheep hear the voice of the shepherd and follow him; they run from the stranger's voice (10:3-5). Jesus identified Himself as the door or gate—those sheep that go through the door receive eternal life (10:7-9). Jesus explains that He is also the Good Shepherd who guards and protects the sheep rather than run away when danger threatens them (10:11-13). Antici-

pating His crucifixion, the Lord states three times that He lays down His life for the sheep (10:11, 15, 17).

Sheep with a good shepherd don't need to fear robbers or wolves. They simply need to stay near their shepherd. Children need a shepherd. They need someone to trust. They need someone to protect them and make them feel safe. Preschoolers have much in common with little lambs. They are gentle and naive. And they typically follow each other, just like sheep. As their teacher, point your children to the love and safety Jesus offers them.

Pray for Wisdom

Lord, Your love for me is too wonderful to fully realize. Thank You for being my Shepherd. Please let me know when I begin to wander from Your protective reach.

Help me clearly communicate to these children that You are their Good Shepherd. May they respond to know and trust You personally. I ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.



DISCIPLE TARGETS

In this lesson, children will...

KNOW (knowledge)

- Jesus is like a good shepherd who loves and protects his sheep

FEEL (character)

- Confident that Jesus, their Shepherd, will always take good care of them

DO (conduct)

- Follow and obey Jesus, who will lead and protect them

SUPPLIES

General Supplies

- Bibles, Disciple Guides (pages 45-48), Lesson stickers
- Pencils, markers, crayons, puppets (optional)
- Paper, scissors, tape, glue

Welcome & Worship Time

- SAFE PLACE FOR SHEEP: building blocks, cotton balls

Bible Time

- Teaching Picture—My Sheep
- SNACK—marshmallows, pretzels
- SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP: none

Disciple Time

- Teaching Picture—Looking Out for You
- SHEEP PUPPET: lunch bags, sheep pattern, cotton balls or cotton batting

Welcome & Worship Time

Teacher—Welcome each child warmly. Encourage children to bring their offerings to the Lord.

Learn By Doing—Safe Place for Sheep

Supplies: building blocks, cotton balls

(For alternate ideas to introduce this lesson, refer to the *Additional “Learn By Doing” Activities* on page 81.)

Instruct the children to build a sheep pen using the blocks. Provide cotton balls to represent the sheep.

Let them pretend to find a safe place for the sheep to sleep, water to drink and grass to eat. Then wolves come and the shepherd chases them away.

In the today’s lesson the children will hear an exciting story about Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Sing With Joy

Move the children to worship with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *Jesus Loves Me* (traditional)
- *He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands* (traditional)
- *The Lord Is My Shepherd* (traditional)
- *God Is So Good* (traditional)

Rehearse the Verse

The preschool-friendly paraphrases are based on the Bible verse. Decide which will work best for your children, or use a verse of your choice from the Bible version you prefer.

Lesson Memory Verse: John 10:14

“Jesus said, ‘I am the good Shepherd, and I know my sheep.’”

Monthly Memory Verse: Mark 9:37

“Jesus said, ‘Whoever welcomes a little child in My name welcomes Me.’”

Quarter Memory Verse: Matthew 14:33

“The disciples said, ‘You really are the Son of God!’”

Verse Activity: Consider using rhythm to help the children learn the verse. Have the children clap for a word, then pat their hands on their knees for the next word. Continue the rhythm as you repeat the verse together.

Seek God’s Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

As you pray, use meaningful and simple words from your heart. The children will learn to pray by listening to you.

Bible Time

Teacher—Bring your preschoolers to Jesus. Encourage them to apply Biblical truths in practical ways.

Tell the Truth



Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. Show the Teaching Picture—*My Sheep* as you tell or read the story. (The Bible story is printed on page 78 and on the back of the Teaching Picture.)

The story, *My Sheep*, is based on John 10:1–18. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching younger preschoolers, you may wish to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

As you tell the story, consider bringing a stuffed lamb or lamb puppet and walking stick. Talk about how sheep need someone to take care of them. When they get hurt, they need someone to care for them. When they get lost, they need someone to find them. Tell them God takes care of us in the same way. He loves us so much and knows us better than anyone!

Disciple Guide—page 45

Place the appropriate stickers (from the sticker page) on the picture as you reinforce the Bible story.

Talk and Snack

Consider serving marshmallows and pretzels. Have the children make sheep by connecting two marshmallows together using a pretzel as the neck. Add legs to the body and enjoy!

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- Who is like a good shepherd to us?
- What animal does a shepherd take care of?
- How did the good shepherd protect his sheep?
- Who will take good care of His children?

Play and Move

Give children an opportunity to stretch their arms and legs as you play “Follow the Leader.” The leader pretends to be a sheep crawling around on the floor, making sheep sounds, drinking water from the stream, and lying down to sleep.

Disciple Guide—page 47

Look at the people in each row and talk about how they lead and protect us. Have the children draw an X through the two pictures that do not belong in each row.

Learn By Doing—Shepherd and His Sheep

(For alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story, refer to the *Additional “Learn By Doing” Activities* on page 81.)

As the teacher, pretend to be a shepherd. Have the children pretend to be sheep, crawling around the room making sheep sounds. On the count of three instruct them to stop and “freeze.” Let them know that they must be very still until the shepherd touches them. When they are touched, they crawl behind the shepherd and follow until all the sheep have been chosen.

Pray for People

Ask God to help each child show genuine concern for people who are hurt. Thank God for loving you so much that He gave His Son’s life for you. Pray that the children will have a desire to follow Him every day of their lives.

Bible Story—My Sheep

(based on John 10:1–18)

Jesus is like the good shepherd in this story:

One night, several shepherds stood on a hill. They were tired after a long, hard day of caring for the sheep. “We must find a better place to rest,” the good shepherd said. “We must find a place where our sheep will be safe.”

But the other workers complained. “Let’s just stay here,” they said. “The sheep will be fine. Besides, we’re sleepy!” So, they stayed in the big, open meadow. Soon they fell sleep.

Everyone fell sleep except the good shepherd! He cared about his sheep. He loved them very much. He wanted his animals to be safe. The good shepherd looked at the little lambs. They were so cute and helpless. He decided to find a safe place for them. He wanted to protect them from robbers or from wild animals.

The good shepherd went to find a safe place for his sheep. He looked beside the stream. “No,” he thought. “Wolves might come here to drink.” He looked in the open pasture. “No,” he thought, “Wolves would easily find us here.”

The good shepherd looked and looked. Then he saw a group of trees standing at the top of a hill. That was just the right place! There were large rocks to hide the sheep. There was soft grass where the lambs could lie down. There was a good view so the shepherd could see all around. This was a safe place!

The good shepherd ran back to his sheep. He was just in time! Big, hungry wolves were sneaking up on his sheep. “Go away!” the good shepherd shouted. “Stay away from my sheep!”

The other workers heard the shepherd yelling. They woke up

and saw the hungry, growling wolves. The workers were so scared that they ran away. But not the good shepherd! He stayed and chased all the big, hungry wolves away.

Then the good shepherd called for his sheep. Every girl sheep ran to his side. Every boy sheep raced to be near him. Every baby lamb came, too. They knew he would keep them safe.

Jesus is like the good shepherd in this story. He loves His children and protects them from danger. If you follow Jesus, He will take care of you. If you follow Jesus, He will protect you. If you follow Jesus, He will be your Friend.

My Sheep (Summary/Review)

Jesus told this story about shepherds:

“‘We must find a safe place for the sheep tonight,’ the good shepherd announced.

“‘We’re too tired to move!’ the other workers complained. So the good shepherd went out alone to look for a safe place.

“‘He got back just in time—hungry wolves were sneaking up. ‘Go away!’ the good shepherd shouted.

“‘When the other workers saw the growling wolves, they ran. But the good shepherd chased the wolves away! All his sheep were safe.’”

Jesus is like the good shepherd. He loves and protects His children.

Disciple Time



Teacher—This special application story complements the Bible story. Select either the narrative or the puppet script on the following page.

Think and Share

After the Dee-Cy-Paul story, talk with your children using these or similar questions.

- What was wrong with Chip?
- Where did Dee and her mom take Chip to get some medicine?
- Who takes care of us all the time?

Review the Bible Story

Read the Bible Story *Summary/Review* or creatively revisit the Bible story with drama, flannelgraph, or one of your own ideas.

Learn By Doing— Sheep Puppet

Supplies: lunch bags (one per child), pattern of sheep face (found at DiscipleLand.com/downloads), glue, cotton balls or cotton batting

Before class, make copies of the pattern and cut out a sheep's face for each child. Give the children a lunch bag, a sheep face, and several cotton balls. Help them glue the face onto the bottom flap of the lunch bag. Let them glue as many cotton balls as they want to both sides of the bag. Show the children how to put their hand into the bag so their fingers move the sheep's face up and down.

Pray for Life-Change

Thank God for His guidance and protection each and every day.

Dee-Cy-Paul Story "Looking Out for You"

Dee loved her dog Chip more than any other animal in the whole wide world! She snuggled with him at night when she went to sleep. She wrestled with him in the mornings after she got out of bed. And she chased him around the yard in the afternoons when she got home from kindergarten!

Her parents let her take care of him, too. She petted him and brushed his fur and scratched him behind the ears. She helped her mom put out his food. (And sometimes she even helped her dad clean up after him when he made a little mess.)

Dee really loved Chip, all right. He was her special pet.

One day, Dee noticed something. "Mom, how come when I walk through the door, Chip runs up to greet me? He's always wagging his tail and hanging out his tongue."

"Well, because Chip loves you and knows you're going to spend time with him. That's how dogs show they're happy!" her mother replied.

"Oh," said Dee. That made her feel good. It was nice to know that she was special to Chip, just like Chip was special to her.

One afternoon, when Dee walked through the door, Chip didn't run up to meet her. "Chip! Hey, Chip, I'm home!" she called. But he didn't come. Dee ran all over the house until she found him hiding under her bed. "Hey, Chip, c'mon out."

Chip finally came out, but his tail wasn't wagging and his tongue wasn't hanging out. When Dee tried to wrestle with him, he wasn't very playful. He whimpered slightly and then crawled away to the corner.

"Mom! I think something is wrong with Chip!" she called. "I think he might be sick!"

Dee's mother came over and petted Chip. "Hmm...You might be right," she said. "I didn't notice that before. Maybe we should take him to the vet."

"What's a vet?" asked Dee.

"A vet is a doctor for animals," her mother explained.

Dee looked a little scared. "Don't worry," her mother said. "It won't hurt Chip to go to the vet. It will help him feel better."

Dee and her mother put Chip into the car and drove to the vet. The vet was very kind and he said that Chip was a little sick, but that he would be feeling better soon.

"I'll give him a little medicine tonight, and then you can give him a little more tomorrow," the vet said. "I know you won't forget. He is a very strong and healthy dog. I can tell you take good care of him!"

Dee smiled. "I do my best."

On the drive home, Dee turned to her mother. "Mom, I'm glad I'm here for Chip and you're here for me. You help me when I'm sick, and I help Chip! It's nice having people who care about you and help look out for you."

Her mother nodded. "Yes it is," she said.

Dee thought for another moment. "And you know what, it's even better having God take care of all of us. That's the best thing of all!"

Her mother nodded again. "It certainly is," she said.

The next morning, Dee and her mother gave Chip his medicine. And by the time she got home from school, he was feeling better once again. He jumped up to greet her and barked happily and licked at her face.

And that made Dee so happy she would have wagged her tail and let her tongue hang out if she were a dog. But since she was a girl, she just giggled instead.

Dee-Cy-Paul Puppet Script “Looking Out for You”

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The words in italics are notes for you and your puppeteers; they are not to be read aloud.

As Paul narrates today's story, Dee and Chip act it out. Paul should pause long enough for them to do the actions he is describing in his narration.

INTRODUCTION

Dee: Well, Paul, are you ready for today's story?

Paul: I think so. It's gonna be fun because I get to tell almost the whole thing!

Dee: I know! Did it take you long to learn?

Paul: A little while. I'm kind of nervous.

Dee: Don't worry, God will help you. He's always there to help us when we need Him.

Paul: Hey, it's funny you should say that because that's kind of what the story is about!

Dee: Really? Well, let's hear it!

SCRIPT

[Enter Chip.]

Paul: *[As Paul narrates, Dee and Chip act it out.]* Dee loved her dog Chip more than any other animal in the whole wide world! She snuggled with him at night when she went to sleep. She wrestled with him in the mornings after she got out of bed. And she chased him around the yard in the afternoons when she got home from kindergarten! *[Dee and Chip chase each other around the stage.]* Her parents let her take care of him, too. She petted him...and brushed his fur...and scratched him behind the ears. She helped her mom put out his food—which made Chip very happy! And sometimes, she even helped her dad clean up after him when he made a little mess... *[Both Dee and Chip look at the audience, and then look down as if they're looking at a mess.]* She really loved Chip, all right. He was her special pet. *[Dee and Chip hug.]*

[Exit Chip. Enter Cy.]

Cy: Hey, Dee! I saw you playing with Chip!

Dee: Yeah! It's so much fun! But there's just one thing I don't understand.

Cy: What's that?

Dee: How come, as soon as I walk through the door, Chip runs up to greet me? He's always wagging his tail and hanging out his tongue.

Cy: Well, that's how dogs show they're happy! That's his way of saying he loves you and knows you're going to spend time with him.

Dee: Oh.

[Exit Cy. Enter Chip, sulking in the corner of the stage.]

Paul: Knowing that she was special to Chip just like Chip was special to her made Dee feel good. But one afternoon, when Dee walked through the door, Chip didn't run up to meet her.

Dee: Chip! Hey, Chip, I'm home! Chip?

Paul: Dee ran all over the house until she found him under her bed.

Dee: Hey, Chip, c'mon out.

[Chip shakes his head "no."]

Paul: Chip finally came out, but his tail wasn't wagging and his tongue wasn't hanging out. And when Dee tried to wrestle with him... *[Dee and Chip act it out.]* he wasn't as playful as usual...He whimpered slightly and then crawled away to the corner...

[Exit Chip. Enter Cy.]

Dee: Oh, no, Cy! I think something is wrong with Chip! I think he might be sick!

Cy: Hmm. You might be right. Maybe you and your mom need to take him to the vet.

Dee: What's a vet?

Cy: A vet is a doctor for animals.

Dee: Oh, no! Will he hurt him?

Cy: Don't worry. It won't hurt Chip to go to the vet. It will help him feel better.

[Exit Cy. Enter Chip.]

Paul: So, that afternoon, Dee and her mother put Chip into the car and drove to the vet. The vet was very kind and

said that Chip was a little sick, but that he would be feeling better soon. The vet gave Chip some medicine and told Dee and her mother to give Chip some more medicine the next morning. Dee agreed. *[Dee nods and hugs Chip.]* Well, the next morning, Dee and her mother gave Chip his medicine. And when she got home from school that afternoon, Chip was feeling better once again. He jumped up to greet her and barked happily and licked at her face!...And that made Dee so happy she would have wagged her tail and let her tongue hang out if she were a dog. But since she was a girl, she just giggled instead.

[Curtain.]

APPLICATION

Dee: I'm glad I'm here for Chip!

Chip: Woof! Woof!

Paul: It sounds like Chip is glad you're here for him, too!

Dee: And I'm glad my parents are here for me! They help me when I'm sick, and I help Chip! It's nice having people who care about you and help look out for you.

Paul: Yes it is!

Dee: But what's even better is having God there to take care of all of us. That's the best thing of all!

Paul: It certainly is! God helped me tell that story! Jesus said He was the Good Shepherd, because a shepherd takes care of sheep!

Dee: And Jesus takes care of us!

Paul: Right! And not only did He take care of us, but He also died for us. And that's the best thing of all!

Dee: Kids, take a minute to thank Jesus for taking care of you and loving you and forgiving you—

Paul: Hey! Let's be thankful like a dog would! Ready to wag your tongues and your tails everyone? Let's do it!

Dee: Okay, on three! Ready...one, two, three! *[They wag their heads and bottoms.]*

[Curtain.]

Additional Learn By Doing Activities

All three sections in this lesson include a suggested *Learn By Doing* activity. However, you may want to substitute one or more of the activities below to capture the specific interests and needs of your children.

Select activities based on the ages of your children, their learning style preferences, and their developmental needs.

Coloring Page

Provide copies of the reproducible Bible story picture for this lesson (#12) for children to color. (Available at DiscipleLand.com/downloads)

People Who Take Care of Me

Supplies: paper, glue sticks, magazines, scissors

Before class, cut from magazines several pictures of moms, dads, doctors, teachers, police officers, fire fighters, etc. Write at the top of each paper, "People Who Take Care of Me." Let the children glue pictures onto the paper of people who represent those who take care and protect them. Remind them that God also loves and protects them.

Shepherd's Crook

(for older preschoolers)

Supplies: pipe cleaners, colored beads, small bowls

Give each child a pipe cleaner and several beads in a bowl. Help the children thread the beads onto their pipe cleaner. Twist each end so that the beads will stay in place. Show the children how they can bend their pipe cleaner to form a shepherd's crook. Remind them that the crook was used to keep the sheep together and to protect them from other animals.

A Shepherd's Day

(for older preschoolers)

Have the children sit in a circle and do the actions with you as you describe a shepherd.

*A shepherd loves and takes
care of his sheep.*
(hug self)

*He looks for green grass for them
to eat and water to drink.*
(hand above eyes, look around)

*When a baby lamb gets tired, the
shepherd carries it to its mother.*
(pretend to carry a lamb)

*If one of the sheep gets lost, the shepherd
will look everywhere for it.*
(hand above eyes, look around)

*He climbs over hills or goes through
streams of water until the lost
sheep is found.*
(move hands in climbing motion,
move hands as if swimming)

*At the end of the day, the shepherd will
call, and all the sheep come to him.*
(hand by mouth, as if calling out,
motion hands to self)

*The shepherd counts them to make
sure they are all there.*
(pretend to count using finger)

*When the sheep lie down to sleep, the
shepherd watches over them
and protects them.*
(lay head on hands and close eyes)

Tell them God is our Shepherd, because He watches over us and protects us.

Come Along and Follow Me

Sing this song to the tune of *The Mulberry Bush*. Invite the children to follow you around the room as you sing the words and do actions like skipping, waving arms in air, walking on tip-toes, arms out like a plane, etc. Allow the children to take turns being the leader.

*Come along and follow me.
Follow me, follow me.
Come along and follow me,
And do what I can do.*

See *Learning Centers* on pages 86-87 for ideas that can be used as additional "Learn By Doing" activities.