

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

John 10

PPT Title

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Main Point: Jesus is a Shepherd to all who believe in Him.

Key Verse: *I am the good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.* - John 10:14

Props: beautiful gift-wrapped box filled with rotten fruit or vegetables, a marble

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Teacher: Before class, choose a child to look up 1 Samuel 16:7b to read when you call on him or her. **Say:** As Jesus taught throughout the land, some people believed He was the Messiah sent from God, and other people did not. The Pharisees were the religious leaders of the Jewish people. They were experts in God's law and the Scriptures. They were supposed to be leading the people toward God. But instead, they made it very difficult for people to find God because they taught things that were not true (Matthew 23:13, Matthew 16:12). Jesus called the Pharisees, "blind guides" (Matthew 13:15). The Pharisees made up rules for the people that were nearly impossible to follow (Matthew 23:4). Instead of helping people, they judged them. The Pharisees were unkind and unmerciful men who took advantage of people (Matthew 23:23). **Hold up the decorated gift box.** The Pharisees were a lot like this box. They wore fancy robes and they looked very important on the outside, but on the inside they were - **(open the box)** rotten (Matthew 23:27-28). As we have been learning, Jesus was the exact opposite. He looked entirely plain on the outside, but on the inside, He was fully God. **Ask:** What does God care about - what is on the outside, or what is on the inside? *The inside.* Have your volunteer read 1 Samuel 16:7b: "*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*" Jesus came to offer a new heart to everyone who believes in Him (Ezekiel 11:19).



PPT Verse

Jesus had just healed a man who had been born blind. No one had ever done such a miracle before. Still, the Pharisees refused to believe in Jesus. And even worse, they also tried to keep others from believing in Him.



Note to Teacher: To gain insight on God's opinion of the religious leaders of Israel, read the prophecy in Ezekiel 34:1-31. Because these shepherds did not care for the flock, but only for themselves, God promised to come find His lost sheep and care for the flock **Himself**. Jeremiah 23:5-6a lends further insight: "*For the time is coming,*" says the Lord, "*when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. And this will be His name: 'The Lord Is Our Righteousness.'*" (This is a sacred name for the Messiah - Strong's Concordance.)

THE GOOD SHEPHERD (John 10:1-6)

Say: Jesus continued teaching. Again, Jesus used things that people could see to explain heavenly things that they could not see. Everyone in Jesus' day knew all about sheep and shepherds. Shepherding was as much a part of their lives as cars and computers are a part of ours. Most of us don't know too much about sheep and shepherds, so let's



talk about this for just a minute. **Ask:** Who knows what the shepherd's job is? *To take care of the sheep.* **Say:** Sheep are wonderful creatures made by God, but they don't know how to care for themselves. The shepherd does many things for the sheep:



- He finds good clean water for them. Like any creature, sheep need fresh water everyday. But left to themselves, they might drink dirty or polluted water. The shepherd leads them to fresh water or digs a well for them.



- He leads them to good food. He leads them past the dry rocky ground, away from poisonous plants, to fields of green grass.



- He keeps them from wandering away. A sheep might leave the flock and get lost, or fall into a crotch in the rocks and break a bone.

- He keeps them from danger. Wild animals lurk nearby waiting to attack a stray sheep. The shepherd protects his sheep.

- And the shepherd leads the sheep back to their pen each night.

Jesus used sheep as a symbol for people and the shepherd as a symbol for Himself.



"What I'm about to tell you is true. What if someone does not enter the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief and a robber. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought all of his own sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don't recognize a stranger's voice."
- John 10:1-5

Often, many shepherds in a community would share a pen. There was only one gate, or door, on the pen. All the sheep and shepherds entered through that gate. One person would be the gatekeeper for the night. The gatekeeper guarded the door and only let in the rightful shepherds. A thief would have to sneak in another way. When it was time to leave the pen, the sheep actually knew their shepherd's voice and would follow him wherever he led them.



By this comparison, Jesus meant that He was the true Shepherd, or Leader, of the Jewish people. Jesus has been proven to be the One and only King of the Jews because He fulfilled every promise that God made about the Messiah He was going to send. Anyone else is NOT the true shepherd of the Jews (2 Chronicles 23:19). Those who believe in Jesus are "His own sheep." They know His voice and they would never follow another. It is interesting that the shepherd goes out before his sheep, and they follow him. He does not send his sheep into a place where he has not gone first. While Jesus was on earth, He experienced everything that ordinary people go through (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus tells His disciples that they must not do things their own way, but they must follow Him (Luke 9:23).

The people listening to Jesus did not understand what He meant using these symbols.

THE GATE (John 10:7-21)



Say: Jesus tried again to explain Who He was. This time Jesus compared Himself to the gate of the sheep pen, and the pen stood for forgiveness of sins and new life.

So Jesus said again, "What I'm about to tell you is true. I am like a gate for the sheep. All those who ever came before Me were thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not listen to them. I'm like a gate. Anyone who enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out. And he will find plenty of food. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way. - John 17:7-10

Jesus said He was the ONLY way to enter into new life. All the Jewish people listening to Jesus that day knew the punishment for their sin: They were ALL separated from God (Isaiah 59:2). Jesus wanted them to understand the good news that He came to take away their punishment and give them new life. Jesus continued:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. The hired man is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when the hired man sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired man. He does not care about the sheep."
- John 10:13



Ask: Who would care more about the sheep, a man who was hired to help take care of the sheep, or the man who owned the sheep? *The owner.* **Say:** The hired man would leave the sheep if danger were near. He cares more about his own safety than that of the sheep. This is what the Pharisees had done. They had the awesome responsibility of leading the Jewish people, but they did not do what was best for them. They didn't care for the weak (Luke 20:47), or feed them with God's truth (Matthew 16:12). They only looked out for themselves (Luke 20:46). Just the opposite, the good shepherd loves his sheep, and he would even give up his own life in order to save one of his sheep. This is EXACTLY what Jesus came to earth to do. One day Jesus would willingly lay down His life to take the punishment for all who would believe in Him (John 10:17-18).



Jesus was talking to a group of Jewish people. But He told them that He had other sheep as well (John 10:16). He said those sheep also listen to His voice. The other sheep were the non-Jewish people who would believe in Him. He said the flocks would come together as one flock, and He was the Good Shepherd.

After Jesus spoke, the people listening began to disagree with each other. Some people thought He was crazy, but others knew He was not because He had healed the blind man (John 10:19-21).

THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS (John 10:22-42)

Several months later, Jesus was in the Temple courtyard. Some Jews gathered around Him and asked if He was the Messiah. Jesus said He had already told them, but they did not believe Him. He said that the miracles He performed should also prove Who He was. Again Jesus said, *"My sheep listen to My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never die. No one can steal them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than anyone. No one can steal them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are One."* (John 10:27-30)

Say: It is sort of like this. **Hold up the marble.** This marble is a person who has placed their faith in Jesus. That person has been given to Jesus by God the Father. He or she is securely in Jesus. **Place the marble in one hand and close your fist tightly.** The Father and Jesus are One. Wrap your other hand tightly around your fist. No matter what may happen, NOTHING can snatch the person out of Jesus' hand. **Call on a (small) volunteer.** **Tell your volunteer:** Using only ONE hand, because God is infinitely stronger than anything else in the universe, try to get the marble.

Say: Once a person has put their trust in Jesus, NOTHING can keep him or her from receiving forgiveness and new life (Romans 8:38-39).



Some of the people listening to Jesus became very angry that He claimed to be One with God. They wanted to kill Him, but Jesus left and crossed the Jordan River. He continued to teach, and many more people believed in Him.



Application: The Bible says, "Everyone has sinned." Not one of us deserves to be in the presence of God because He is perfect (Romans 3:23). **Ask:** To whom does EVERYONE refer? *Every person*. EVERYONE means every person. That includes Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the Pharisees, me, and every person in this room. The very wonderful news is that Jesus came, like a Good Shepherd, to save us. He loved us enough to lay down His life for us.

1 Peter 3:18 says, "*Christ died for sins once and for all time. The One who did what is right died for those who don't do right. He died to bring you to God. His body was put to death. But the Holy Spirit brought Him back to life.*"

Jesus gives new life to everyone who believes in Him. He is our Good Shepherd. He guides us, feeds us, protects us, and saves us. Once we believe in Him, we are safe FOREVER. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice. They know Him and they follow Him. Are you one of His sheep? Abide with Him. Remain with Him. Hear His voice and follow Him.

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