

The Good Shepherd

Lesson
23

Purpose To teach the children to trust Jesus because he is the Good Shepherd.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study John 10:1–18, Mark 10:13–16, and 3 Nephi 11:37–38. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
2. Additional readings: Matthew 19:13–15 (note the Joseph Smith Translation in footnote *b* of Matthew 19:13) and Luke 18:15–17.
3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.
 - b. A Book of Mormon for each child.
 - c. Pictures 7-19, The Good Shepherd, and 7-24, Christ and the Children (Gospel Art Picture Kit 216; 62467).

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Explain to the children that you are going to tell them about certain responsibilities a person has. Tell them that you will give the clues to what that person does one at a time. When the children think they know what the person does, they should come to the front of the room and whisper the answer to you. If they are right, they should remain standing. If they are wrong, they should sit down. Use clues such as the following:

I work outdoors.

I am very concerned about those in my care.

I sometimes have to fight off wild animals or thieves.

I must be very watchful.

I must protect the young.

I must search for those that are lost.

Those I watch know my voice and follow me.

I search for good pastures and clean water for those in my care.

Angels announced the birth of Jesus Christ to some people who have these responsibilities.

I watch over sheep.

When all the children know that the person is a shepherd, have them return to their seats. Explain that during the lesson they are going to learn about the Good Shepherd, who is Jesus Christ.

Scripture Account	<p>Show the picture The Good Shepherd. Explain that the shepherd symbolizes Jesus' relationship with his followers because good shepherds were devoted to their sheep. In Biblical times, when flocks were driven into a sheepfold (high walls topped with thorns to prevent wolves from leaping in) at night, each shepherd took a turn guarding the sheep by lying across the open entrance, literally becoming the gate or door (John 10:7, 9). If a wild animal managed to leap over the walls, the shepherd would give his life if necessary to protect the sheep. When the shepherds called their flocks in the morning, each sheep recognized its master's call. For a sheep to be kept safe, it had to follow its master closely as he led it to good pasture.</p> <p>Teach the children the parable of the Good Shepherd from John 10:1–6. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see "Teaching from the Scriptures," p. vii.)</p>
Discussion and Application Questions	<p>Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do the sheep follow their shepherd? (John 10:4.) What do you think it means to "know his voice"? Whose voice do we need to know? How can we come to know the Savior's voice? • Who are spiritual thieves and robbers today? (John 10:1; Joseph Smith Translation John 10:8.) (Help the children think of people or things that might influence them to turn away from their shepherd, who is Jesus.) Why weren't the sheep led astray by "thieves and robbers"? (John 10:8.) How can we protect ourselves from evil influences? Who else can help protect us from these influences? (The Holy Ghost, the prophet, parents, good friends, teachers, the bishop.) • How is Jesus the Good Shepherd? (John 10:9–11.) If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, what are we? How does knowing that Jesus is the Good Shepherd help us follow him? • How does the Good Shepherd show his love for his sheep? (John 10:11.) From whom did Jesus receive the power to lay down his life and take it up again? (John 10:17–18. He was able to die because his mother was mortal. He could take up his life again because his father, Heavenly Father, was immortal.) What does it mean to us that "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"? (John 10:11.) How does Jesus' sacrifice make it possible for us to live with him and Heavenly Father again? <p>Help the children understand that one way Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd is because he voluntarily suffered for our sins and gave his life for us. Therefore, we all will be resurrected and we all can repent, be baptized, and be forgiven for our sins.</p> <p>Explain that you are going to tell another story that shows a way the Good Shepherd cares for his sheep. Show the picture Christ and the Children. Teach the story of Jesus blessing the children (see Mark 10:13–16).</p>

- Why did Jesus' disciples try to send the children away? (Joseph Smith Translation Matthew 19:13.) What did Jesus say when his disciples tried to send the children away? (Mark 10:14.) What did he do for the children? (Mark 10:16.) How do you think you would have felt if you had been one of those children? How does knowing that Jesus loves us make it easier to follow him?
- Jesus said that we need to "become as a little child" if we want to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:15; Mosiah 3:19; 3 Nephi 11:37–38). What do you think it means to "become as a little child"? What do you think you need to be like to enter the kingdom of heaven? Why does Jesus want us to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Give each child a piece of string at least twelve inches long. Ask the children to lay their pieces of string vertically on a table or the floor in front of them and try to push the string away from them. Then ask the children to pull their pieces of string toward them. Relate this experiment to how shepherds lead their sheep (John 10:4). Explain that in Israel the shepherds lead their sheep by walking in front of them. In some other countries shepherds drive the sheep. Jesus, as our Good Shepherd, leads the way and asks us to follow him.
2. Read and discuss Psalm 23 with the children.
3. Divide the class into small groups. Have them think of ways Jesus has shown and continues to show his love for us (some ideas could be paying for Adam's transgression, suffering for our sins, teaching us the gospel through the scriptures, being an example, helping us when we need help, and so on). Discuss how these things help us know that Jesus loves us.
4. Read and discuss the account of Jesus blessing the Nephite children (3 Nephi 17:12–13, 21–24).
5. Review with the children any or all of the first three articles of faith.
6. Help the children memorize John 10:11.
7. Sing or read the words to "I Feel My Savior's Love" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 74).

Conclusion

Testimony	Bear testimony that Jesus loves each one of us and wants us to follow him. Share an experience from your own life when you have felt Jesus' love or when you have followed him and have been blessed.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study John 10:1–18 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give a closing prayer.