

Children's Message for May 3rd, 2020

Object: Shepherding Hook, Toy Sheep/Lambs, Cardboard to Make a Sheepfold, or, Alternatively, a Picture of a Shepherd and Sheep

Scripture: John 10:1-10 (NRSV)

Jesus the Good Shepherd

10 "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Message

This requires some background on shepherds. Using props and/or a picture of a shepherd with his/her sheep, present information about shepherding. Demonstrate how shepherds gather sheep (using a hook), watch over their sheep in the sheepfold, take care of their sheep – leading them to pasture and water, and then taking the sheep back home at the end of the day, and counting each one so they don't lose any. Explain how they watch over the sheep and protect them from other animals or humans who might steal them. Read verses 1-5 and explain how Jesus is like the good shepherd who watches over and takes care of us.

Next explain how the sheep know the shepherd's voice and that the shepherd knows all of their sheep by name. Demonstrate how people call or whistle for their pets and how parents call for their children (e.g. to come home if outside, to come to the dinner table, to help with a chore, etc.). Tell them how from their voice they can tell who is being called and what is expected, sometimes even how the caller is feeling at the moment. Compare these calls with how a shepherd would call for their sheep and how God calls us and knows each of us by name.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that you know each of us by name and that you are always calling and caring for us. Help us to follow you and to be like the good shepherd and take care of others too. Amen.

Optional Activity

Play hide and seek with your children. Have them hide and then call out to them. Have them respond with "Baa, Baa" so you can then find them. If the weather is nice, you could then take them outside (your home, the sheepfold) and then lead them to a spot in your yard that is like a green pasture.