

LESSON PLAN

THE SHEPHERD WORK OF CHRIST

John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4

Lesson Memory Verse: John 10:11 - "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

Lesson Aim: Teach children to receive Christ as their Savior and trust Him as their good Shepherd.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): I am going to tell you a story from the life of Garibaldi (1807-1882) a great Italian general. Garibaldi had set up a camp in the hills for his soldiers during a war. One day a poor shepherd met Garibaldi while he was searching for a lost lamb. The shepherd was so concerned about his lost lamb that General Garibaldi was moved with compassion to help the shepherd find his lost lamb. He sent the soldiers of his own staff to look all over the mountains for the little lamb. One by one the soldiers came back. After long hours of searching, no one had found the little lamb.

Late the next morning the general's servant went into Garibaldi's tent to wake him. He could not understand why the general was sleeping so late. The general stretched and rubbed his eyes. Then he reached under the blanket and pulled out the lost lamb. The general had gone searching for the lamb and had stayed out on the mountains all night refusing to return until he had found the lost lamb! That is in a very small way a picture of the Lord Jesus in His concern for us. In John 10, Jesus compared Himself to a shepherd that cared for His sheep.

HE (for Authority): In John 10:11 Jesus said He was the good Shepherd that gives His life for the sheep. He did not mean that He was a shepherd of sheep, but that He was like a shepherd who took care of people that were like sheep. The people were like lost sheep that were in danger of being attacked and killed by wild animals (lions, bears, etc.). Their shepherd would fight these wild beasts to save the lives of his sheep. A good shepherd was willing to die to save his sheep. When Jesus said that He was the good Shepherd that gives His life for the sheep, He was saying that He was going to die to save people from going to the lake of fire. Jesus loves us much more than any shepherd could love his sheep.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Today we are going to learn three ways that Jesus is a Shepherd to those who have received Him as their Savior.

I. The Good Shepherd – Jn 10:11. As the good Shepherd, Jesus died for His sheep.

A. Jesus is the seeking Shepherd – Lk 19:10.

The seeking Shepherd left Heaven, came to earth and became a man. He lived with the people, healed their diseases, raised their dead, fed their hungry, cast out demons, opened blind eyes and unplugged deaf ears. The seeking Shepherd drew near to His sheep, so they could call unto Him like a bleating lamb and be found by Him (Isa 55:6). Of course, He knew where they were, but He waited for them to call for help before He would come to them.

B. Jesus is the saving Shepherd – Lk 19:10.

The saving shepherd came from Heaven to rescue His lost sheep on earth. His lost sheep were those that would hear His call and come to Him (Jn 1:9-12; Mt 11:28). He is the saving Shepherd that gave His life for the sheep (Jn 10:11). He took the sins of all people and paid the penalty for them by dying on the cross so that He might save those that would come to Him (1 Jn 2:2; 1 Pet 2:24; Jn 6:37). The impossibility of the wicked to repent and call for help was made possible by the grace of the good Shepherd who drew nigh and died for them (Isa 55:7).

Illustration: Draw on the blackboard the four sides to a "sheepfold" leaving a space for entry. In one corner draw a little "shelter" for the sheep. Explain that the sheepfold of Bible times had no door. The shepherd would stand by the opening and count each sheep as it came in. Then he would sit down in the opening. That is where he spent the night! He was the door. So Jesus is the door to Heaven. Sinners cannot get into Heaven without coming to Jesus.

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WE: We must call on the Lord Jesus Christ to be found by the good Shepherd and saved from our sin. He is the only way that we can be saved (John 10:7-9; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

II. The Great Shepherd – Heb 13:20. As the great Shepherd, Jesus conquered death and is alive so now He gives eternal life to His sheep.

God raised Jesus from the dead to show that He was fully satisfied with His death as a payment for the sins of all people. His resurrection makes Him the great Shepherd of the sheep. Jesus is the good Shepherd because He died for the sins of lost people. Jesus is the great Shepherd because He was raised from the dead and can share His life with those who come to Him. Jesus' life in those who receive Him gives them eternal life. Jesus is able to raise every believer from the dead and take them to Heaven. Death has no power over those who belong to the Great Shepherd (Jn 10:28).

WE: We should rejoice that we have a living Shepherd that gives eternal life to His people.

III. The Chief Shepherd – 1 Pet 5:4. As the chief Shepherd, Jesus will give His sheep a crown of glory that does not fade away.

Jesus is coming back to earth to reward His sheep (Lk 19:12-19). They will be rewarded with positions of leadership in Jesus' Kingdom. Jesus will rule over all nations on the earth (Zech 14:9) and He will grant all of His faithful followers the glory of ruling with Him for one thousand years (Rev 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4, 6). The crown of glory also includes their citizenship in the New Jerusalem (Phil 3:20 [NKJV]; Col 1:13; Rev 21:1-22:5). The glory of the New Jerusalem is eternal; it will never fade away. The chief Shepherd will reward His sheep will glory that will not fade away.

WE: If we are true followers of Jesus, we will rule with Him. We can look ahead to great glory when Jesus returns to earth to rule over the nations. Also, we will be living in the New Jerusalem, the beautiful city of gold and precious stones. Will you be given a crown of glory? To have a crown of glory, you must receive Jesus as your Savior.

NOTE: Teachers of children in the early elementary grades should concentrate on Jesus as the good Shepherd. They may confuse the younger children if they also speak about Jesus being the great Shepherd and the chief Shepherd.

APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE: "Eliab, the Good Shepherd"

Eliab was such a good shepherd that his father gave him one hundred sheep to take care of in the mountains. Eliab was very careful so that he would not lose any of his father's sheep. To make sure that he had not lost any, he counted them each evening. He would stand in the doorway of the sheepfold and put his staff across the doorway so that the sheep would have to jump one at a time to get into the fold. This made it easy for him to count them.

One night Eliab was counting in his usual manner as the sheep jumped over his staff into the fold...95...96...97...98...99...That was it. There were no more sheep. He looked around the outside of the fold, but there were no more sheep. He thought, "Maybe I counted wrong. It looks like a hundred sheep in the fold, but what if there are only 99?" He decided to count again, but when he finished, he still had only 99 sheep in the fold. One of his sheep was lost. What would his father think?

This disturbed Eliab. He must find the lost sheep, but where could it be? It would be hard to find the lost sheep in the dark, and it would be dangerous, but there was nothing else to do. He must leave the 99 sheep which were safe in the fold and go find the lost sheep which was in danger of being killed in the mountains. So he left with his staff in hand to find the lost sheep.

Then, just as the sun was beginning to rise in the morning, Eliab heard something like a lamb. He put his hand to his ear and listened carefully. He heard nothing. Then he called loudly and listened again. This time he heard the cry of a lamb. It came from the direction of a steep cliff.

When Eliab got to the cliff and looked over it, he saw a frightened lamb on a ledge below. It was crying and shaking with no place to go. It was caught in a little bush. Eliab knew it would be dangerous to rescue the lamb, but he must try. Very carefully he climbed down the cliff as far as he could. Then he held on to a scrub tree, growing on the side of the mountain, and leaned down far over the side of the cliff

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until he grasped the neck of the lamb in his hand. Then with his powerful arms he pulled the lamb free and lifted himself and the little lamb up to a higher ledge. Then he climbed the rest of the way to safety on top of the cliff. When Eliab got to the top, he was so tired that he had to sit down and rest, but he was very happy. He had found his lost little lamb and now it was safe in his arms.

After that experience, Eliab watched the little lamb very carefully. He did not want to lose it again. But he soon noticed that the little lamb had not learned its lesson. It still wandered away from him and the other sheep whenever something else caught its attention. Almost every day the shepherd had to hurry off and leave his sheep to bring the wandering lamb back to the flock.

The shepherd loved the little lamb, but he had to teach the lamb not to wander. If it continued to wander away, it could be killed by falling over a cliff, or be attacked and eaten by a wild animal. He did not want this to happen, so he decided what he must do. The next time the little lamb wandered off he would have to teach it a hard lesson.

What do you think he did? I will tell you.

When the little lamb wandered off, Eliab caught the lamb. Then he took the lamb's front leg in his two hands and broke it. This was very hard for Eliab to do, but it was the only way the little lamb would learn its lesson. Then Eliab carefully set the bone of the little lamb, wrapped its leg and laid the lamb on his shoulder. Now the little lamb could not run away. It had to be carried everywhere. Eliab carried the lamb on his shoulders for many weeks while its leg was healing. During this time the little lamb learned to know and love Eliab and when its leg was healed, the little lamb wanted to stay close to its shepherd. Now the little lamb was the best of Eliab's 100 sheep.

Eliab was a good shepherd. First, he saved the little lamb's life and then he taught the little lamb to be a good follower.

WE: We are like the little lamb and Jesus is like the shepherd. What kind of a lamb are you?

BE (for Action): The Bible says we have all wandered away from Jesus, and even more than that, we have turned others away from Him, too (Isa 53:6). Your sin has gotten you into much trouble, and you are in danger of going to Hell unless Jesus can save you. Has He saved you yet? He will not be able to save you until you cry out in prayer and ask Him to do it, and when you do pray, you must really mean it. If you have done that, then Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has saved you. If you are saved, Jesus wants you to love Him and stay close to Him because He is your Shepherd. He does not want you to run away from Him and get hurt because of your sins. Do you love to be with Jesus and with His sheep (they are the Christians in the church and in Sunday school)? If you are a Christian, but do not stay close to Jesus, your Shepherd, He may have to hurt you in some little way so that you do not run away from Him and get hurt by your sins in some big way. If you need to be saved by Jesus, or if you need to learn to stay close to Jesus, then raise your hand and I will help you and pray with you after class.