

Good Shepherd Sunday 2024

Children's Message¹

by Rev. Kelly Nieman Anderson

Items Needed

- Story Bible, with page marked (ex: "The Good Shepherd" from Spark Story Bible page 436)
OR pictures of sheep and shepherds
- Children's bulletins² (*optional*)
- LSSI poster, postcard, or flyer

Introduction: *explanation*

Today is "Good Shepherd Sunday", our annual opportunity to share God's love with everyone, and to support the work of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).

Opening Questions:

- Have you ever heard of Shepherds? (*they take care of sheep; they are in the Bible; they were at Christmas, etc.*)

If they have no idea what a shepherd is, show them an image from the story Bible.

- What is a shepherd's job? What does a shepherd do? (*They take care of sheep*)
- What do you know about sheep? What do sheep do? (*they are cute; they have wool; they eat grass, etc.*)

¹ for a video version of this message visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQsyphdZUNs> (note: LSSI did not create this video, so we cannot be responsible for ads which might appear video.)

² Children's Bulletins are available for ELCA congregations through your "Sundays and Seasons" digital subscription. Go to Library → Children's Bulletins → Spark Worship Bulletins, Year B (2024) → Easter → Spark Worship Bulletin Easter 4a (Pre-Reader) and → Spark Worship Bulletin Easter 4a (Reader)

Bible Connection:

In today's Bible story, Jesus compares himself to a shepherd. Shepherds are people who take care of sheep.

Sheep need a lot of care and help from humans. Can anyone think of anything else that shepherds do to take good care of their sheep? (*accept any reasonable answers.*) That's right. Sheep need humans to give them healthy food and clean water; sheep need humans to provide safe places to sleep at night and play during the day; sheep need humans to shave off their wool and keep their hooves clean; sheep even need human help sometimes to safely give birth to baby sheep!

There were a lot of shepherds in Jesus' community, because there were a lot of sheep! People used sheep for food, and clothing, and other important things. Sheep were even a part of their church traditions back then.

In today's Bible story, Jesus says that we are like sheep, and he is the best shepherd. Jesus knows our names, and knows how to take good care of us. Jesus loves us, always, and even when we grow up into very big adults, Jesus .still takes care of us. Sometimes, Jesus sends us other people to help take care of us. Can you think of any people who help to take care of us? (*parents, teachers, first responders, pastors, etc.*).

Sometimes, Jesus asks us to take care of other people and pets and the whole planet. Can you think of anyone or anything that you can care for? (*my family, my pets, my friends, etc.*)

Transition Statement (if you have children's bulletins or Sunday School):

[In today's children's bulletins / during Sunday School today], you will learn more about Jesus as the "Good Shepherd" and how much Jesus loves us.

Application/ Take Home Point:

Jesus loves us and takes care of us, and He sends us other people to take care of us, too.

Jesus also asks us to be loving and caring, and to help others who need it.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) helps to take care of a lot of people every year. The people who work with LSSI share God's love with people who need help, and so we support them in sharing God's love. One of the ways that our church helps is... [*we share money, we collect Christmas Presents, we pack school backpacks, we pray for them, etc.*].

[*SHOW the LSSI materials you're sharing today.*]

Today, we're learning more about how LSSI helps people across the state, and we're thinking about how we can be a part of their helping work. You're invited to listen and learn more, too.

You can also talk to your adults after church about how Jesus helps us to take care of other people and animals.

Final Prayer: *ask children to repeat after you, if that is your tradition*

Dear God, Thank you for taking care of us. Thank you for protecting us and providing for us And being our Good Shepherd. Thank you for sending us people to help us and take care of us. Show us how to care for others, just like you care for us. We love you, God! In Jesus name, Amen!