

Confirmation/ Youth Lesson

Good Shepherd Sunday SEASON 2026 with LSSI

For use with other resources available at LSSI.org/GSS

By Rev. Kelly Nieman Anderson



NOTES:

- *This lesson, written specifically for use on Good Shepherd Sunday 2026, includes material previously published from a variety of sources, all available free online.¹*

**Supplies will vary based on activities chosen below.*

Welcome / Sharing Time/ Opening Prayer:

Welcome all of the participants to the space as you always do.

Celebrate milestones and share challenges as appropriate.

¹ <https://ministrytoyouth.com/youth-group-lessons-following-jesus/> and <https://thesource4ym.com/what-do-you-hear/>

Pray for those items which were shared as you prepare to begin the lesson.

Introduce the Lesson.

Say something like:

Today's Bible story is about listening to Jesus and following Jesus. We'll read the whole Bible story together soon. But first, we're going to practice listening and following.

Opening Activities:

Choose one or both of the following

Follow the Leader

- Find an open space and have the students form a circle, sit down, facing each other. Choose one student to be the "detective," and have them leave the room.
- While they are in another room, choose a student from the circle to be the "leader" —the rest will be "followers." Have the "leader" begin leading the circle in whatever actions they feel like taking. Some examples are clapping, stomping, making funny faces, waving arms, etc.
- Bring the "detective" back in and place them in the middle of the circle. Their job is to determine who the "leader" is.
- The "leader" may take as many actions as they like until they are "discovered."
- The trick for the "followers" is to avoid too much eye contact with the "leader," so as to keep the "detective" guessing. Once the "leader" is found out, they become the "detective" and must leave the room. A new "leader" is chosen, and the game repeats. Repeat for as many rounds as you like.

Opening Activities, continued

Listening Test:

- There are several websites that let you download sound effects for free. Visit any one of them and download some common sound effects.
- Give students a pen and piece of paper and have them write down their answers as if they were taking a test.

Here is a list of ideas for you:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Airplane | ▪ Door closing | ▪ Frying an egg |
| ▪ Applause | ▪ Footsteps | ▪ Slurping / straw |
| ▪ Buzzing fly | ▪ Glass breaking | ▪ Spinning a coin |
| ▪ Cat purring | ▪ Turning pages | ▪ Tires squealing |
| ▪ Cow bell | ▪ Rain | ▪ Waves crashing |
| ▪ Crickets | ▪ Shuffling cards | ▪ Zipper |
- Give the winner a cool prize.
Give the loser (in a fun way) a box of Q-tips (ear cleaner).

Activity Debrief

Give students a chance to talk about what they just learned.

Ask questions like:

- What happened during our activity?
(we listened to sounds... we tried to follow directions)
- How did you feel during the activity?
(fun.. confused... happy... silly ... frustrated)
- What have you learned through this activity?
(I am good at knowing sounds! ... I liked leading more than following.... I didn't like it when I made mistakes... I thought it was fun to make lots of guesses)
- What can you do with your new learning?
(accept any reasonable answer)
- What do you think our activity had to do with listening to Jesus and/or following Jesus?
(accept any reasonable answers)

Transition Teaching:

Connect the fun activity to the Bible Story. Say something like:

Guessing sounds or guessing the leader is pretty fun. AND it was easy to make a mistake! In real life, it can be difficult to hear or understand God's voice, and it can be challenging to determine which actions are best choices when we're trying to follow God's will for our lives.

Introducing the Scripture

Explain a little about what you're going to read.

Today's Bible story is about when Jesus is trying to explain listening and following to his disciples. Jesus has already healed several people, and each time, some people wonder if he is the "real" Messiah, or if he is doing "magic tricks." (Around that time, false prophets and false messiahs showed up every so often and normally tried to lead riots and political protests.) Jesus is talking here to "pharisees", which are Jewish leaders—rabbis, religious lawyers, and religious professors—and his disciples. He's trying to explain how to recognize the "real" savior/Messiah.

Bible Story:

Read today's Bible Story from John 10:1-21.

The Living Bible Translation:

"Anyone refusing to walk through the gate into a sheepfold, who sneaks over the wall, must surely be a thief! ² For a shepherd comes through the gate. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ He walks ahead of them; and they follow him, for they recognize his voice. ⁵ They won't follow a stranger but will run from him, for they don't recognize his voice."

⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them.

"I am the Gate for the sheep," he said. ⁸ "All others who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the Gate. Those who come in by way of the Gate will be saved and will go in and out and find green pastures. ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.

Small Group Scripture Discussion

Discuss the Bible reading, using these or similar questions.

- Why do you think that Jesus compares his followers to Sheep?
- In verse 5, Jesus says His sheep will run away from a stranger's voice because they do not recognize it. What do you think He was referring to?
- Why do you think that Jesus calls himself the "Good Shepherd"?
- How does Jesus act like a shepherd?
- What is the "good news" of this passage?
- In John's Gospel, Jesus is compared to lots of other things (not just a shepherd). Can you remember any other images of Jesus? (examples: I am the...)

[Leader Points to Know]

Although we are never certain what a particular scripture "means", Lutherans understand the following, and any of these points might come up in discussion.

- We belong to God and God is concerned about us.
- Jesus knows us individually and cares deeply about each person.
- Jesus shows us the way. He does not simply send us out as disciples; he models what faithfulness looks like.
- Jesus protects us from that which would destroy us.
- Jesus desires to take us from empty lives to full lives—from surviving to thriving.
- Jesus is inherently different than all other shepherds or caretakers we will ever know, even the best ones! Shepherds know that their sheep will be slaughtered, and so they're essentially caring for them in order to make money. This part of the metaphor is something that Jesus reverses – he takes punishment and death on the cross in our place.

Video Explanation

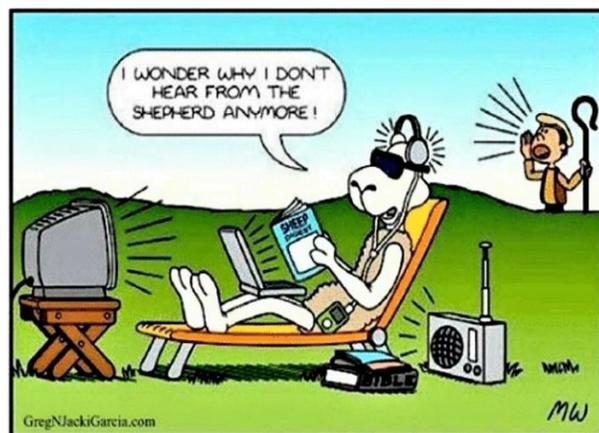
Lots of smart youth are going to ask, “do sheep really recognize their shepherd’s voice??!!” This is a great video to show them that point!

<https://youtu.be/e45dVgWqV64>

Lots of people try to call the sheep... but they only listen to their shepherd!

Large Group Application

Show youth the following comic.



My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
- JOHN 10:27 NIV

Ask something like:

- What do you notice in this image?
- Do you think it is accurate to today’s Scripture lesson from John 10? Why/how?
- This particular image is somewhat dated and specific.
What other things might distract us from listening to God?
- When do you find it easy to listen to Jesus? When is it more challenging?
- Is there anything you can do to listen to Jesus better?
- How/when can we say “thank you” to Jesus for taking care of us?
- Who takes care of you, like a shepherd?
- Who or what do you take care of? [Who listens to you?]

Optional Meditation with Song

Individual time to think, pray, and process is important, even for ‘wiggly’ youth.

Consider distributing a copy of the adult coloring image (next page) and playing this video. Say something like:

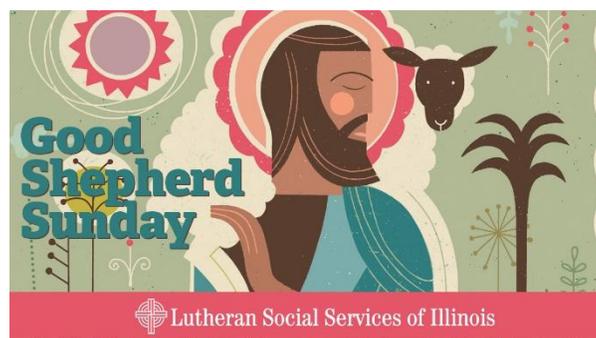
While we listen to this next song, I invite you to imagine what it would be like to follow God to a place of abundance. What is an “abundant, full, thriving” life like for you? Take this time to pray to God, listen to God, and let your heart dream a little. Coloring might help your brain focus!

“My Sheep Hear My Voice” song with video: <https://youtu.be/IDvb1tXuRrU>

Closing Prayer

Someone can read or lead a prayer like this:

God, you sent Jesus to show us what a “Good Shepherd” is, but the world of sheep and shepherds doesn’t always feel relevant to us. Still, we know what it’s like to be lost or scared or in need of help, and we thank you for always taking care of us. Forgive us for all the times when we ignore your voice or follow other leaders. Please send us good human caregivers and open our hearts to recognize you all around us. Amen.





Sheep