

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

John 10:1-10 The Good Shepherd

Jesus said:

I tell you for certain that only thieves and robbers climb over the fence instead of going in through the gate to the sheep pen. But the gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd, and he goes in through it. The sheep know their shepherd's voice. He calls each of them by name and leads them out.

When he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice. The sheep will not follow strangers. They don't recognize a stranger's voice, and they run away.

Jesus told the people this story. But they did not understand what he was talking about.

Jesus said:

I tell you for certain that I am the gate for the sheep. Everyone who came before me was a thief or a robber, and the sheep did not listen to any of them. I am the gate. All who come in through me will be saved. Through me they will come and go and find pasture.

A thief comes only to rob, kill, and destroy. I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest.

Storyteller: (picks up the Parable Box): I wonder what this is?

It is the colour gold. Something inside must be precious like gold. Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are even more precious than gold.

It is closed. *Knock on the lid.* It has a lid. Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are closed; they need to be opened up so we can see what is in them.

The box looks like a present. Parables were given to us long ago as presents. Even if you don't know what a parable is, the parable is already yours. Shall we open it? Let's look inside.

I think we may have seen some of these things before! Look, here are some rocks and some thorns. *Put the rocks and thorns over on the left side of the board. put up the Good Shepherd on the flannel board a little left of centre* ...Jesus said:

"I am the Good Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd gives up his life for his sheep." *Put the three interchangeable sheep to the Shepherd's left, and build the sheepfold around them with three of the four pieces of brown felt. The Good Shepherd Himself is the fourth wall of the sheepfold*

Put the hired shepherd over to the right, and put the lamb, stubborn sheep, and injured sheep near him. Hired workers are not like the shepherd. They don't own the sheep. *Put the wolf up near the hired shepherd.* When they see a wolf coming, they run off. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep. *Put the hired shepherd back in the parable box. Move the wolf near to the hired shepherd's sheep, and then 'scatter' the sheep onto the rocks and near the thorns.* Hired workers run away because they don't care about the sheep.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep. *Move the Good Shepherd a*

Story Materials

- Flannelboard
- Good Shepherd parable box
- Felt figures:
 - Good Shepherd
 - Rocks
 - Thorns
 - Wolf
 - 3 interchangeable sheep
 - Stubborn sheep
 - injured sheep
 - lamb
 - green hills
 - still water
 - 4 sheepfold walls
 - Good Shepherd carrying injured sheep

little away, and put up the fourth wall of the sheepfold to keep the sheep safe. I have other sheep, that are not in this sheep pen. *Move the Good Shepherd over to the thorns.* I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. *Move the Good Shepherd over toward the rocks, then move the sheep from the thorns after him. Pick up the injured sheep and put it on the Good Shepherd's shoulders.* Then there will be one sheep, and one shepherd. *Move the Good Shepherd back to the sheepfold, with the lost sheep following him. Open the sheepfold and move the other sheep inside. Put the Good Shepherd back across the door of the sheepfold to keep the sheep safe.* The Father loves me, because I give up my life, so that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life from me. I give it up willingly! I have the power to give it up and the power to receive it back again, just as my Father commanded me to do.