

## JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### Objective

The children learn that the Lord cares for his own.

### Contents

- A shepherd's responsibilities.
- The parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12–14).
- “My sheep hear my voice” (Matthew 10:27–28).
- Jesus is the good shepherd.



## Lesson Plan

### Lead-In

#### Question Prompt

Sheep are mentioned in over two hundred places in the Bible. Can you imagine why?

#### Discussion

The children guess.

Emphasize that sheep are very useful animals. They provide wool and fleece for clothing, and milk and meat. Especially in the Orient—there, where the biblical account mainly plays—sheep always had great value. A family's or extended family's wealth was measured according to the size of its flocks of sheep, and goat and cattle herds. The people of Israel also used sheep as sacrificial animals.

The metaphor of the shepherd with his sheep is also frequently found in the Bible.

## Implementation

#### Workbook, Exercise 1

Allocate roles and have the children read exercise 1.

#### Discussion

The responsibilities of a shepherd are brought out.

- He cares for the flock.
- He protects the flock from wild animals.
- He leads them to the best pastures.
- He looks for the sheep that have strayed.

Shepherds had a great responsibility and therefore were greatly respected.

The Lord Jesus also once spoke about the responsibility of a shepherd.

#### Bible

Matthew 18:12–14:

*“How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of our Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”*

The disciples were able to understand this illustration well.



**Question Prompt**

However, this is not about the story of a lost sheep which the shepherd looked for and brought back again. Jesus is telling a parable here which also has significance for us.

What could the Lord Jesus have meant?

**Discussion**

The children guess how this parable is to be interpreted.

Supplement, if necessary.

- The one hundred sheep can be compared to God's children.
- The lost sheep is a child of God which turned away from the Lord and is pursuing his or her own ways. He or she is no longer in the community of God's children.
- The shepherd represents Jesus Christ who looks after all of God's children. If a child of God strays, he endeavours to lead him or her back into the community.

**Workbook, Exercise 2**

The children do the exercise.

**Discussion**

During the ensuing discussion, the following points are elaborated on:

- We are the "sheep" of Christ.
- To "hear his voice" means to listen to the Lord's word which we hear in the divine services.
- "I know them" means that each and every one of us is important to him. The Lord knows our characteristics, but also our concerns, wishes, requests, etc. and gives time and attention to them.
- "They follow me" means that we allow the Lord to lead us.
- "I give unto them eternal life" means that Jesus Christ ensures that we are able to be in God's kingdom for ever.
- "They shall never perish" means that the Lord Jesus protects us.
- "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" means that the Devil cannot separate us from the Lord.

Discuss with the children that the Lord's promises are connected to our following him. The Lord does not force us to follow; however, we are resolved to remain in his hand.

