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THEME

2 Jesus Guides Me

Focus

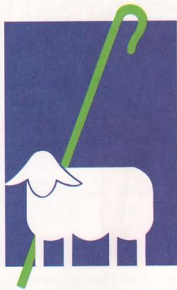
To help the children discover that God gives them parents, teachers, and other adults to guide them

To help the children know that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, guides us along the path to God

Reflection

How should we treat people who differ from us in color, education, social background? What do we owe our employers? Must we always tell the truth? A variety of elements influence these and other moral decisions we make. We are influenced by law, by our education and background, by life in human society. We are also influenced by personal conscience. As we try to strike a balance between all these elements, our growth as free and responsible decision makers takes place.

The moral decisions of young children depend chiefly on what is suggested to them by their parents and teachers, on the rules of good manners, and on accepted social customs. The obedience young children give to those whom God has placed at their side to guide them expresses their obedience to the will of God. Normally, young children do God's will by listening to their parents and teachers and doing what their parents and others have a right to ask. By trying to bring joy and happiness to these adults, children discover inner peace and contentment.



Theme 2 announces to the children the good news that God guides them through people who love them. We use the image of the good shepherd to help the children discover that their obedience to God is expressed in their desire to listen to their parents and teachers as they teach what is good. Parents and teachers are indeed the good shepherds of their children.

In Theme 2 we announce to the children the good news that they will be guided by God's word. Special emphasis is placed on the words of Jesus that show us the way to God. Little by little, these statements should help the children live according to God's Spirit of love.

Finally, we present the priest as the shepherd of the whole community of Christ. His role is to guide us, to help us freely choose what is good.

Materials Needed: *The Good Shepherd* child's book ■ pictures or slides of shepherds (or use page 8 of the child's book) ■ record player ■ five large sheets of paper with sayings from pages 12 and 13 of the child's book ■ magazine pictures of people sharing, caring, praying, and so on ■ scissors ■ paste ■ felt-tip pens ■ Bible

Welcoming the Children

Welcome the children into the group by greeting each child personally. Encourage the children to talk about how they belong to the Christian community. Allow the children to share their artwork on page 9. Be responsive and warm about their work and comments.

Introducing the Theme

Use pictures and slides of shepherds along with the following sample dialogue to help the children understand the role of a shepherd.

- This person is a shepherd. He or she makes sure that the sheep are safe and have enough to eat and drink. When the sheep get too hot, the shepherd leads them to a shady place where they can rest. When the sun goes down, the shepherd leads the sheep back to a safe place where no harm can come to them.
- Even though there may be one hundred sheep, the shepherd knows each one of them. If even one sheep gets lost, the shepherd will look until it is found. If one of the little lambs begins to wander, the shepherd will call it back, saying, "Come back with me. Stay close to me. Do what I tell you so that you will always be safe and happy." The sheep follow because they trust the shepherd as their best friend.

Explain to the children that people we know can be like shepherds to us. Ask the children for some examples of people who are good shepherds. Have the children explain what these shepherds do for others. Compliment them on their understanding of the role of shepherds as exemplified by parents, teachers, and community leaders.

Direct the discussion to a consideration of Jesus as the good shepherd, using the following meditation as a guide.

- Jesus tells us that he is our good shepherd. He knows each of us and cares about everything we do. Jesus wants to guide us along the right path to God. Jesus wants us to be happy and close to God and each other.

Read to the children the following adaptation of Psalm 23. Invite them to say the response: "The Lord is my shepherd."

Catechist: The Lord is my shepherd.
He takes care of me.
He watches over me.

All: The Lord is my shepherd.

Catechist: He guides me along the right path.
He is always with me.
I will not be afraid.

All: The Lord is my shepherd.

Catechist: With his help, I will try to love everyone.
I shall be happy forever and ever.

All: The Lord is my shepherd.

2 Jesus Guides Me



10

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Discussing the Picture Study Remember to consider the various home situations of the children when doing the picture study discussion or any of the other activities in this lesson. Because home situations may vary, we will use *family* rather than *parents* whenever possible.

Direct the children to open their books to page 10. Discuss the following questions.

- What do we call the person in the large photograph?
- How do shepherds or sheep ranchers care for their sheep?

- What do you see in the other photographs?
- How are the people caring for the children?

Reviewing Explain that God gives us mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, coaches, and other adults to care for us. They, like a good shepherd, help us to grow and be happy.

Recall with the children that in the previous lesson they learned that being in charge involves caring.



People who love me show me
how to be happy.

People who love me care about
what I do. They spend time with me.
They help me learn what is right and
what is wrong.

People who love me guide me.
They keep me safe from harm.
They show me how to be happy.



Draw a picture of a person who guides you.

11

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Focusing Read aloud the summary sentence at the top of page 11. Ask the children to tell you about learning something that made them happy, such as learning to read, to play ball, or to ride a bike. Guide the discussion by asking questions such as these.

- When did you first learn this skill?
- Who taught you this skill?

Reading Ask a volunteer to read aloud the text on page 11. Tell the children that you are happy to see that so many people are loving, guiding, and caring for them.

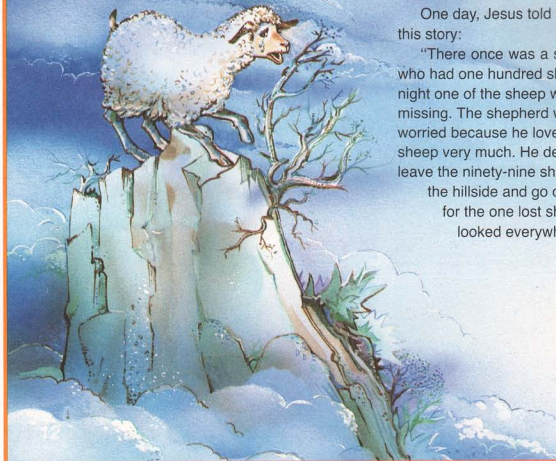
Drawing Give the children sufficient time to do the drawing activity on page 11. Invite the children to explain their drawings. Affirm the children on their art work and willingness to share.

Praying When the children have finished their drawings, lead them in a prayer of thanks.

I thank you, God, for _____, who loves and cares for me by teaching me to _____.



The lost sheep is found.



The Story of the Good Shepherd

One day, Jesus told his friends this story:

"There once was a shepherd who had one hundred sheep. One night one of the sheep was missing. The shepherd was very worried because he loved all his sheep very much. He decided to leave the ninety-nine sheep on the hillside and go off to look for the one lost sheep. He looked everywhere.

SCRIPTURE

Discussing Begin this section of the lesson by asking the children if they have ever lost a pet, a favorite toy, an article of clothing. Follow up by asking how they felt when they found what had been lost.

Focusing Direct the children to read aloud with you the summary sentence on page 12. Allow the children to share with you and the class how they think the sheep might have gotten lost.

Sharing the Word of God Tell the children that you are going to read to them a story that Jesus told. Read the story from Matthew's gospel, as adapted on pages 12–13.

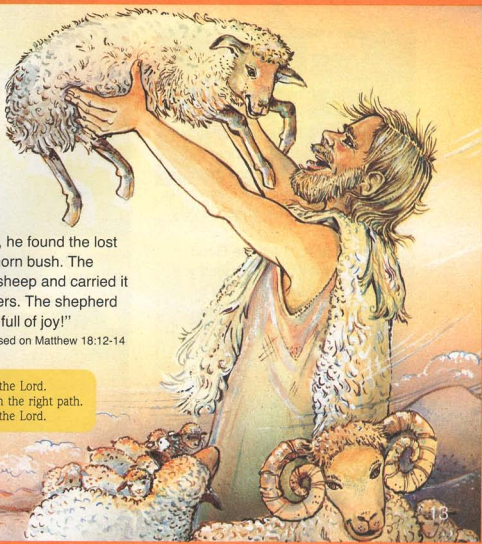
Reflecting on the Word of God After the story, recall with the children the role of a shepherd. Ask the children to share with the group how they think Jesus is like the good shepherd in the story.

After a long time, he found the lost sheep caught in a thorn bush. The shepherd freed the sheep and carried it home on his shoulders. The shepherd and the sheep were full of joy!"

Based on Matthew 18:12-14



My shepherd is the Lord.
He guides me on the right path.
My shepherd is the Lord.



SCRIPTURE

Responding to God's Word Invite the children to listen carefully to the scriptural antiphon as you play it on the record player, using the sound sheet provided. Encourage the children to read the words of the antiphon found on page 13 as they listen to the recording. When the children are comfortable with the melody, play the instrumental version of the antiphon. Encourage the children to sing along. You may wish to add gestures to the words of the antiphon.

My shepherd: Point to self.

is the Lord: Raise hands.

He guides me on the right path:

Hold wrist with free hand, as in leading, while walking slowly forward.

My shepherd: Point to self.

is the Lord: Raise hands.

Slowly F B^b F Fine C F B^b D.C. al Fine
C

My Shep-herd is the Lord. He guides me on the right _ path.

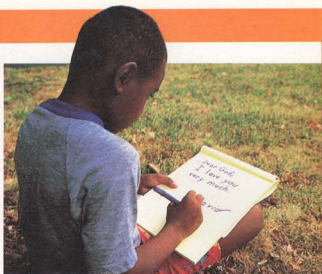
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Jesus cares for me. Jesus calls me to care for others.

The story of the Good Shepherd is a wonderful story of how Jesus cares for us. He cares for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. A shepherd guides his sheep. He keeps them safe from harm. He knows each of his sheep by name. Every sheep is very special to him.

Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd. I want you to be happy. If you listen to my voice, you will be happy. I will guide you. Listen to my call."



Happy are you if you love God with all your heart.

Happy are you if you care for other people.



PERSONAL RESPONSE

Focusing Consider again the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Jesus wants us to be happy and close to God. Jesus guides us with his words along the right path to God. Read aloud the summary sentences at the top of page 14. Tell the children that they will hear a special message from Jesus, their good shepherd.

Reading Read aloud the text at the top of page 14. After reading the text, allow volunteers to read it aloud again, while the others read along silently.

Sharing Share some of your experiences of caring, helping, and forgiving that left you feeling joyful and at peace. Impress on the children that the words

of Jesus that they just read tell us what real happiness is. Real happiness makes us feel joyful when we care for and forgive others. Ask the children to give some examples of people helping and forgiving others.

Creating a Collage On large sheets of newsprint, print each of the "Happy are you" statements found on pages 14 and 15. Supply the children with scissors and several magazines. Ask the children to find photographs in the magazines that show people sharing, praying, forgiving, and listening. As the children find the photographs, paste them onto the appropriate chart. Display the completed collages.

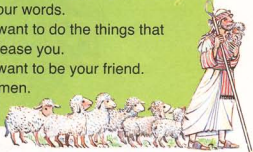


Happy are you if you forgive people who hurt you.



Happy are you if you listen to my words and obey them.

Jesus,
fill my heart with your words.
Help me always to listen to
your words.
I want to do the things that
please you.
I want to be your friend.
Amen.



15

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Reading and Discussing Read each of the “Happy are you” statements aloud. After each statement, encourage the children to respond to questions such as the following.

Happy are you if you love God with all your heart.

- How is the boy in the photograph showing his love for God?
- What kinds of things do you like to tell God?

Happy are you if you care for other people.

- How are the girls in the photo showing care?

- Whom do you care for?

Happy are you if you forgive people who hurt you.

- How do you show forgiveness when people hurt you?

Happy are you if you listen to my words and obey them.

- When do you listen to the words of Jesus?

Praying To complete this part of the lesson, pray aloud the prayer found on page 15.



The Church guides us.

In the Christian community there are many people who guide me.

Remember

Jesus guides me as a good shepherd guides his sheep.
Jesus calls me to listen to his words and follow him.

Reader of
God's Word

Music Leader

Scouts

Catechist

Priest

Bishop

Parents



Draw lines to match the Christian community leaders with their names.

16

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Focusing Prepare the children for this part of the lesson by directing their attention to the summary sentence at the top of page 16. Ask a volunteer to read this sentence aloud.

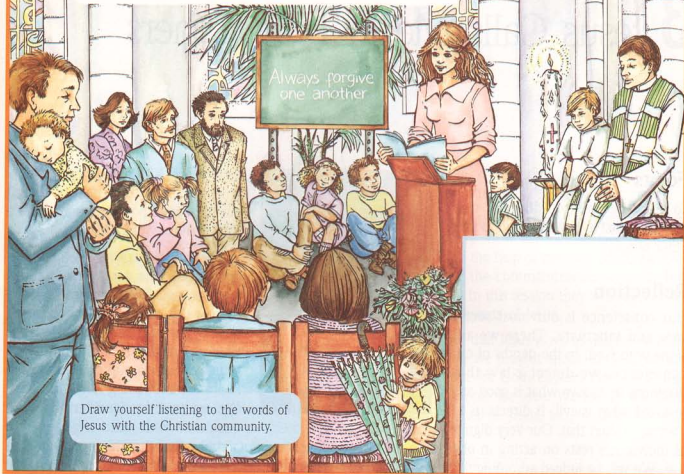
Discovering Leaders Guide the children through the activity on page 16. Discuss with the children the various people in the illustration and the special ways they guide others in the Christian community. Ask the children's help in naming individuals in your local parish and diocese who perform these ministries.

Sharing Share with the children a time in your life when your parents, a teacher, a priest, older friend, or a sibling helped guide you in knowing the difference between right and wrong. Describe how what we *learn* becomes what we *live* and the basis

for making loving choices rather than unloving choices throughout our lives.

Teaching Open a Bible and show it to the children. Tell them that a long time ago there were many Christian communities in which the people were guided by Jesus' words. They would tell the stories of Jesus to each other whenever they gathered together. When the people heard these stories of Jesus, they believed that it was Jesus himself, through his Spirit, who was guiding them on the right path to God. Because the people wanted everyone to know Jesus as they knew him, they decided to write down these stories. In that way others would come to know Jesus, and his stories would not be forgotten. This collection of stories became known as the gospels. The word *gospel* means "good news."

Our Christian community listens to the words of Jesus.
His words guide me and show me the way.



Draw yourself listening to the words of Jesus with the Christian community.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Discovering the Bible Show the children where the four gospels are located in the New Testament section of the Bible. Ask these questions.

- Do you have a family Bible?
- What is your favorite story of Jesus?
- Have you ever heard your favorite story of Jesus read at church?
- Who reads these stories to you at home? At religious class? At church?
- Do the stories remind you to make good choices?

Remembering Read aloud with the children the Remember statement on page 16. You may want the children to memorize these important sentences before the next class.

Discussing and Drawing Give the children time to study the illustration on page 17. Ask them to tell you what they think is happening in the illustration. (The Christian community is listening to the words of Jesus.) Guide the children in an awareness that the Christian community often gathers together, just as those Christian communities gathered together long ago to tell the stories of Jesus. And, just like long ago, we too believe that Jesus himself is telling these stories to us, through his Spirit.

If time permits, allow the children to draw themselves into the illustration. Remind them that whenever they listen to or read the stories of Jesus, his words are guiding them safely on the joyful path to God.