

# The Good Shepherd

Lesson 24

## Bible Story

Luke 15:3-7

## Teacher Challenge

One present-day shepherd told his pastor that God's use of sheep as a metaphor for His people is not complimentary: Domestic sheep cannot fend for themselves. They need watching over almost every minute. Without a good and capable shepherd, the sheep may get lost and eaten by predators, or they may eat too much or the wrong things, get sick and die. This description may not be complimentary, but it is apt; and we are in need of a loving Shepherd to watch over us and guide us in the right path.

- ➔ How have you sensed God's guidance and protection in your life?
- ➔ What do you do to stay in touch with the leading of the Good Shepherd?

You don't have to know exactly where you're going or how you're going to get there or what you'll do when you get there. You can rest in the knowledge that God is leading and guiding and providing every step of your way. Allow God's love to flow through you to others as you treat them with the same kindness that the Good Shepherd treats you with. Your kindness shows God's love and care to the young children in your class.

**God's Word**  
"We love because he first loved us."  
1 John 4:19

**God's Word and Me**  
God loves me and I can show His  
love and kindness to others.

## Teacher's Planning

1. Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them. For tips on schedule planning, see page 9.
2. Plan who will lead each center, making sure to have one adult for approximately every six children. For staffing tips and ideas, see page 12.



# Play to Learn

Lesson 24

## Active Game Center: Balance Spoons

### Collect

Bible, cotton balls, cardboard box, plastic spoons.

### Prepare

Hide cotton balls throughout room (on floor, desks, chairs, bookshelves, etc.). Open cardboard box and place in center of the activity area.

### Do

1. Distribute plastic spoons to children. Children find cotton balls and carry them on spoons and drop them into cardboard box.
2. Continue until all the cotton balls have been found. Hide balls and play again.

### Talk About

- ➔ **Our Bible story tells us of a shepherd who searched for one of his sheep when it was lost. Let's play a game where we pretend to be shepherds, look for sheep and put them in their sheepfold.**
- ➔ **Why did the shepherd put his sheep in the sheepfold? (To keep them safe.) What are some of the things your mom and dad do to keep you safe?**
- ➔ **Cheyenne, you were careful not to bump Owen. You know how to show love and kindness! What are some other ways to show love to your friends?**
- ➔ **The Bible says, "We love because he first loved us." God loves us! And we can show God's love and kindness to others!**



### God's Word

"We love because he first loved us."  
1 John 4:19

### God's Word and Me

God loves me and I can show His  
love and kindness to others.

### For Younger Children

Instead of plastic spoons, children use paper cups to carry cotton balls.

### For Older Children

Children count aloud as cotton balls are added to the cardboard box. When the count reaches twenty, begin counting again at one.

# Play to Learn

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## Art Center: Pasture Scene

### Collect

Bible, large length of butcher paper, markers, cotton balls, toy person.

### Prepare

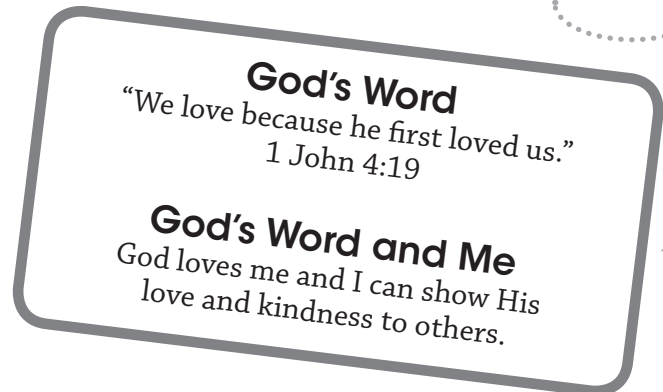
Draw sheepfold, path and hills on the paper.

### Do

1. Place paper on tabletop or floor. Children draw grass, water and trees on paper.
2. Guide children to use cotton balls for sheep and move toy person and “sheep” to act out this lesson’s Bible story.

### Talk About

- ➔ **Our Bible story today tells about a kind shepherd who had LOTS and LOTS of sheep. Even though he had lots of sheep, the shepherd searched and searched to find the one that was lost. Let’s draw some grass and water for our sheep.**
- ➔ **Why do sheep need a shepherd? What do you think the kind shepherd did to help his sheep?**
- ➔ **The shepherd loved his sheep. God loves us! God shows kindness to us. We can show God’s love to others by being kind to them.**
- ➔ **Giving Vincent more space was a kind thing to do, Kylee. You really know about being kind! What are some ways you can be kind when you play with others?** (Let someone else have the first turn. Share toys.)
- ➔ **The Bible says, “We love because he first loved us.” God’s love shows us how to love others! Pray briefly, Dear God, thank You for loving us. Help us show Your love and kindness to others.**



### For Younger Children

Participate in this activity with children, but keep your drawings simple. Encourage children to add to the mural by asking, **Where should we draw trees? Water? Grass?**

### For Older Children

Print words to label each part of the mural.

# Play to Learn

Lesson 24

## Block Center: Block Park

### Collect

Bible, blocks, recyclable materials (cardboard tubes, empty soda cans, plastic tubs, etc.), toy people.

### Do

1. Children build a park from blocks and recyclable materials.
2. Talk about the ways in which children can show God's love and kindness at the park and as they build.

### Talk About

- ➔ **The Bible says, "We love because he first loved us." God loves us, and we can show His love to others. Let's build a park and act out ways we can be kind and show God's love.**
- ➔ **Jessica, I see that you are sharing the cardboard tubes with Sophia. Sharing is a way to be kind and show God's love.**
- ➔ **How can you show God's love when someone is waiting for a turn at the swings? How can you be kind to someone who has fallen?**
- ➔ **Let's thank God for His love and ask for His help in showing love to others.** Lead children in a brief prayer.



### For Younger Children

Lay a masking-tape line on the floor to outline a park area. Children place blocks on line. (Note: Remove tape immediately after finishing this activity.)

### For Older Children

To avoid injury when building with wooden or large blocks, children may not stack blocks higher than chin level.

# Play to Learn

Lesson 24

## Science Center: Sorting Animals

### Collect

Bible; marker; four cardboard boxes, shoe boxes or large paper plates; toy animals or magazine pictures of animals.

### Prepare

Label the boxes or plates “Home,” “Zoo,” “Forest” and “Farm.”

### Do

Show children the boxes or plates you prepared. Children sort toy animals or pictures of animals according to where the animals live, placing animals in the appropriate boxes or plates. Children make appropriate animal noises as they move the animals to their homes.

### Talk About

- ➔ **Today’s Bible story tells about a kind shepherd. His sheep lived outside and spent the night in a safe place called a sheepfold. Let’s talk about different animals and where they live.**
- ➔ **Some animals live in our homes. What are some of the animals that might live in our homes? Do we have any of those animals here? Find the animals kept as pets.**
- ➔ **Where are some other places animals live? What animals live in a forest? In a zoo? On a farm?**
- ➔ **God wants us to show His love by being kind to others. Jacob, who are some people you can show kindness to?**
- ➔ **The shepherd in our Bible story was kind to and loved his sheep. God loves and cares for us. The Bible says, “We love because he first loved us.” We can love other people, because God loves us!**



### For Younger Children

Children play freely with boxes and toy animals or animal pictures. Use your conversation to tie children’s activities to the lesson focus.

### For Older Children

Children draw pictures of other animals (pets they have in their homes, animals they have seen at zoos, etc.) to sort into the boxes.

# Listen to Learn

Luke 15:3-7

Lesson 24

## Collect

Bible, Bible Story 37 pictures from *God's Story for Me Poster Pack #1*, *Preschool Music #1 CD* and player, cotton ball.

## Greet Each Other

**In our story today the shepherd listened carefully for the sound of his sheep. Let's listen carefully to hear and say our names.** Sit

with children in a circle. Pat your legs in a slow rhythm.

Children imitate your actions. Begin speaking rhythmically, first saying

your name and leading children to echo it. Then say the name of the child next to you.

Continue around circle until each child has had a turn.

**God's Word**  
"We love because he first loved us."  
1 John 4:19

**God's Word and Me**  
God loves me and I can show His  
love and kindness to others.

## Tell the Story

Open your Bible to Luke 15. Tell the story using the pictured motions (keywords in bold) or show Bible Story 37 pictures.

**Have you ever lost something? What did you do to find it? Let's listen to a story Jesus told about a shepherd and a lost sheep.**



One day Jesus told this story. There was a shepherd who had one hundred sheep. (One hundred is many more than the number of children in our class!) This shepherd loved his sheep. He knew the name of each one of his sheep.

In the morning the kind shepherd **led** his sheep to the hillsides. The sheep ate the green grass on the hillside. And they drank cool water. The shepherd made sure the sheep had enough to eat and drink.



When nighttime came, the shepherd kept his sheep safe in a place called a sheepfold. This sheepfold was a big yard with a stone wall around it. There was no door, so the shepherd slept right across the doorway of the sheepfold. "No one can get into the sheepfold and hurt MY sheep!" he said.



One night the shepherd was counting his sheep. He **counted** 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . all the way up to 98 . . . 99 but . . . oh my! One sheep was GONE! Where was that sheep?



Right away the shepherd went out to find his lost sheep. He **looked** and looked. He called and called the sheep's name. Then the shepherd heard a BAAA! *What was that?* he wondered. Then he heard it again. BAAA! There was the lost sheep! The sheep had gotten lost and could not find its way home. The shepherd reached down and **lifted** the sheep onto his shoulders. All the way home, the kind shepherd carried the sheep. The shepherd was so happy to have found the lost sheep.

"God loves us like that," Jesus said. "He is glad when we choose to love and obey Him."

## Talk About the Story

**What did the shepherd do when he found his sheep?** (Lifted it to his shoulders and took the sheep home.) **Jesus told the story of the kind, loving shepherd to help us know that God is kind and loving, too. And God wants us to show love and kindness to each other. What is one way someone showed love to you today?**

## Sing to God

**Let's sing together!** Lead children in singing "Kind to Everyone" (track 7 on CD). **Who are we supposed to be kind to?** (Everyone.)

**Option:** If children give a weekly offering during this worship time, ask older children to help with the collection. Describe one or two ministries your church supports and explain to children how the money they are giving will be used to show God's love and kindness to others.

## Hear and Say God's Word

Holding your Bible open to 1 John 4:19, say verse aloud. **This verse tells us that God loves us. God's love is so great we want to love Him and love others, too!** Lead children in repeating verse as children clap their hands on each word. Vary the motion by having children stomp their feet, flap their arms, tap their heads, slap their knees, etc.

## Pray to God

Ask children to suggest ways to be kind. Pray, including several of their suggestions in the prayer.

**Option:** Print children's suggestions of ways to be kind. Place list where parents can read it when they pick up their children.

## Praise to God

Children sit in a circle. As you play "Let Us Love" (track 11 on CD), children pass a cotton ball around the circle. When the music stops, child holding cotton ball completes this sentence, "I can be kind and show God's love when I share (child names item)."

## Bible Story Activity Pages Center

### Collect

A copy of Activity 37 from *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages #1* for yourself and each child, crayons or markers; optional—small twigs, glue.

### Do

Lead children to complete pages following the instructions. (Optional: Children glue twigs to trees.) Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages and retell the story.

## Preschool Puzzle Center

### Collect

Copies of Puzzles 47 and 48 (p. 101 and p. 103 from *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*) for each child; pencils, crayons or markers.

### Do

Children complete the puzzles and color pages. Use the conversation suggestions on the pages.

## Read-Aloud Story Center

### Collect

A copy of Story Picture 24 from *The Big Book of Read-Aloud Stories #1* for yourself and each child, crayons or markers.

### Do

Read the story and distribute pictures. Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages.

