Preschool–Grade 6

The Good Shepherd

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: Jesus is my good shepherd. He knows my name.
Bible passage: John 10. Read John 10:1–18 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "I am the good shepherd" *John 10:11 (KJV)*.
You need: a Bible, a few chairs set in a circle with one gap for a door, a green blanket or green paper, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at John 10. Set up the chair "sheepfold" and lay the green "pasture" on the other side of the room.

1. Opening game: Little Sheep, Follow Me (5 minutes)

The kids are sheep. They crawl or walk and say "Baa!" Say: "Sheep follow their shepherd!" Walk slowly around the room and let them follow you in a line. Stop, turn and call each child by name: "Anna, follow me!" Say: "Today we will hear a true story. Jesus said He is the good shepherd."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 10. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Jesus told a story about sheep (John 10:1–5). *(Say "Baa!")*
The sheep stayed in a sheepfold. It had a wall and a door. *(Make a circle with your arms.)*
The shepherd came in by the door (10:2). *(Walk in place.)*
The sheep heard his voice (10:3). *(Cup a hand behind your ear.)*
He called his sheep by name (10:3). **Say it with me: "He knows my name!"**
The shepherd went first. The sheep followed him (10:4). *(Wave "come on.")*
They know his voice (10:4). *(Cup a hand behind your ear.)*
Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (10:11). *(Point up.)*
Say it with me: "Jesus is my good shepherd!"
A wolf came. A hired helper ran away (10:12). *(Run in place.)*
But Jesus loves His sheep. He gave His life for them (10:11, 10:15). *(Hug yourself.)*
Jesus knows His sheep (10:14). **Say it with me: "Jesus knows me!"**

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. How does the shepherd call his sheep? *(By name, John 10:3)*
2. Who do the sheep follow? *(The shepherd, 10:4)*
3. Who is the good shepherd? *(Jesus, 10:11)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said, 'I am the good shepherd.'" Teach the motion: point up on "I am," make a big circle with your arms on "the good shepherd," and hug yourself at the end. Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "John 10:11" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Sheep Come Out (5–10 minutes)

All the kids sit inside the chair "sheepfold." Stand at the door and call one child by name. That child comes out and follows you to the green "pasture." Call every child, one at a time. Then give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw sheep on green grass. While they color, ask: "Who knows your name? Who is your good shepherd?"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, Jesus, for being my good shepherd.
Thank You that You know my name.
Help me follow You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: say every child's name often today. Let the wiggliest sheep go first. If they get wiggly, play Little Sheep, Follow Me again. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

If a child is scared of the wolf: say gently, "The good shepherd takes care of his sheep. Jesus takes care of you."

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