

## Family Sunday School Lesson 4 - Outside the Pen

### Introduction:

God tending to us like a shepherd tends their sheep is a beautiful image. And God wants everyone in the world to be gathered in the same flock. In fact, if there are sheep outside the pen, Jesus says, "I must bring them also."



### Start the Fun!

#### Lying Down in Green Pastures

Watch this video about making sheep lie down in green pastures:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6ZEBhrBXR4>



## **Read together**

### **John 10:14-16, NIV**

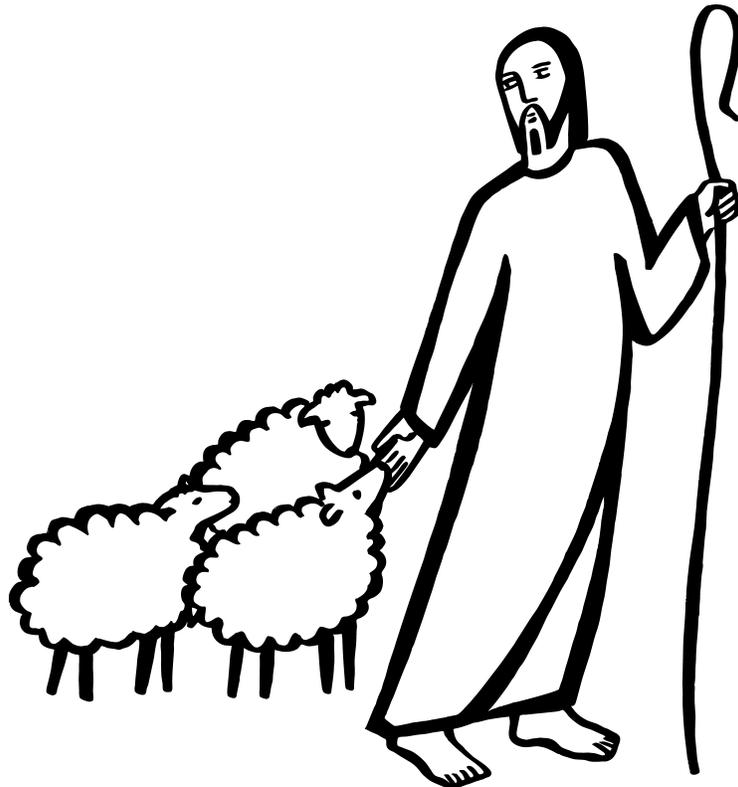
#### *The Good Shepherd*

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

### **Ezekiel 34:11-16, NIV**

#### *Searching for the Lost Sheep*

“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.



## **Discuss**

*Ask:* Ask: In John 10:14-15, how well does Jesus say he knows us?

Discussion points: The verses say Jesus knows us “just as the Father knows me and I know the Father!” Can you imagine anyone being closer than Jesus and God? They are part of the same being! Jesus lets us know here we are even closer to him than a shepherd is to his sheep.

*Ask:* In verse 16, when Jesus talks about sheep that are not of this sheep pen, who does he mean?

Discussion points: At that time, Jesus was talking about Gentiles. Gentiles were all the people who were not Jewish. Since the Jewish people were known as God’s chosen people, Jesus was letting us know that everyone in the world is welcome to be part of God’s flock, or family, not just Jewish people.

*Ask:* Both of these passages are about sheep that are outside the pen. What is God’s goal for them?

Discussion points: As the Good Shepherd, God wants all of the “sheep,” or people, to be rescued from the places where they are scattered. God wants everyone united with their flock of followers, their family of believers.

*Ask:* Psalm 23:2 says, “He makes me lie down in green pastures.” Ezekiel 34: 14 and 15 both talk about the sheep lying down. Why do you think this metaphor means?

Discussion points: For sheep to lie down, they need to be free from fear, from friction with other sheep and from hunger. God wants us to be free from anxiety and fear, to get along with everyone and to have everything we need.

*Ask:* Near the end, the lesson says, “but the sleek and the strong I will destroy.” What does this probably mean?

Discussion points: This is probably a metaphor for people who value worldly possessions and money more than God. God might have to bring them low so that they see that they need God and that money can’t provide everything.

## **Pray**

Look back at Ezekiel 34: 11-16. Thank God for all the ways God wants to care for us that are described in that lesson.

## **Participate**

### **The Bean Hunt**

#### *Materials:*

- white beans, such as navy beans, to represent scattered sheep;
- cups

In this hunting game a parent hides a number of beans while the players are out of the room. When they are brought back into the room, each player is given a small container, such as a cup, and allowed to search for the beans. The player who finds the most beans within a set period of time is the winner.



## **Wrap Up**

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows you like he knows God. He wants everyone to know him so there is one flock and one shepherd. Work to welcome the sheep who are not yet in the fold.

## **Take a Moment to Breathe**

### **Sheep Pen Breath (or Box Breathing)**

Box Breathing is a great exercise to help with anxiety and stress. Navy SEALs use box breathing to stay calm and improve their concentration in tense situations! Try it out this week and see how you feel afterward.

- Inhale through your nose to a count of four, filling your lungs with air.
- Hold the air in your lungs for a count of four.
- Exhale through your mouth to a count of four, clearing all the air from your lungs.
- Hold your lungs in an empty state for a count of four.
- Repeat the steps for 3-5 minutes. You can also try to increase the count to 8 when you are ready.