



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

**A COMPLETE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
LESSON WITH 18
CREATIVE IDEAS**

The Good Shepherd

- a complete Sunday School lesson -

In this booklet we offer you eighteen creative ideas that you can use in your Sunday school, kids ministry, children's church or youth work on the Bible passage of Psalm 23 and John 10: 11-18

Thirteen ideas for your Sunday school lesson:

- * Find the lost sheep - an introductory activity
- * Discover the wolf - an icebreaker
- * The door of a sheep pen - a creative activity
- * Who are you in the flock? - a creative activity
- * A love letter from the Father - a creative activity
- * Practicing with snails - a creative activity
- * He leads us to green pastures - a creative activity
- * Make a good shepherd's crook - a crafts activity
- * Your rod and staff comfort me - a crafts activity
- * Make you own sheep - a crafts activity
- * In search of the lost sheep - a Bible game
- * Feed the sheep relay race - a Bible game
- * Shooting at wolves - a Bible game / crafts
- * Which side of the black sheep? - a creative prayer idea
- * How close to the shepherd are you? - a creative prayer idea
- * Safe in the Shepherd's hand - a creative prayer idea
- * He leads me beside still waters - a creative prayer idea
- * Praying for the lost sheep - a creative prayer idea

The Bible story in this lesson:

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

(Psalm 23 - NIV)

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “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. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

(John 10: 11 – 18 NIV)



Introductory activity - Find the lost sheep

This idea can be used as a game or creative activity at the very start of your programme. As the children come in, they can join in. Of course you can also plan this activity somewhere in the middle of your programme.

A fun game where in children or adults go searching for a sheep that's lost.



What do you need:

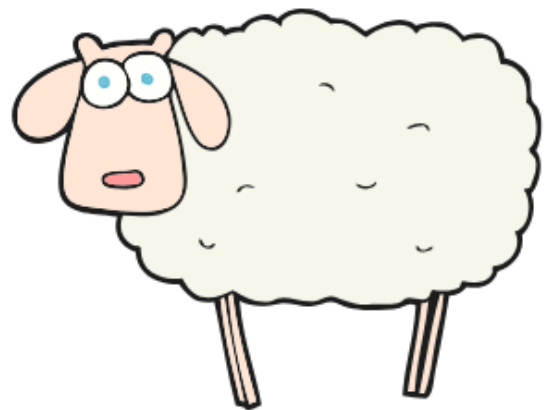
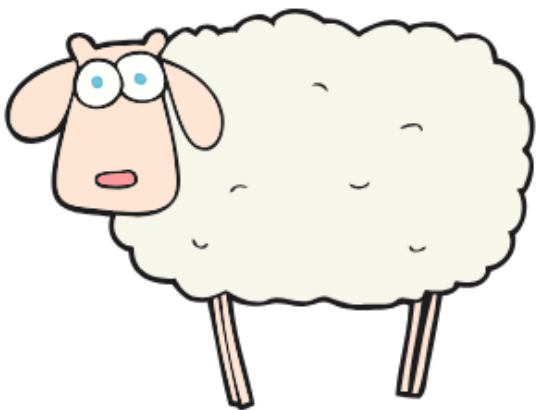
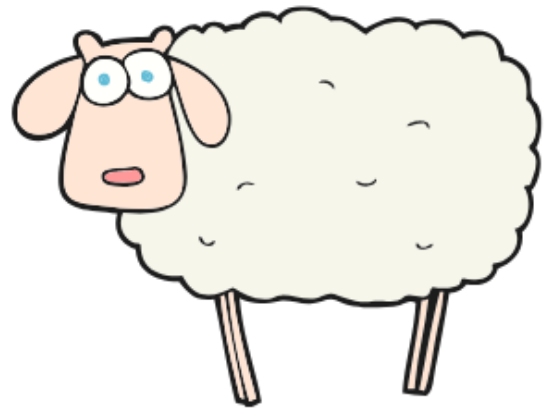
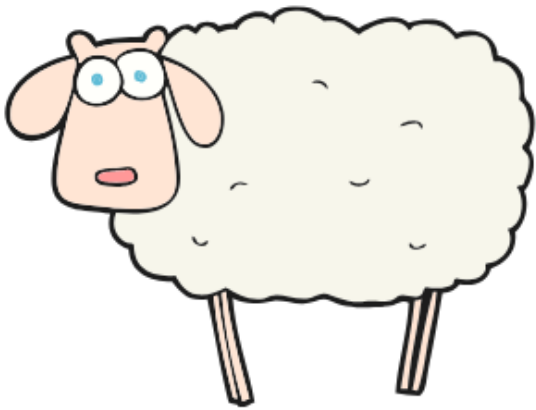
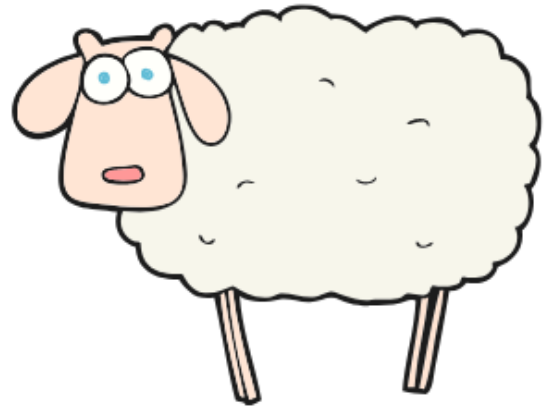
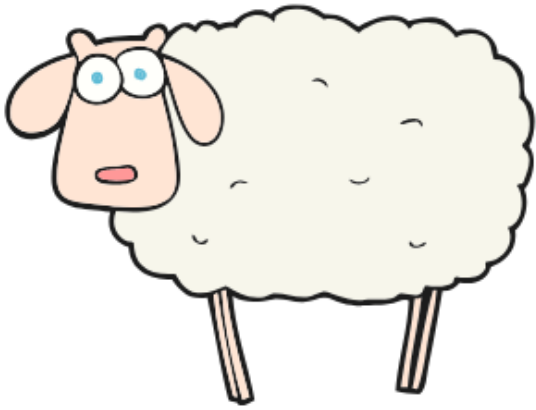
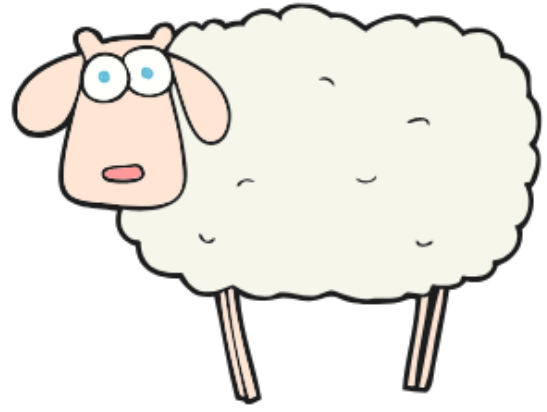
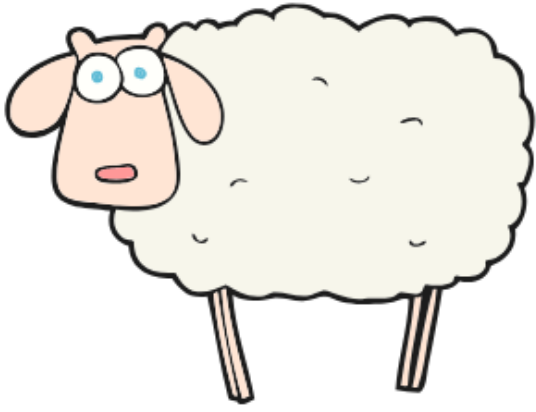
- 10 to 15 different coloured sheep

What do you do:

Tell: Are you a good shepherd? Will you notice which sheep is missing? Or will you not see it and lose one of their precious sheep?

Do: There are sheep in 10-15 different colours laid out on the table. These sheep are cut out of coloured cardboard. The children take turn to be the shepherd. While the shepherd is not looking, one of the coloured sheep gets taken away.

Ask: Which one is gone?
Can the shepherd find out which one of the coloured sheep is the lost one?



Icebreaker - Discover the wolf

A playful introduction to the theme of Psalm 23 and the Good Shepherd.

A fun game wherein children try to discover who the wolf is.

In this game we're going to think about Jesus' words that a real shepherd doesn't run away from the wolves, but protects the herd.



What do you do:

Do: Everybody stands in a circle.

Tell: One person is the shepherd and has to go to out of the room, so that he can't see or hear anything.

While the shepherd is out of the room, choose one of the children to be the wolf. The rest are sheep. Once the wolf has been chosen, the shepherd comes back into the room. The wolf then 'kills' the sheep by winking at them – if the wolf winks at a sheep, it falls down dead.

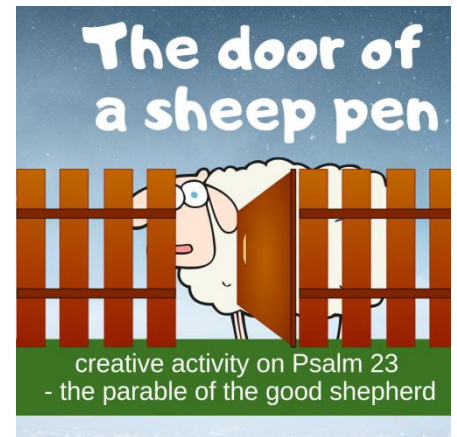
The aim of the game is for the shepherd to try and work out who is the wolf. The shepherd gets three guesses. This is a game suited to a larger group of children, 15 or above.

Creative activity - The door of a sheep pen

This is a fun activity where we're going to think about the words of Jesus: "I am the door for the sheep".

What do you need:

- a circle of chairs



What do you do:

Do: Create a sheep pen with a circle of chairs with an opening.

Tell: We have a problem. Here is a sheep-pen. The flock is safe for the night, but we don't have a gate yet. The space between the two chairs is the opening where wild beasts can get in and where the sheep can go out.

Ask: How can we solve this problem?
Who wants to show how you can make a gate here?

Do: Ask different people to try and make a gate using various objects they can find in the room.

We end the activity with the statement Jesus made: "I am the gate for the sheep."

Ask: What did Jesus mean by this?
In what way is Jesus the gate for the sheep?

Tell: In Jesus' time shepherds used to lie in the door opening and form a gate with their body – they were literally being the gate for the sheep.

Creative activity - Who are you in the flock?

A creative and interactive idea for your family service

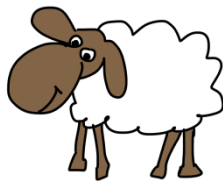
What do you do:

You can use this for a family service. Explain that there are all sorts of different sheep and people in the Lord's flock: obedient sheep, sheep with questions, a black sheep, lambs, stubborn goats, lost sheep, sacrificial lamb, shepherd's helper, deer, tourists

Through the use of three assignments we are looking at who we are in the Lord's flock, we talk about this together and then we finish with a beautiful creative prayer idea. We have done this together with all the adults, teenagers and children in our small missional church and people were really touched by it.

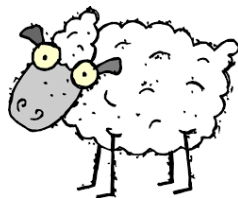
You'll find all the information and ideas below...

Illustrate every sheep and every person:



The obedient sheep:

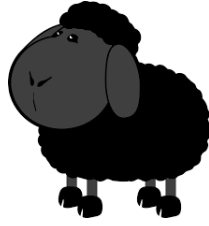
These are the people who want to follow the Shepherd blindly. They'll do everything they can to stay as close to him as possible and to trust him.



The sheep with questions:

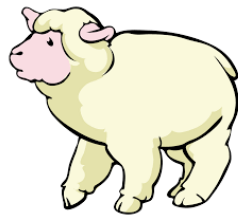
This is someone who belongs to the flock. He's a sheep of the good Shepherd and he/she usually has a lot of questions and doubts.





The black sheep:

A shepherd will add a black sheep to the flock on purpose, because he's different. At first sight he doesn't seem to belong here. The other sheep are a bit scared of him. But as time progresses they get used to him. The next time when there's a dog, or even worse a wolf, the sheep aren't as scared and they won't scatter. It can be good for the group if there's someone that's different. A black sheep is someone that's a sheep of the Good Shepherd, but feels like the outsider.



Lamb:

These are the small children or the people that have just became a part of the flock.



Stubborn goat:

This is someone that's a sheep of the Good Shepherd, but at the same time very consciously makes their own decisions. These decisions don't necessarily have to be bad ones. He/she certainly won't follow the obedient sheep the whole time.



Lost sheep:

The lost sheep is someone that feels lost and would like to be found by the Good Shepherd. These are the most 'important' people of the flock, because the shepherd leaves all his sheep behind to find them!



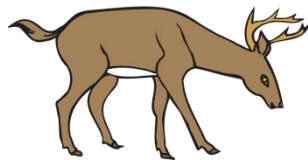
Sacrificial lamb:

Some sheep were separated from the flock for sacrificing in the temple. As Christians we've been called to be a living sacrifice. This person is willing to be a living sacrifice for the Good Shepherd.



Shepherd's helper:

The shepherd's helper is someone who has been called by the Good Shepherd to be there for the other sheep.



Deer:

A deer is someone that enjoys hanging out with the sheep, grazing together with them and someone that feels at ease within the flock, but who's not a sheep of the Good Shepherd (yet). The deer fits in perfectly, and is welcome in the flock, but doesn't have to be a sheep yet.



Tourist:

A tourist is someone that looks at the flock from a distance as an outsider. He/she can enjoy the flock. He might even make small talk with the shepherd sometimes. But he's not a sheep and doesn't feel a part of the flock. The tourist is always welcome though!

Assignment 1

Do: Using the worksheets on the next page, make plenty of slips of paper.

There are ten different slips. Make sure there are enough of each, so that there is plenty of choice for everyone.

Ask: Ask everyone to take one piece of paper, the one that they feel most relates to them at this moment. Obviously the children can take part too!

Assignment 2

Do: Ask everyone to show their piece of paper to someone else and tell them why they chose that particular one.

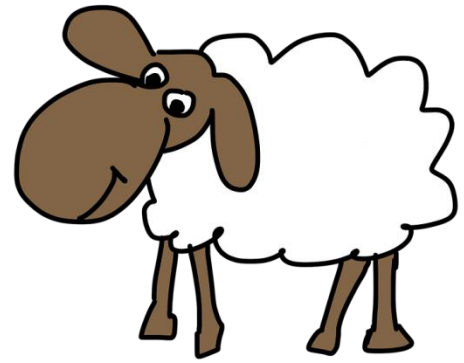
Assignment 3:

Do: Put a big cross on the floor.

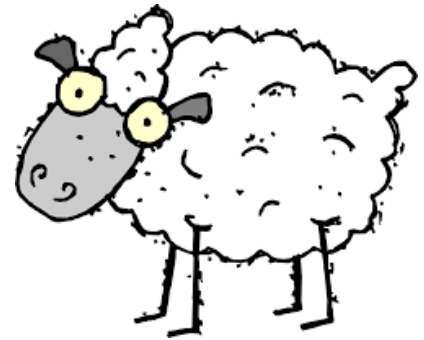
Tell: Usually a sheep lives for the shepherd. He gets slaughtered, eaten or his wool gets used. Jesus says: "I am the Good Shepherd. I live for the sheep."

Everyone that wants to, can lay their piece of paper on the cross. It doesn't matter what position you have in the flock, or which flock you're part of. You can bring yourself to the Good Shepherd.

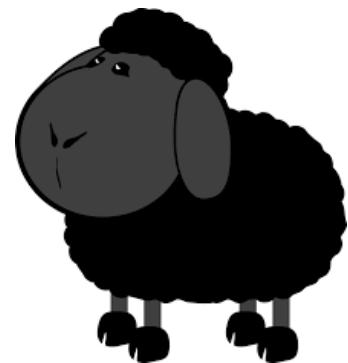
The obedient sheep



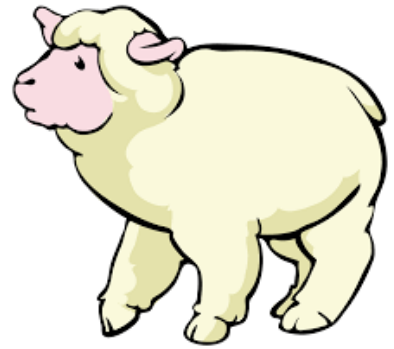
The sheep with questions



The black sheep



Lamb



A stubborn goat



Lost sheep



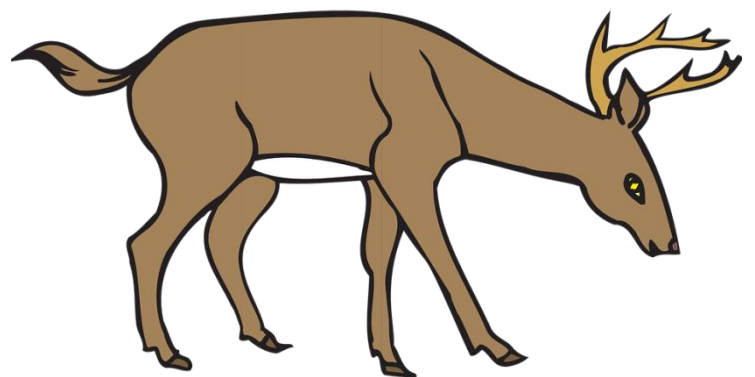
Sacrificial lamb



Shepherd's helper



Deer



Tourist



Creative activity - A love letter from the Father

In this corner of the prayer room you can find a soft cuddly sheep and a love letter from the Heavenly Father.

Take the sheep on your lap, pet it and remember that the Heavenly Father wants to take you on his lap like this.

[Read the love letter](https://www.fathersloveletter.com/text.html) and believe that these words count for you.
(<https://www.fathersloveletter.com/text.html>)



What you'll need:

- a soft cuddly sheep
- a [love letter from the Father](https://www.fathersloveletter.com/text.html) (you can laminate it to make it last longer)



Creative activity - Practicing with snails

What are the traits of a good shepherd?

Children are going to practice with being a shepherd by taking care of a Faunarium with snails in it.

What do you need:

- a small faunarium
- wet earth
- small dish of water
- a few garden snails

What do you do:

Do: We bought a small faunarium through Amazon. We placed a layer of wet earth on the bottom of the faunarium and a small dish of water. I found 3 or 4 snails in our garden with their shells on. These snails can temporarily live in the faunarium. Make sure they get some chalk and some lettuce or other vegetation.

The children can take in turn the faunarium home for a week to take care of the snails. They only need some fresh water and some vegetables. In this way the children can practice being a shepherd.



Creative activity - He leads us to green pastures

A creative prayer idea for working in a creative way with a Bible story / theme.

"He leads us to green pastures."

What do you need:

- plastic grass
- sweets

What do you do:

Do: As you can see there are sweets on the pastures in the prayer room.

You can eat one and think about what you're thankful for. God gives us so many good things.

Take the time to thank Him for that.



Crafts activity - Make a good shepherd's crook

Your rod and your staff they comfort me

This is a fun activity in which every child makes a shepherd's crook.

What do you do:

Do: Take the children to the park to look for suitable sticks to make a shepherd's crook.

With the help of sandpaper and (under supervision) a penknife, they can prepare their sticks and make them smooth. (You can always collect the sticks beforehand! That saves a trip with the kids...)

You can ask someone if they want to teach the children something about wood carving. You can decorate the crook with ribbons, stickers and flowers. The aim is that every child has his or hers own shepherd's crook.



Crafts activity - Your rod and staff comfort me

Ice lollies as a rod or a staff? Your rod and staff comfort me...

Being guided by God is not always as clear, easy or obvious as we would like. With this craft activity and creative form of prayer you can help children to think about the guidance that God gives us.

What do you need:

- ice lolly sticks
- labels with string
- pens
- stickers

What do you do:

Ice lolly sticks aren't really comparable to the rod and staff of the Shepherd. But still...

In this prayer idea /craft idea you can decorate an ice lolly stick with stickers, markers and. When you have decorated your stick, take a label and write on it in what way you want God to guide you in the future. Tie this label to the stick and take it home with you.



Crafts activity - Make your own sheep

Let's create a flock

Did you know that the Good Shepherd wants to help us to look more and more like Him every day? He changes us, in order that we as sheep will start to look more like the Shepherd.



What do you do:

On the table there are cardboard sheep, balls of wool, toy eyes, stickers and felt pens. You can make your own sheep using these materials.

What you'll need:

- sheep made out of cardboard
- balls of wool, toy eyes, stickers and felt pens



Bible game - In search of the lost sheep

96, 97, 98, 99... We're missing a sheep!

Set up a game in which the children can search for a lost sheep.

What do you:

Do: You can play this game in different versions:

- * Set up a trail during which the children have to look for people disguised as sheep, or wearing certain items of clothing to represent the lost sheep.
- * Set up a trail of arrows that the children have to follow to lead them to the lost sheep.
- * Hide a sheep made of paper or a toy sheep in the forest or park and let the children find this, you can also let some of the children hide a few sheep.



Bible game - Feed the sheep relay race

A fun Bible game about being a shepherd

What do you need:

- three buckets
- wads of paper
- tape to make a line on the floor

What do you do:

Do: Divide the children into two groups.

Tell: In the room there is a bucket full of balls of screwed up paper. This is the food supply.

At the other side of the room there are two empty buckets. These are the food containers for the sheep. Each team has their own bucket.

There's a tape line in front of the empty buckets. You aren't allowed to cross this line, and have to try and throw your paper ball into the bucket from the line. If you miss the bucket, run over the line and pick up the paper ball and go back to behind the line, and try again to get it into the bucket.

As soon as your paper ball is in the bucket, you run back to the food supply bucket and tag your team mate. He or she will then pick up another paper ball and do exactly the same.

When the food supply bucket is empty, the game is over. Both teams have taken the paper balls from the same bucket but have thrown them into their own buckets. The team with the most paper balls in their bucket is the winner.



Crafts idea and Bible game - Shooting at wolves

A crafts and game that especially the boys in your children's ministry will like.

This activity fits well with the story of David the shepherd or with the story of the good Shepherd.



What do you need:

- PVC tubing
- tape
- pieces of paper
- sellotape
- cardboard wolf heads

What do you do:

Tell: A shepherd should be able to defend himself against the wolves, that's why we're going to have an arrow-shooting competition.

Do: Take some lengths of PVC tubing with a diameter of 1 cm and tape.

Show the children how they can make their own arrow-shooter, and also how to make paper arrows.

Put up some cardboard wolf heads, and see if the children can shoot their arrows and hit the wolves.

You can also make tube out of paper as demonstrated in the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID8BoYNIIAk>



Creative prayer idea - Which side of the black sheep?

There are no black sheep in God's flock - an idea for creative prayer

Sometimes we feel like the black sheep. We can make ourselves believe we don't belong with all the negative words that we say about ourselves.

Which side of the sheep do you believe? Turn it that way up. Or maybe if you believe the negative things but want God's help to believe the truth, leave the black sheep with the positive statements showing, as a prayer.

A creative prayer idea in which we're going to dwell on the beautiful words that the Lord says about us.



What do you need:

- a big black sheep made out of cardboard with positive and negative words

What do you do:

Tell: On the table there's a big black sheep made out of cardboard. On one side are written the negative words that we say about ourselves:

I'm useless
I'm ugly
Nobody loves me
I'm unattractive
I'm not important
I'm nobody
I'm boring
I'm weak
I'm inferior
I'm stupid

Tell: On the other side there are the words that God says about us in the Bible:

I am the salt of the earth
I am the light of the world
I am a child of god
I am a branch of the true Grapevine, the Source of love.
I am a friend of Christ.
I have been chosen by Jesus Christ for a purpose and to bear fruit.
I am a servant of God.

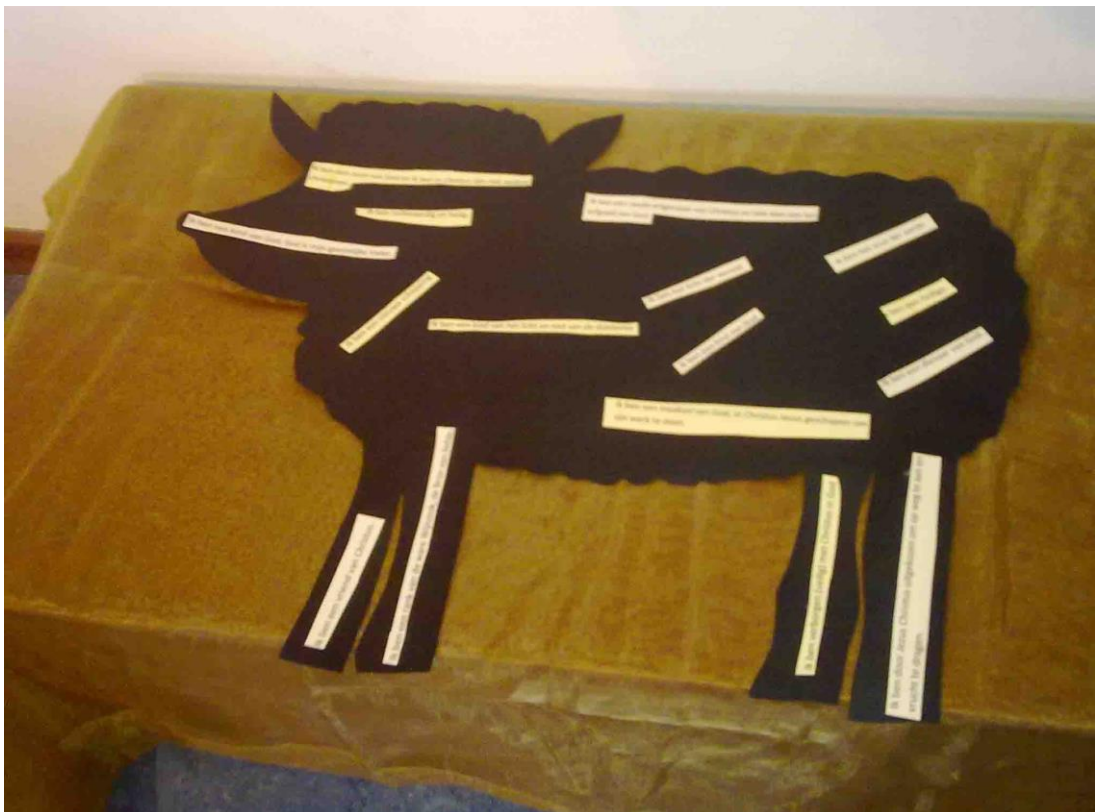
I am a child of God; God is my holy father.
I am a heir of Christ and I will share in God's heritage.
I'm a new creation.
I am a son of God and I am one in Christ with other Christians.
I am a saint.
I'm a creation of God, born in Jesus Christ to do his work.
I am sincere and holy.
I'm hidden away (safe) with Christ in God.
I am a child of the light and not of darkness.

Tell: Sometimes we feel like the black sheep. We can make ourselves believe we don't belong with all the negative words that we say about ourselves.

Ask: Which side of the sheep do you believe?

Do: Turn it that way up.

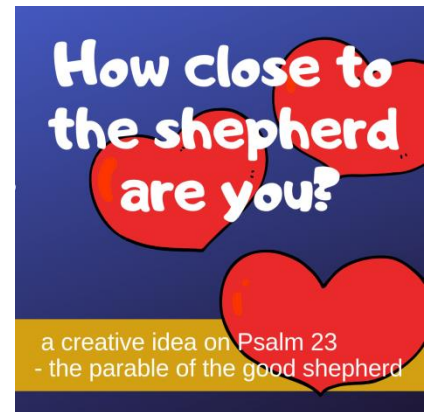
Tell: Or maybe if you believe the negative things but want God's help to believe the truth, leave the black sheep with the positive statements showing, as a prayer.



Creative prayer idea - How close to the shepherd are you?

How do you express who you are in the flock of the Good Shepherd?
What's your position in the flock?

This creative prayer idea helps children and adults to give an answer to these two important questions in a non-threatening way.



What you'll need:

- laminated A4 paper with the words "The Good Shepherd" on them.
- the slips of paper with the different sorts of sheep/people in the idea 'Who are you in the flock?'

What do you do:

Do: On the table there's a laminated A4 piece of paper with the words "The Good Shepherd" on them. There are also smaller strips of paper with the descriptions on them of the different sheep and people who are in and around the flock.

There's also a description of every different sheep and person.

Choose one of the strips of paper that is the most applicable to you and put it on the table. You can put it close to the shepherd or far away from him. Choose a position in which you feel at ease.

Creative prayer idea - Safe in the Shepherd's hand

Put yourself or someone else in the hand of the shepherd

A lovely creative prayer idea in which children are going to put themselves or someone else in the hand of the Good Shepherd, literally.



What you'll need:

- a big hand made out of cardboard.
- several small sheep made out of cardboard.

What do you do:

On the table there is a large hand made of cardboard and some small sheep cut out of cardboard.

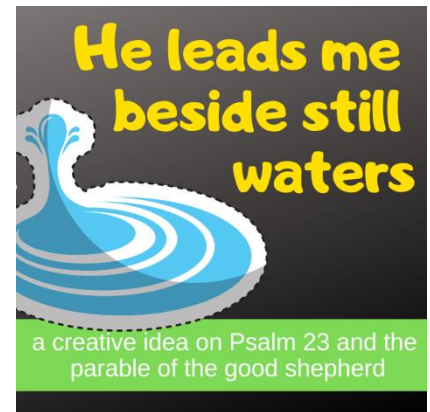
You can write your own name, or the name of someone else on the sheep and you can put this sheep in the hand of the Good Shepherd.



Creative prayer idea - He leads me beside still waters

Water carriers - a fun and active prayer idea

A creative prayer idea in which we're going to pray with the children in a practical way for clean water in countries with a lot of poverty.



What do you need:

- a big vase or bowl
- bottles of water
- footprints on the floor

What do you do:

Tell: In one of the corners of the prayer room there are bottles of water. In the other one there's a big vase or bowl. On the floor there are paper footprints. Each footprint represents a mile. Some people have to walk for miles to find water.

In Psalm 23 we read that the shepherd leads us to quiet waters. In this corner we pray for clean and quiet water for people in this world. You can take a bottle of water as a prayer, and walk slowly to the other side of the room, remembering as you look at the footprints that each one represents a mile.

Do: When you pour the water in the vase or bowl you can pray for the provision of clean drinking water for people that need it.



Creative prayer idea - Praying for the lost sheep

A creative prayer idea on the theme of the Good Shepherd.

What do you need:

- a print out of lots of different coloured sheep on different colour paper
- scissors
- a pen for each child



What do you do:

- Do: Divide the coloured sheep between the children.
- Tell: The children can choose someone who might be a lost sheep or someone that needs to be found by the Good Shepherd.
- Do: The children can write a name on one of the coloured sheep from the last game.
- They can take this sheep home and pray for the person named on it.

