



Fruit of the Spirit

Gentleness – Lesson 2

“Let your gentleness be evident to all.” Philippians 4:5

Lesson Time

Last week we learned about gentleness and how Jesus is gentle. Today we will learn about how Jesus was a Good Shepherd and is gentle when we are not choosing to make good choices. What is a shepherd? (A person who takes care of sheep.) What do you know about sheep? What sound does a sheep make? (“Baa baa.”) That’s right! Well, did you know that sheep’s wool is scratchy and gets really heavy when it is wet? So, if they go to the stream to get a drink, they need someone to help them find still and calm water, not fast moving water like in a river, because they could drown if they fall in. Did you know that sheep sometimes like to wander off? If they wander off and get into trouble with a dangerous animal, they do not know how to fight back. They need protection. Sheep are not very smart. They need someone to show them where to go and to watch them very closely.

Even though sheep are not very smart about many things, they learn the sound of their shepherd’s voice and will not follow a stranger. In fact they run from strangers. Not all of the people who care for sheep are good, but a good shepherd knows every one of his sheep, not just as a group, but individually. A good shepherd needs to be strong because sometimes wolves and bears try to get the sheep. A good shepherd needs to be willing to risk his life for his sheep; so that the wolves or bears don’t win. A good shepherd needs to be alert; people will even come at night and try to take their sheep. Thieves try to climb into the pen and not go through the gate where the shepherd is so they can steal the sheep. A good shepherd needs to be smart; all of his sheep are different but he knows each one. A good shepherd needs to be patient; some sheep like to wander away. A good shepherd needs to be caring and gentle; sheep can easily become sick.

So, how important do you think it is that sheep have a good shepherd? Do you think sheep could survive very long on their own? Probably not! In John Chapter 10, Jesus says “What I’m about to tell you is true. What if someone does not enter the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief and a robber. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the

sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought all of his own sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don't recognize a stranger's voice." "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me." John 10:1-5, 11, 14

How did He lay down His life for us just like a shepherd does for his sheep? That's right. He gave Himself to die on the cross for each one of us. Jesus said that no one *TOOK* His life from Him; He *GAVE* His life for you because He wanted to save us from sin. When we believe that Jesus is God's Son and let him be our shepherd we become His sheep. Jesus is called the Good Shepherd because if you are His sheep He will protect you just like a shepherd protects his sheep! He is patient and gentle, and goes after you when you make mistakes and choose not to obey. He is strong and will fight to keep you. He is alert; He will watch over you.

If one of us wandered off and we were making bad choices Jesus would gently show us the way back but we have to know the sound of His voice – just like the sheep know the voice of their shepherd. We as sheep need to listen to His voice and follow our good and gentle Shepherd.

So when our friends are making bad choices what can we do? Should we yell at them? Maybe yell at them, "GET OVER HERE RIGHT NOW!" or "STOP THAT!" Is that what Jesus would do? Or would He take His friend by the hand and gently lead them back to where it is safe? He would stay in control and lead the sheep to Him in a gentle and loving way. He is also patient, kind and faithful – there's that part of the fruit again! Jesus shows us what it looks like to live out the fruit of the spirit in our life, but can we do it without HIM? Nope! He will help us as we learn to hear His voice. When we choose to follow him, He will show us how we can live out the fruit the Holy Spirit gives us. Then other people who do not know Jesus will want to know the kind of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control He gives. Let's practice our memory verse. "Let your gentleness be evident to all." Philippians 4:5

Prayer Time

Activities

The goal of this time is to utilize a variety of engaging activities –passive and active play, crafts, application, and more – to reinforce what was taught in the lesson. While you may not get to every activity, we encourage you to complete the "Take-Home" activity so children leave with a tangible reminder of what was discussed today.

If numbers are high and/or time and space allow, you may want to use a center format: divide the class into groups (one for each activity) and rotate through the centers after an allotted time.



The Sheep, the Shepherd, and the Wolf

Appoint one child to be the wolf and one to be the shepherd. (The teacher can also opt to be the shepherd, especially if the children are not familiar with one another's names.) The rest of the

children will be sheep. Have the sheep stand at one end of the playing area (a larger space is best), the shepherd at the opposite end, and the wolf in the middle. Tell the students that the shepherd will call each of them by name. Once they hear their name, they are to try to reach the shepherd, without getting tagged by the wolf. If they get tagged, they need to take a sheep nap and sit down. If they don't get tagged, they are safe with the shepherd. Continue playing until all students' names have been called. For additional games, switch the roles of shepherd, wolf, and sheep.

The point: Tell the children that a shepherd knows his sheep by name. Every sheep has a name, just like each child does. When the shepherd calls the sheep, "Johnny, Gracie, Mary..." the sheep come running. Sheep know and love their shepherd's voice. They will not run to a stranger. In fact, they will run away from a stranger. Draw a parallel by saying that Jesus knows each of us by name also. We are so special to Him that He died on the cross for each one of us. He loves us. It's important that we learn to hear Jesus' gentle voice. He is the Good (and gentle) Shepherd. We learn to hear His voice by praying, reading the Bible, and coming to church. It's also important to "run away" from sin and danger. That means not listening to the voice that is not "gentle" that tells you to do things that would hurt yourselves or others.



Sheep Craft

Supplies:

Clothespins (2 per child)

Sheep head and body printout (1 per child)

Cotton balls

Googly eyes (2 per child)

Glue

Have kids cut out their sheep body and head and glue the head onto the body. Next, have them glue the googly eyes onto the eyes. Then, have them glue cotton balls all over the sheep to make him feel fluffy and soft. Last, have them clip the clothespins to the bottom of the sheep for his legs so he can stand up.



Sheep Pen

Supplies:

Blankets or sheets

Blocks/chairs

Have the kids build a sheep pen out of chairs and blankets. Have the children hide in the pen together pretending to be sheep. Have one child pretend to be "the shepherd" and lay at the opening of the

pen. Have one teacher or child be the voice of the shepherd. Only when the sheep hear that voice should they come out of the pen and follow. If they hear another voice they should stay in the pen protected by the shepherd. For the “fake shepherd” either have another child calling out or have the same teacher using a strange voice. The Shepherd can say: “____(child’s name), Come follow me!” The “sheep” can say: “Baaa!”

The point: Tell the children that sheep pens are places where sheep are protected from things that could hurt them, like wolves and dogs. In Bible times, sheep would stay in a place surrounded by rocks or wood. There would be one opening, like a door. Shepherds used to sleep in these openings and would guard the sheep with their own bodies. Many times in the Bible, Jesus calls himself the “door for the sheep.” That means he protects us and provides for us.



Lost and Found Sheep Hunt

Supplies:

Sheep cutout

You will hide sheep in various places around the classroom for the children to find. Make sure you place the sheep in places that are easy to find for the younger children, such as in corners of the room, on top of tables, taped to the wall, etc. For older children, you may want to hide some under chairs, or behind doors, etc. The kids get to be shepherds and look for the missing sheep. A suggestion is to let the children find as many sheep as they can and once all of the sheep are collected, have them share with anyone who did not find one. This way you can also teach the benefits of sharing.



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