



## Sheep LOVED by a Shepherd: Preschool Lesson

This is the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of three lesson plans called YESHUA: The Good Shepherd and intended for preschool children (ages 2-5).

There are over 600 references to sheep, lamb, shepherds, and ewe in the Bible. Sheep are a consistent animal used in scripture to teach Biblical truths. Yet if we do not live in an agrarian society, it can be difficult to understand the principles YHWH is teaching us. This lesson plan sets a foundation for understanding and teaches children that they are like sheep, loved by a Shepherd. The second lesson (Sheep SAVED by a Shepherd) teaches them that Yeshua (Jesus) saves his sheep. We have also posted a third lesson (Sheep PROTECTED by a Shepherd.)

**Objectives:** To recognize Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) as the Good Shepherd, who is both provider and protector. To identify the importance of listening to His voice through God's Word.

**Materials:** large sheep cutout, cotton balls, glue, Bible

**Welcome Activity/Art Project:** Have a large cutout of a sheep (or maybe two, depending on the number of children) on the table before you begin. The cutout can be fashioned out of white poster board or butcher paper, whatever you have available. Provide cotton balls at each child's seat. When they enter the room, demonstrate how to spread out the cotton balls. Have your child(ren) glue the cotton balls on the sheep to create a fleece. Fill in areas as needed. This group art project can later be utilized on a bulletin board that might read, "EWE are LOVED by a SHEPHERD."

### **Bible Lesson:**

**Say:** "Can you guess by our art project what we're going to talk about today? Why in the world are we going to learn about sheep? How funny to come to church and learn about a farm animal! Well, sheep are very important in God's word. So are shepherds, the people who take care of the sheep. They are so important that God talks about them over 600 times in the Bible. Wow! That's a lot of sheep talk!"

**Say:** "Today, we're going to learn about sheep and shepherds. You will get a chance to do lots of pretending today! Are you ready to play and learn? If you are, let me hear a 'BAAAA!!!!'"

**Say:** "The first thing we'll do is listen for sheep and shepherds in God's word. So take your fingers, wiggle your ears to make sure they're listening, and let's get started! When you hear the word 'Sheep,' I need you to, 'Baaa.' When you hear the word 'Shepherd,' I need you to cross your arms in front of your chest to make the sign of love. Shepherds really love their sheep and we need to remember that!" Repeat the directions again.

**Read:** John 10:7-16, with energy and enthusiasm, pausing after each mention of sheep and shepherds.

**Do:** Applaud the child(ren) for good listening. Then say, "YHWH calls us His sheep, so when you hear the word sheep, it's actually talking about you! How funny! The Bible also tells us that Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) is our Good Shepherd, who takes care of us. We're going to read John 10:7-16 one more time. Except this time, when you hear the word sheep, point to yourself. When you hear the word shepherd, make the sign for Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) (or have the child(ren) point upwards to YHWH.) It's so important to hear our Shepherd's voice." (Repeat directions again.)

**Read:** John 10:7-16, pausing again after the words 'shepherd' and 'sheep'.



**Do:** Applaud the child(ren) again.

**Ask the following review questions:**

- *What kind of animal does God say we are like?* (Sheep)
- *What does a Shepherd do?* (He takes care of his sheep.)
- *Who is our Good Shepherd? Who takes care of us?* (Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ))
- *Whose voice should we learn to listen to?* (The Good Shepherd or Yeshua (Jesus))
- *How do we hear His voice?* (God's word or Bible)

### **Group Game: The Sheep, The Shepherd, and The Wolf (several children)**

1. Tell your 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, "Martha, Gracie, Fleece," 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.
2. Draw a parallel by saying that Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) 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 our Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus Christ) voice. He is the Good Shepherd. We learn to hear his voice by praying and reading the Bible, His Word. It's also important to run away from strangers, sin, and danger.
3. Appoint one child to be the wolf and one to be the shepherd. (You can also opt to be the shepherd) 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.
4. Continue play until all students' names have been called. For additional games, switch the roles of shepherd, wolf, and sheep.

We pray that this lesson will be a blessing to you and your children and that they will be a blessing to others.

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