

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

# SHEEP

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Reflecting on the Gospel*

##### *The good shepherd (John 10: 1-10)*

The image of the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep to model the relationship between God and the people of God was already well established in the Old Testament as exemplified by Psalm 23. Throughout chapter 10 of his gospel John develops this image to express who Jesus is. The theme reaches its climax in verse 11 with Jesus claiming 'I am the good shepherd'. This image has inspired many generations of Christians.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage about the good shepherd is *sheep*.

#### *Extracts from the Gospel passage (John 10: 1-4)*

Jesus said, 'Very truly, I tell you,  
anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate  
but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.  
The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.  
The gatekeeper opens the gate for him,  
and the sheep hear his voice.  
He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.  
When he has brought out all his own,  
he goes ahead of them,  
and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.'

#### *Gospel prayer*

Risen Lord,  
you are the good shepherd  
and we are your sheep.  
Teach us to hear your voice  
and to follow your command,  
that we may dwell safely in your fold;  
now and always.  
Amen.

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME**

### ***Reflecting and meditating***

Reflect on Jesus' teaching about the good shepherd:

- what details in the passage catch your attention?
- what big ideas does the passage spark in your mind?
- what most touches your heart in the passage?
- what most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage?

### ***Thinking and talking***

- what do you understand by the shepherd calling his sheep by name?
- what do you understand by the shepherd going ahead of the sheep?
- why is Jesus using this figure of speech?
- what is meant by 'I came that they may have life'?
- what does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

This whole passage, John 10: 1-30, is distinctive of John's way of writing. Compare this narrative with passages about sheep in Matthew and Luke:

- Matthew 18: 12-14
- Luke 15: 4-6

Explore key passages from the Old Testament that employ images of sheep:

- Psalm 23
- Ezekiel 34: 11-15

### ***Exploring online***

- look up images of Jesus and sheep in the catacombs
- look up paintings of Jesus as the good shepherd
- explore shepherds at the time of Jesus
- find out about making models of sheep

### ***Drawing on experience***

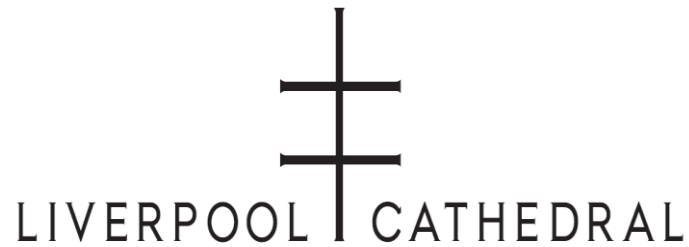
- what is your experience of sheep in the UK or elsewhere?
- what is your experience of the image of sheep in churches?
- what is your experience of Jesus as the good shepherd in your life?

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR A) SUNDAY 3 MAY 2020

### *Creating and making*

- find pictures of sheep and pictures of Jesus the good shepherd to set side-by-side
- make models of sheep, or cut out shapes of sheep, to display at home
- make a collage of a rural hillside and populate it with sheep
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer on Jesus the good shepherd

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR A) SUNDAY 3 MAY 2020



## **EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to [Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk](mailto:Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk)

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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