

Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. He tells his friends that he knows and cares for them just as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Jesus says he will even lay down his life for his sheep, whom he knows by name. Jesus cares for all of his followers. Most parishes have a pastor, who leads and cares for the people of his parish, much like a shepherd cares for his sheep. Since Earth Day is April 22, *Promise* connects a shepherd's care for his sheep to our responsibility to care for God's Creation. This week, help your child notice the many people who care for your family like shepherds—crossing guards, bus drivers, police officers, teachers, your pastor, grandparents, and neighbors.

Share Experiences

Check off the boxes as you complete each part of the lesson.

- Pray together** "Jesus, you give us people who love us and take care of us. Thank you, Jesus. Help us to show love and care back to them and to you. Amen."
- Cover Activity • Jesus cares for all of Creation. (pages 1 & 4)** Invite your child to look at the picture on page 1. **Ask:** How are the people in this neighborhood caring for Creation? **Ask:** Are there any areas the children have missed? *The tree with litter around it and the plastic bottles on the ground.* Have your child turn to page 4, cut out the three shapes, and glue them where they belong on the cover picture. Three more ways of caring for Creation are now evident. **Ask:** In what other ways could these people care for Creation? What are your favorite ways of caring for Creation?
- Story • Becca and James care for Creation. (page 2)** Have your child close *Promise*. Then tell this story:

Becca and James followed their dad to the barn almost every morning because they liked to help find new lambs. The mother sheep often had twins or even triplets, but sometimes the mothers didn't have enough milk for so many lambs.

One morning, Becca and James found three new lambs lying next to their mother. One lamb was strong and sucking milk from its mother; the other two were too weak to nurse. Becca and James picked up the lambs and took them to the house. They took the lambs to a warm spot on a rug near their wood stove. They filled a bottle of milk for each lamb and

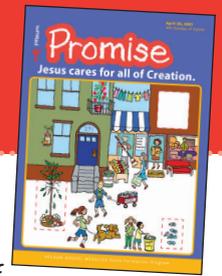
put big rubber nipples on the bottles. They rubbed the lambs' curly wool. Becca held the bottle, and James stroked each lamb's throat to make it swallow milk so it could get stronger.

Becca and James spent all morning with their lambs. After lunch, the lambs slept. Right before dinner, the lambs woke up. First, one stood and then the other. The lambs slipped and fell on the smooth kitchen floor, so Becca and James took them to the warm pen in the barn. Every day, Becca and James returned to feed the lambs until they could eat grass.

Invite your child to open *Promise* to page 2 and look at the drawing of Becca and James feeding the lambs. Give your child time to find the eleven other sheep hidden on the page, as well as the sheep dog and the wolf. Your child can then color the page.

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Our Good Shepherd** Explain that there were lots of sheep where Jesus lived. People made clothes and warm blankets from their wool and drank the sheep's milk to become strong. People wanted to keep their sheep safe and healthy. People who care for sheep are called shepherds. **Ask:** What did you learn from the story of Becca

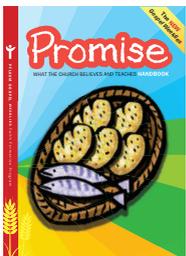


and James and the baby lambs? *James and Becca cared for the lambs like shepherds, people who take care of sheep.* Explain that in today's Gospel, Jesus talks about being a shepherd.

Jesus told his friends: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd will give up his life for the sheep. A hired shepherd runs away when a wolf comes. He only cares about getting paid. A good shepherd stays with the sheep. A good shepherd

loves the sheep. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. In the same way, my Father knows me, and I know my Father. I will give my life for my sheep."

Explain that Jesus is our shepherd too. Jesus cares for us and keeps us safe. He wants us to trust him and follow him like sheep trust and follow their shepherd.



- Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 17. Read aloud the top third and invite your child to print the name of your parish on the line. Move on to the middle third. Help your child understand that the pastor takes care of the people of the parish. Print the name of your pastor (and other priests) on a sheet of paper. Give your child time to copy the pastor's name in the book. Discuss what your pastor does for the parish.

Read about the Pope and invite your child to write the name Pope Francis on the line. Encourage your child to listen for the Pope's name the next time you attend Mass. Explain that we always pray for the Pope and for the whole Church at Mass.

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Promise, page 2.

- Word of the Week • pastor (page 2)** Help your child locate the Word of the Week on page 2. Share this definition: *A pastor is a priest who leads a parish.* **Ask:** How is a pastor like a shepherd of the people in the parish?

Live the Gospel

- Activity • Jesus is our Good Shepherd. (pages 3-4)** Read the sentence at the top of page 4. Have your child cut out the two pictures on the heavy lines and glue or tape the sides together, following the directions. The sides with the faces should face the front. **Ask:** Who is part of Jesus' flock? Give your child some pieces of paper to write the names or draw pictures. Then have your child put the papers in the sheep pen behind Jesus. You may also invite your child to think of people who especially need help or protection and put their names in the sheep pen.
- Closing Prayer** Invite your child to repeat each line of this prayer after you:

Jesus, we know you are our Good Shepherd. You love us all and take care of us. Please help and protect us and all the people in your flock. We trust and love you. Amen.



Parent Resources

For weekly videos, assessments, and more, scan this code or go to pflaumweeklies.com/family
Visit www.usccb.org/bible/readings to read this Sunday's Scripture