

Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus compares friendship with him to the caring relationship between shepherds and their sheep. A real shepherd knows and looks after his sheep with great care, and Jesus does the same for us. In this lesson, we examine our relationship with the earth, recognizing how it cares for us, and how we, in turn, can care for it.

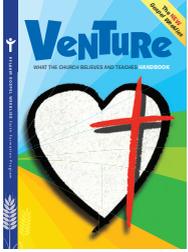
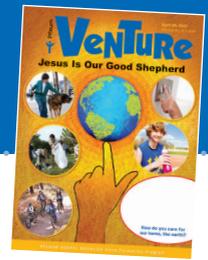
Share Experiences

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

- Pray together** Share people and intentions you wish to pray for today. After each petition, respond together: "Loving God, hear our prayer."
- Cover Activity • Jesus Is Our Good Shepherd (page 1)** Look at the cover photographs together. Remind your child that Earth Day is April 22, but for Christians, Earth Day can be every day. Discuss how your family can do something for the earth around your house or neighborhood. *Some ideas: plant a tree; dig and maintain a flowerbed or garden; pick up trash at a local park or open space, etc.*
- Article • Come and See the Shepherd's Garden (pages 2–3)** Before reading the article together, talk about any experiences your family has had working in a garden or caring for plants. What did everyone enjoy most?
- Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Fruits and vegetables are grown on the farm; cows and chickens too. There are a number of products made from the cow's milk, including cheese and yogurt. The farm even keeps bees. 2. The bees support the growth of the farm's crops; the bees in the hives symbolize the Church, which is not always perfect but tries to work together. 3. The Pope wants to share the peaceful setting of the farm, but also provide good examples for caring for Creation. 4. Pope Francis shared a story about a man who cared for olive trees. His relationship with nature brought him closer to God.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (page 4)** Talk about who your child cares for—perhaps a younger sibling, neighbor, or family pet. **Ask:** How does it feel to know that someone counts on you? Proclaim the Gospel by reading the four Jesus parts together.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Good shepherds protect their sheep; hired shepherds run away and let the wolf kill the sheep. 2. A shepherd knows, protects, guides, and takes care of sheep. Jesus says the Father knows, loves, and takes care of him. Jesus knows his followers by name, and we know him; Jesus gives his life for his people. 3. He cares for his people, especially those who are vulnerable; he also models taking good care of God's Creation.*
- Catholic Faith Word • Good Shepherd (page 4)** Have your child read the definition aloud as you continue your discussion of this metaphor.
- Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus Chooses to Give His Life for Us (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel, and give your child time to think about responses to the *Think* questions.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Possible responses might include a particular coach, teacher, older teammate, family member, priest or deacon, religious sister, etc. 2. Open-ended; remind your child about the many Gospel stories you have read about Jesus' healing, including Peter's mother-in-law and the man with the unclean spirit.*



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 43 and read aloud the section on meditation. Explain that you're going to lead your child in a simple guided meditation. Begin by finding a place to sit comfortably together. Invite your child to close their eyes, breathe deeply and exhale. Speak slowly and calmly as you:
 - Invite your child to imagine the sun rising in the morning. It is very dim at first. Then it becomes brighter and stronger. You can feel its warm rays on your arms. You can relax in the warmth, but the heat does not burn you. It feels comforting.
 - Invite your child to silently thank the sun for bringing warmth and light. Then have your child silently praise God for making something so good. You might have your child imagine images such as birds sitting on the phone wires in the sun, a cat snoozing in a patch of sun, or flowers lifting their faces to the sun.
 - Have your child imagine a dark little cloud working its way across the sun. Soon it is joined by other clouds. The sun is hidden now. The air feels cooler. Then *splat splat* sounds begin—raindrops. The rain begins to hit the sidewalk and the leaves of the trees. Puddles form. The dust on the flowers washes away in the rain. The birds take a drink from rainwater caught in a leaf. Now the rain is falling more gently. Invite your child to thank God for making rain come, so the sun is not too strong for us. Soon the rain stops. We can enjoy a world washed clean and green.
 - Give your child a few quiet minutes before ending your meditation.

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Venture page 5.

- **Our Catholic Faith • A Good Shepherd Knows, Protects, and Unites (page 5)** Have your child read this feature and complete the questions. *Answers: Jesus leads us to the Eucharist, where God's Word nourishes us, and we share the bread and wine that become Jesus' body and blood. Jesus loves us and takes care of us, even though it meant he would be crucified. Just as Jesus and his Father share one divine life, Jesus shares his divine life with his followers and shares human life with us too.*

Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • We Care for Earth's Water and Air (pages 6-7)** One principle of Catholic social teaching is that our individual rights are tied to responsibilities. Our right to clean water and air means we are responsible to see that others also have clean air and water. Work on completing the survey together this week and make plans to reduce your water use.
- **KidTalk • How Can We Care for the Earth? (page 8)** Complete this section together as a family.
- **Closing Prayer** The Rosary is a form of meditative prayer. Say a decade of the Rosary together. (If needed, see page 54 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* for instructions.)



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.