



## 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, you'll examine our relationship with the earth, recognizing how it cares for us, and how we, in turn, can care for it.

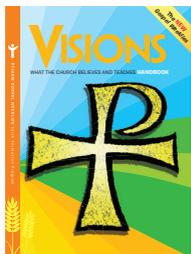
## Share Experiences

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

- Pray together** "Loving God, we appreciate your care for us. We are grateful for the people you place in our lives who act as shepherds and guides for us. We also understand your call to shepherd others. We pray for those who need our help. Thank you for being with us all. Amen."
- Cover Activity • We Care for God's Creation (page 1)** Have your child fill out the cover survey. You can answer the questions yourself on a separate sheet of paper. When finished, score yourselves by using the key at the bottom of page 4.
- Article • A Shepherd for Others (pages 2-3)** If you know anyone who is a member of the Knights of Columbus, share what you know about ways they help others through this organization. Then read aloud the article about this American priest who founded the Knights of Columbus.
- Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Coming from a family of immigrants, he saw their struggles, especially when the head of the family died. His family's strong faith influenced his desire to become a priest. 2. Men weren't going to church. He wanted to strengthen their faith. 3. Many were immigrants, like his own family; he treated them like family; even becoming the legal guardian for one of them. 4. Open-ended.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by taking turns reading the paragraphs aloud.
- Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. A hired shepherd may do a fine job of watching the flock when things are good, but is working for a wage, so will probably protect him/herself before protecting the sheep if they are attacked. A shepherd who owns a flock will sacrifice anything to protect the flock, including his or her own life. 2. Jesus gave himself even unto death so that we, the flock of believers, could have life in him and with him. Father McGivney worked to help his parishioners with all of their needs, both physical and spiritual. 3. We know Jesus through the memories of the disciples who followed him, handed on his teaching, told stories about his actions, his Death, and his Resurrection. Over forty years, these memories became oral traditions, which the Gospel writers wrote down so the traditions travel through time to us. We know Jesus through the Gospels.*
- Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • The Church Is the Sheepfold (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine on this Sunday's Gospel. **Ask:** Tell me about someone you admire as a leader. How are they like Christ?
- Turn to the Talk questions related to the doctrine.** *Answers: These questions are meant to prompt open-ended discussion. You may wish to share your own answers as a prompt if your child hesitates.*



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 6 and read the Nicene Creed aloud together. Point out that God our Father is “maker of heaven and earth.” **Ask:** Why do you think that our belief in God the Creator is so prominent in this creed? *We list God first when we make the Sign of the Cross, he is our creator and all things come from him. The Creation story in Genesis is also one of the first stories many Christians read in the Bible. Accept other answers as well.*

Turn to page 9 and the section on Human Beings. Take turns reading the three paragraphs. **Ask:** How are human beings created like God? *We are most like God in our human souls.* Why did our first ancestors disobey God? *They were tempted to sin; they acted of their own free will and deprived themselves—and all of their ancestors, including us—of holiness. This deprivation is what we know as Original Sin.* What comfort do we have even after Adam and Eve sinned? *God promised them—and us—that he will always be with us.*

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 4.*

- **Catholic Faith Word • Stewardship (page 4)** Read aloud the definition. Talk about ways your family contributes time, talents/gifts, and material resources, and which of these is hardest or easiest to share.
- **Our Catholic Faith • We Must Be Good Shepherds of Earth (page 5)** Have your child read this feature aloud. Then discuss and complete the questions together. Relate your responses to what you’ve already discovered from the cover activity.

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • How Do We Care For God’s Creation? (pages 6–7)** The Good Shepherd metaphor in the Gospel gives us the model for how we should treat one another—with unfailing love and care. It’s not a big stretch to extend that care to include our common home, the earth. Catholic social teaching stresses care for Creation and recognizes our interdependence with all living things.

Have your child work through the list independently. When finished, your child can match responses with the groups identified on page 7: Waste Watcher, Nature Lover, Careful Consumer, or Creature Teacher. Have your child choose a group and spend time thinking about the suggested ideas for action. Invite your child to speak the pledge aloud and discuss realistic ways to accomplish it. Offer positive reinforcement when your child follows up on this pledge.

- **World Church • The Year of Saint Joseph (page 8)** Read aloud this feature together. Note that this week we celebrate the feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker (May 1). His primary feast day—yes, he has two!—is celebrated on March 19. Encourage your child to pray this prayer for Saint Joseph, which Pope Francis included in his recent apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*, which means “with a father’s heart.”
- **Closing Prayer** Take turns sharing about one special thing in the natural world for which you are most thankful. After each mention, respond together: Loving Creator, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.



## Parent Resources

For weekly videos, assessments, and more, scan this code or go to [pflaumweeklies.com/family](https://pflaumweeklies.com/family)  
Visit [www.usccb.org/bible/readings](https://www.usccb.org/bible/readings) to read this Sunday’s Scripture.