

Fed by the Good Shepherd

GRADES 4-5



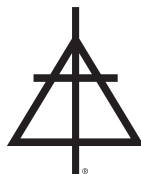
We are grateful to Della vanDokkumburg of Conestogo, Ontario, for her work in developing *Fed by the Good Shepherd*. Della has served as a leader in church education and worship ministries.

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Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

GRADES 4 AND 5

Fed by the Good Shepherd

SCRIPTURE

Mark 14:12-26; Psalm 23; John 10:11

FOCUS

In the Lord's Supper we are reminded that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for us and laid down his life for us.

FAITH NURTURE GOALS

- Know that we belong to Jesus the Good Shepherd and are reminded of that in the Lord's Supper.
- Feel sure that Jesus the Good Shepherd feeds me, walks with me, and died for me.
- Give thanks for the ways that the Lord's Supper reminds us of the Good Shepherd's care for us.

REFLECTION: GETTING INTO THE STORY

Mark 14 opens during a busy time in Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples are preparing to celebrate the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In verse 12 we read that the disciples, on the first day of the Festival, approach Jesus to ask him where he would like them to go to prepare for it. They waited until the last possible minute, but Jesus was prepared. And they found everything just as he had told them.

In Psalm 23 David invites us to imagine God as our shepherd. The image he paints shows God as the shepherd who goes before us, guiding us. He is the shepherd who walks beside us to protect us and feeds us at the table. And he is also the shepherd who follows us with goodness and love.

The picture of God painted in Psalm 23 is not that different from the image of Jesus we see in Mark 14.

- Just as the shepherd prepares a table before David in the presence of his enemies, Jesus sat down at a table and ate the Passover with the one who would betray him and those who would soon deny him.
- Just as Jesus filled the cup for his disciples to share around the table at the last supper, the shepherding God of David filled his cup to overflowing.
- And just as a shepherd in Psalm 23 provides protection for his sheep, Jesus willingly laid down his life for our sins.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we lack nothing. He prepares a table for us. He fills our cup. And he assures us that we need not be afraid. He will go before us, alongside us, and behind us. And we will always have a place around his table.

WONDERING








- How do you like to imagine God's hospitality?
- Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd. What characteristics define a good shepherd?
- How might we feel if we were constantly aware of Christ going before us, alongside us, and behind us each day?

TEACHING







- Shepherds do not use their rods to harm their sheep. The rod is intended for gently guiding sheep along and for fending off predators. Psalm 23 paints a beautiful image of God as our protector and defender.
- When we read “he makes me lie down in green pastures,” our minds might conjure up images of rolling hills in Ireland or lush farmland in Iowa. But the lands that shepherds navigated in ancient Israel were largely barren and rocky wilderness. The land could be called completely desolate, were it not for the dew that falls each evening, causing small tufts of grass to sprout—just enough to feed a flock of sheep each day. The picture that David elicits of God’s provision here is one of God providing our daily bread. It is the gift of just what we need, right when we need it.





—Rev. Shannon Jammal-Holleman

A NOTE ABOUT LEARNING STYLES

In the chart below and beside each Easy Extra activity, you will find one or more of the following descriptions: **Aa** Word Smart,  People Smart,  Music Smart,  Number Smart,  Earth Smart,  Self Smart,  Body Smart, and  Picture Smart—and an icon beside each one. Those descriptions and icons refer to “multiple intelligences,” a term developed by Dr. Howard Gardiner to describe the different ways in which people learn. We’ve used them here to indicate to you which learning style(s) each step/activity taps into the most. For example, some people are visual learners, others are musical, some learn best when they are physically engaged, some are a combination of several “smarts,” and so on. For more information on each of those learning styles along with a fun quiz you can give your students (and one you can take yourself!), visit tinyurl.com/dwellstylequiz.

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Steps	Time	Activities	Materials	Multiple Intelligences
Gathering for God’s Story	10-15 mins	Sheep and Shepherd Game	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheep and Shepherd Game board(s), Wandering Sheep cards and game pieces reproducible pages 11-12, enough copies for the size of your group <input type="checkbox"/> Dice (1 per game board) <input type="checkbox"/> Shepherd kit: a bag filled with <input type="checkbox"/> a pencil <input type="checkbox"/> a piece of paper <input type="checkbox"/> croutons, pita wedges, or rice crackers for each sheep player <input type="checkbox"/> grape juice boxes for each sheep player <input type="checkbox"/> Lord’s Supper/Psalm 23 reproducible page 13, 1 per participant <input type="checkbox"/> Newsprint or board and markers	Aa   
Entering the Story	10 mins	<i>The Shepherd’s Meal</i> dramatic reading from Mark 14: 14-26 Linking the Good Shepherd to the shepherd’s meal	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible <input type="checkbox"/> markers or colored pencils <input type="checkbox"/> “The Shepherd’s Meal” story script (reproducible page 14) <input type="checkbox"/> Lord’s Supper/Psalm 23 reproducible, 1 per participant	Aa   

Living Into the Story	20-25 mins	Sharing the good news of the Shepherd with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Snack and drink (from Gathering activity) Option 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Lord's Supper/Psalm 23 reproducible, 1 per participant <input type="checkbox"/> Markers/colored pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Large piece of fabric or posterboard for background <input type="checkbox"/> Paper or fabric for letters <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Glue Option 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Good Shepherd rap (reproducible page 15), one per participant	Aa   
Living Out of the Story	5 mins	Giving Thanks	<input type="checkbox"/> Board or newsprint <input type="checkbox"/> Markers <input type="checkbox"/> Computer or tablet, optional <input type="checkbox"/> "Dear Family" letter, reproducible page 16, print or email one per child	Aa 

Step 1 Gathering for God's Story

Before the session, prepare the game board(s), Wandering Sheep cards, and game pieces of the Shepherd and Sheep Game for your group. Each game can be played by 2 to 5 players, where one person is the shepherd and the remaining players are sheep.

Greet your learners as they arrive, then divide them evenly into groups, as needed. You are welcome to join in the fun! Determine which person in each group will be the shepherd (for example, someone whose birthday is in the current month, or someone whose favorite meal is breakfast) and give that person the shepherd kit. All the other players will be sheep, so give each of those people a sheep game piece.

TIP

If possible, print on cardstock to make play easier.

TIP

Make sure your shepherds feel comfortable drawing and are aware that they will be expected to do so.

HOW TO PLAY:

Have each group gather around the game board. Playing clockwise, each sheep player rolls the dice and moves his or her game piece the corresponding number of places along the board. More than one sheep may occupy a space. This game is like Chutes and Ladders, but with some twists:

- If a player's game piece lands on a "Role Play" space, the player must follow instructions.
- If a game piece lands on "Same turn: Shepherd rolls dice" the shepherd must roll the dice, and the sheep moves again.
- If a game piece lands on a "Dark Valley" space, the player must slide his or her game piece to the indicated lower space on the board, and in that same turn the shepherd must roll the dice to move the sheep again.
- If a game piece lands on a "Pick Up Wandering Sheep Card" space, the player must pick up a card and read the problem (in bold). The shepherd must rescue the sheep by quickly sketching the solution to the sheep's problem, as written on the card. Once the solution is drawn, the player places the Wandering Sheep Card on the bottom of the pile, and the next player begins his or her turn.

Play continues until the shepherd has successfully helped ALL the sheep to Quiet Waters. Once there, the shepherd provides each sheep player with a snack and juice box from the kit.

After the game is finished, be sure to give the shepherds a snack and juice box too.

Instruct the class to hold on to their snacks for now; there will be time to eat together later.

Tell your group that there's a psalm about a shepherd in the Bible. Ask if anyone knows what it is. Then distribute the Lord's Supper/Psalm 23 page to each participant (reproducible 13). Read the psalm to the group or ask them to go around the circle, taking turns reading verses.

Say: The game you just played together is based on this psalm. How can you tell? What happened in the game that also happens in the psalm?

Some examples:

- The shepherd provided for the sheep's needs.
- The shepherd led the sheep to quiet waters.
- The shepherd guided the sheep along the right path.
- The shepherd provided comfort.
- The shepherd rescued the sheep from danger and the Dark Valleys.
- The shepherd provided food.

As group members list similarities, write them on newsprint or board. Conclude your discussion by noting that the sheep could only get to Quiet Waters through the work of the shepherd!

Step 2 Entering the Story

Open your Bible and tell the group that there's another very famous verse from the Bible that's about a shepherd. Then read John 10:11 to the group: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (John 10:11, NIV).

Challenge your group to think a bit about the connection between the Old Testament shepherd and this New Testament Shepherd with these wondering questions:

- Who is describing himself as the Good Shepherd in this passage?
- Why do you suppose Jesus described himself that way?
- I wonder how many ways you can think of that Jesus is like a shepherd? (Referring to the list you made together in step 1 and to Psalm 23 may help.)

TIP

If you plan to use the art response in step 3, you may want to lay markers on the table and invite participants to begin coloring as you read. Encourage them to do it like a meditation, thinking about the Good Shepherd in the story as they color.

Tell the group that at an event called the Last Supper, a Passover celebration, Jesus did a lot of the things mentioned in Psalm 23. He cared for his disciples the way a shepherd cares for his sheep. He prepared a table for them—even though some of them (especially Judas) would become his enemies. Explain that you will read the story of the Last Supper to them from the Bible.

Then read "The Shepherd's Meal" from reproducible page 14 or, if you prefer, directly from Mark 14:14-26 in your Bible.

After the story, ask the group to look back at Psalm 23. What words and phrases in the psalm remind them of this story of Jesus' last supper with his friends? (particularly verses 5 and 6). What celebration in our own churches does this story remind them of? Agree together that many times when we celebrate the Lord's Supper we use these words that Jesus used with his disciples at the last supper. Each time we gather, the Good Shepherd is calling us to the table—the place where he feeds us, strengthens us, and comforts us.

Step 3 Living Into the Story

Comment that knowing that the Good Shepherd goes before us, alongside us, and behind us each day is amazing good news! Even when we go through very bad times (through a very dark valley, as Psalm 23 says), Jesus is there. That's a comfort for us and for all Christians. Knowing that the Good Shepherd died for us and gave us a celebration to help us remember that sacrifice is an amazing thing too. It's very good news that we can share.

Explain that today your group will have an opportunity to share that good news with your congregation. Two responses are outlined below. You can use them in one of these ways:

- Choose the activity that best matches the skills, learning preferences, and interests of your group. Do it as a large group and prepare to share it with all or part of the congregation.
- Set up stations in your meeting area and allow participants to choose one of the two activities to share the good news about the shepherd's meal with others in the congregation. (There's a third option in the Easy Extras section that you might use instead of or in addition to the ones below.)

Invite the children to enjoy their snacks as they work.

OPTION 1: BANNER OR POSTER

This activity involves completing the coloring work on the Psalm 23 handout and arranging the pages on cloth or poster-board around a heading that you and the group decide on. For example: "Welcome to the Table of the Good Shepherd!" or "The Good Shepherd Welcomes You to His Table!" You can either have one group member print the words with marker or cut the letters out of paper or fabric. The finished poster might look something like this:



Next time your congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper, ask for permission to display the banner or poster your children created somewhere in the narthex or the sanctuary—or even near the table at the front of the sanctuary. You or one of your group members can give a short explanation about the banner, either live or in the bulletin.

OPTION 2: STORY RAP

If members of your group enjoy rhythm and music, they'll love this rap. Give them time to read through it together and decide how they'd like to present it to a larger group—either other Sunday school classes or the whole congregation (again, maybe before a Lord's Supper service). Perhaps they'd like to all rap the words together, though that can be difficult to synchronize. Or they may want to alternate rappers, stanza by stanza. (You can make copies for the rappers from reproducible 15.)

The Good Shepherd said he'll take care of us.
 Never leave us or turn his back on us.
 He looks after every one of our needs
 and makes sure we don't get lost in the weeds.

He protects us when things get so very bad.
 He wipes all our tears whenever we're sad.
 Our Good Shepherd always shows us the way.
 He built us a home where we will all stay.

TIP

If there is a setting where it would be appropriate to share this rap with others, make arrangements for that. (You may want to have one or two rehearsals before the presentation though.)

Hey, Jesus is that Good Shepherd's name.
 He healed the sick and he cured the lame.
 He made some friends when he came to their towns
 and asked them if they'd follow him 'round.

Now one day his friends they wanted to know
 if there was a place where they could all go
 to sit down and eat the Passover meal.
 He told them about it, and it was all real.

That night in the room where they all took a seat,
 the Good Shepherd gave them bread to eat.
 He told them, "Remember this body of mine
 was given for you, my blood is the wine."

The Good Shepherd laid down his life for us sheep,
 which shows that his love for us runs ocean-deep.
 And so we remember with bread and with wine.
 Yeah, we remember with bread and with wine.

TIP

If the group would like to perform the rap with music, search for "80 bpm rap beat" on YouTube. Here's one example of a beat that works: tinyurl.com/8orapbeat.

Step 4 Living Out of the Story

If your group members worked on separate projects in step 3, be sure to give them time to present them to each other. As they do, use every opportunity to affirm again that the good shepherd in the psalm is Jesus, the one who gave his life for us, the one who calls us to the Table.

Together make a list of reasons why we feel so grateful to Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Remind the group that our needs are big and small. Be sure to celebrate the many things God provides for us every day, like food, shelter, and clothing. (Jot down ideas on board or newsprint.) But also remember to include our need for salvation, and how our Good Shepherd provided it by laying down his life! Then have a circle prayer. Begin with words like these:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we give you thanks for . . .

Go around the circle, inviting each group member to add one of the items from your list to the prayer. Conclude with words like these:




We give you all praise and honor for what you have done for us. Help us to live like sheep who trust their Shepherd to care for them and love them. Amen.

If your group enjoys singing, conclude with a favorite communion hymn or song about the Good Shepherd. Or search YouTube for an appropriate song to end your time together. Here's one possibility: tinyurl.com/goodnessandmercy.

As the children leave, challenge them to picture the Good Shepherd and his love for us each time your congregation gathers around the table to celebrate communion.

EASY EXTRAS

1. Lost Sheep Parable Video *This story could be used to supplement the scripture in Step 2, Entering the Story.*

TIME 5 minutes	
 Picture Smart  Word Smart  People Smart	MATERIALS <input type="checkbox"/> Computer or tablet






Your group has talked a lot about the Good Shepherd and the supper that he calls us to today. But there is one important Scripture story about a shepherd that we haven't discussed—the parable about the lost sheep that Jesus told. Because the story really enhances the picture of a shepherd who will love and take care of his sheep no matter what, you may want to add it to your session today. The story is found in Matthew 18:12-14 and Luke 15:3-7. But instead of just reading it together, you may want to show the video version at tinyurl.com/SuperbookLostSheep.

After viewing the video, use some of the following questions with the group:

- Why were the religious leaders angry with Jesus?
- What do you suppose Jesus wanted them to learn through this story?
- Who are the lost sheep?
- How does this story remind you of Psalm 23?

2. Sharing the Good Shepherd with Young Children

This activity could be used either in place of the two options in step 3 or as an additional option.

TIME 20 minutes	
 Word Smart  Picture Smart  People Smart  Earth Smart  Number Smart	MATERIALS <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Young Children and Worship</i> book <input type="checkbox"/> Wooden figures from Young Children and Worship program (LEGO® or Playmobil® people and animals could also be used) <input type="checkbox"/> computer or tablet

Many churches use the Young Children and Worship curriculum developed by Jerome Berryman and Sonja Stewart with the younger children in the congregation, often during children's church. In the book *Young Children and Worship* you'll find two versions of the story of the Good Shepherd. The second links the story to the Lord's table. If your church has the wooden pieces for this storytelling

method (or if you can borrow them from a neighboring church), make them available to your group today. If they're not available, you can use LEGO® or Playmobil® people and animals instead.

Show your group the videos of how the story is presented and ask them to practice doing it on their own. (You'll need copies of the script from *Young Children and Worship*, which is available from Amazon.)

Following are the video links:

Part 1: tinyurl.com/YCWGoodShepherd1

Part 2: tinyurl.com/YCWGoodShepherd2

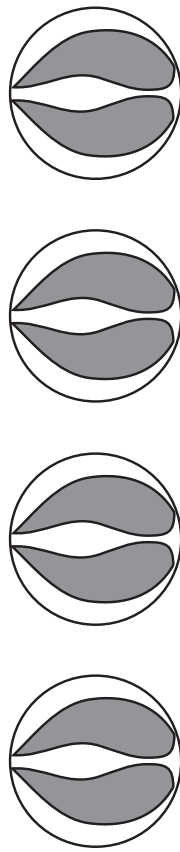
Arrange for a time when children from your group can tell the story to either a group of younger children or to the whole congregation. Prior to the presentation, arrange for several practice sessions.

Shepherd and Sheep Game: Wandering Sheep Cards and Playing Pieces

<p>Oh no! I fell into a pit! Shepherd must draw a rope to pull me out.</p>	<p>Oh no! A wolf is chasing me! Shepherd must draw a staff to defend me.</p>	<p>Oh no! My woolly coat is caught on a branch. Shepherd must draw a pair of scissors to cut me free.</p>
<p>Oh no! I twisted my foot on a rock! Shepherd must draw a bandage to wrap my foot.</p>	<p>Oh no! I am stuck in the mud! Shepherd must draw a shovel to dig me out.</p>	<p>Oh no! I heard a scary noise! Shepherd must draw a blanket to comfort me.</p>
<p>Oh no! I took a wrong turn and now I am lost! Shepherd must write down my name to call me.</p>	<p>Oh no! I got bit by a wild dog! Shepherd must draw a bottle of soothing oil to rub in my wound.</p>	<p>Oh no! It's dark and I can't see where I'm going! Shepherd must draw a lantern to help me find me way safely.</p>
<p>Oh no! I got into a fight with my sister! Shepherd must draw a fence to separate us.</p>	<p>Oh no! I ate something I shouldn't have! Shepherd must draw a hand to rub my back until I feel better.</p>	<p>Oh no! I miss my friend! Shepherd must draw another sheep to keep me company.</p>

Wandering Sheep cards: Print on card stock, cut out and place (face down) on Wandering Sheep box on game board.

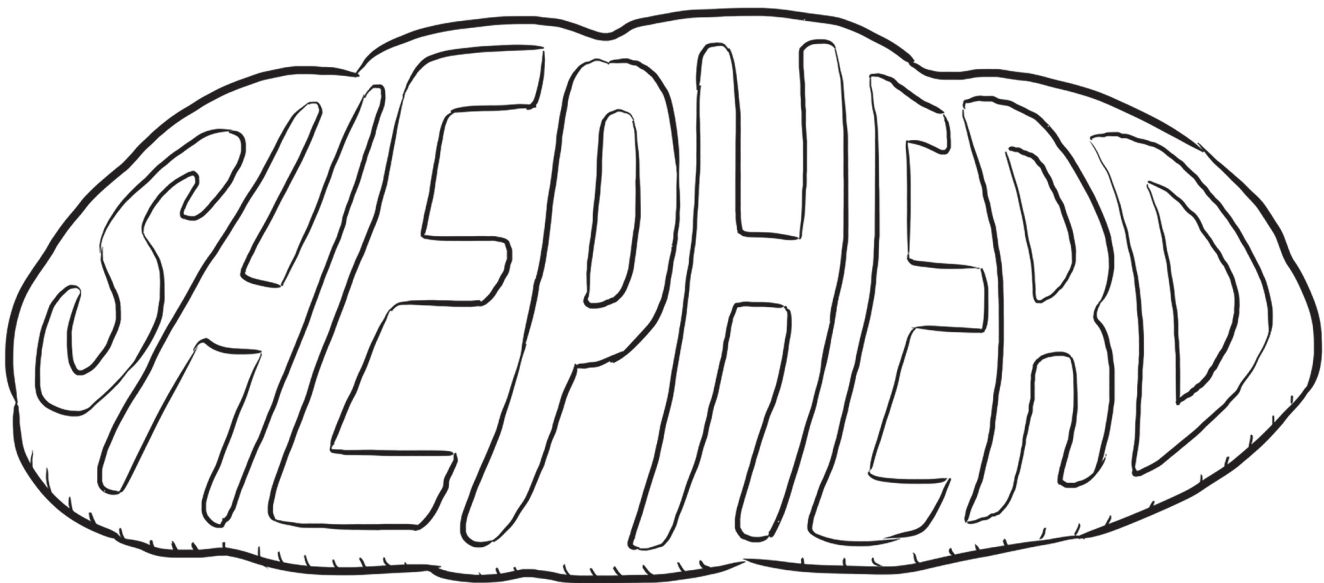
Sheep game pieces: Cut out and color each piece with a different color.





Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 he leads me beside quiet waters,
 he refreshes my soul.
 He guides me along the right paths
 for his name's sake.
 Even though I walk
 through the darkest valley,
 I will fear no evil,
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies.
 You anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows.
 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.



The Shepherd's Meal

BASED ON MARK 14:12-26, NIV

Note: Suggestions for how to read this story are italicized and in brackets. Overall, this meditative reading should be read slowly and quietly.

(Somberly)

It was the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the day God's people sacrificed their Passover lambs.

Jesus' disciples asked him, *(Innocently, rapidly)* "Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

Jesus gave two disciples these instructions *(Slowly)*: "Go into Jerusalem. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and when he enters the house, say to the owner of that house, 'The Teacher asks: where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' He will show you to a large room upstairs. It will be clean and ready with all the furniture we need to have our meal together. Prepare the meal for us there."

The disciples left, went into the city, and found everything . . . *(Astonished)* JUST as Jesus had told them! They prepared the Passover meal.

After the sun had set, Jesus and the twelve disciples went up to the room, and while they were eating, Jesus said, *(Sadly)* "I tell you the truth: one of you eating with me here is going to betray me."

The disciples were upset, and began asking Jesus, *(Distressed)* "Is it me?" "Is it me?"

Jesus replied, "It will be one of you twelve . . . the one who dips his bread into the same bowl with me. *(Choking up)* The Scriptures that were written a long time ago say that the Son of Man will die. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays the Son of Man! *(Quietly)* It would have been better if he had never been born."

(Very slowly and softly) While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread; he said a prayer of thanksgiving, and then broke it into pieces. He shared it with his disciples and said, *(Louder)* "Take it. *(Pause)* This is my body."

(Softer) Then he took a cup, and again gave thanks to God. He handed it to the disciples and they each drank from it. Jesus said, *(Louder)* "This is my blood, which is a new covenant between God and his people. It is poured out for many people. This is the truth: I will not drink wine again until the new day when I drink it in the kingdom of God."

Together they sang a hymn and then went out to the Mount of Olives.

Good Shepherd Rap

The Good Shepherd said he'll take care of us,
never leave us or turn his back on us.
He looks after every one of our needs
and makes sure we don't get lost in the weeds.

He protects us when things get so very bad.
He wipes all our tears whenever we're sad.
Our Good Shepherd always shows us the way.
He built us a home where we will all stay.

Hey, Jesus is that Good Shepherd's name.
He healed the sick and he cured the lame.
He made some friends when he came to their towns
and asked them if they'd follow him 'round.

Now one day his friends they wanted to know
if there was a place where they could all go
to sit down and eat the Passover meal.
He told them about it, and it was all real.

That night in the room where they all took a seat,
the Good Shepherd gave them bread to eat.
He told them, "Remember this body of mine
was given for you, my blood is the wine."

The Good Shepherd laid down his life for us sheep,
which shows that his love for us runs ocean-deep.
And so we remember with bread and with wine.
Yeah, we remember with bread and with wine.

Dear Family,

Today our group spent time exploring both Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures that give us a picture of the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep.

We played a shepherd and sheep game and then explored the Psalm 23 together—that wonderful picture of a shepherd who walks with us through both good times and bad times, who prepares a table for us, even when our enemies are all around.

The story of the last supper in Mark 14:12-26 reminded us of another table—a table we gather around as a congregation. We saw together that Jesus and the good shepherd are one in the same! At the table, Jesus reminds us that he died for us and cares for us daily as a shepherd cares for his sheep.

Our group decided that that's news worth sharing! We worked on a project that we hope to share—either with other children or the whole congregation. Be sure to ask your child about it.

And next time you look forward as a family to a celebration of the Lord's Supper, read Psalm 23 together before you go. Picture together the shepherd who has prepared a table to remind you of how much he loves you.

Sincerely,