



OUR GOOD SHEPHERD

An intergenerational worship service

The fourth Sunday of the Easter Season (May 11 in 2003) is sometimes referred to as Good Shepherd Sunday. The Lectionary Bible readings for that Sunday have to do with the image of Jesus as our Good Shepherd.

This worship service takes up the Good Shepherd theme and can be used on the Fourth Sunday of Easter or at another time when you want to use the Shepherd theme.

THEME

**Jesus takes care of us
the way good shepherds take care of their sheep**

BIBLE BASIS

Acts 4:5-12 Peter and John before the council
Psalm 23 The Lord is my Shepherd's
1 John 10:11-18 God's love moves us to love others
John 10:11-18 Jesus, the good shepherd

NOTES

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Intergenerational (or all-age) worship takes seriously the idea that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. Worshippers, young, old and in-between can also be involved in planning worship, inviting people to worship, and leading worship.

This packet contains

- **NOTES** about preparing the service
- **THE SERVICE** 'script' of what to say and what do do for each element of the service.
- **APPENDICES**
 - *Tyson's Track*, a short story that can be read in the service
 - a master drawing of a good shepherd window
 - a master for a bedtime prayer card.

Read through all the material. Discuss it with your planning team. You may use the whole service, or adapt it or choose only the parts that will be appropriate in your situation.

Some items are optional even for people

who choose to use the worship service as written, these items are marked 'optional'.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD WINDOW

You will need a large good-shepherd picture as the visual focus for your service. If your church happens to have a good shepherd window, painting, or banner, use your existing artwork. [Drawing attention to things people see all the time helps people look at the familiar with new appreciation.] Consider copying the artwork for other uses as suggested below.

Attached to these notes is a master picture of a a good shepherd window. You may use this in many different ways.

- 1 Copy the picture onto an OHT. Add colour and project the picture on a screen or wall during the service.
- 2 Make a large poster of the window. An easy way to do this is to copy the master sheet onto an OHT. Then project the transparency onto a large sheet of paper or card (perhaps several sheets taped together). Use a black texta to copy the projected lines onto the paper, then add

colour.

Alternatively make a banner of the window. Stitch together the background using several bright colours. Copy the shepherd figure onto unbleached muslin (ask suggested above) and applique it to the background.

Display the poster at the front of the worship area.

- 3) Reduce the size and use the picture as a cover for your worship bulletin.
- 4) Photocopy the picture for children to colour-in. An interesting 'stain-glass' effect can be achieved by using coloured pencils for colouring-in and then rubbing the back of the sheet with cooling oil.

OTHER DECORATION

Sheepskins draped over the communion rail or the ends of pews will add to the atmosphere. [You might encourage young children to engage their sense of touch by feeling the sheepskins when you talk about sheep.]

If you have Powerpoint or facilities for showing photographic slides, consider showing pictures of sheep as people arrive and at other times during the service.

The week prior to the service, you might invite people (children, especially) to bring along any soft toy sheep that they have. Children can hold the animals OR you could create a sheep pen at the front of the church with these sheep in it.

If you really want to put a lot of work into the service, use the imagination and practical skills of a multi-generational team to make the worship area look and feel like a sheep fold/pen. Consider having some hands-on displays in courtyard after the service: sheep to pet, carding, spinning or weaving wool.

NOTE: If you are going to use the Lost Sheep game (7a) in the service, you will need to place several sheep (soft toys or cardboard cut-outs) around the base of the shepherd picture. AND you will need to have one sheep similar to these sheep hidden somewhere in the worship area.

TAKE HOME

The service (14,16) suggests teaching the song *Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me* to be used at home as an evening prayer. If you plan to do this, make a take-home prayer card with the words of the song (and the Good Shepherd picture) for each family.

MUSIC

Before the service you could play recorded pan pipe music which can evoke music played by a solitary shepherd. Alternatively you might play sheep pen sound effects (if you can obtain them).

Choose music that emphasises the sheep/shepherd theme. Avoid 'Jesus, Lamb of God' references as they will confuse the image.

Traditional songs include:

LHS = *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement*
TAHB = *The Australian Hymn Book*

- Faithful Shepherd, feed me [LHS617]
- God his watch is keeping [LHS 389]
- God will take care of us [LHS 865]
- Good Shepherd of thy people, hear [LHS 422]
- Gracious Saviour, quiet Shepherd [LHS 592]
- Have no fear, little flock [LHS 867]
- Jesus, where'er thy people [TAHB 372, LHS 506]
- The King of Love, my Shepherd is (Psalm 23) [TAHB 81, LHS 391]
- Lead us, heavenly Father [TAHB 492, LHS 397]
- The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want (Psalm 23) [TALB 16, LHS 387]
- Loving Shepherd of thy sheep [LHS 607]
- Saviour, like a shepherd lead us [LHS 604]

More contemporary possibilities:

- *O Lord, you lead me* (Geoff Bullock)
- *Shepherd King (Praise and Worship 726)*
- *Shepherd and Come my way from Amazing* (free download worshipresources.parachutemusic.com)
- *Surely goodness and mercy (Scripture in Song 46)*

Specially for children

- *Jesus, tender shepherd hear me* [LHS 601]
- *I am Jesus' little Lamb*
- *Little Lamb* (John M Nelson) from *Sing a*

Song of Scripture)

- Jesus looks after us all from *God Gives #2*
- John 10:10 from *God Gives #1*

The entire congregation sings most of the songs, but you may want to have a small group (a family, a Sunday school class, your church choir) perform one song.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany singing.

Alternatively you might gather a band of musicians specially for this service. If possible invite a young (or mature) person who is learning an instrument to be involved alongside more experienced musicians.

SERMON

Some options include:

- If Jesus is our shepherd and we are his sheep, we are to obey/follow only Jesus (the reading from Acts 4:19)
- the Shepherd protects his flock, (Peter and John are freed, and the Christian community rejoices, Acts 4 following the reading)
- If there are a significant number of pre-schoolers, build the message around three nursery rhymes:

Mary had a little lamb: Jesus' 'little lambs' follow him wherever he leads them

Baa, baa, blacksheep: 'Jesus' lambs are generous with what God gives them and best of all:

Little Bo Peep: Jesus doesn't leave his lambs to come home home. Jesus came to find us and bring us home.

Ideally, the sermon would be aimed at all ages.

However, if it is an AO sermon (adults only), children can colour in a picture of the good shepherd at this time.

Give children a colouring-in sheet plus a clipboard or piece of sturdy cardboard and coloured pencils. Alternatively suggest they sit/kneel on the floor and use the pew as a table.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the minister recalls the children's attention with a

reference to their pictures or a question or idea to discuss in family groups.

ARRIVAL

You may set the theme for the service by having a 'Shepherd' greet people as they arrive, and count them off as a shepherd counts sheep arriving at the sheep pen.

Your shepherd could be in Bible-times costume or could be an Aussie sheep farmer, perhaps even with a sheep dog.

WORSHIP LEADERS

The service involves three primary leaders:

- **Worship Leader** (or leaders) provides all the commentary and serves as host (or compeer) leading worshippers through the service.
- **Reader** (or readers) read Bible texts throughout the service. The reader may stand at a lectern, hold a Bible conspicuously so that people will readily realise what comes from the Bible, in contrast to the words of the Worship Leader.

The worship leader and reader may be any age. Several people of different ages can share either of the roles.

- **Minister (pastor/priest)** may serve as either the Worship Leader or the Reader. However, the minister *will be* responsible for any sections of the service that your church reserves for clergy, eg the absolution (statement of forgiveness), the sermon, the benediction.

Although a worship service is not a performance, the role of the leaders in helping people worship is critical.

Because this service is different from your usual worship pattern a rehearsal is necessary, whether one person is leading the entire service or there are a number of leaders. A complete a walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Some churches find it best to have this rehearsal in conjunction with the band or choir practice for the service.

THE SERVICE

(Spoken 'script' is in plain type, comments and instructions are in *italic.*)

1. ARRIVAL

You may set the theme for the service by having a 'Shepherd' greet people as they arrive, and count them off as a shepherd counts sheep arriving at the sheep pen.

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2. WELCOME & INVOCATION

WORSHIP LEADER: Welcome to worship. As you can see from the decorations, we are going to be thinking about sheep and shepherds today.

The Bible was written by people who lived in a country in which sheep were very important for food and wool — just as they are in Australia.

(Point to or stand beside the Good Shepherd window.) This picture reminds us that sometimes the Bible compares God with a good shepherd and people like you and me with sheep.

For example:

READER: (Ezekiel 34:11,12) The LORD God said: 'I will look for my sheep and take care of them myself. Just as a shepherd looks for lost sheep'.

WL: Today we worship God, our Good Shepherd.

3. SONG

The congregation sings an opening song, eg: Jesus, wher'er your people meet.

4. CONTEMPORARY STORY

Read the story Tyson's Track by Meredith Davies (attached).

You may choose to act out the story, perhaps with actors miming while the story is read.

One person may read the entire story (choose someone who can read clearly and with expression) or the reading can be

shared among several readers. A woman could read Mum's words, a young boy, Tyson's words and thoughts, and another person the pastor's words.

If the story is mimed, make sure all worshippers have a clear line of vision. If this means having children stand on seats or come to the front, do so.

If the story is simply read, draw people's attention to the Good Shepherd window when appropriate.

5. SONG

The congregations sings a song about Jesus finding the lost, eg Amazing Grace.

6. GOSPEL READING

WL: In the Bible, Jesus talks about being our shepherd:

READER: (John 10:11-18) 'I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me . . .

The sheep know their shepherd's voice. He calls each of them by name and leads them out . . .

When he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice.'

7. CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

WL: Sometimes we do not follow Jesus, our Good Shepherd. We may follow a false shepherd, or we may decide to do our own thing.

In the Bible, in we hear more about the kind of sheep we are.

READER: (Isaiah 53:6) All of us were like sheep that had wandered off. We had each gone our own way.

7a. LOST SHEEP GAME (optional)

WL: (Stand near the sheep at the base of the good shepherd window) We've got some sheep here near the good shepherd.

One, two, three . . . (*Count the sheep*)

Oh no! There are only x sheep here. There are supposed to be $(x+1)$.

One of the sheep has gone its own way. It is about (so big), and it's (a light brown colour with a darker face).

I need a couple of good shepherds to find that lost sheep. *Select a cross generational pair (a child and an older person) to search for the lost sheep.*

You may suggest that anyone in the congregation who discovers the location of the lost sheep can help the shepherds. Not by going to the sheep or pointing to it, but by making a sheep sound. 'Baa' louder as the shepherds get closer to the sheep and more softly as they move away from it.

Once the sheep has been located and returned to the flock, the worship leader continues:

Can you think of some words you might use to describe the sheep that wandered away from the shepherd and got lost. Tell your words to someone sitting beside you.

Allow a minute or two for people to talk in 'family' groups.

Yes, we could say that that sheep was 'silly' and 'naughty' and 'disobedient' and maybe a bit 'selfish' and 'irresponsible'. And maybe he deserves to be punished.

Remember, when the Bible talks about sheep, it's actually talking about people — about you and me. Perhaps you can think of some time when you have been silly or naughty or disobedient or selfish. If you would like to, take a minute to tell someone sitting beside you.

Allow a minute or two for people to talk in 'family' groups.

WL/MINISTER: The Bible tells us what God — the Shepherd who loves each one of his sheep — did about the punishment that we deserve.

READER: (*Isaiah 53:6*) . . . but the Lord gave him — Jesus — the punishment we deserved.

Jesus suffered as a sacrifice to take away the sin and guilt of others.

He suffered for our sins and asked God to

forgive us.

WL/MINISTER: God has forgiven you and me because of what Jesus did for us.

8. SONG

The congregation sings a song based on the words of the 23rd Psalm, eg The King of Love my Shepherd is

9. TESTIMONY (*Optional*)

Someone for whom the 23rd Psalm is 'my favourite Bible passage', talks about what the psalm means in their life.

10. BIBLE READING/STORY

WL: Our main Bible reading today doesn't mention the word 'sheep' or 'shepherd' at all. But if you listen carefully you will find that it is about who we listen to and obey.

First, let's set the scene:

(If possible show an illustration of the story.)
Peter and John were Jesus' friends. After Jesus had died and come back to life and gone to heaven, Peter and John went around helping people and telling them about Jesus.

Jesus gave them the power to heal a lame man. That was great — a miracle!

When people asked Peter about it, he said:

READER: (*Acts 4:9–12*) You are questioning us today about a kind deed in which a crippled man was healed. But there is something we must tell you and everyone else in Israel. This man is standing here completely well because of the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. You put Jesus to death on a cross, but God raised him to life . . . Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone.

WL: Some important people were upset about what Peter and John did and what they said about Jesus.

They ordered Peter and John never, for any reason, to say anything about Jesus.

Peter answered:

READER: (*Acts 4:19*) Do you think God wants us to obey you or to obey him? We cannot

keep quiet about what we have seen and heard.

11. SERMON

THE MINISTER gives a brief message

12. OFFERING AND OFFERTORY

Announce and collect the offering in your usual way OR

WL: As followers of Jesus, the good Shepherd, we like to help his work of taking care of people. So we give him some of our money to use for (name projects). I'd like to invite one or two people from each family here today to bring their gift up here and put it on the sheepskin by this picture of Jesus.

As the offering is collected or brought forward, instrumentalists can play the tune of the most familiar song you have used OR the congregation or a small group can sing a song such as:

13. PRAYER

Use your usual general prayer format.

Alternatively a number of different people of different ages can each write and pray one petition based on Psalm 23, eg they may pray about

- God providing everything we need (I'll not want)
- God giving us relaxation, leisure, and rest (He makes me lie down in green pastures)
- God's guidance (He leads me)
- God's comfort in times of suffering, sickness, and death (I will fear no evil)
- God's protection (His rod and staff comfort me)
- God's promise of everlasting life with him (I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever)

Each petition may end with: 'Good Shepherd, hear us and take care of us'.

To which the congregation can respond 'Amen'. Or (if it seems appropriate) 'Baa-amen'.

13a. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pray together the form of the Lord's Prayer used in your congregation.

14 CLOSING SONG

WL: In the evening, a good shepherd brings all his sheep home to the sheep fold. The sheep can sleep safely through the night, knowing that the shepherd is watching over them and protecting them from harm. Our last song is an evening prayer.

I know it's not evening now, but we're going to give you a copy of this song so you can take it home and pray it at bed time.

Two or three people distribute song/prayer cards as the instrumentalist plays the tune.

Then the whole congregation sings Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me.

15. THE BENEDICTION

WL/MINISTER: Jesus, our Good Shepherd always loves us, always takes care of us and always listens to us when we pray to him. Go in his care. Trust him, follow him, listen to him.

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In addition to any other needed announcement, a family that practices bedtime prayers can tell about what they do and why they do it. Remind people of the prayer card they have received that they can use for bedtime prayers.

EVENING PRAYER

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,
bless your little lamb tonight.
Through the darkness please be near me,
keep me safe till morning light.

Through this day your hand has led me,
and I thank you for your care.
You have warmed me, clothed and fed me;
listen to my evening prayer.

Let my sins be all forgiven;
bless my friends and family, too,
Take me, when I die, to heaven;
happy there to live with you.
Amen.

Tyson's track

a short story by Meredith Davies

Tyson loves weekends.

Saturdays he goes walking with his mum and his dog, Zac. Sundays he goes to church with his mum and dad.

The church is old building, with a tall spire and stained glass windows.

Tyson doesn't understand everything that happens at church or everything the pastor says. But he loves the singing and seeing his friends. Most of all he loves the brightly coloured windows.

The morning sunlight shines thorough the windows and makes dazzling patterns on the floor and the walls and the people.

Tyson's very favourite window has a picture of a kind looking man carrying a small white lamb.

Mum said it was a picture of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The lamb had wandered from the flock and got lost. The Good Shepherd had searched everywhere to find it and bring it safely home.

Saturday was Tyson's special day for walks with Mum. They explored all around the district. But Tyson's favourite place to walk was on the old track that Dad used to ride his bike on to school and before that Grand-dad rode a horse to school.

This Saturday morning, Mum didn't feel well. 'Maybe we'll walk tomorrow,' she said. 'You and Zac can play in the yard today.'

Tyson was really disappointed. He knew Zac was disappointed too.

They sat by the gate to the track for a while in the bright sunshine, wondering what they could do.

Zac saw some brown and yellow butterflies and chased after them. Tyson went after him.

When Tyson noticed the track made by a goanna's tail and feet, he followed the track to its hole.

Tyson was having such fun following tracks in the sand that he didn't notice how far from home he had gone. Zac ran ahead,

his tail wagging and his ears pricked high.

Suddenly, Tyson tripped over a tree root. He slipped on rocks and rolled into a sandy creek bed.

He landed heavily on one leg. His arms and legs were scratched and bleeding. His ankle hurt so much he could barely stand, let alone climb back up the creek-bank.

For a long time he sat there, thinking: 'I wonder if Mum has missed me yet' and 'I wish Zac was here with me.'

He was alone and afraid. 'I'm lost,' he thought, 'I don't know if anybody will be able to find me'.

Tears slid down his cheeks and mixed with the dirt on his face. He was hungry and tired and hurt and very sorry for himself.

Eventually Tyson cried himself to sleep with his head against a tree root.

He was woken by a scrabbling noise and suddenly a small brown dog jumped into the creek-bed and wriggled into his arms. Above him, Tyson saw his dad smiling down at him.

Dad carried him back home, where his mother was anxiously waiting.

Later, when Tyson's ankle was bandaged and he was tucked in bed, Mum and Dad told him how worried they had been while he was lost. As Tyson snuggled his head in his pillow, they explained how Dad and Zach had searched and searched until they found him.

Next day, when they were sitting in church, Tyson heard the pastor say: 'Many people are like lost sheep. They wander away from God. Because he loves them, God sent Jesus to find them and bring them back.'

'Just like Dad,' thought Tyson with a smile.

Tyson looked at the light shining through the beautiful window and making dazzling patterns on the floor and the walls and the people. He whispered a quiet 'Thank you, Jesus,' to the man in the window. Now he knew how it felt to be a lost lamb, safe in the arms of the Good Shepherd.

The man in the window smiled down at him.

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