

# My Sheep Know My Voice

## UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** Seeking and obeying God's will

**Scripture:** John 10:3-5

**Memory Verse:** The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. - John 10:3

## The Children's Sermon

Hello, little ones! Today, we're going to talk about a very special story. It's about sheep and their shepherd. Do you know what a shepherd is? A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep. They make sure the sheep are safe, find good grass to eat, and have water to drink. This story helps us understand our relationship with God. We can call it the "Sheep Shepherd Relationship."

In this story, we are like the sheep, and God is like our shepherd. Just like sheep need their shepherd to take care of them, we need God to take care of us. The Sheep Shepherd Relationship is very special because it shows us how much God loves us and wants to keep us safe.

Sheep are not very strong animals. They can easily get lost or hurt. That's why they need a shepherd. We are sometimes like those sheep. We might feel lost or scared, but we have God to guide us, just like the shepherd guides his sheep.

Now, let's talk more about the Sheep Shepherd Relationship. Imagine a big, green field under the sunny sky. This is where the sheep love to eat and play. But sometimes, they

might wander off too far or get close to danger without even knowing it. That's when the shepherd comes in. He watches over them all the time, making sure they stay safe and sound.

Sheep know their shepherd's voice. In a big field, even if there are many people talking, the sheep can hear their shepherd calling them. That's amazing, isn't it? In the same way, we can learn to listen to God's voice. Even when there are so many other noises around us, we can hear Him speaking to our hearts, guiding us through our day.

Sometimes, a sheep might fall into a hole or get caught in thorns. The shepherd doesn't get mad but gently helps the sheep out and makes sure it's okay. The Sheep Shepherd Relationship shows us that when we make mistakes or get into trouble, God doesn't get angry with us. Instead, He helps us out and loves us just the same.

Shepherds also use a staff to help guide their sheep. If a sheep starts going the wrong way, the shepherd uses the staff to gently nudge it back to the group. This is like how God gives us rules to live by. These rules aren't to make our lives hard but to keep us safe and help us be happy, just like the shepherd's staff helps the sheep.

At night, the shepherd counts each sheep to make sure they're all there. If even one is missing, he goes out to find it. This shows us how important each one of us is to God. Just like the shepherd doesn't want to lose any sheep, God doesn't want to lose any of us. We are all very special to Him.

In the Sheep Shepherd Relationship, the sheep also stick together. They feel safer when they are with their friends and their shepherd. This teaches us that being part of

a community, like our family or church, is important. We can help each other and feel God's love together.

Now, let's remember that the Sheep Shepherd Relationship is all about love, care, and guidance. God loves us so much that He always looks out for us, just like a shepherd loves and looks out for his sheep. We can trust God to guide us, protect us, and always be there for us, no matter what.

So, little ones, whenever you see a picture of a sheep or a shepherd, remember how much God loves you and wants to take care of you. And just like sheep listen to their shepherd, we can listen to God by reading the Bible, praying, and being kind to others. This is how we keep our special relationship with God strong.

Thank you for listening to the story about the Sheep Shepherd Relationship. Remember, you are loved and cared for, just like the sheep in the field. God is always with you, guiding you through every day.

## Bible Memory Verse

**The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. - John 10:3**

You Will Need:

- Several large sheets of paper
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- A blindfold

Get Ready:

- Write each child's name on a separate sheet of paper and draw a simple sheep around the name. Cut out the sheep shapes.
- Prepare an open space in the room where children can safely walk around blindfolded.

Do This:

1. Explain that in the Bible verse, Jesus talks about how the sheep listen to his voice and he knows them by name. Each child will have a chance to be a 'sheep' and listen for their name.
2. Blindfold one child at a time and scatter the sheep cutouts around the room.
3. The teacher (acting as the shepherd) will call out one of the names on the sheep cutouts. The blindfolded child must listen carefully and find their way to their sheep by following the sound of the teacher's voice. Use this activity to reinforce how important it is to listen for Jesus' voice and follow Him.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A printed copy of John 10:3-5 for each child
- Blindfolds
- A small bell
- Several small obstacles (like cones or soft toys)
- A spacious room or outdoor area

Get Ready:

- Set up an obstacle course in your chosen area using the small obstacles.
- Designate the start and end points of the course.
- Familiarize yourself with John 10:3-5 to explain how it relates to the activity.

Do this:

1. **Introduction and Scripture Reading:** Start by gathering the children and reading John 10:3-5 together. Discuss the meaning of the scripture, emphasizing how the sheep recognize the shepherd's voice and follow him, avoiding strangers because they do not recognize the stranger's voice.

2. **Blindfold Obstacle Course:** Explain that the children will take turns navigating the obstacle course blindfolded, representing the sheep. The twist is that one child (the "shepherd") will guide the blindfolded child (the "sheep") using only their voice, while you (representing the "stranger") will also give directions in an attempt to mislead them.

- Before starting, select a "shepherd" and give them the bell. The bell represents the shepherd's voice in John 10:3-5. The shepherd's job is to guide their sheep safely through the obstacles by giving verbal commands. The shepherd can also use the bell to help the sheep recognize their voice.

- Blindfold the first "sheep" and position them at the start of the course.

- The "shepherd" stands at the end of the course and begins guiding their sheep using their voice and the bell. At the same time, you will give conflicting directions to try and confuse the sheep.

- The goal for the sheep is to listen carefully and follow the voice of their shepherd, ignoring the stranger's voice, to reach the end of the course safely.

3. **Reflection and Discussion:** After everyone has had a turn, gather the children and discuss the experience. Ask them how it felt to listen for the right voice and the challenges they faced distinguishing between the shepherd's and the stranger's voice.

Relate this back to the importance of knowing and following God's voice (our Shepherd) in our lives, distinguishing it from other voices that may lead us astray.

## Snack Activity: Shepherd's Voice Cupcakes

You'll Need:

- Cupcakes (pre-baked, any flavor)
- White frosting
- Small pretzel sticks
- Mini marshmallows
- Edible food markers
- Sheep and shepherd cutouts (paper or edible)

Get Ready: Prepare a clean workspace with all the materials laid out. Ensure the cupcakes are cool enough to be frosted.

Do this:

1. Frost the cupcakes with white frosting to create a smooth, even layer. This represents the field where the sheep graze.
2. Use the pretzel sticks to make a small fence around the edge of each cupcake. This symbolizes the boundaries and protection provided by the shepherd.
3. Cover the top of the cupcake (inside the pretzel fence) with mini marshmallows to represent the sheep. Use the edible food markers to draw faces on some of the marshmallows to give them character.
4. Place a sheep and shepherd cutout on each cupcake. Discuss how in John 10:3-5, Jesus describes Himself as the good shepherd who calls His sheep by name and leads them out. The sheep follow Him because they know His voice. As we 'eat' the cupcakes,

let's remember the importance of listening for and following the voice of Jesus, our Shepherd.

## Game Activity: Shepherd's Voice Tag

You'll Need:

- A large, open play area (preferably outdoors)
- A blindfold
- Several small bells

Get Ready: Mark a specific play area boundaries large enough for the children to run around safely. Choose one child to be the 'shepherd' and give them the blindfold to wear. The rest of the children will be 'sheep.' Attach small bells to each 'sheep.'

Do this:

1. The 'shepherd' stands in the middle of the play area blindfolded, and the 'sheep' are scattered around the play area within the boundaries.
2. The 'shepherd' calls out specific phrases from John 10:3-5 (e.g., 'The sheep hear his voice,' 'He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out,' 'They will never follow a stranger'). When the 'shepherd' calls out these phrases, the 'sheep' should try to quietly move to a new location without being tagged.
3. The 'sheep' respond by gently ringing their bells to indicate their movement. The 'shepherd' tries to tag the 'sheep' by listening to the sound of the bells and the voices. Once a 'sheep' is tagged, they join the 'shepherd' in the middle and help to call out phrases or guide the 'shepherd.' The game continues until all 'sheep' have been tagged. The last 'sheep' tagged becomes the 'shepherd' for the next round.

## Craft Activity: Hearing the Shepherd's Voice

You'll Need:

- A large poster board
- Markers or paint
- Stickers or pictures of sheep and shepherds

Get Ready: Prepare a large area where the children can work together on the poster board. Ensure all materials are accessible and safe for use by the children.

Do this:

1. Read John 10:3-5 together as a class, discussing the importance of recognizing and following God's voice, just as sheep follow their shepherd.
2. Have each child draw or write on the poster board what they think God's voice sounds like to them or how they can follow God's guidance in their lives. Encourage creativity and personal expression.
3. Decorate the poster with stickers or pictures of sheep and shepherds to remind the children that, like sheep know their shepherd's voice, they can know and follow God's voice in their lives. Hang the poster in the classroom as a reminder of the lesson.

## Prayer Activity: Hearing the Shepherd's Voice

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copies of John 10:3-5
- Blindfolds for each child
- A large, safe, open space



Get Ready: Before the activity, select a large, safe, open space where the children can move around freely without bumping into obstacles. Mark a starting point and a finish line. Familiarize the children with John 10:3-5, explaining how sheep recognize and follow the voice of their shepherd, just as we should listen for and follow God's guidance in our lives.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into pairs and have one child in each pair be the 'sheep' by wearing a blindfold, while the other is the 'shepherd.' The shepherd's task is to guide their sheep from the starting point to the finish line using only their voice. The sheep's task is to listen carefully and follow the shepherd's voice.
2. After each pair has had a turn, gather the children and discuss how it felt to listen for and follow the shepherd's voice. Relate this to listening for and following God's will and guidance in our lives, as described in John 10:3-5.
3. Conclude with a prayer circle, inviting each child to pray for the ability to hear and obey God's voice more clearly in their daily lives.