# LSW

children

Is there any way other people can know that we belong to Jesus? *Discuss that following is not just to physically to follow a person somewhere like the sheep following the shepherd. A follower also follows what his or her master does. When other people see that we are doing the same thing as our master, they know that we are followers of our master. Discuss the things we should be doing so that people will know.*

*Link this up with last week’s reading:* Anyone who says ‘I know him (God)’, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar. (1 Jn 2:4).

Year B

##### Fourth Sunday of Easter

## Images

## Sheep following a shepherd

Shepherd risking his life

## Points to note

As mentioned in the leaflet for Easter 3, this is part of a four-week journey that John is leading us. You may wish to read that leaflet to set this Sunday in context.

This is one of the most endearing images of Christ: Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In many ways, there are two images of the Good Shepherd. First, as a leader after whom his disciples will follow. And his disciples include us. His disciples will follow him because we know him.

You may also want to reflect on the accessory of a bishop. The staff that a bishop carries is called a *crozier*. It represents the staff of a shepherd. The crook at the end of the staff enables the shepherd to hook the necks of straying lambs.

The other image is that of a shepherd risking his life for his sheep, fighting off wolves and the like. Jesus, however, not just risked his life for us, he laid down his life for us. For younger children, you may not wish to emphasise this image.

## Liturgy

### Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the Good Shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my own sheep and my own know me.

Alleluia!

### Gospel

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And with your spirit.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Jn 10:11-18)

Jesus said:

“I am the Good Shepherd:

the Good Shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep.

The hired man, since he is not the shepherd

and the sheep do not belong to him,

abandons the sheep and run away as soon as he sees a wolf coming,

and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep;

this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd;

I know my own and my own know me,

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;

and I lay down my life for my sheep.

And there are other sheep that I have that are not of this fold,

and these I have to lead as well.

They too will listen to my voice,

and there will be only one flock and one shepherd.

The Father loves me,

because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

No one takes it from me;

I lay it down of my own free will,

and as it is in my power to lay it down,

so it is in my power to take it up again;

and this is the command I have been given by my Father.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

#### Discussion

Anyone has a dog? Does your dog come when you call? *Explain that sheep flocks in the Middle East tend to be small* *and the many flocks need to search for scarce grazing land. Grazing grounds generally overlap and flocks tend to mix freely. Interestingly, though, when the shepherds leave at dusk, each has no problem in identifying his sheep and leading them home. The sheep all knew their master and each will respond only when its master calls and not another, very much like how dogs recognise their masters.*

Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd and that his sheep, i.e., we, know him and will follow him when he calls. How do you think he will call us? By our names. Discuss those who God called by their names: Abraham, Samuel, etc. Discuss how Mary Magdalene did not recognise Jesus at the tomb until he called her by her name. A good example of the sheep who knew the shepherd. How would Jesus call you? This is a good opportunity for everybody in the group to share his or her name. Make sure that each gives his name out loud to the group and not just to the facilitator.

Have you seen how cows are branded? *With a red hot metal rod, which then imprints the owner’s name or sign on the side of the cow. Cows are branded so that everyone knows to whom those cows belong.   Explain that cows are very big so they don't feel it much.*

If we are Jesus’ sheep, do we also need to be branded like the cows? *Yes!! Like the cows, we are branded with Jesus’ name on us. We are all called Christians.*