

Sunday 21st February - I Am the Good Shepherd

We hope that you have had a relaxing half term, although it has been different, not being able to go out and visit anywhere or see people. Today we are continuing the I Am series.

What do you understand the role of a shepherd to be?
Can you describe the qualities of a shepherd?

In Biblical times and even today in the Middle East the sheep are not driven but led. The shepherd calls them by name and they follow him. Some will follow closely but others will stray or drop behind, the shepherd is constantly looking over his shoulder to make sure he doesn't lose any. A sheep, unlike many animals, remains lost if it gets lost – it can't find its own way back. Should a sheep give birth then the shepherd would carry the lamb until it was ready to walk and he would make sure that he didn't go too far so that the mother sheep could keep up. The shepherd would lead the sheep to good grazing grounds and to where there was water. If there was no stream or spring he would use a well or dig a well to make sure his animals were well watered. In the winter he would melt snow so that they could drink and in the summer he would find somewhere shady for them to rest during the heat of the day. The shepherd would be prepared to defend his sheep against any attack, he would even be prepared to sacrifice his own life to protect his sheep.

Read John 10: 11-18, use the Bible study and or the GROW sheet (whichever you find the most useful) to help you unpick the passage. Spend time really thinking about what this means because understanding Jesus as our Shepherd can be tricky in today's society, but it underpins our relationship to Jesus and His to us.

Think about and answer the following questions, use what you have written on your Bible study/ Grow sheet to help:

- 1 What is the "I Am" statement Jesus is making here?
- 2 What were the differences between the good shepherd and the person who had been employed to look after the sheep?
- 3 What do you learn about the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep?
- 4 Why did the shepherd go to look for the sheep? Why was he so happy when he found it?
- 5 What do you learn about how much the shepherd cares for the sheep? For what reasons might a shepherd have to lay down his life for his sheep?
- 6 What did Jesus tell this story for?
- 7 Why do you think Jesus is entitled to call himself the good shepherd.
- 8 Can you think of any similar modern day examples?
- 9 How did Jesus demonstrate that He is the good shepherd or in other words, how did He practice what He preached?

Jesus is the Good Shepherd because

finish the sentence.

Activity:

Make the parable into a story for small children – aged about 5 – that will show them that Jesus is like a shepherd who looks after us. Get as complicated with this as you like – you can just write the story or add pictures as well and bind them into a book. (Use staples and then cover the stapled edge with sellotape.). Keep the books (or give to Anne) and when we get back together we can use them to teach the younger members of our church family.

Listening for his voice

Make yourself comfortable, either lying or sitting.

Spend a few minutes quietly, in your own space, listening for Jesus' voice.

Once comfortable and ready pray asking help in hearing what God wants to say when he wants to speak, eg:

"Thank you Jesus for being our good shepherd. Thank you that you know each one of us by name and that you love and care for each one of us. Help us to hear and recognise your voice now."

Try being still and listening for about 5 minutes.

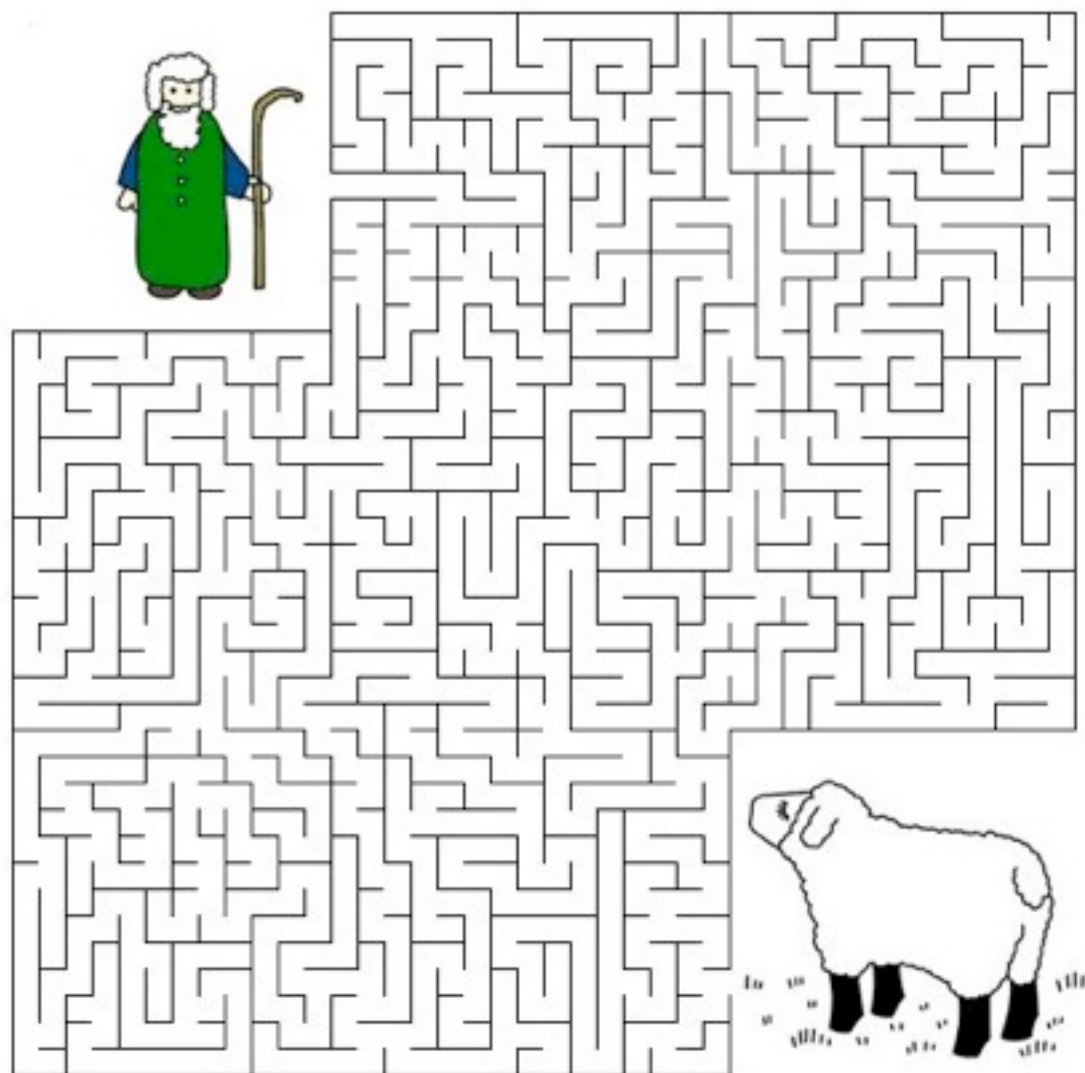
You may hear an audible voice or might see a picture in your mind or remember a verse from the Bible or have a sense of peace or joy. You may experience nothing, and that's o.k., it doesn't mean God doesn't love you, just that this isn't the right moment to 'speak'.

Marshmallow sheep:

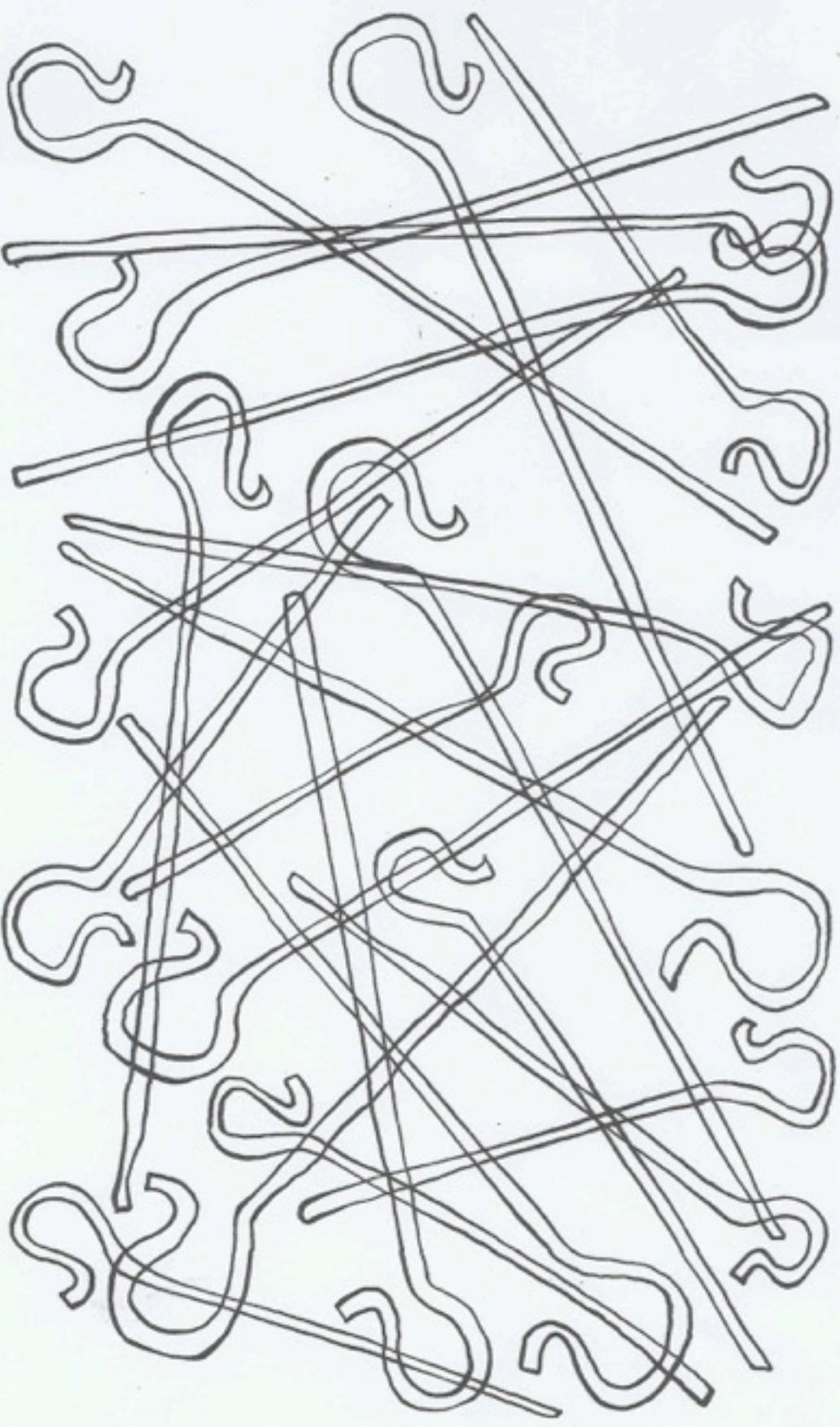
Need: Marshmallows, water, icing sugar, matchmakers or pretzels, chocolate buttons

Cut the matchmakers/pretzels into 4cm lengths. Create edible sheep by sticking the larger end of two marshmallows together with water icing. Use water icing to glue a large chocolate button onto one end for the head then push four matchmaker sticks into the bottom for legs. If you want to, you can add white icing dots for eyes on the chocolate button. (If you want to do this activity and don't have the bits you need, please contact Anne who will drop some around).

Jesus proved himself the Good Shepherd beyond all doubt when He willingly allowed Himself to be killed by crucifixion so that we could have eternal life and be in a forever relationship with God.



You are my good shepherd because



How many shepherds' crooks can you find? More than 20?

BIBLE STUDY

Breakdown

Date: _____

Book of the Bible:	Passages:	Time Period:
Who wrote it? <i>Author</i>		Who was it written to? <i>Audience</i>
Where did it take place? <i>Location</i>		Main Characters Involved:
Main Themes: <i>Marriage, Faith, etc</i>		
Key Verses:		
		Major Events:



BIBLE STUDY

Breakdown

Key Words

Verse:	Word	Definition/Translation
Notes & Lessons Learned:		
Life Application: <i>What lessons can I directly apply to my life today?</i>		

GROW Bible Adventure

Bible Passage/story:

God's Word:

What is happening in the story?

The main point we need to remember is:

Relationships:

Is there anything that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others?

What should we do?

What shouldn't we do?

Outward Action:

Is there anything that shows us how we should help or serve God or others and what is it?

This week to show this I am going to

Worship:

Is there anything that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? What is it?

How do you feel about God?

What would you like to say to God?