

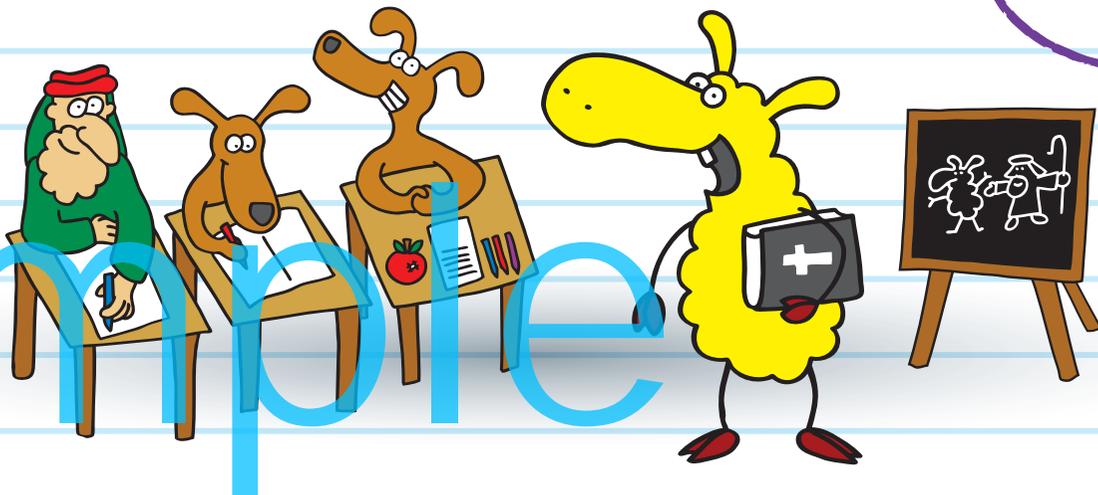


SHEEP DOG SCHOOL™

Cecil the Lost Sheep™

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Sample



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Introduction

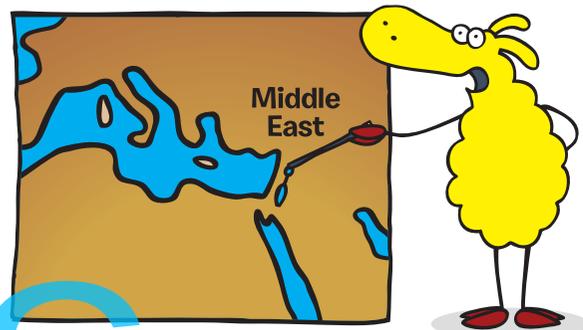
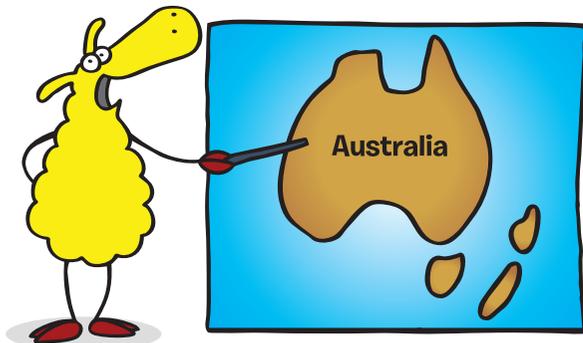


Hi shepherds, sheepdogs, teachers and parents.

My name is Cecil and I'm the head teacher at Sheepdog School. From the first pages of Genesis, where we meet Abel who kept flocks ([Genesis 4:2](#)), to the last chapter of Revelation where Jesus is called "the Lamb" ([Revelation 22:3](#)), we find stories of sheep and shepherds. If you are going to understand your Bible you need to know about sheep. I could send you on six months' work experience to some small village in the Middle East where the role of shepherds has hardly changed since Biblical times, but it may be easier if I just share my expertise.

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History & Geography



As a sheep expert I have traveled widely studying the different ways people look after sheep. In Australia where one farmer can have thousands of sheep, he doesn't know their names. Instead, each sheep gets an ear tag with a number on it. When the farmer wants to get the sheep from the paddock to the shearing shed, the sheepdog rounds them up while the farmer yells out instructions like, "Get away back!" or, "Get in behind!" If the sheepdog ignores the instruction the farmer yells out things that are not appropriate for us to repeat here at Sheepdog School. The farmer doesn't hang around with the sheep; he is off doing things like fixing the tractor. Even at night the sheep have to stay out in the paddock and look after themselves.

While I don't want to offend my friends in Australia, I think shepherds in the Middle East are nicer to their sheep. A shepherd will have a herd of 5-15 sheep or an extended family may have a flock of 40. One hundred sheep is a big flock and would be cared for by a group of shepherds

[Luke 15:4](#). The shepherd knows each sheep well and he doesn't need ear tags to tell who's who. He stays with them all day and takes them home at night. If they do stay out at night, the shepherd stands guard. When it is time to move, the shepherd just calls out and all the sheep recognize his voice and follow him ([John 10:3-4](#)). Shepherds do not lose sheep. If one strays he searches until he finds him. Even if a sheep is killed by a wild animal, the shepherd will find the remains and bring them home. Mind you, and wild animals be warned, read [1 Samuel 17:34-37](#) before you decide to pick on a sheep. Mess with the sheep and you answer to the shepherd.

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Interviews



Hi, sheepdog school trainees, I'm here in [Luke 15:1](#) hoping to interview some tax collectors and sinners. To my surprise, I've discovered a shepherd amongst this lot. Hello shepherd, I didn't expect that people would lump you in with the sinners! I thought everyone loved shepherds.



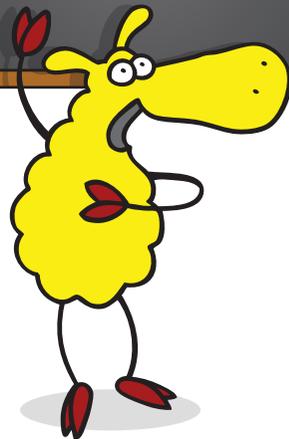
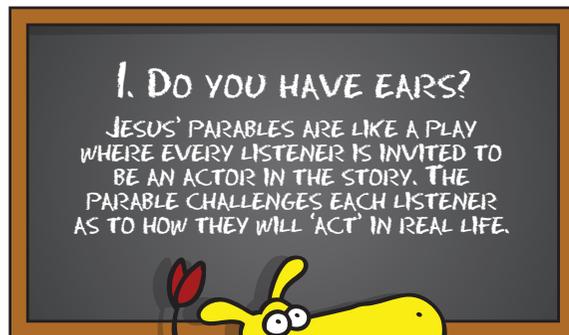
They should love shepherds. All the big names in the Old Testament were shepherds. Abraham had large flocks ([Genesis 13:5-7](#)), as did his son Isaac ([Genesis 26:12-14](#)), and his son Jacob. And what were Jacob's sons doing all day? You guessed it, looking after the sheep ([Genesis 37:12-17, 47:3](#)). Then there is Moses. He spent forty years as a shepherd ([Exodus 3:1](#)). King David? Where did he hone all those skills that made him such a great leader? As a young shepherd protecting the family's flock, of course ([1 Samuel 16:11-13](#)). Not to mention the prophet Amos (if you don't know what his occupation was, look up [Amos 1:1](#)).



Even God is a shepherd. Jacob says, "God has been my shepherd all my life" ([Genesis 48:15](#)), David prays, "The Lord is my shepherd" ([Psalm 23:1](#)), and the great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all call God, "our shepherd." Look up these verses in your Bible: [Isaiah 40:10-11](#), [Jeremiah 31:10](#), and [Ezekiel 34:12](#). But that's not all; God calls the leaders, the kings, and the priests to be faithful shepherds to his people. David did a brilliant job ([Psalm 78:70-72](#)), but others neglected their flock ([Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23:1-4](#)).

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Master Class



1. Do You Have Ears?

One of the things Jesus used to say is, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" ([Luke 14:35](#)). That's good advice, especially when you're listening to one of Jesus' parables! Some listeners think, "What a nice story, I'll have to tell it to the kids," but those who hear Jesus, go, "Hang on! That story is about me!" They head home really happy...or very angry depending on where they ended up in the story. If you hear a parable of Jesus it will affect you! When I first heard this story, I went, "Hey, I'm a sheep! This story is about me!" I went home happy thinking about how much God loves me. When the tax collectors and the sinners heard this parable they yelled, "Hey, this story is about us! We're that lost sheep! Wow the Shepherd loves us sinners!" They went home amazed and happy.

Jesus made sure the Pharisees and the teachers of the law knew the story was about them. He looked them in the eye and began, "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep." The Pharisees thought, "What a rude thing to say! How dare you call us shepherds! Shepherds are unclean sinners!" But then Scriptures like [Ezekiel 34:1-6](#) would have come to mind, where God had called the leaders of Israel to be faithful shepherds of His sheep. At the end of the parable many of the Pharisees would have been furious and said, "How dare Jesus imply that those sinners belong to God's flock and that we should rejoice in them." But maybe one or two Pharisees received the parable as an invitation to be a faithful shepherd, they would go home happy thinking, "Wow! Jesus is right! I should eat with sinners, for they are God's sheep and need us shepherds." We know of a few Pharisees who became followers of Jesus. There is Nicodemus ([John 3:1](#), [John 19:39](#)), the Apostle Paul ([Acts 26:4-5](#)), and the crowd in ([Acts 15:5](#)).

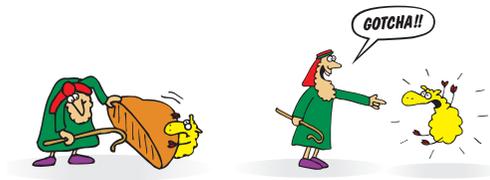
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Activities



Purchase the Activity Book
from the Lost Sheep Shop!

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1. Hide and Seek

Here is another activity to share how well God knows each of his sheep. Take the class outside and ask them to scatter and hide around the church or school. Keep one student with you and prepare another to not come out of hiding when the whistle is blown. Get the children to return quickly on the whistle and mass as a group. See how quickly the child with you can guess who it is that is missing from the larger group. Then send everyone out to find that one "sheep" who is missing.

2. Party Time

After you have shared Cecil the Lost Sheep, have a big celebration party like the one on the last page of the book. Have hats, streamers, and party food. Tell the kids that this is what happens in heaven when one lost person is found. You could even sing a verse of "Amazing Grace" at the party.

3. Bonus Activities

Download the file below. These are great activities for the classroom including bookmarks for kids to cut out, mazes, and pictures of Cecil to colour!

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Jeremiah 23:1-4 CEV

You leaders of my people are like shepherds that kill and scatter the sheep. You were supposed to take care of my people, but instead you chased them away. So now I'll really take care of you, and believe me, you will pay for your crimes! I will bring the rest of my people home from the lands where I have scattered them, and they will grow into a mighty nation. I promise to choose leaders who will care for them like real shepherds. All of my people will be there, and they will never again be frightened.

Jeremiah 31:10 NIV

Hear the word of the Lord, you nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: "He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd."

Ezekiel 34:1-4 CEV

The Lord God said: Ezekiel, son of man, Israel's leaders are like shepherds taking care of my sheep, the people of Israel. But I want you to condemn these leaders and tell them: I, the Lord God, say you shepherds of Israel are doomed! You take care of yourselves while ignoring my sheep. You drink their milk and use their wool to make your clothes. Then you butcher the best ones for food. But you don't

take care of the flock! You have never protected the weak ones or healed the sick ones or bandaged those that get hurt. You let them wander off and never look for those that get lost. You are cruel and mean to my sheep.

Ezekiel 34:12 NIV

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

Amos 1:1

I am Amos. And I raised sheep near the town of Tekoa.

Micah 5:2,4 CEV

Bethlehem Ephrath, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation—someone whose family goes back to ancient times. Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep, this ruler will lead and care for his people by the power and glorious name of the Lord his God.

Matthew 10:30 CEV

Even the hairs on your head are counted.

Luke 5:33 NIV

John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.

Luke 6:2 CEV

Some Pharisees said, "Why are you picking grain on the Sabbath? You're not supposed to do that!"

Luke 11:42 CEV

You Pharisees are in for trouble! You give God a tenth of the spices from your gardens, such as mint and rue. But you cheat people, and you don't love God. You should be fair and kind to others and still give a tenth to God.

Luke 11:37-38 NIV

When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal.

Luke 14:35 CEV

If you have ears, pay attention!

Luke 15:1-7 CEV

Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus.

So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them." Then Jesus told them this story: If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbours and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep." Jesus said, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

Luke 15:8-10 CEV

Jesus told the people another story: What will a woman do if she has ten silver coins and loses one of them? Won't she light a lamp, sweep the floor, and look carefully until she finds it? Then she will call in her friends and neighbours and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found the coin I lost." Jesus said, "In the same way God's angels are happy when even one person turns to him."

Luke 15:31,32 CEV

His father replied, "My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be

glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found."

John 3:1 NIV

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

John 10:3-4 CEV

But the gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd, and he goes in through it. 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.

John 10:14-16 CEV

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd.

John 19:39 CEV

Nicodemus also came with about seventy-five pounds of spices made from myrrh and aloes. This was the same Nicodemus who had visited Jesus one night.

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