

# Read

Acts 4:8-12

Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23,  
26, 28, 29

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2021



#### REFLECTION

Today's Gospel reading contains one of the seven "I Am" statements of John's Gospel. Jesus tells his disciples that he is the Good Shepherd who gives up his life for the sheep, which stands in comparison to hired workers who run away and hide at the sight of a wolf. This distinction is important when living the Christian life, as personal relationship is of the utmost importance. Jesus loves each one of us as individuals, not because he is forced to but because of his abundant love for creation. Do we live as a Christian because we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Do our lives embody what we believe? Do we risk critique and ridicule to share the Gospel? Does our faith influence our choices?

#### ACTION

This week, spend time reflection on who Jesus is for you. Reading the Gospel accounts tell us a great deal about who Jesus and what he did. However, each of us have a personal relationship and encounter with Christ. Who is Jesus for you? How do you understand your relationship with others in light of your relationship with Christ? Write down statements Jesus makes about himself in the Gospel accounts and then expand upon each one to connect Jesus with your life.



**"Let us involve ourselves  
in our relationship  
of love with Jesus and we  
will be able to perform  
good works that have the  
fragrance of the Gospel."**

— Pope Francis (@Pontifex)

#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd resonate in your life today?
- ❖ Besides the Good Shepherd, what are some other images of Jesus that you especially relate to?



April 25, 2021

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### LECTIONARY #50B

Acts 4:8-12

Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

### Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Today's Gospel reading reminds us of why Jesus died for us. As our shepherd, he seeks a relationship with his followers, but also with anyone who does not believe. Believing in Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection brings us closer to God. We must be ready to respond throughout our lives to his call to follow him. He cares for us and protects us. We can turn to him for all our needs.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus is our shepherd who guides us and cares for us.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

On April 29, we celebrate the memorial of St. Catherine of Sienna. She lived in the fourteenth century and was a member of an order of lay Dominicans (she was not a religious sister). She was a mystic and spent a great deal of time in prayer. However, she also spent much of her time helping the poor and the sick. She boldly spoke against the problems in her time, both in the Church and in secular issues. She gives us a great example of how prayer strengthens us to complete the work that God has called us to do. She is a Doctor of the Church.

### Church Teaching Connection

"The church is, accordingly, a sheepfold, the sole and necessary entrance to which is Christ (see [John] 10:1-10). It is also a flock, of which God foretold that he would himself be the shepherd (see [Isaiah] 40:11; [Ezekiel] 34:11 ff), and whose sheep, although watched over by human shepherds, are nevertheless at all times led and brought to pasture by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and prince of shepherds (see [John] 10:11-15; 1 [Peter] 5:4), who gave his life for his sheep (see [John 10:11-15])" (*Lumen gentium*, 6).

### Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

John 10:11-18

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one

shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

► **What image comes to mind when you hear Jesus is our shepherd?**

Although it may not be a common occupation today, the people during Jesus' time would have been able to relate to this image that Jesus uses of the shepherd and his sheep. Many of those who came to listen to Jesus would have been shepherds who understood the dangers and constant attention it took to tend sheep. Losing a sheep would have devastated a shepherd as it would mean less wool to sell and one less ewe producing lambs. Tending to the flock of sheep required a great deal of care.

► **What other metaphors are used in Scripture to describe Jesus? Which of these is most relatable to you?**

There are many metaphors Jesus uses to describe himself in the New Testament. Living water, light,

vine, potter, bridegroom, shepherd, the Word, and the bread of life are just a few of the metaphors Jesus uses to explain that he is in fact the Messiah that the prophets spoke of in the Old Testament. These metaphors are used to help listeners, followers, and potential converts learn more about Jesus and how his life was lived so that we may receive eternal life.

► **What modern-day metaphor would you use to describe Jesus so that other young people your age might connect more to Jesus as the Messiah?**

When we read the Scripture, we must remember that the writers were writing to a specific audience at a particular time in history. But it is also important to remember that Scripture is the divinely inspired Word of God. It reveals truths about God to us, so that we may come to know him better. We should take time to consider how Jesus shepherds us in our time and lives. He laid down his life for us so that we might have eternal life.

► **When have you noticed others sacrificing things for sake of others? Think about your parents or grandparents. Perhaps you have sacrificed time and energy for a friend or sibling.**

► **What do these sacrifices tell you about the relationship between people?**

When someone sacrifices something for another person, it usually done out of a great love for that person. Jesus' life gives us a model of how we show our love to others. Today's Gospel passage reminds us this great sacrifice made for us. God loves us so much that Jesus gave himself up to death for our sake. We in turn are called to share this sacrificial love for others, going out of our way to make sure others have what need and are well cared for.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 176.*

**As members of the flock, we are guided by our Shepherd, Jesus.**

**Jesus laid down his life for all people.**

**Jesus is always waiting for us to turn and follow him.**

## Act on the Word

### Jesus Is . . .

*You will need Bibles, large sheets of newsprint, and markers.*

Divide the teens into small groups and have them brainstorm different metaphors used to describe Jesus in the New Testament. Have each group choose one metaphor. Each group will then search the Bible for a passage that is related to their metaphor. If groups need help, here are some examples: Mark 2:18–20 (bridegroom), John 6:25–59 (bread of life), John 8:12 (light of the world), John 10:11–18 (shepherd), John 15:1–8 (vine), or Ephesians 2:20–22 (cornerstone). You can also use a concordance or index to find related passages. These can often be found at the end of Bibles, and there are many online tools to help as well.

Groups should read through their passages together to make sure they understand the reference. On the center of their sheet of newsprint, have

them print "Jesus is . . ." and fill in the blank with their metaphor. Then have them fill in the remaining space around the central metaphor with Scripture passages that refer to Jesus as such. They should also include how this metaphor can be understood in the modern day.

Once all the groups have finished, have them present their metaphor and its meaning to the larger group. Be sure to discuss how each metaphor is relevant to today.

## Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,  
you are the Good Shepherd  
who never leaves the flock unattended  
and who always watches over us with care.  
May all who believe in you come together as one  
family, united in your love.  
Raise up in your Church effective leaders who  
are willing to give their lives for the sheep.  
You live and reign with the Father in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*