

Leader's Guide

The Good Shepherd: My Sheep Know Me

John 10:11-18

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Opening Icebreaker (Lighthearted)

If you could have any animal represent you, what would it be — and why?

1. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. What does this reveal about His character and what stands out to you most about the way He cares for His people?

Notes:

Emphasize:

- He lays down His life willingly (v. 17–18).
- He knows His sheep personally.
- His leadership is sacrificial, not self-serving.

Follow-Up Prompts:

- How is Jesus different from a “hired hand” in your own words?
- Why is it significant that He says no one takes His life from Him?
- How does knowing Jesus is both powerful *and* sacrificial affect your trust in Him?

Supporting Scripture:

- **Psalm 23:1–4** – The Lord as Shepherd
 - **Isaiah 53:6** – We all like sheep have gone astray
 - **Philippians 2:5–8** – Christ's humility and sacrifice
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2. If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, what does it mean for us to be sheep? In what ways do you see yourself reflected in the description of sheep (dependent, vulnerable, needing guidance, designed for community)?

Notes:

Sheep are:

- Dependent/Cannot Carry a Burden
- Vulnerable/Defenseless
- Communal
- Know Their Shepherd and Run to Him

Follow-Up Prompts:

- Which sheep characteristic do you resist the most?
- Why do we struggle with dependence in our culture?

Supporting Scripture:

- **Proverbs 3:5–6** – Trust in the Lord
- **2 Corinthians 12:9–10** – Power in weakness

3. Sheep recognize and follow the shepherd's voice. What voices most compete for your attention in daily life and how can you intentionally grow in recognizing and responding to the voice of Jesus?

Follow-Up Prompts:

- How do you personally discern whether a thought is from God, yourself, or something else?
- What habits help you tune your ear to Jesus?
- When have you ignored His voice — and what happened?

Supporting Scripture:

- **John 10:27** – “My sheep hear my voice”
- **2 Corinthians 10:5** – Take every thought captive
- **James 3:17** – Wisdom from above

4. Sheep aren't built to carry heavy burdens or defend themselves alone. What burden are you currently trying to manage on your own instead of entrusting to the Shepherd? What would it look like to practically surrender that this week?

Follow-Up Prompts:

- What keeps you from handing that burden to Jesus?
- Are you trying to control an outcome?
- What would surrender look like in action? (Prayer? Confession? Delegating? Resting?)

Supporting Scripture:

- **Matthew 11:28–30** – “Come to Me... I will give you rest”
 - **1 Peter 5:7** – Cast your cares on Him
 - **Psalms 55:22** – Cast your burden on the Lord
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5. Sheep live in community and don't thrive in isolation. Where might you be tempted to live independently rather than relationally? What is one concrete step you can take this week to lean more fully into Christian community?

Notes:

Isolation is one of the enemy's primary strategies.

Community provides:

- Protection
- Encouragement
- Correction
- Strength

Follow-Up Prompts:

- What makes vulnerability in community difficult?
- When have you experienced protection or encouragement from other believers?
- What would deeper connection look like practically?

Supporting Scripture:

- **Hebrews 10:24–25** – Do not neglect meeting together
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9–12** – Two are better than one
- **Galatians 6:2** – Bear one another's burdens