

A NOTE TO PARENTS

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

- Matthew 9:35-36

Long before the time of Jesus, domestic sheep had lost the ability to survive without the care and feeding of human shepherds. Ask your child, “How would sheep be if they had no shepherd?” If you have several children, suggest that they pretend to be sheep, wandering helplessly with no shepherd. Sheep with no shepherd cannot search for food or protect themselves from harsh weather, dangerous terrain, or hungry predators. They scatter aimlessly, or foolishly follow whichever of their number begins to do something. All of this is easy for children to imagine, for they know how lost and helpless they feel when there is no trusted adult around.

Now let someone be the shepherd. What does the shepherd do? How do the sheep feel now? What will be different for them? Remind your children of the Good Shepherd whom we met in the Gospel shortly after Easter (John 10:1-18). What does the Good Shepherd do? (He cares for the sheep, finds pasture for them, leads them, they know his voice ... *and he lays down his life for them.*)

Jesus tells his friends to spread the news that the shepherd has come among them to gather them, heal them, and feed them. The image changes, and now we are speaking of God’s Kingdom, or God’s Reign: the time when we know that God is with us, and we choose to follow and trust him. And with the work of proclaiming God’s reign comes the power to make his presence real, in works of healing, deliverance, and restoration. We are not just sheep, after all. We are human, made in God’s image. When we follow our Savior, he doesn’t just feed us and save us. He makes us become like him. And we are to reach out to other lost sheep, and offer them the same wonderful gift. How would your children act this out? How can we act it out ourselves, not as a pretend game but for real?

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Year A
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Jesus went from town to town, telling all the people, "God's Kingdom is coming!"



He healed people who were sick or hurt.



He sent his friends out to do the same work.



He said, "Spread the Good News that God's Kingdom is coming."

Jesus told his friends to do what he did. He told them to help people who were sick or hungry or lonely or hurt. He told them to spread God's love wherever they went.

Today, we are Jesus's friends. He wants us to spread God's love. What do people in your church do to spread God's love? Draw it here.