

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

New Testament Lesson #68

Jesus told two stories. In the first, Jesus referred to the gate of a sheepfold. In that time, shepherds led their flocks to a fold (a fenced area) guarded by a gatekeeper. When the shepherd came to the fold with his flock, the sheep entered and mixed with the other flocks already there. The sheep knew the voice of their shepherd, and when he called, they would follow. But they would not follow a stranger. Shepherds entered by the gate. Thieves tried to enter some other way, intending to steal sheep.

Jesus declared that he was the gate and that all who would find life must enter by him. All who suggested other entry points were “thieves and bandits” who had no rightful claim on the flock.

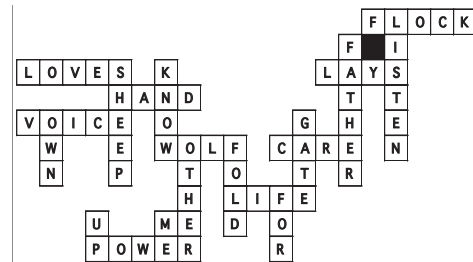
Shepherds endured much for their sheep – braving the weather and wild animals for the flock’s welfare.

In the second story, Jesus called himself “the good shepherd” who would lay down his life for the sheep, in sharp contrast to the hired hand who abandons the sheep when danger comes.

The Good Shepherd

- I. Jesus told two stories about sheep.
- II. He first described the gate to the sheepfold.
 - A. Shepherds led their flocks into a fold.
 - B. The different flocks mixed together in the fold, but each knew its shepherd’s voice and wouldn’t follow the wrong shepherd.
 - C. Shepherds entered by the gate.
 - D. Thieves tried to find another way in.
 - E. Jesus said he was the gate and the only way to enter into life.
- III. Jesus called himself the good shepherd in the second story.
 - A. Shepherds cared for their flocks, even in adverse conditions.
 - B. Jesus said he would die for his sheep, in contrast to hired hands who abandon the sheep when danger comes.
 - C. Jesus also had “other sheep” he wanted to bring into his flock.

ANSWER KEY:



POINTS TO CONSIDER:

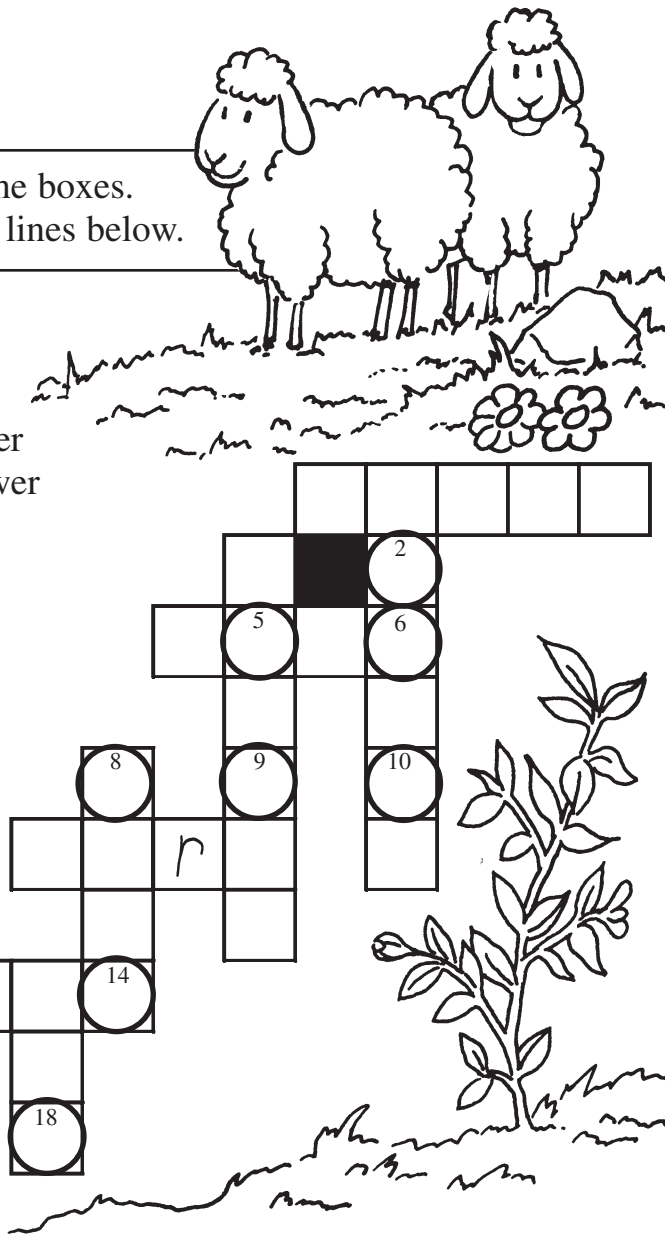
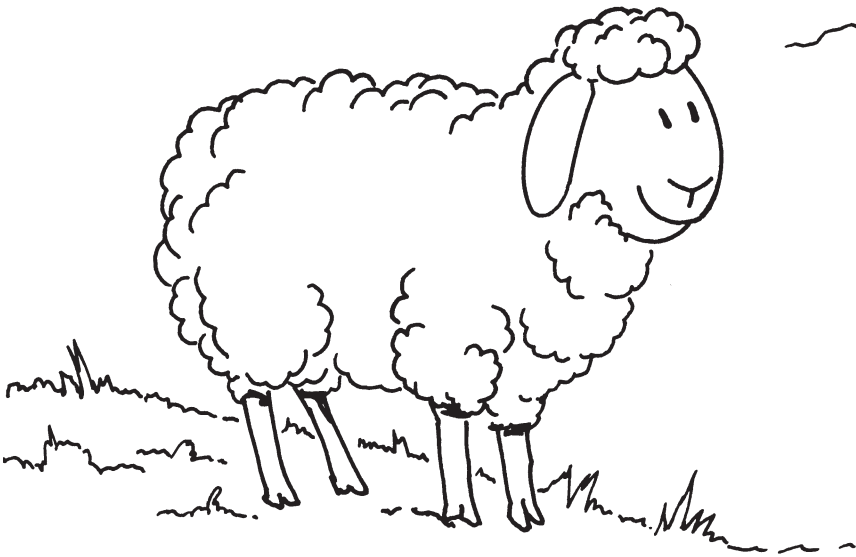
- In John’s gospel, these stories follow accounts of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, a legalistic religious group. Jesus may have intended the “thieves” and the “hired hand” in these two stories to represent the Pharisees. (John’s comment in verse 6 seems to support this.) Clearly, the Pharisees did not acknowledge Jesus as the “gate” or the “good shepherd.”
- The “other sheep” Jesus mentioned probably referred to Gentiles. Jesus came first to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24), that is, Jews, but the message would eventually be extended to non-Jews as well.

“I am the Good Shepherd.” Jesus said he had “other sheep” not of his sheep pen, and he wanted to bring them into his flock as well.

BIBLE
ACTIVITY SHEETS

Fit these words from the Scripture into the boxes.
Then write the letters that are circled on the lines below.

- | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| me | fold | gate | sheep | up |
| own | care | hand | voice | for |
| lays | wolf | flock | Father | other |
| know | life | loves | listen | power |



Jesus said . . .

“

 2 5 15

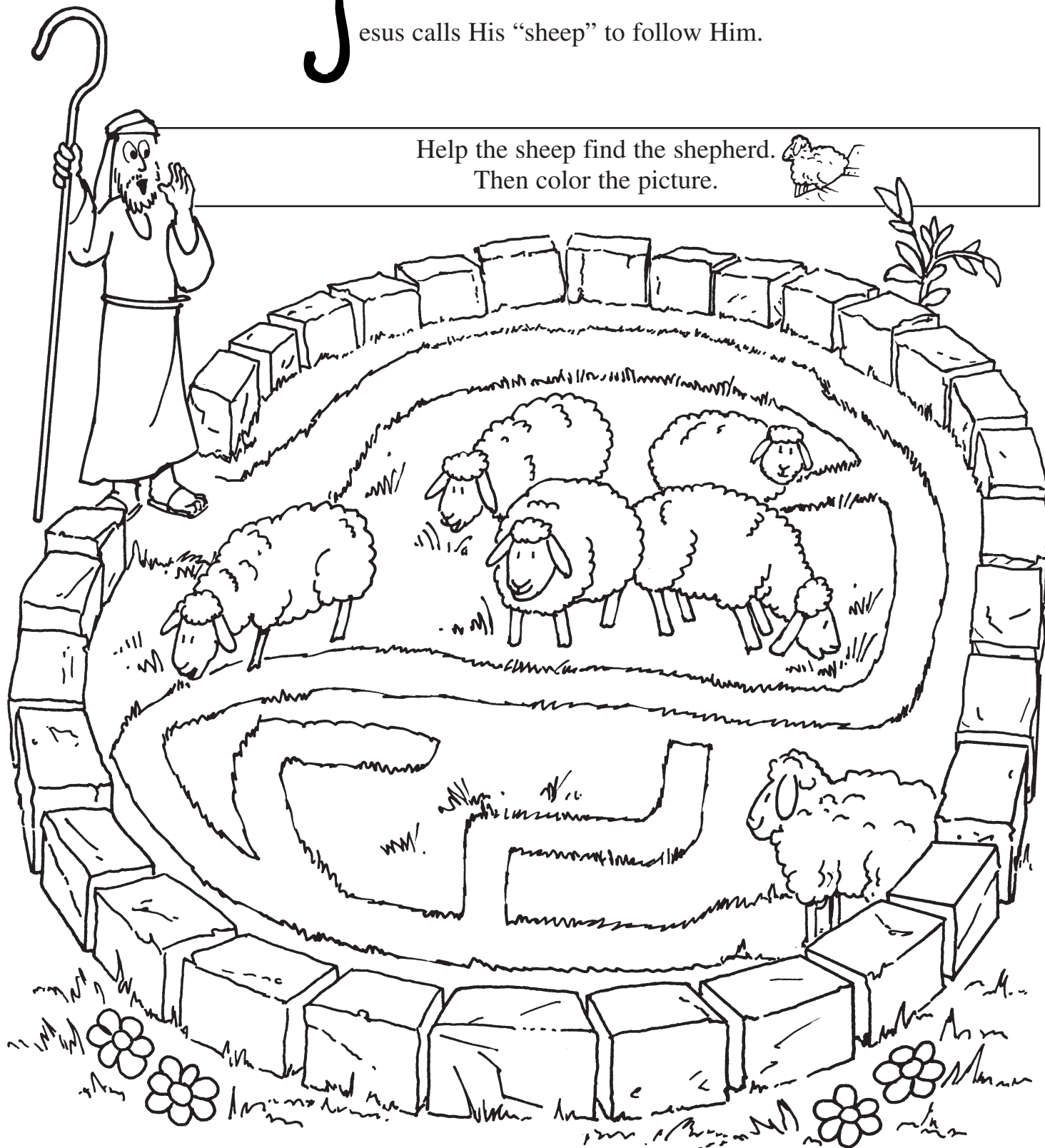
 12 9 11 8 7 1 4

 6 3 14 17 13 10 18 16
 ”

Name _____

Jesus calls His "sheep" to follow Him.

Help the sheep find the shepherd.
Then color the picture.



Name _____