

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

The New Commandment

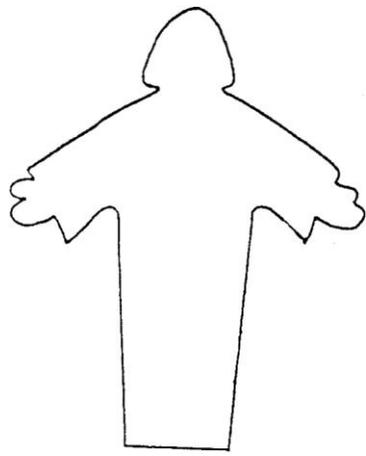
Adapted by:
Brenda J. Stobbe

Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoenberg & Tiffany DeGraaf
Activity Sheets, Laminated Cards and Art Editing by:
Tiffany DeGraaf

Good Shepherd, Inc®. 2000
Good Shepherd, a Registered Trademark of Good Shepherd, Inc.
All Rights Reserved
Printed in the U.S.A.

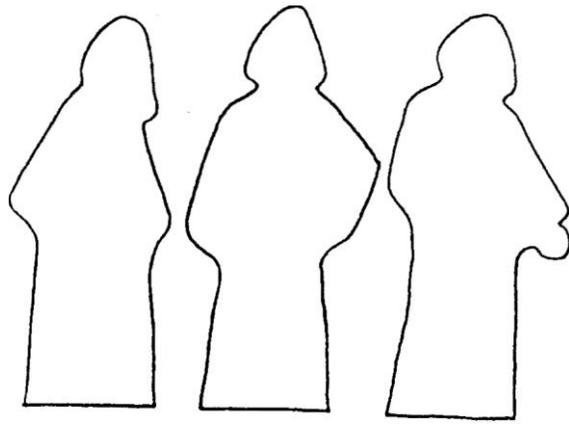
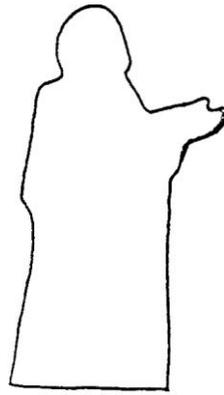
THE NEW COMMANDMENT MATERIALS NEEDED

- medium wicker basket to hold
- wooden Jesus figure
- wooden Judas figure
- 3 wooden disciple figures
- laminated "heart" card



Jesus

Judas



Three Disciples

THE NEW COMMANDMENT ... JOHN 13:31-35

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story basket from the shelf and return to the circle.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place the Jesus figure toward at the center of the storytelling area.

Rest your hand lightly on the Jesus figure.

Place four disciples next to Jesus.

Remove the Judas figure and return it to the basket.

Touch the Jesus figure as you speak.

Lift your hand, palm up to indicate God.

Move your hand back down to Jesus.

Touch each of the disciples, one at a time as you speak.

Move one disciple in two or three different directions as though looking.

Shake your head as you speak sadly.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make it your work today or another day.

All of the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this story of God's people.

Jesus spent much of his time on earth helping people understand who he was.

When they wondered if Jesus was really the Savior, the Messiah he told them about himself in different ways.

The night before Jesus died, he had the Passover supper with his disciples.

After Judas left, Jesus talked to some of the other disciples.

He told them, "Now the Son of Man (Jesus meant himself) will be given glory.

Then I will bring glory to God.

After that God will bring glory back to me, and it will happen very quickly"

Then Jesus looked at his friends and said, "My children, I will be with you for just a little while longer.

After that you will look for me, but you won't find me.

I'm telling you just like I told others, 'You cannot go where I am going.'

Move the Jesus figure closer to the disciple figures.

Lift up your hand to indicate God, then sweep your hand in front of you to indicate others.

Place the "heart" card in front of Jesus.

Touch each of the disciples as you speak.

Touch first Jesus, then the disciples.

Place all wooden figures in the basket one at a time.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf Return to the circle and sit down.

Dismiss the children when everyone has had a chance to choose his/her work.

But I am giving you a new commandment now."

(The old commandments were to love God and love others like you love yourself.)

Jesus said, "The new commandment is that you must love each other just as I have loved you.

If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my followers, my disciples."

The next day Jesus died. But the disciples remembered his words.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder why Jesus called his disciples, "my children"?

I wonder how Jesus showed the disciples he loved them?

I wonder the best way there is to love others like Jesus loves us?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will do for your work today? Let's begin.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT TEACHER HELPS

The setting of this story is the upper room after the Last Supper. The gospel of John gives extensive text to this time in Jesus' passion. While the other gospels move fairly quickly to the garden, betrayal and arrest, the gospel of John takes four chapters to move from supper to praying in the garden.

The primary reason for including this story in our unit on the teachings of Jesus is to help the children understand the difference between loving God with our heart, soul and mind and loving others as ourselves, and loving each other as Jesus loves us. The first is an ancient Jewish law that commanded people to love God so they could continue to be God's people. The new commandment is a way of life. By loving each other the way Jesus has loved us we will live our lives as a witness to the power of the Savior.

The gospel writer gives us another glimpse into his own theology in this passage. For the writer of John, Jesus' death was not a scandal, but glory. In dying Jesus would be glorified and bring glory to the creator God as well. The writer of John believed everything that happened to Jesus had to happen for the scriptures to be fulfilled and for God's plan to be carried out. So although the cross is NEVER minimized in the gospel of John, it is seen as the final glorification of God through Jesus and Jesus through God.

Jesus is careful to give his disciples a simple, yet powerful commandment. There is much he could have told them of how to act after he left them. But Jesus chose the simplest, yet most difficult task possible. In asking his disciples to love each other as he had loved them Jesus did two things. One, Jesus gave them a way to continually remember him. As they thought of how to love each other, they would regularly think back to what Jesus had done when he was alive. Second, he gave them the most basic instruction regarding taking care of themselves in the public/church sector. By loving as he loved them, the disciples would continue the work of Jesus by default. He did not, however, give them an easy commandment. It would have been easy to say, "Keep the laws, take care of the widows and orphans." But Jesus instead gave them grace. He gave them the task of loving the least loveable and doing it with joy.

Our first wondering question asks why Jesus called the disciples "my children". I imagine the responses will primarily be because Jesus loved them just like he was their father. Older children may remind us that Jesus probably knew the disciples were still very young in their faith and may have used the title for that reason.

The second wondering question asks how Jesus might have shown the disciples he loved them. It will be interesting to see if the children recall the stories of Jesus calling the disciples, of him washing their feet or feeding them at the Last Supper. Some of them may share their thoughts that we don't really know the answers to that question, but can imagine him patiently explaining something, or taking care of their loved ones.

The final wondering question should be fun. As we wonder how the best way is to love others the way Jesus loved us, children will use their sanctified imaginations and bring us

to the ways they like to be treated by other people and by the way they wish they would always treat those they love.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Think back to the first time you realized you really cared about someone that you always thought you "had" to love, like a sibling or grandparent. How did that feel?

Using what you know about the disciples, what would have been hard for Jesus to love about them? Did they think of him first? Did Jesus always think first of the disciples?

In the story Jesus told the disciples they could not go where he was going. Why did he tell them that? Why do you think he didn't explain more about his death to them? What are the questions you have about death?