

Finding Pasture: 3-9 May 2020

Bible time  **John 10.1-10**

Jesus tells us he is like a shepherd: he loves and protects us, so we can live a full and happy life.

Life today

A 'gatekeeper' is someone who controls access to something. Today, the word is often used in a negative way such as when a person holds back information that would help another. As you read the story, can you see how the gatekeeper has a positive impact by protecting the sheep from danger and enabling the shepherd to reach them? Can you think of some examples of positive gatekeepers?

Read the story together then explore it using these questions.

Question time

- Who would you like to be in the story: the gatekeeper, the shepherd (Jesus) or a sheep?
- Who takes care of us? Who do we take care of?
- How does knowing that Jesus is the good shepherd make you feel about your daily life?

Activity time

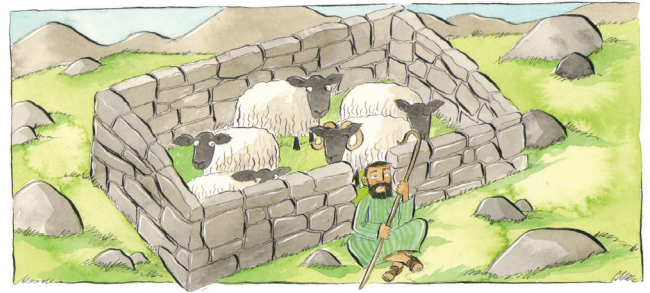
• Gatekeeper counts

As you go about your day, count how many positive gatekeepers you encounter. How did the gatekeeper help you, and what did you achieve because of their help?

• Welcome to my favourite place

Ask each member of your family to think of a place that is special to them – what makes the place special, what can be seen, what does it feel like, what is their favourite bit. Encourage everyone to plan a 'virtual tour' of their special place, make some notes or draw pictures, to help remember key points.

When you gather together, share your special places with each other. Take turns at conducting the virtual tour you have prepared, and afterwards, talk about the different places you have been to on these virtual tours. Thank each other for giving you access to them.



Jesus said, 'I am just like a good shepherd who takes care of his flock of sheep. He knows the names of all of his sheep. When he calls them, they follow him into the safety of the sheepfold. And when he calls them out, they follow him wherever he goes, because they know and trust him. But if a stranger gets into the sheepfold and calls to the sheep, they refuse to follow, because they do not know the stranger's voice. The gatekeeper only opens the gate for the good shepherd. Thieves and robbers try to break into the fold to steal the sheep, but the shepherd protects them from danger.'

The people listening to Jesus still did not understand what he was saying, so he said to them, 'I am just like the gate of the sheepfold. All those who went before me were thieves and robbers who wanted to lead the sheep astray, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am not like a thief who comes to steal and kill and destroy. I am the gate: whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. I came that the sheep might have a full and happy life.'

sheepfold an enclosure in a field to keep sheep safe from wild animals and thieves; first-century Middle Eastern sheepfolds were made of stone.

• Positive gatekeeping

Some years ago, it became popular to wear wristbands with the letters WWJD on them, which stood for 'What would Jesus do?'. Decide on a question to ask yourself each day as you encounter different scenarios, e.g. How can I help? Can I be a positive gatekeeper? Remind yourself of the phrase as you go about your day, you may also wish to make a wristband or other reminder. Use it to help you to be a positive gatekeeper.

Prayer time

Use different materials to create a tactile, colourful picture of the Bible story, including a large gate. Pray for those who are positive gatekeepers in your life. Write their names on the gate in your picture.