

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Acts 4:8-12
1 John 3:1-2
Gospel: John 10:11-18

One by one, the Pauline children woke up. One by one, they rubbed their sleepy eyes, threw on their robes, and headed downstairs for Sunday breakfast. But something was different about this Sunday morning. At first, they could not put their finger on it, but slowly their eyes were opening in more ways than one.

The first thing the children noticed was that Mom and Dad were both awake and dressed. They were busy working in the kitchen, and it seemed like they had been up for hours.

"How come you guys are so wide awake at 6:30 a.m.?" Mary Clare asked. "And what smells so good coming from the oven?"

Just then Lucy came running into the kitchen carrying a piece of construction paper shaped like a lamb. "Look what I found on top of my pillow!" she exclaimed. "And Ben and Vincent had one on their pillows, too!"

"Hmmm, interesting!" said Dad, as he looked over at Mom with a knowing smile. "Now, what can I get for you lovely children for breakfast this morning?"

"Dad, are you okay?" quizzed Vincent as he entered the kitchen. "And did you see the picture of the Pope we have in the hall? It has one of those shepherd staffs taped to it."

"Mommy, look at our paper doll of Father Jon! Someone put one of those shepherd staffs in his hand, too!"

"What is going on here?" the kids all asked together.

"Well, let's sit down for a few minutes and read our Gospel for Mass this morning. Maybe it will give us some clues!" Dad said.

He got the Bible and started reading from John, Chapter 10. He read the words of Jesus. *"I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I*

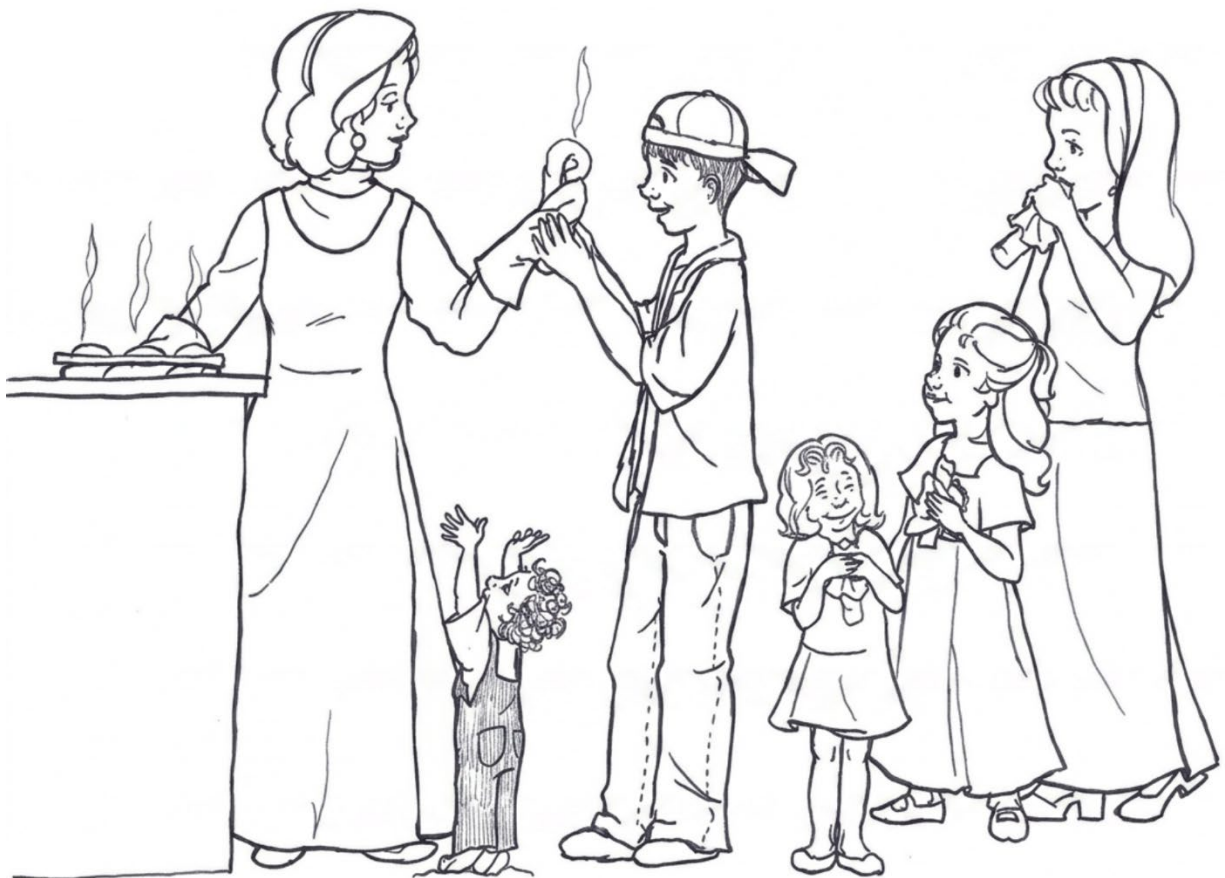
am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.' " (John 10:11-15)

"You see, Kids," said Mom, "Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He willingly laid down His life for His flock. Someone who didn't care that much, or was just a hireling, like the Gospel says, would run when there was trouble and leave his sheep for the wolf to get. But Jesus never ran away. He stayed with His flock to guide and protect them."

"Why was Jesus like that?" 4-year-old Hillary asked.

"The only reason, Hillary, was His pure love. Love is the central message of the Good Shepherd story. Jesus loved us so much that He would die in place of the sheep."

"Why do we have all of these construction paper sheep around?" asked Mary Clare.



"Well, to remind us that the Church members are the sheep, and we are cared for by our shepherds. Our Pope, the vicar of Christ on earth, is the 'good

shepherd' to a flock numbering in millions and millions," Dad said. "And Father Jon is the 'good shepherd' of our parish. They have willingly laid down their lives in love for others."

"That's why you put those staffs on their pictures!" Hillary shouted.

"But why were there sheep on our pillows?" Vincent wondered.

"Well, you are our 'sheep.' Your dad and I have willingly laid down our lives for our family," Mom said. "Now let's go see what we have in the oven!"

Putting on her pot holders, Mom went over to the oven. She pulled out a sheet of cinnamon rolls shaped like little shepherd staffs.

"This is great!" Lucy said as she bounced up and down. "Not only are you great shepherds to us, but you make the tastiest visual aids in the world!"