



Diocese of Bristol

Families growing faith at home

Church@Home is a practical 'easy-to-use' resource to help and encourage church families enjoy a time of worship together, explore the Bible, pray and grow in their faith in the comfort of their own homes.

Church@Home provides a fun, engaging and easy-to-follow session every Sunday using a Bible reading selected from the Church of England Lectionary. Each session lasts approximately twenty minutes and provides age-related material for toddlers to teenagers to accommodate everyone in the family. Thought-provoking questions, fun activities and crafts bring the Bible story to life as well as creative prayer ideas to help families focus, learn and grow in their faith together. Additional teaching and craft suggestions are also provided for families with very young children.

Church@Home can also be used as a fun way to help families connect with other families on Sunday mornings too during this time of distancing. Invite everyone to begin **Church@Home** at the same time and perhaps set up a WhatsApp group where families can share what they have done, or discuss the topic further together.

If your family or families in your church are using **Church@Home** please let us know. We would like to keep in contact, find out how you are doing as well as hear how **Church@Home** is helping families grow in their faith, so that we can share and inspire others during this time of distancing.

daniel.jones@bristoldiocese.org

Thank you ❤️



Sunday 3 May 2020
4th Sunday of Easter

Listen to my voice

John 10:1-18

Time to focus...

As you gather as a family, find a place on the floor, around a table or even in the garden. If possible, light a candle to mark the beginning of the worship time. Quietly stare at the flame as you pause and prepare for a time of worship as a family...

Set the scene...

Do you own a pet? What happens when an owner calls their pet - does the pet respond? In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is talking about something that's a lot like pets going to their owners when called. But instead of talking about pets and their owners, Jesus talks about sheep and their shepherd....

Watch the story...

A lovely animation telling the story of "[the good shepherd](#)".

Explore the story...

Do you know why sheep need a shepherd to take care of them? Sheep can't protect themselves very well by themselves because don't have sharp claws or sharp teeth and they don't run very fast. The shepherd not only guides them to green grass and pure water to drink. A good shepherd also makes sure the sheep are happy and safe. The shepherd protects his sheep from dangerous animals. He carries a rod or stick that he uses to fight off any wild animals.

In the story Jesus says that sheep follow the shepherd because the sheep know the shepherd's voice and will follow the shepherd wherever the shepherd goes. Jesus is talking about shepherds and sheep because it is sort of the same thing with him and us - that Jesus is like a shepherd and we are like his sheep.

We also need God's protection. We can go to God when we are in trouble or scared, and he will comfort us. God is our shepherd. He is a good shepherd. He not only knows our names, but he knows every thing about us. He knows what we sound like. He can tell by the way we cry if we are in trouble, lost or sick. God, our shepherd, knows everything about us. He loves us just the way we are, bad things and all. He knows when you are sad, happy or lonely.

This is good news for today. When we choose to follow Jesus and learn to hear and trust his voice, Jesus shows us how to live life and live it abundantly - v10 (a fancy word that means "a lot").

End with a prayer...

Thank you that Jesus is also a good shepherd who knows us, will watch over us and lead us into good pasture. In Jesus' name – Amen!



Sunday 3 May 2020
4th Sunday of Easter

Listen to my voice

Creative ideas / toddlers to teenagers

0-5s...

Activity: Play a game of 'lost sheep' - if you have a cuddly toy sheep, or one from a farm set etc. Take it in turns hiding the sheep and finding it. If you do not, use a teddy bear etc.

Or, 'hide and sheep' - nominate a shepherd. Everyone else are sheep and find a good hiding place. The shepherd tries to find the sheep and when a sheep is found, that sheep joins with the shepherd in finding more sheep.

Creative prayer: Names are very important – they are how we are known to each other and to God... write and decorate your names on card/paper and place them around a candle/Bible as a symbol of how you are known and loved by God.

5-11s...

Worship: Enjoy singing and dancing to "[My best friend](#)"

Bible Chat Mat: Click [here](#) for this funky colouring-in sheet from 'Bath & Wells Diocese'. This fab activity will encourage all the family to explore what Jesus meant when he said; 'I am the good shepherd'.

Creative prayer idea: Have a go at rewriting Psalm 23 in your own words. For inspiration watch these great retellings of David's personal poem to God - '[Psalm 23](#)' and '[My cup overflows](#)'.



11-18s...

- 1) Have you had something stolen, how did it feel?
- 2) Why does Jesus refer to himself as the gate for the sheep?
- 3) What do you think Jesus means in John 10:10?

+ Ask God to help you live life to the full in Him.

> Do something today that you love to do, that also pleases God.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." John 10:14

Psalm 23

David's poetic praise to God

The Lord is my best friend and my shepherd.
I always have more than enough.

He offers a resting place for me in his luxurious love.
His tracks take me to an oasis of peace,
the quiet brook of bliss.

That's where he restores and revives my life.
He opens before me pathways to God's pleasure
and leads me along in his footsteps of righteousness
so that I can bring honor to his name.

Lord, even when your path takes me through
the valley of deepest darkness,
fear will never conquer me, for you already have!
You remain close to me and lead me through it all the way.
Your authority is my strength and my peace.
The comfort of your love takes away my fear.
I'll never be lonely, for you are near.

You become my delicious feast
even when my enemies dare to fight.
You anoint me with the fragrance of your Holy Spirit;
you give me all I can drink of you until my heart overflows.

So why would I fear the future?
For your goodness and love pursue me all the days of my life.
Then afterward, when my life is through,
I'll return to your glorious presence to be forever with you!

The Passion Translation (TPT)