

## Jesus “I AM” Week 6 – The Good Shepherd

### Ready (*Plant the seed*)

I am the good shepherd. –John 10:11, 13

### Set (*Get the conversation started*)

Jesus is continuing the analogy of the shepherd and his sheep when he says, “I am the good shepherd.” A shepherd’s job was to protect the flock from wolves and thieves. Last week we heard Jesus calling himself “the gate” and through Him, we have salvation. Jesus doesn’t just call himself a shepherd, he says a GOOD shepherd. Let’s read on in the book of John to find out why: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me” (John 10:11-13). Let me ask you a question: if you were in a field with a flock of sheep and a wolf started attacking the sheep, would you run? Probably! That would be scary! But Jesus says he does not run. Jesus says that he would lay down his life for his sheep. And guess what- He did! Jesus laid down his life for us, his sheep, so that we may live. That is what makes him a GOOD shepherd.

God will not fault us for running away from that wolf. He tells us this so that we may have comfort in Him. Remember, HE is the shepherd protecting us. We can use the wolf as a symbol for sin. Just as we talked about last week, we can be strengthened against temptation from sin by knowing that Jesus is our shepherd. He will be there with us. He will never leave us alone with the wolf. When you are on the court and there is a wolf on the other team, stand firm in your faith, do not be tempted to retaliate or cheat or say something that is unsportsmanlike. Remember to whom you belong. Your shepherd is always with you.

### Grow (*Take it away*)

- Anger is an easy emotion to be drawn into by the wolves in our lives. It can cause us to do or say things we shouldn’t. How does knowing that Jesus is your “good shepherd” help you choose what to do when you are angry?
- What are some unsportsmanlike actions on the court?
- What should you do if you see those in others or feel like doing them yourself?

### Pray

God, we love you and are so thankful that Jesus is our good shepherd. He find comfort in knowing he is always with us, guiding and protecting us. Please help us to remember this when we feel angry or hurt so that we don’t act like a lost sheep. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!

### Overtime (*Optional Reinforcement Activity*) *Sheep & Wolves (Sharks & Minnows)*

*Materials:* basketballs

*Directions:* Sheep dribble around inside of the court avoiding the two wolves that are trying to steal their ball. Players must dribble the whole time. If they lose their ball, they are out. The last player in the game is the winner.

*Give Directions & Play a quick round*

*Say:* Great job, players! Those wolves were hard to avoid. You really had to focus on your dribbling and watch out for them at the same time. Listen, you are going to find yourselves facing some tough wolves in your life. Remember to keep your focus on God. Sometimes you will see the wolves coming, sometimes you won’t; but scripture tells us that Jesus is our Good Shepherd and He is always with us. I hope that gives you confidence to stand firmly in your faith and trust that God will be fighting your battles with you.