

## GOD THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## UNIT ONE: God's Heroes

**Lesson 6:** David the Shepherd Boy

## CONTENT:

1. David was the youngest son of Jesse. He had 7 brothers older than himself. He looked after his father's sheep. He cared for them well, seeing that they were well-fed and safe. He used his rod and sling-shot to protect them from wild animals.
2. David was also a musician. He made music and sang hymns (psalms) to God. He realised that God was a good shepherd who took care of him, just as he took care of his sheep. He made up a song about it which we still sing today.
3. Jesus once said, "I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep. I know my own and my own know me."
4. At Mass we sing a psalm to God after the First Reading. The psalms remind us of Jesus and how he came to save us. They help us to pray. [CCC2587]
5. We can trust Jesus our Good Shepherd to look after us and protect us. We thank him for dying for us and for caring for us day after day. [CCC303-305]

ASSIGNMENT: Read handout at home. Answer the quiz questions about psalms. Try and make up a tune for the 'Shepherd Song'. Learn the Bible verse.

REFERENCES: 1Samuel 17:34-37. Psalm 23; John 10:11-14. *Ignatius Study Bible (Com. Jn 10:11)*

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts (2). Shepherd pictures. Props for acting: a long staff, a short rod, a cloth for David's head. Newspaper for making 'stones', strips of cloth for the slings (*practice beforehand to see that it works.*) Option: use a catapult.

**I. STARTER:**

[Allow students to show the pictures of shepherds and share the facts they have learnt about them. Give small prizes to those who have taken the trouble to collect pictures and facts (written down!)]  
Talk about shepherds, bringing out facts as follows:]

- Shepherds take care of sheep. They are 'outdoor' people: They don't work in an office, shop or factory.
- Shepherds have to take the sheep from place to place, so that they get enough grass. When the grass is all over in one place, they move to another.
- Shepherds carry a long stick (a staff) in their hands to guide the sheep. They also carry a strong rod to protect the sheep from wild animals.
- They wear a cloth or turban on their heads to protect them from the sun. They often have to spend the night outdoors too.
- Sheep can't fight or run fast, so the shepherd has to protect them in case dogs or wolves come to attack them.
- At night the shepherd takes the sheep to a place where they can be safe. (It is called a sheep-fold: a place surrounded by walls or a thorny fence.)

## II. DEVELOPMENT:

Today we are going to hear about a boy called David, who was a shepherd. He had 7 older brothers but they had other jobs to do, so David's father put him in charge of his sheep. (His father's name was Jesse.) David's job was to lead the flock out into the country-side and see that they had enough grass to eat and were safe and well.

David took a lot of trouble over his sheep. He would search for the best places to take them, where there was plenty of green grass. If the sheep were troubled by flies and other insects (boochies) he would pour special oil on them. That would send the insects away.

David always carried a long stick (a staff) with him to guide the sheep and keep them together. Just by touching the sheep with his staff, they knew that he was nearby. (It was like having a long, long arm!)

David also carried a strong rod with him for fighting wild animals, because there were wolves, bears and lions around who would come and snatch away a sheep or lamb.

David also taught himself another way to fight. While he was watching his sheep he would gather round stones, put a stone in a sling, swing it round and round and suddenly leave it. The stone would go flying through the air with great force, like a bullet from a gun.

David practiced slinging stones till his aim was perfect. When a wild animal attacked, he would quickly sling a stone at it. When it fell down, he would go and kill it. As long as David was around, the sheep were safe!

But David was not only good at fighting. He was also a musician! He didn't go for guitar or singing classes, but just taught himself. He would make his own instruments and play music on them.

On a wooden frame he would tie strings and make music by plucking the strings. (The instrument is called a harp.) Along with the music he would make up his own songs and sing along. His songs were so beautiful that we sing them even today.

## III. REFLECTION/DRAMA:

- Lets imagine how David felt and how he protected his sheep!  
*[If possible take the students outdoors and let those who want to try, practice using a sling-shot. Instead of stones, however (which may be dangerous) they could use rolled-up balls of wet newspaper. Select the student who can sling the best to take the part of David. If a sling shot is not practicable, use a simple 'catty' (catapult). One child acts as a wolf, the rest are sheep. Narrate the story with sufficient gaps while the children mime.]*

One day, David the shepherd-boy took his sheep out to graze...

He guided them with his long staff...

He also had a rod and his sling in case of danger...

At last they reached a beautiful green land next to a peaceful lake...

The sheep began to eat the sweet grass and drink water from the water's edge...

David sat down on a rock and began to practice slinging stones...

Suddenly he heard a movement in the bushes...

David jumped up and put a stone in his sling...

*(The sheep should stop eating and come close to the shepherd, aware of the danger.)*

David looked all around and saw a wolf crouching, ready to attack...

He swung his sling round and round and out flew the stone!..

It hit the wolf on the head!

Then David ran forward with his rod...

He shouted and waved it around...

The wolf ran away as fast as it could... the sheep were safe!

#### NEXT CLASS:

[Recapitulate the last lesson by asking the students anything they remember about David. Each student adds one fact. Eg. David had 7 older brothers. His father's name was Jesse. He was a good shepherd.]

We heard that David was a good musician and made up his own songs. Many of his songs were about God. When he saw the clouds in the sky and the wind in the trees, the moon and the stars at night; the water of the lake shining in the sunlight, he thought, 'God is great! He is beautiful! He has made everything so well!'

When he saw how God helped him fight the strong wild animals, he thought, "God is with me! He is my friend!"

One day David looked at his sheep peacefully eating grass and he thought, "God is my shepherd! Just as I look after my sheep, he looks after me. He protects me. He feeds me. When I am upset he calms me down. I don't have to worry about anything. I'm sure he will keep me safe as long as I listen to him and stay close to him!"

David began to sing a song about it. The song was such a beautiful one that others also learnt it and taught it to other people. Even today we sing this song in church.

#### IV. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

Many many hundreds of years after David, Jesus said to the people around, "I am the Good Shepherd! I protect my sheep and die for them, because they are my sheep. I don't run away when there is danger, but I save them. I know my sheep and they know me."

- Do you think Jesus is a good shepherd? How? *[He cares for us. He sees that we have food to eat. When we are troubled he calms us down. Best of all, he died for us on the cross. (The devil is like the wolf trying to destroy our lives.) Because Jesus died, we can live forever, the devil cannot destroy us as long as we stay close to Jesus.]*
- Do you trust Jesus? Will you try and stay close to him? Like David, let's sing a song about our good shepherd, Jesus.

[Sing/recite the 'shepherd-song' prayerfully.]

#### V. ACTIVITY

Give out handouts and read the written matter, filling in the missing words:

1. David was the son of Jesse. He had 7 older brothers. He had to take care of his father's sheep. He took good care of them and protected them from wild animals with his rod and sling-shot. He carried a long staff to guide them.
2. David was also a musician. He played on his harp and sang songs to God. We still sing his songs. They are called psalms. We find them in the Bible.

[The students colour the pictures in the 'Shepherd song', stick it onto card paper and put a cord through the top.]

#### Home assignment:

- x Read handout at home.
- x Ask your parents to help you answer the quiz questions about psalms.
  - x Learn the Bible verse. [John 10:14]
- x Try and make up a tune for the 'Shepherd Song'. Sing it for the class next time.