

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

SESSION 5 – I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JOHN 10:11–18

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

This session explores Jesus' declaration, **"I am the good shepherd,"** which reveals the heart of Christ's leadership and care. In contrast to self-serving or absent leaders, Jesus presents Himself as the shepherd who **knows His sheep, protects them, and willingly lays down His life for them.**

The goal of this session is to help participants reflect on **who they trust to lead their lives**, how they understand God's care, and what it means to be personally known and loved by Christ.

INTENDED USE

This lesson is designed for **personal preparation and group discussion**. Participants should complete the Student Guide before the group gathering. The facilitator's role is to **guide conversation, invite reflection, and help participants engage the text meaningfully**, rather than provide a lecture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- **Understand the meaning of Jesus' image as the Good Shepherd**
 - **Recognize the contrast between true care and self-serving leadership**
 - **Reflect on what it means to be known and called by Christ**
 - **Consider how trust and surrender shape life with God**
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FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading the session:

- **Read John 10:11–18 slowly and prayerfully**
 - **Review the shepherd imagery in connection with Session 4 ("I Am the Door")**
 - **Reflect on your own experiences of trust, care, and guidance**
 - **Prepare to hold space for both comfort and challenge**
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SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)



1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and remind them that this session continues the series on Jesus' **"I AM" statements**, now moving from *access* (the Door) to *relationship* (the Shepherd).

Open with prayer, asking God to:

- Deepen trust in Christ's care
- Reveal areas of fear or resistance
- Open hearts to being known and led

Suggested prayer focus:

- Trust instead of control
 - Openness to God's care
 - Courage to follow
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2. ORIENTING THE GROUP: CONTEXT IN JOHN (5 MINUTES)

Briefly remind the group that John 10 follows the healing of the man born blind, where religious leaders failed to care for someone vulnerable.

Key teaching point:

John 10 contrasts false leadership with the heart of God's true care.

Explain that Jesus is addressing people shaped by failed religious leadership and deep questions of trust.

3. DISCUSSION: SHEPHERD IMAGERY (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite participants to reflect on the image Jesus uses.

Discussion prompts:

- What comes to mind when you hear "shepherd"?
- Why do you think Jesus uses such a relational image?

Facilitator insight:

In the ancient world, shepherds lived with their sheep. This image emphasizes presence, responsibility, and care.

4. DISCUSSION: "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD" (10 MINUTES)

Read Jesus' statement aloud slowly.



Key idea:

Jesus defines goodness not by power, but by self-giving love.

Discussion prompts:

- **What makes this shepherd “good”?**
 - **How is Jesus redefining leadership?**
 - **Why might this be both comforting and challenging?**
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5. DISCUSSION: GOOD SHEPHERD VS. HIRED HAND (10 MINUTES)

Explore Jesus’ contrast.

Key teaching point:

The hired hand prioritizes self-preservation; the good shepherd prioritizes the sheep.

Discussion prompts:

- **What motivates the hired hand?**
 - **Where do we see this kind of leadership today?**
 - **How does Jesus’ model differ from common ideas of success or authority?**
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6. DISCUSSION: KNOWN BY THE SHEPHERD (10 MINUTES)

Focus on Jesus’ words about knowing His sheep.

Key idea:

Being known precedes being led.

Discussion prompts:

- **What does it mean to be known by God?**
- **Why can being known feel both comforting and unsettling?**
- **How does trust grow out of relationship rather than control?**

Encourage participants to reflect personally, not abstractly.

7. DISCUSSION: LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE (5–10 MINUTES)

Highlight the central claim of sacrifice.

Key teaching moment:

Jesus’ care is costly—and intentional.

Discussion prompts:



- **Why is sacrifice essential to Jesus' leadership?**
 - **How does this point forward to the cross?**
 - **How does this shape our understanding of God's love?**
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8. DISCUSSION: ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD (5–10 MINUTES)

Address Jesus' statement about other sheep.

Key idea:

God's care is wider than expected.

Discussion prompts:

- **What boundaries does Jesus challenge here?**
 - **How does this expand the idea of belonging?**
 - **What unites the flock?**
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9. PERSONAL REFLECTION AND APPLICATION (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite quiet reflection or optional sharing.

Reflection questions:

- **Who or what have you trusted to guide your life?**
- **Where do you struggle to trust God's care?**
- **What might it look like to follow the Good Shepherd more closely this week?**

Encourage participants to name one small, concrete step.

10. CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Close in prayer, thanking God for Christ's faithful care and self-giving love.

Optional prayer focus:

- **Trust over fear**
 - **Rest instead of striving**
 - **Willingness to follow**
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KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FACILITATORS

This session invites participants to move from **seeing Jesus as helpful** to **trusting Him as their Shepherd**. The image is deeply personal and relational. Allow space for comfort, resistance, and honesty. The aim is not to force trust, but to invite reflection on the Shepherd who knows, stays, and lays down His life.

