

WORSHIP HELPS

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD JOHN 10:1-15

This can be done individually or in a group setting:

Q: How are you feeling physically, spiritually, and emotionally by completing a sentence that begins “I am”

Opening prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, loving shepherd, we thank you for watching over us, for laying down your life for us. Thank you for caring about us and about all the concerns and situations we have named here. During this time, help us to see and to appreciate the ways your care comes to us and move us to follow you by showing that same care to those around us. Amen.

READ JOHN 10:1-15 AGAIN

1. The Shepherd watches the comings in and goings out of the sheep to the pen. For you, what is a healthy balance between coming in—experiencing security and comfort—and going out—searching for excitement or the satisfaction that comes from meeting challenges?
2. How do you experience Christ caring for you?
3. God believes in us and continuously works to help the image of God in us to shine. Ponder that for a few moments. (Allow silence.) How do you feel as you consider that God believes in you?
4. Psychologists tell us that we see ourselves how the most important person in our lives sees us. How might you live differently if you saw yourself as Christ sees you?
5. What objects, songs, or practices help you to remember Christ's presence with you in difficult times?
6. What gives you a sense of security? In what ways can the search for and need for security hold you back in the spiritual life?

Psalm 23

Read Psalm 23 slowly taking in all the Good Shepherd does for us.

We can trust the Good Shepherd because:

he is good,

he knows and cares for us,

he defends us.

Practice: Intercessory Prayer

Just as Christ cares for us, we are called to show Christ's care to others. One of the ways we do this is by praying for others - "intercessory prayer." The prefix inter- means "between." When we intercede for someone, we connect them to God by spiritually holding on to them on the one hand and reaching out to God on their behalf with the other hand.

There are many patterns for interceding. A simple one called the "five-finger prayer." Here's how the five-finger prayer works. Hold your hand in front of you.

The finger closest to your body is the thumb.

The thumb reminds us to pray for the ones closest to us: those dear to us and those physically near to us. These people are the easiest to remember to pray for. And as Pope Francis has said, praying for those near to us is "a sweet obligation."

The second finger is the index finger or the pointer.

This finger reminds us to pray for those who "point the way" for others, those who teach and guide us. This includes our spiritual friends, our pastors and church leaders, those who teach and work with young people, and so on.

The third finger is the tallest.

It reminds us to pray for those who "stand tall," who are most visible in our culture and our world. This includes our nation's leaders and all the world leaders. We pray that God will guide them and give them wisdom, courage, and diligence to make the world more like God wants it to be. This can also include celebrities and others in the news who have the power to shape attitudes and actions.

The fourth finger, the ring finger, is the weakest of the five.

This finger reminds us to pray for the weakest members of our society, those on the fringes, the poor, the sick, the frail and forgotten, the oppressed, those hungry and without other necessities. As we do this, we remember God's special concern for "the least of these."

The final finger, the smallest one, reminds us to pray for ourselves.

After praying for the other four groups, we can pray for ourselves with new perspective on our needs and our blessings. We also pray to see how God is calling us to become part of answering the prayers we have prayed for those in the other four groups represented by our other fingers.

Loving Shepherd, you know that we tend to wander and get ourselves into tight places. Help us to respond to your voice as you call us, over and over, toward the way that leads to life. Help us this week to listen to your whispers and to obey the Holy Spirit's small nudgings. We give thanks for your tender care that has kept us and carried us this far. In the name of Jesus, who faithfully and diligently seeks all wanderers. Amen.

Prayer - Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ be with us, Christ before us, Christ behind us,
Christ in us, Christ beneath us, Christ above us,
Christ on our right, Christ on our left
Christ where we lie, Christ where we sit, Christ where we arise,
Christ in every heart of everyone who thinks of us,
Christ in every eye that sees us.
Christ in every ear that hears us.
Salvation is of the Lord,
Salvation is of the Christ,
May your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us. Amen.

Song Suggestions

Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRmRQR_VuYU&list=PLP56RteGPR8hJ5nKUaWFa7h3WAr7yOjki&index=3

Saviour, Lead Me, Lest I Stray (SATB 273)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvAQoVLb--A>

The Lord's My Shepherd I'll Not Want (SATB 63)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-elQQayhpak&list=PLP56RteGPR8hJ5nKUaWFa7h3WAr7yOjki&index=2>

He Leadth Me (SATB 645)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw92rbqTgil>

The King of Love My Shepherd Is (SATB 61)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huZvQD87Clk>

In Christ Alone (SATB 861)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

Like to Lamb Who From the Fold Has Strayed (SATB 259)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcMAZqLrcXk&list=PLP56RteGPR8hJ5nKUaWFa7h3WAr7yOjki>