

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness*  
John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Enlist three readers to aid in the Call to Worship. A copy of the verses is located at the end of the Worship Time materials. Prepare a copy for each reader. This reading would be a good way to include children of reading age, youth, and/or seniors.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

**Worship Time Leader:**

**Music Sources:**

**Open My Eyes, That I May See,** *The Worship Hymnal* #443; CCLI # 68003 Public Domain

**Open the Eyes of My Heart,** *The Worship Hymnal* #66; CCLI # 2298355

**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us,** *The Worship Hymnal* #161; CCLI # 5513848 or 4427375

**Shine On Us.** *The Worship Hymnal* #89; CCLI # 1754646

**Shine, Jesus, Shine.** *The Worship Hymnal* #491; CCLI #30426

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness*****Focal Text**

John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

**Background**

John 9—10

**Main Idea**

Jesus provides abundant life to all who will let him open their eyes.

**Question to Explore**

We couldn't be blind, could we?

**Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to identify ways in which we could be spiritually blind.

**Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Open My Eyes, That I May See**, *The Worship Hymnal* #443; CCLI # 68003 Public Domain

Make copies of the following Call to Worship (easiest from the separate copy on the final page of this session).

**Worship Leader:*****Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things in Your law.*****Reader 1:*****The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside the quiet waters,  
He restores my soul.***

**Reader 2:**

*He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil for you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff they comfort me.*

**Reader 3:**

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

**Worship Leader:**

*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
And the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
And the mute tongue shout for joy.*

*Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
And every eye will see him.*

(Psalm 119:18; Psalm 23: 1-6; Isaiah 35: 5-6; Revelation 1:7)

### **First thoughts:**

The question to explore asks “We couldn’t be blind, could we?” This echoes the skeptical words of the Pharisees to Jesus “What? Are we blind, too?” The Pharisees were so very blind that they could not see the miracle of the healing of the man blind from birth. They continued to be more worried about the breaking of the Sabbath law than the healing of a human being.

Today we will consider two beautiful aspects of the ministry of Jesus – His healing from both physical and spiritual blindness and the fact of his shepherding us all the days of our life. This rich study helps us know more about Jesus and helps us know more about ourselves as well.

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness*

#### **Focal Text**

John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

#### **Background**

John 9—10

#### **Main Idea**

Jesus provides abundant life to all who will let him open their eyes.

#### **Question to Explore**

We couldn't be blind, could we?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to identify ways in which we could be spiritually blind.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Use the scriptures that will be the Call to Worship for your meditation during the week as you prepare to lead the study.

#### **Worship Leader:**

*Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things in Your law.*

#### **Reader 1:**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside the quiet waters,  
He restores my soul.*

**Reader 2:**

*He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil for you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff they comfort me.*

**Reader 3:**

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
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And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

**Worship Leader:**

*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
And the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
And the mute tongue shout for joy.*

*Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
And every eye will see him.*

(Psalm 119:18; Psalm 23: 1-6; Isaiah 35: 5-6; Revelation 1:7)

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

**John 9: 1-5**

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

*“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

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*The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness – 16-41-07-en*

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Jesus is apparently walking along the road from the Temple on the festival's last day. (This refers to the Feast of Tabernacles – John 7:2, 10.) His disciples express a common understanding of a connection between sin and suffering. This was the understanding of many Jews despite the teachings of the book of Job. Even a congenital problem like being born blind represented a divine punishment of sin. Sin of the mother prior to the birth of the baby could be responsible for such a problem to many of those people.

Jesus denies the connection between sin and the blindness of this man and said it served as an opportunity for him to display the work of God in the life of the man.

“The vital question is not, Who is responsible? But, How may this tragic fact be turned to the glory of God? Let Christians take note, their primary duty is not to torture their minds over the mystery of evil but, with God's help, to do what they can to remove it” (Hunter, A.M. **The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: The Gospel According to John**. London: Cambridge University Press, 1965, page 95).

“Beyond a misunderstanding of the cause and effect of sin, their question betrays a deeper ignorance of the nature of God. Through His actions and words Jesus will try to establish a fresh understanding of the Father. He will seek to open a door into a place where we are invited to come and meet a Father who does not strike babies blind because they or their parents might have done something wrong. He will provide for us at last a redemptive way to understand all our suffering, in the same light He understood all His suffering.

‘His blindness,’ Jesus says, in effect, ‘is not a punishment but a possibility. This man is a waiting example of God's glory.’ His life is about to become a powerful parable” (Card, M., **Parable of Joy: Reflections on the Wisdom of the Book of John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2007, page 133),

Jesus will heal the man of his physical blindness, but His desire is that He receive spiritual healing as well – the light which Jesus is.

It is well, however, to remember that the Old Testament did emphasize the consequences of the sin of the parent on the child (Exodus 20:5; Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Psalm 109:14.) “It is a thing which must never be forgotten that no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. When a man sins he sets in motion a train of consequences which has no end” (Barclay, Wm. **The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John**, Volume 2. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956, page 45).

We cannot explain the reason for human suffering although sometimes we can see the basic cause behind it – a drunk driver kills a family member; drugs entrap a young person and cause untold suffering for a whole family; smoking is related to lung cancer. It is only helpful to look for ways in which there can be redemptive activity related to the tragedy “so that the work of God may be displayed”.

***As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.*** “When Jesus said that He did not mean that the time of His life and work were limited; what He did mean was that our opportunity of laying hold on that life, and light and work are limited. There comes to every a man a chance to decide for Christ, to accept Christ, to give His life to Christ, to accept Christ as His Saviour, His Master and His Lord. And if that opportunity is not seized it may well never come back. Work must be done, decisions must be taken, while it is day, and before the day ends and the night comes down” (Barclay, page 47).

In John 8:12 Jesus declared ***“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”***. Now in 9:5, he repeats ***“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.***

“This truth is now shown by his restoration of sight to a man born blind. According to Old Testament prophecy, such giving of sight was to be a mark of the Messianic time – ‘Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened’ (Isa. 35:5). The blind man’s cure, however, is a dramatic symbol of the Christ who gives light to those in spiritual darkness” (Hunter, page 95).

#### **John 9: 6-7**

***Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed and came home seeing.***

Though it seems strange to us, the use of spittle as a curative agent was very common in New Testament times and Jesus took the methods and customs of his time and used them. He had to gain the confidence of those he would heal. So Jesus used his spittle, took some dirt from the ground and mixed a kind of clay which he applied to the man’s eyes. Jesus told the man to go to the Pool of Siloam. Years before, a conduit was made from the spring Gihon, located in the Kidron Valley, to Jerusalem so that in case of a siege of the city they would not be cut off from a water supply. The pool of water thus created was called Siloam “which it was said meant sent, because the water in it had been sent through the conduit into the city. So Jesus sent this man to wash in this pool which was one of the landmarks of the city; and the man washed and saw” (Barclay, page 50).

“The pool of Siloam may have been the nearest convenient water-supply, but the Evangelist points out a further significance Siloam, he says, meant ‘sent’ ... and it speaks of Jesus, the sent one of God who alone is qualified to impart inward illumination (Bruce, F. F. **The Gospel of John**. Grand Rapids: Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983, page 210).

He was made to see, but some of his neighbours and people who had seen him previously had trouble deciding if this man who could see was actually the man who

was blind (John 9: 8-12). Even the most obvious of miracles will not be believed by everyone.

In John 9:13-18, we read the story of the blind man's growing understanding of who Jesus was. At first he told the Pharisees that a man they call Jesus made mud and put it on his eyes and after he washed he could see (verse 11). He didn't even know where Jesus was when the Pharisees asked him. Later, he called Jesus a Prophet (verse 17). When the Pharisees continued to ask him about Jesus and who Jesus was he replied ***"Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see"*** 9:25.

Later he tells the Pharisees that if Jesus were not from God, he could do nothing (verse 33). Finally Jesus found the man after he had been thrown out of the synagogue and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. When Jesus identified Himself as the one speaking to him the man said ***"Lord, I believe and he worshipped him"*** (verse 38).

#### **John 9: 39-41**

***Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."***

***Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"***

***Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin, but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."***

"Jesus is not saying here that he has come to execute judgment; rather, his presence and activity in the world themselves constitute a judgment as they compel men and women to declare themselves for or against him, as they range themselves on the one side or the other. Those who range themselves against him are 'judged already' (John 3:18) , not because he has passed judgment on them but because they have passed it on themselves.

The healing of the blind man is presented as a parable of spiritual illumination. Thanks to the coming of the true light of the world, many who were formerly in darkness have been enlightened; this is not only the effect but the purpose of his coming. But on the other hand some thought they had no need of the enlightenment brought to them, because they could see perfectly well already. They turned their backs on him and, without realizing it, moved into deeper darkness. Blame did attach to those who, while living in darkness, claimed to be able to see" (Bruce, pages 210-221).

It is not physical blindness that indicates sin but rather it is spiritual blindness – particularly blindness to what God was doing in Jesus – that attitude indicates sin.

## John 10: 1-6

***I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. That watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.***

The division between chapters 9 and 10 did not exist in the original text. Jesus' teachings about the Good Shepherd beginning in 10:1 continue his dialogue with the Pharisees that begins in 9:40. Chapter 10 begins with the Greek words Amen, Amen (translated in the New International Version as ***I tell you the truth.***) These are most typically used by Jesus within discourses - not at the beginning of something entirely new.

Ezekiel 34 is a very descriptive chapter about the shepherds of Israel who failed to take care of the flock. Verse 23 of that chapter begins the prophecy about David who is the Messiah of David's line. It is against this background that Jesus speaks in John 10.

The Pharisees had assumed the role of spiritual shepherds of the Jews. However, they are not true shepherds. They have entered the sheep pen as a robber. "The Good Shepherd, as Jesus defines Him, has two qualities. First of all, He knows the sheep. He calls each one by name. (The realization that we are known by name is manifestly comforting.) The second trait of the Good Shepherd is that He is willing to lay down His life for the sheep" (Card, page 143).

Jesus is speaking in figurative language. He uses "the image of a sheepfold; it has one door; the gatekeeper allows in the true shepherd; the sheep know the shepherd and the shepherd calls the sheep by name; the shepherd leads them and the sheep follow him. Then, the parable introduces the negative possibility. There is a stranger whom the sheep will not follow because they do not recognize his voice. John tells us that those who heard the parable did not understand its meaning" (Palmer, E. **The Intimate Gospel: Studies in John**. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978, pages 96-97).

## John 10: 7-10

***Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate, whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.***

Jesus changes or enlarges the metaphor here. In this passage, he is not the shepherd, but the gate by which the sheep can come in and out to safety, food and water. All of their needs will be met. All of the needs are met for those who have accepted the life which Jesus offers; in fact there will be an abundant or full life.

“‘I am the door for the sheep.’ Jesus is the entrance through which every truth, every teacher, and every disciple must enter. (In small mountain folds, the shepherd would often become the very door by sleeping across the opening to the fold).

All those thieves and teachers that do not enter by this doorway are false. Jesus has, by this interpretation, made himself the very criterion of truth. He is teaching that every theme out of the past or in the present receives its meaning in terms of how it relates to the door that God has established. The Law of Moses must enter by this doorway” (Palmer, page 97).

### **John 10: 11-13**

***I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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.***

The second trait of the Good Shepherd is that He is willing to lay down His life for the sheep” (Card, page 143). The shepherd knows the sheep by name; they are so important to him that he will lay down his life for them. There may be someone caring for the sheep who does not own the sheep. This person will not go out into the storm to find the lost sheep; he will not risk his life climbing down a steep precipice to rescue a fallen sheep. He will run from the wolf rather than protecting the sheep. These negative pictures of the hired hand are positive pictures of the true shepherd.

### **John 10: 14-18**

***I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from the Father.***

Jesus states very plainly here that he will lay down his life for the sheep. “In this context, Jesus here predicts his victory over death. Because his father has willed it, Jesus lays down his life and will ‘take it up again.’ This sentence is the fullest and most open prophecy concerning his coming hour that we have heard to this point in the Gospel” (Palmer, page 98).

The sheep are the ones who hear the voice of the shepherd and follow him. There is a universal note of welcome here. Jesus has welcomed into the shepherd's fold people from a wide cross section and sweep of background and nationality and along the whole social acceptance scale.

It is God's intention to have one flock led by one shepherd. The prophecy of Ezekiel 34: 23-24 says ***I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.***

This is repeated in Ezekiel 37:24 ***My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.***

This theme is discussed in Ephesians 2: 11-21 which speaks of the inclusion of Gentiles as ***fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit*** (verses 19b-18).

"The important theological point is that Jesus as the door and the shepherd is the one who invites the sheep into the fold. The only other criterion that matters in the willingness of the sheep to hear, to follow and to enter" (Palmer, page 98).

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

The Pharisees continue in their blindness. Once more they have discounted the miracle of healing and focused on the fact that it was done on the Sabbath. Even when the blind man tells them ***One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see*** they persist in their spiritual blindness.

Some of our favorite Biblical images have to do with shepherds. Psalm 23 continues to be a favorite of people who know little else about the Bible. Jesus clearly indicates that he is the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep by name, who will give them abundant life, who will protect them from harm. He will lay down his life for them.

These are rich passages. May we rejoice in them. May we share with another person this week. May we be aware of ways in which we may be blind to who Jesus is and thus be cut off from his blessings.

## **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**



## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

#### **Background**

John 9—10

#### **Main Idea**

Jesus provides abundant life to all who will let him open their eyes.

#### **Question to Explore**

We couldn't be blind, could we?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to identify ways in which we could be spiritually blind.

### **Connect with Life:**

Begin with this story: A beautiful Christian lady, now nearing 100 years of age, is increasingly unable to remember much of her past and very little of her present. Yet, many passages of Scripture remain firmly fixed in her mind. One of those is Psalm 23 and in each visit that one friend makes to the nursing home where Mary lives, they say it together. Jesus knew that the image of a shepherd is one which brings comfort across cultures and generations. We will rejoice in today's study of the Good Shepherd and the healing of the blind man.



## Guide the Study:

Have someone read John 9: 1-5.

Ask: What is the understanding which the disciples had about the cause of the man's blindness? (Someone had sinned – his parents or the man himself. Since he was blind from birth, it is hard to see how he could have been responsible. This attitude toward the relationship between difficulties – especially physical difficulty – and sin was one held by most Jewish people).

Comment: Jesus denies the connection between sin and the blindness of this man and said it served as an opportunity for him to display the work of God in the life of the man.

Ask the group: Consider the meaning of the words ***As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.*** See Teacher Preparation for help in understanding and presenting this.

Have someone read John 8:12 and 9:5.

Talk about what “light of the world” means to people in the group.

Have someone read Isaiah 35:5.

Explain: According to Old Testament prophecy, the giving of sight was to be a mark of the Messianic time.

Have someone read John 9: 6-12.

Ask someone to describe the way in which Jesus healed the blind man.

Have someone read John 10:14 and discuss why this is important. (We know from past studies that the Pharisees are very alarmed when Jesus works on the Sabbath. To make the mud and put it on the blind man's eyes was work).

Now add: The pool of Siloam was built as a conduit from a spring outside of Jerusalem to bring water into the city so they would not ever be cut off from a water supply. Siloam means “sent” which speaks of Jesus who was sent to bring light.

Ask: How could people who knew this blind man not have known that he was the one healed? (We often do not see miracles which happen right before us.)

Summarize the verses 13-38: The Pharisees questioned the man blind from birth. The man moves from saying that he washed and could now see to saying that Jesus was a prophet. The Pharisees questioned his parents who would not comment on the healing. The Pharisees questioned the man again. This time he said ***“Whether he is a sinner***

**or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see!"** The Pharisees finally threw the man out of the synagogue. Jesus came to him and said, **"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"** The man affirmed **"Lord, I believe,"** and he worshipped Jesus.

Have someone read John 9: 39-41.

From the Teacher Preparation material explain that the presence and activity of Jesus constitute a judgment as they compel men and women to declare themselves for or against him.

Say: The Pharisees chose not to be for Jesus. They claimed to be able to see while living in darkness.

Have someone read John 10: 1-6.

Mention this: This is not a new discussion. Jesus is still in dialogue with the Pharisees. They were the shepherds of the Jewish people. This passage shows clearly how they have failed in their responsibility.

Ask: What important quality of the Good Shepherd is found in these verses. (He calls his own sheep by name and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.)

Allow time to reflect on the importance of this teaching to members of the group.

Have someone read John 10:7-10.

Ask: What picture of the shepherd is given here? (The gate for the sheep; sometimes the shepherd actually slept at the opening of the sheep pen. Anyone or any animal which wished to harm the sheep would have to go over him to enter the pen.)

State that the picture of the gate indicates that Jesus is the way to salvation.

Have someone reread verse 10.

Pause for responses to what this verse means to the group.

Have someone read John 10: 11-13.

Ask: What second trait of the Good Shepherd is mentioned here? (The Good Shepherd is willing to lay down His life for the sheep.)

Continue by explaining: The one who is merely hired to care for the sheep will run away in the face of danger. The one to whom the sheep belongs will defend the sheep.

Have someone read John 10: 14-18.

Ask: Who will be included in the flock which Jesus shepherds? (Others beyond the Jewish people).

Have someone read Ezekiel 34:22-24 and another read Ezekiel 37:24.

Comment: The term, “my servant David”, refers to the Messiah who will be a descendent of David the King. It is God’s intention to have one flock led by one shepherd.

With the group, examine the statement Jesus makes about laying down his life; it is a definite statement of what he is to do.

Note: He says that he does it of his own accord. He will have victory over death. He is following the will of the Father.

Reemphasize: Jesus is both the door and the shepherd. He is the one who invites people into the fold. What matters is the willingness of the sheep to hear, to follow, and to obey.

## Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Explain: The story of the healing of the blind man is an opportunity for Jesus to care for a needy person and to give the Pharisees an opportunity to understand his message. Once more, they turn away from the truth. They are caught in spiritual blindness. May we pray today for those around us who are caught in spiritual blindness.

Add: Consider memorizing the passage from John 10:9-10. Say it together as a closing for your study ***I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.***

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### *The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness*

John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

### **Learning How to Teach the Bible to Others** **Session 2**

In an earlier study, you were asked to prepare to teach the story to children 4-5 years of age. Continue that exercise today by planning how you would teach the story of the healing of the blind man.

Consider how you would teach the passage about The Good Shepherd. Children think in literal terms; this is a very symbolic passage. Describe the way a shepherd takes care of his sheep. What are some of the dangers which the sheep and the shepherd faces? Talk about how the shepherd sometimes would lay down at the entrance of the sheep pen. What would have happened if a wild animal tried to get in the pen? Explain how Jesus is saying that he is like a good shepherd – he knows us by name and he gave his life for us.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***The Good Shepherd and Human Blindness***

John 9:1-7; 9:39—10:18

**Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**Open the Eyes of My Heart**, *The Worship Hymnal* #66; CCLI # 2298355**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #161; CCLI # 5513848 or 4427375**Shine On Us**. *The Worship Hymnal* #89; CCLI # 1754646**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

Pray for new believers to cling to God's Word and continue to grow in their knowledge of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

**Jesus – the Light of the World and Jesus – the Good Shepherd.**

Two important descriptors of the character of Jesus are the focus of the study today: Jesus—the Light of the World and Jesus—the Good Shepherd.

What an immense amount of meaning and comfort we find in these portrayals of Christ which are actually promises to us.

Jesus is the Light; we no longer walk in the darkness of sin. For many, the change from darkness to light has been very dramatic. They came to Christ from the pain of alcoholism, drug abuse, alienation from friends and family. He gave them strength to overcome evil and very often, He gave them a new family in Christ. For others, the Light of Christ has always been there. Life circumstances led them to know him as a child and they were spared some of the darkness that would have been theirs without him in their life.

There are many references to light in the Bible. Here are some of them.

Genesis 1: 3-5

***And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.*** This is a reference to actual physical light.

Psalms 4: 6-8

***Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?"  
Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.  
You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound.  
I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.***

The Psalmist refers here to the presence of the Lord expressed as the light of His face.

Psalms 19: 8

***The precepts of the Lord are right,  
Giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
Giving light to the eyes.***

Light here refers to the commands of the Lord – to knowledge and understanding.

Psalms 27: 1

***The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?***

We are secure in the Lord.

Isaiah 2: 5

***Come, o house of Jacob,  
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.***

Psalms 119: 105

***Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.***

We receive guidance and discernment from the light of the Lord.

Matthew 4: 16

***The people living in darkness have seen a great light;  
On those living in the land of the shadow of death  
A light has dawned.***

Light here symbolizes salvation.

1 Corinthians 4: 6

***For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

We have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

God spoke light into existence and there was day. The word of God is a light to our path; the commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to our eyes. We recall the opening words of the book of John ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.***

The Word is Jesus. It is He who was with God and spoke light into existence. It is He who through Biblical precepts has been light through the ages.

Jesus made a clay from his spittle and the dust of the earth, put it on the eyes of a man blind from birth. When he man washed as he was told by Jesus, he could see. His triumphant, though still limited in understanding, affirmation was ***One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see.***

Like this man, we began our Christian walk with limited understanding of the grace of God in our life. But we knew and continue to know that light has dawned in our life and we are not the same.

Later Jesus found the man who had been blind and revealed to him that He was the Saviour. The man affirmed ***"Lord, I believe" and he worshiped him.***

A second facet of the character of Jesus is revealed in the story of the Good Shepherd.

Again, the picture of the shepherd is familiar in Bible passages. The familiar Psalm 23 which was read in the Gathering Time speaks of the shepherd who provides for needs, who is the guardian of his flock. He recognizes each member of his flock individually. He calls them by name. The shepherd provides for material needs – food, drink, rest, shelter, etc. Beyond that, however, and even when material needs are lacking, He provides strength to continue, hope that saves and peace in the hidden heart.

The shepherd give rest and restoration of the soul. Rest leads to new energy for the tasks which we have in life. The shepherd leads in paths of righteousness – the path He leads us down is a straight path to the sheltering fold – He leads us home.

We are not familiar with the life of the shepherd in most cultures which make up today's world. Psalm 23 spoke of ***“thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me”***. The staff symbolizes all the gentle disciplines that keep us going. The rod is that stronger emotion we feel when we go against that which we know to be good and right. We might call it conscience; it is the Holy Spirit creating that inner sense of right and wrong without which we cannot live to our highest self.

Further in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm we are told that the shepherd leads through the valley – even the valley of the shadow of death. We cannot live long in this world before we suffer loss. It may be our own illness or that of a loved one. It may be disappointment in others; it may be change forced upon us by life circumstances. The shepherd will be with us in those impossibly difficult times.

Let us rejoice in other Bible passages which speak of the shepherd:

Isaiah 40: 11

***He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
And carries them close to his heart;  
He gently leads those that have young.***

Jeremiah 31: 10

***Hear the word of the Lord, O nations  
Proclaim it in distant coastlands:  
He who scattered Israel will gather them  
And will watch over his flock like a shepherd.***

Ezekiel 34: 11-12

***For this is what the Sovereign Lord says  
“I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.  
As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them,  
so will I look after my sheep.***



***I will rescue them from all the places  
where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.***

Perhaps the most beloved picture of shepherds in the Bible other than the passage in John 10 is that found in Luke 2: 8-20.

***And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."***

***Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying***

***"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests".***

***When the angels had left them and gone into heave, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."***

***So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorify and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.***

Isn't it amazing that the Christ Child worshipped that night by the shepherds grew up to call Himself the Good Shepherd.

### **Call to Commitment:**

What did the shepherds do after they saw the Christ Child? The Scripture says:

***When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.***

We need to spread the word this week about Jesus—the Light of the World and Jesus—the Good Shepherd.

### **Concluding the Service:**

**Shine, Jesus, Shine.** *The Worship Hymnal #491; CCLI #30426*

Make copies (for each reader) of the following Call to Worship.

**Worship Leader:**

***Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things in Your law.***

**Reader 1:**

***The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside the quiet waters,  
He restores my soul.***

**Reader 2:**

***He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil for you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff they comfort me.***

**Reader 3:**

***You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

**Worship Leader:**

***Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
And the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
And the mute tongue shout for joy.***

***Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
And every eye will see him.***

(Psalm 119:18; Psalm 23: 1-6; Isaiah 35: 5-6; Revelation 1:7)