

1,2,3 STORY TIME!

DID JESUS TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN?

One day, some mothers brought their children to Jesus to be blessed by Him. Do you know what happened? Unbelievable! The disciples began to send them away.

- Go away, go away, go away; go away, we don't bother Jesus for kids!

Fortunately, Jesus saw them. He called them back, took them in His arms and blessed them. But he was very angry with the disciples:

- What are you doing there; he told them, let the little children come to me! Do not prevent them from coming to me, for the kingdom of God is for those who are like them.

Yes, it is! Jesus welcomes all children, but the disciples were far from caring, because children were not their first concern; so he is going to tell them a story, a shepherd's story. In the country, there were many flocks at that time and everyone knew shepherds. So they could all understand. It's a very simple story, but it makes us think, because, as you know, in his little stories, his parables, Jesus always hid great truths.

Now, let us listen carefully to discover the truths hidden in this parable.

You can read it in Matthew's Gospel, verses 10 to 14 of chapter 18.

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In spring, when the grass starts to grow and the flowers bloom, the shepherd goes into the mountains with his flock. The meadows are green, dotted with brightly colored flowers; the



air is pure; the water in the streams is clear. The sheep and their lambs are happy to find fresh and tender grass. They know their shepherd well; he is always with them. In the morning, it is he who opens the door of the sheepfold and leads them to the best pastures. In the evening, when he calls them, they gather around him.



They immediately recognize his voice. He takes the path to the sheepfold and they follow him head down, huddled together. All day long, he is there with them, while they graze peacefully. He knows the name of each one. This one is Bouclette, it's all curly!.... This other one with the black legs, well! Yes! It's Black Paw!... That one is Blanchette, it looks like a big ball of white wool!... and the little

one who makes antics there, it's Intrepid. It is always necessary to have an eye on him!

One evening, while the sun starts to hide behind the summits, the shepherd returns his flock, and as always, he counts his ewes one by one. When he reaches 90, he feels a slight anxiety in his heart.... 96, 97, 98, 99... But one is missing! He counts again: 96, 97, 98, 99!

- No doubt, I'm missing one..., he says to himself more and more worried. Where can she be? It is lost! I can't leave her alone in the night. I absolutely must find her.

He leaves the 99 warm in the sheepfold and he takes his stick back and here he goes on



the way to the mountain; the night is already very dark. He calls...:

- Boo! Boo!

Nothing! He calls again...:

- Boo! Boo!

Nothing... except the mountain that echoes his voice:

- Boo! Boo!

He presses the step, and continues to call:

- Where are you, where are you, little sheep? Don't be afraid, it's me; I'm coming to get you.

Did you fall into a ravine? Are you hurt? Answer me! It's me, your shepherd!

He seeks, he seeks again, he calls, he calls again without tiring. He listens, but not the slightest little bleating!

In the distance, over there, in the valley, he hears some dogs barking, and they seem to answer each other, and it is again the heavy silence of the night.

Perhaps, it is there, behind that bush? Or is it there, in that hole?



He climbs up, down, up, slips, catches up with the branches, hurts himself on the rocks. He stops for a moment to catch his breath. He scans all around him but it is very dark, the moonlight is veiled by the clouds. He is attentive to the slightest noise but still nothing; then he starts again:

- She is lost, he repeats to himself, I must find her!

He has been walking for hours. He imagines dogs that may have attacked her, or a wolf that devoured her! The mountain is dangerous -



wild animals prowl around at night looking for prey. Suddenly, he stops to listen better, he seems to hear a noise, it sounds like a faint bleating, over there, in the distance:

- Yes! It is surely her. That's it. She must have fallen over there! He starts running.

He approaches, takes her carefully in his arms,

caresses her. He is filled with joy:

- At last! How happy I am! She was lost and I found her!

She is all trembling, cold but also afraid. The shepherd puts her on his shoulders. He reassures her by talking to her as if she understands:

- We are going home. You will find the warmth of the sheepfold again. Don't be afraid, I'm here now! You are no longer alone.



And here they go again. The ewe is confident, reassured; she bleats with contentment. It seems that she says thank you to him! She is well, there, on the solid shoulders of her shepherd. The return is joyful! In the sheepfold, hearing them coming, the sheep wake up:

- Here they are! Here they are!

It is a concert of joyful bleats!

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



Let's see together what this shepherd story teaches us. First of all, the sheep. What do they represent? Who does Jesus refer to? Yes, he speaks of the little ones, the children, the people who have faith in him, he compares them to sheep.

And who is the shepherd? Yes, he is Jesus, he is the good shepherd.

And who is the lost sheep? Have you guessed? Well, it represents all those who are not yet in his flock, who are far from him, who are lost, who do not know him or who do not believe in him. They are like this lost sheep, all alone, unprotected, separated from him.

So what is the great truth that Jesus has hidden in this little story? Have you guessed? He wants us to know that He came to earth to seek and save all men, but also all children, even the youngest. You too!

To sum up this story, we can read verse 10 of Luke's Gospel - chapter 19: "Jesus came to seek and save what was lost."

We can learn it by heart if you want. We will repeat it again, you are ready, attention 1, 2, 3: "Jesus came to seek and save what was lost!" - Luke 19/10.

You can repeat it again.

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



This parable tells us clearly that God does not want any of these little ones to be lost and Jesus says that children as well as adults are lost but that He came to save them. We do not want to lose sight of this very important truth.

Our children need the good shepherd for their salvation, so we let them know this good news of God's love and encourage them to come to Jesus. If they haven't done so yet, well, let us continue to pray for them so that they do so as soon as possible.