

God Is Our Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In green pastures you give me rest.

You lead me to peaceful waters
and refresh my soul.

You guide me in right paths
for your name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

You spread a table before me
in the sight of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in your house
for years to come.

Psalm 23

Find the images
from the psalm in
the illustration.

Get on the BUS

On Mother's Day, families want to be together.

On Mother's Day, children want to say thank you to their moms for loving them. They want to make presents to show their love.

But what if you are a child who hasn't seen your mother for ten years because she is in prison? What if you live with your grandmother seven hours away from the prison where your mother is? About 2.7 million kids in the United States have a parent who is in jail or in prison.

"Children need to see and touch and talk to their parents in prison," says Sister Suzanne Jabro, a Sister of St. Joseph from Los Angeles. "They have a right to visit, but they can't get there."

Sister Suzanne was part of a group of people from different churches who visited the women in prison in Chowchilla, California. The visitors asked, "What

can we do for you?"

One woman said, "Please bring our children. We never see our children."

Then the woman started to cry, Sister Suzanne remembers. "We heard other women say the same words over and over and over. 'We never see our children. Help us, help us, please.'"

Sister Suzanne belongs to a small group of women called Women Religious Advocating for Women in Prison. The group decided they could get one bus and go to a prison four hours away.

But renting a bus is very expensive. "We called our friends. We practically have no friends now because we have called them all to help out," Sister Suzanne laughs.

The prison agreed to the visit and got mothers in prison to sign up. The prison officials chose nine families.

"They picked women whose kids hadn't seen them for forever—from four to nine years," says Sister Suzanne. "Our group and our friends went to every home and brought the kids to the bus. We had 100 percent response.



The kids could not believe they were going to see their moms. They wouldn't believe it until the bus drove up to the prison."

At the prison, the moms were in the visiting

room, each at a table. "When the kids came through the door, the moms got up and everybody started running toward each other, sobbing," Sister Suzanne remembers. "That first year, we had one bus, nine families, and seventeen kids." Get on the Bus now schedules multiple bus trips so that children can visit their mothers and fathers in California prisons.

Get on the Bus involves many helpers today.

Volunteers go with children to the prison if, for example, a grandmother can't go because she has to work or is sick. People in churches raise money and volunteer.

On Mother's Day, buses leave for the prison visit from all the major cities in California. The children wear Get on the Bus T-shirts with sponsor names on the back. Volunteers serve breakfast. Every child has a travel bag with snacks and activities to do during the bus trip.



Visit getonthebus.us to see how many people help get children and parents together.

High school students and grade school kids make pillows and blankets for children on the buses. They also write letters for the travel bags with encouraging messages like “We’re thinking of you today. Hope your visit is great.”

Children coming from San Diego ride the bus for seven hours, visit their parents for four hours, then ride the bus seven hours home. The caregivers and grandparents get a travel bag too.

At the prison there is a special picnic—hot dogs, ice-cream bars, and chips. Mothers can braid their daughters’ hair. Fathers can give their kids a swing in the air.

All the children get special photos with their moms or dads. On the way home,



Antonieta is a retired city bus driver in Los Angeles. She drove nine children to visit their moms in a prison near San Francisco. The children and Antonieta stayed at Holy Names University in Oakland and drove to the prison every day for a week. “My son is in prison too,” Antonieta says. “I know how these children and moms feel.”



Theresa Harpin, CSJ, visits with a father and his child.

children get a surprise—a letter from their mom or dad and a special teddy bear.

A mom in prison wrote a letter to Sister Suzanne. “I had the most wonderful visit with my kids and my mom. When I was doing the wrong that ended me up in prison, I didn’t understand or think about the price that I would have to pay. I got ripped apart from my kids and family. Without GOTB, I wouldn’t have seen my children until I got out. Thank you! Thank you!”



- 1** What do mothers and dads in prison feel about not seeing their children?
- 2** How do you think the children feel when they see their parents?
- 3** What do people recognize about the Get on the Bus program that makes them want to help?

The children who participate in Get on the Bus to visit their parents get love and support from children they have never met.

Just after Easter, students at Old Mission School in San Luis Obispo, California, start to collect money for Get on the Bus. The school uses the donations to fill Stay-Connected bags for children with parents in prison.

Each grade has a special item to collect: fun pens, writing paper and cards, stamps and stickers, games, and teddy bears. The children who have visited their parents can use the materials in the bag to stay in touch.

After the children have visited their parents at the prison, they get a break before the long bus ride home. People from San Luis Obispo, including students, welcome the children to a park or playground. They play games with them, eat together, and talk about how the visit went. They pass out the Stay-Connected bags and the teddy bears. Each child also gets a love letter from his or her parent.



SUNDAY GOSPEL

4th Sunday of Easter

John 10:1-10

Jesus Comes to Give Life

Jesus 1: Amen, I tell you: Whoever does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber.

Jesus 2: The one who enters through the gate is shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd; the sheep hear the shepherd's voice. He calls them by name and leads them out.

Jesus 3: When the shepherd has brought out all those that are his, he walks in front of them, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. They will not follow a stranger; they will run from a stranger, because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

Narrator: Even though Jesus used this figure of speech with them, the Pharisees did not understand what he was trying to tell them. So he spoke to them again.

Jesus 1: Amen, amen, I say to you: I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them.

Jesus 2: I am the gate. Those that enter through me will be safe. They will go in and out and find pasture.

Jesus 3: The thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it to the full.



- 1 What kind of shepherd is Jesus?
- 2 What does the work of shepherds tell us about how Jesus cares for us?
- 3 How are the Get on the Bus volunteers good shepherds?



Connecting GOSPEL and DOCTRINE

Shepherds in ancient Israel piled rocks to make sheep pens. They left an opening in the rock walls for the sheep to go in and out. At night, shepherds slept in the openings, becoming the actual gate themselves.

Jesus says that, just as the shepherd is the gate of a sheep pen, he is the gate of the Church. People come into the Church because they believe in him. Jesus is the person in whose name Christians gather and form the Christian family. The Church is our

way to salvation in Christ. "The Church is a sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ" (CCC, 754).

Baptism is the sacrament through which Christians enter the Church. In Baptism, Jesus gives us new life and welcomes us into his family.

Jesus Is the Way to Salvation



- 1 How does your class welcome new students?
- 2 How does your family welcome new members (for example, new babies born into the family or through marriage)?



May is Mary's month. It's a time that we honor in a special way the Mother of God through prayer and devotion. Turn to pages 52-55 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*. You will work with your class to become more familiar with the prayers of Mary, including the Hail Mary; Hail, Holy Queen; the Rosary; and the *Memorare*.

The Church Honors Mary, Our Mother

Every Catholic church has some way to honor Mary and show her importance. Find all the ways people in your parish learn about Mary's importance to Jesus and her importance to us.

Be sure to look on the outside of the church as well as the inside. Use this page to record your findings. If your church has more ways to honor Mary than you can fit on this page, use a second sheet of paper.

Windows showing Mary

Location _____

Description _____

Location _____

Description _____

Picture of Mary

Location _____

Description _____

Statue of Mary

Location _____

Description _____



Stations of the Cross

Number _____

Mary is _____

Number _____

Mary is _____

Number _____

Mary is _____



We Live in the Spirit of Friendship



Play and sing "The Great Commandment" (Venture/Visions Music CD, CD-2, #13)

Leader 1: Jesus gives us one commandment: love one another. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to bless us and our friendships.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your friendship and with love for one another.

Leader 2: Come, Holy Spirit, and help us recognize that we are sisters and brothers to all the children of the world.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your friendship and with love for one another.

Leader 3: Strengthen us to get along with others in our school and neighborhoods.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your friendship and with love for one another.

Leader 4: Give us courage to share our gifts for the good of all.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your friendship and with love for one another.

Leader 5: Wherever we go, whomever we meet, may the Spirit of God's loving friendship shine through us.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your friendship and with love for one another.

Leader 6: Let us turn to one another in friendship and share a sign of peace, saying, "The peace and love of Christ be with you."



Play and sing "The Great Commandment" again to conclude your prayer.

Our Lent Promises Continue in Easter

Read this Sunday's Second Reading, 1 Peter 2:20b–25. What does it mean that we will "suffer"? What does it mean that Jesus suffered for us? Jesus doesn't want us to hurt or be miserable. To suffer means that we remember that Jesus gave his life for us. We show our thanks for this gift by serving others and avoiding sin. This may mean that we have to give up some treats, some comforts, and some of our free time.

Think back to Ash Wednesday when we made our promises for Lent. We fasted from things we enjoy (like candy) and things we may enjoy too much (like screen time). We spent more time in prayer. We also shared our time serving others.

Did you keep your Lent commitments? Are there some things left undone? Did you enjoy a service project and want to continue? Write or draw your Easter promises in the next column.

I will PRAY. I promise to _____.

I will FAST. I promise to _____.

I will SERVE. I promise to _____.



We Are Called to Be Like Jesus

Jesus shows us how God acts and calls us to act like God. Jesus heals people, shows compassion, and raises people up to life. He brings Good News to people who are poor,

left out, and sick. Jesus calls each of us to act in this same way. This call is our **vocation**.

Cut out the cards below. Follow the directions to make your own Call Cards.



Catholic FAITH WORD

VOCATION The state of life to which God calls each of us. It comes from the word *vocare*, which means "to call." Specifically, vocation is a call to live as an ordained minister, as a vowed religious sister or brother. Others are called to the single life or to marriage and to raising children.

CALL CARD

Seeking the Lost

Jesus Acts

Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down from that tree. I want to stay at your house today." People grumbled. "Doesn't Jesus know Zacchaeus is a sinner?" Jesus said, "I have come to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:5, 7,10

We Act

Jesus includes Zacchaeus among his friends even though most people thought he was lost. Turn over the card. Write in each arrow a way to welcome and include everyone in your games and class activities.

CALL CARD

Healing

Jesus Acts

Ten lepers called to Jesus: "Master, have pity on us." Jesus said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." As they were going, they were cleansed. Luke 17:13-14

We Act

Turn over the card. Write at the center the name of a person who needs healing—a visit, a card, or a smile. Write in each arrow a healing word or message for this person.

CALL CARD

Raising Up

Jesus Acts

Mary said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus said, "Your brother will rise. Where have you laid him?" Jesus went to the tomb, and he wept. Then he called, "Lazarus, come out!" John 11:32-34, 43

We Act

Turn over the card. Write on the bottom line a sentence that describes who you are now. Write on the top line who you want to be. Write on the lines inside the arrow steps you can take to become the person you want to be and Jesus calls you to be.

CALL CARD

Spreading the Good News


Jesus Acts

Jesus saw James and John fishing in the Sea of Galilee. "Follow me!" he said. "I will make you fishers of people." They went with Jesus all over Galilee, where he taught in the synagogues, proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom, and healed people from all kinds of illness. Matthew 4:18-19, 23

We Act

Turn over the card. The arrows name ways Jesus shows us God's love. Write a sentence in the center of the card that describes a way someone acts like Jesus toward you.

With My Family and Friends

Scan here for  parent resources.



For **free** at-home activities, visit  gospelweeklies.com/seasonal

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Pray

Jesus, I want to be like you and care for other people. Help me to care for others through loving thoughts and actions. Amen.



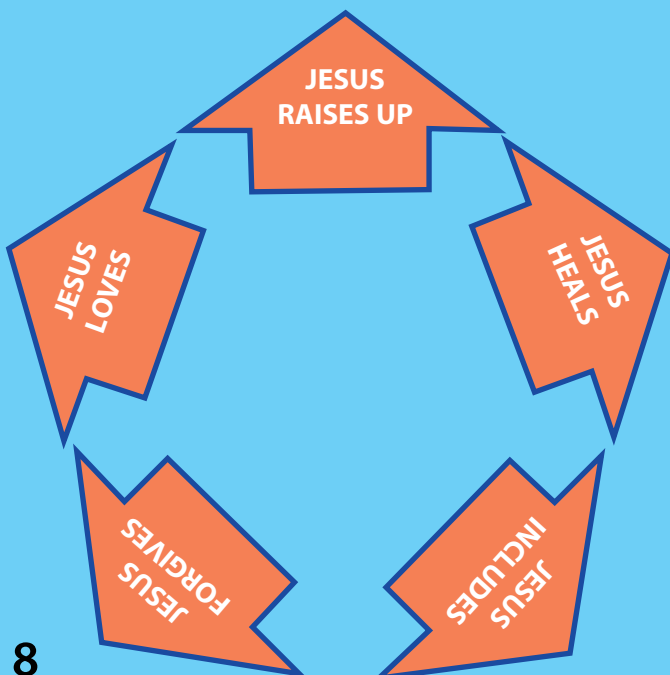
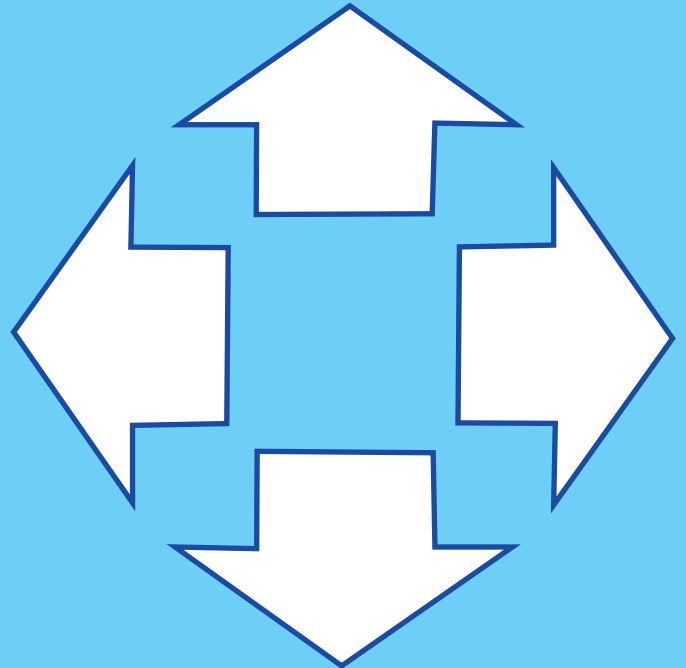
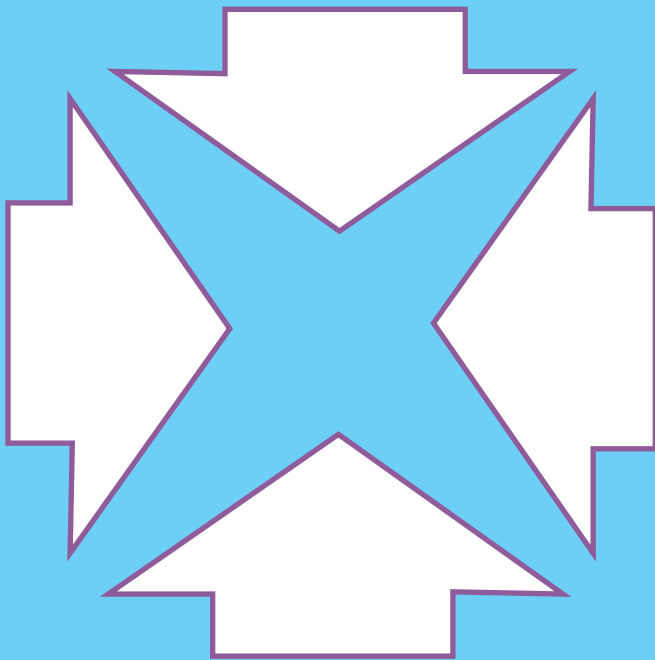
Think

Who are the people I can trust to always take care of me?



Act

Ask a parent to use your vehicle's navigation system to direct you home from Mass. Take a few wrong turns. Reflect together on the way that Jesus always leads us on the right path even if we make some mistakes along the way.



4. _____
3. _____
2. _____
1. _____
