

Good shepherd

Jesus, our good shepherd, treats us in the same way. We love Jesus, and want to live his way, but we all let him down sometimes. Maybe by losing our temper... or lying... or answering back. That doesn't mean we're not Christians. And it certainly doesn't mean that he'll kick us out of his flock!

Fill in the gaps in Jesus' words from verse 14:

I **k**_____ my sheep and **t**_____ know **m**_____.



Jesus, our good shepherd, knows us inside out. He knows the things we love to do, and the things that scare us. He knows all about our friends and family. He knows what excites us. And he also knows how we feel when we mess up, and let him down.

Spot the difference

When you become a Christian, God begins to change you to make you more like his Son, Jesus. One way you will know you're a Christian—other people will see it too—is when God changes you on the inside. It might take a while, but you will begin to notice some of those changes.

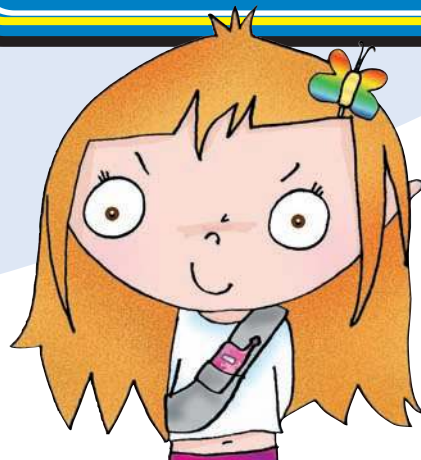
- You will want to do what God wants, rather than just doing what you want.
- God will help you to love other people more, and to care what happens to them.
- You will want to pray more, telling God about each day, and asking him to help your friends and family.
- You'll also want to meet with other Christians, and to read God's book, the Bible, so that you can get to know him better and better.

As you follow Jesus, your good shepherd, you will become more and more like him. And that will help you to be sure that you really are one of his sheep!

So... lots of sheep, a great gate, and a loving, good shepherd. It's a lot to think about, isn't it? Why not talk to God about some of this now? You can use your own words—God loves to listen to his sheep!—or maybe use the prayer below. And if you're still not sure if you're a Christian, ask God to show you whether you are or not. Then talk to an older Christian about it. They'll want to help you.



Dear God,
Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to be my gate so that I can come in and be friends with you. Thank you that Jesus died for me as my good shepherd. Please change me on the inside to make me more like Jesus. And please help me to keep following Jesus, and living his way, every day. Amen



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All Bible references taken from the Good News Bible

? how do I know I'm a Christian



Not sure if you're a Christian?

Then check out what Jesus said to his followers.

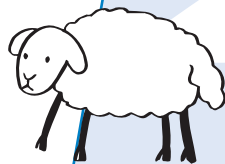
It's all about sheep...

Feeling sheepish?

What do you think sheep are like? Woolly? Smelly? Silly? When Jesus spoke to his friends, he often used picture language to explain things to them. In this example, Jesus says that his followers are like sheep and that he is both their shepherd and a gate!

John chapter 10 verses 7-15

⁷Jesus said again, "I am telling you the truth: I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All others who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever comes in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. ¹¹I am the good shepherd who is willing to die for the sheep. ¹²When the hired man, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; so the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And I am willing to die for them.



Find these words in the sentences above and underline them:

'I am the gate' (verses 7 and 9)

'I am the good shepherd' (verses 11 and 14)

[This means the sentences that start with a tiny 7 and 9.]

Great gate

Hmm... it's easy to think of Jesus as being like a shepherd looking after sheep—but how can he be like a gate??

Jesus is using picture language, so maybe a picture will help...

Look at the picture of the sheep pen.

How many ways into the sheep pen are there? _____



You can only get in through the **gate**. It is the **only way**.

Jesus, the gate, is the **only way** to become friends with God. The **only way** to be saved (have your sins forgiven—v9). The **only way** to eternal life in heaven (v10).

Fill in the gaps from verse 9:

W _____ comes in by **m** _____ will be **s** _____.

Now fit those same words into the fact box below.

- A Christian is someone who has been **s** _____ by Jesus. They believe that Jesus died for them, to take the punishment for their sins (all the wrongs they do).
- Jesus said, 'Whoever comes in by **m** _____ will be saved.' We can't save ourselves. Only **Jesus** can save us.
- Who exactly will be saved? Is it good people? Or important people? No! It's **w** _____ trusts in Jesus!

That's great news! Jesus promises that whoever enters through him—the gate—will be saved from their sins and have eternal life. Jesus welcomes everyone who comes to him. So, if you have put your trust in Jesus you can be sure that you're a Christian, because Jesus always keeps his promises!

If you're not sure whether you've ever put your trust in Jesus, why not talk to God about it now. Say sorry to him for your sin—the wrong things you do, say and think. Thank God for sending his own Son, Jesus, to die for you and take the punishment for your sin. Ask God to forgive you, and to help you to live as one of his friends, with him in charge.

Struggling sheep?



I have put my trust in Jesus—but I keep messing up, and letting God down. Maybe I'm not a Christian at all!

Imagine a sheep that's part of a shepherd's flock. It tries to be a perfect sheep—nibbling the grass politely and never wandering off. But sometimes it messes up. It grabs all the best grass for itself, or it wanders away and gets lost. Will the shepherd kick it out of his flock? Of course not! A good shepherd looks after his sheep—all of them—and helps them when they get stuck.

