

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 62. THE LOST SHEEP

Bible Base: Luke 15: 1-7

Key Christian Belief: Jesus came to rescue the lost.

Aim: To help children understand that Jesus has come to our rescue.

You will need:

- the attached PowerPoint presentation

#### Introduction

EITHER: Display the first PowerPoint slide and ask if anyone has seen 'Thunderbirds Are Go' on television. For those who may not have seen it, explain that it is about an organisation called International Rescue. Their mission is to rescue people who are in trouble - wherever they are. If you have seen the programme, talk about any episodes you can remember, or ask the children to tell you about any they can remember.

OR: Display the second slide and ask if anyone knows what the vehicles in these pictures all have in common. (They are used to rescue people who are in trouble.) Talk briefly about how each of them is used and perhaps refer to a real life rescue story that was in the news recently or that the children may be familiar with.

It's always great when someone who was in danger is rescued. Today we are going to hear a rescue story that Jesus told and think about what we can learn from it.

#### Bible Story

Once there was shepherd who had a hundred sheep. He was a good shepherd and knew every single one of his sheep by name...Spotty, Grimy, Snowy, Fluffy and so on...

Every day he would lead his flock to fresh, juicy green pasture and then take them down to the stream where there would be cool clean water for them to drink. Every night he would take them to the sheep pen where they would be safe from the wild animals that prowled around in the hillside.

One night he was counting his sheep into the pen: '1, 2, 3... 44, 45, 46... 97, 98, 99... oh...' It looked like one of them was missing so he counted again and sure enough there were only 99 sheep in the pen that night.

'Oh dear' thought the shepherd. 'One of my sheep is missing! Which one could it be?' He looked around. 'Snowy' he thought. 'Where's Snowy?' But Snowy wasn't there.

We don't know how Snowy had gone missing. Perhaps he had been nibbling on a nice piece of grass and was enjoying it so much that he hadn't noticed that the other sheep and the shepherd had gone on without him, leaving him behind.

Or perhaps he had been thinking to himself: 'I'm fed up following the same shepherd day after day around the same old fields. There's a hill over there he never takes us to. I want to see what it's like over there!' And so he waited for his chance and when the shepherd wasn't looking he set off on an adventure of his own.

Either way, when night came and he heard the wolves howling in the distance, Snowy knew he was in big trouble.

Christians believe that **we are like this lost sheep**. We don't always do what God says. Sometimes we do what He says we shouldn't. It is as if we have wandered away from Him - and now we are in trouble. Because of the wrong things in our lives the Bible says we cannot be His friends or live with Him in heaven. We have been separated from Him.

There were other shepherds in those days who might have thought to themselves 'Oh well - at least I've got 99 sheep safe and well. There's only one sheep missing. Who cares about just one?' But not this shepherd. Every single one of his sheep mattered to him. So now he had to decide what to do. Perhaps he remembered a nursery rhyme he had learned as a boy that had some advice for shepherds who had lost their sheep:

'Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep and doesn't know where to find them. Leave them alone and they'll come home...' Wait a minute! That's not very good advice is it?

'If I leave Snowy alone he'll end up as a wolf's dinner!' thought the shepherd. 'I can't just sit here and do nothing! I'm going to do everything I can to find him and bring him back home safe and sound before it is too late!'

Christians believe that **Jesus is like this good shepherd**. He knows every one of us by name and every single one of us matters to him. He hasn't left it to us to get out of the trouble we're in all by ourselves because He knows we can't. Instead He came from heaven to rescue us and to bring us back to God, where we belong.

So the shepherd set out in the darkness calling 'Snowy! Snowy! Where are you, Snowy!' Up into the hills and down into the valleys he went - across fields, rivers and swamps until eventually he heard a faint cry. It was Snowy, stuck on a ledge of rock. The shepherd ran up to him, picked him up in his arms and carried him on his shoulders all the way back to the sheep pen.

'It's all right' he whispered. 'You're safe now - I've got you!'

And when the shepherd arrived back at the sheep pen he went round all his friends and neighbours to tell them the good news. It was three o'clock in the morning - but he didn't care. He wanted everyone to know how happy he was!

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Christians believe that like this good shepherd, **Jesus has come to our rescue**. The Bible says he took the blame for the wrong things we have done so that we can be forgiven. This means that we can be God's friends now and forever. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who came to bring us back to God, where we belong. I believe that, if we choose to trust and follow Him, we can be sure that He will take care of us always, and one day bring us to be with God forever.

And Christians believe that this good news is for everyone. The shepherd in the story cared about every single one of His sheep and in the same way, Christians believe that **everyone matters to Jesus**. No one is excluded from His love and friendship, no matter who they are or what they have done.

If we are His friends, Jesus wants us to show His love to others in all we say and do. He wants us to include everyone in our love and friendship and make sure no one is left out!

**Prayer**

Then finish with a prayer thanking Jesus for His love and asking Him to help the children show the same love to everyone as He has shown to them.