



St. Ignatius of Loyola Church
Pre-K-5 Family-Based Program

April 25th - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Reflection Point: Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and we are called to follow him as part of the flock.

Reading: John 10:11-18

Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd.

A good shepherd lays down their life for the sheep.

A hired person, who is not a shepherd

and whose sheep are not their own,

sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away,

and the wolf catches and scatters them.

This is because they work for pay and have no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd,

and I know mine and mine know me,

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;

and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.

These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice,

and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

This is why the Father loves me,

because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own.

I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.

This command I have received from my Father.”

Reflecting Together:

1. How does the hired person act when the sheep are in danger?
2. What does Jesus say that the good shepherd will do for their sheep? Why does the good shepherd act differently than the hired person?

Going Deeper:

1. Jesus says he is like a shepherd who wants to care for his sheep because he loves them. How can you show love to the people in your life?
2. Jesus says that he is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. As disciples, we are called to do the same. What is something you can do this in your life this week?

Finding God in Our Week

The Good Shepherd makes sacrifices for the sheep not because it is required, but because it is a choice. That sounds a lot like parenting and the dynamics of a healthy family life. Parents choose to make sacrifices for their children out of love, not obligation. Christian parents model and invite their children to choose to make sacrifices for other family members and for other people, acting out of love rather than obligation.

At Home

When you gather as a family, invite each family member to consider the attitude that permeates their participation in family life. Read a common examen, such as any of the following: Do we do family chores cheerfully and without having to be asked multiple times? Do we gladly share with others? Do we willingly contribute to the family good when asked? Discuss together how the example of the Good Shepherd might inspire your family life. Invite each family member to make a renewed commitment to one action/attitude to focus on in the upcoming week that shows that we will choose to follow the example of the Good Shepherd. Pray together that we will be able to honor our commitment. Pray together Saint Ignatius of Loyola's Prayer for Generosity.

An Example of Lived Faith: Saint Francis of Assisi



This past week we celebrated Earth Day, and St. Francis of Assisi is a wonderful example of someone who put the needs of others above his own and faithfully served God. He was born in Assisi, Italy in 1182. He grew up leading a privileged life as the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. Francis loved to learn and sing songs as a boy. His father wanted him to become a businessman and taught him about the French culture. About the age of nineteen Francis went to battle against the nearby town of Perugia. Francis was captured and taken prisoner. He was held prisoner in a dungeon for a year before his father paid the ransom and he was set free.

Over the next few years Francis began to see visions from God that changed his life. when praying in a church, Francis heard God tell him to "repair my church, which is falling in ruins." Francis gave all his money to the church. His father became very angry with him. Francis then left his father's home and took a vow

of poverty. He is most famous as the founder of the Franciscan Order, and also helped to found other orders, like the Order of the Poor Ladies with St. Clare of Assisi. Francis was known for his love of nature and animals. There are many stories about Saint Francis and his preaching to animals. It is said that one day he was talking to some birds when they began to sing together. Then they flew into the sky and formed the sign of a cross. May the example of St. Francis inspire us to care for creation and follow Jesus in the ways we are called to!

Concluding Our Year Together

Make a tree of gratitude to list talk about what you are most thankful for and what you have learned this year!

Try using this reflection to think about what you have learned, what you really loved, what you struggled with, and how can Jesus help you to grow. Find the reflection [here](#).