



The Sacrament of Reconciliation
Preparation Booklet 2





What is my "Conscience?"



My conscience is ...

like a tiny voice inside me that tells when I am doing something right and when I am doing something wrong.

My conscience is ...

God teaching me right from wrong. God gives us the freedom to make our own decisions. This is called FREE WILL. Our conscience helps us to think about our choices.

What does your conscience tell you ?



Your friend asks if he can join in with your football game. He is not very good at football and might make you lose, so you say no.

Will your conscience tell you that you did the right thing?



Your friend has nothing to eat at break time and you have crisps and a biscuit. You share them with your friend.

Will your conscience tell you that you did the right thing?

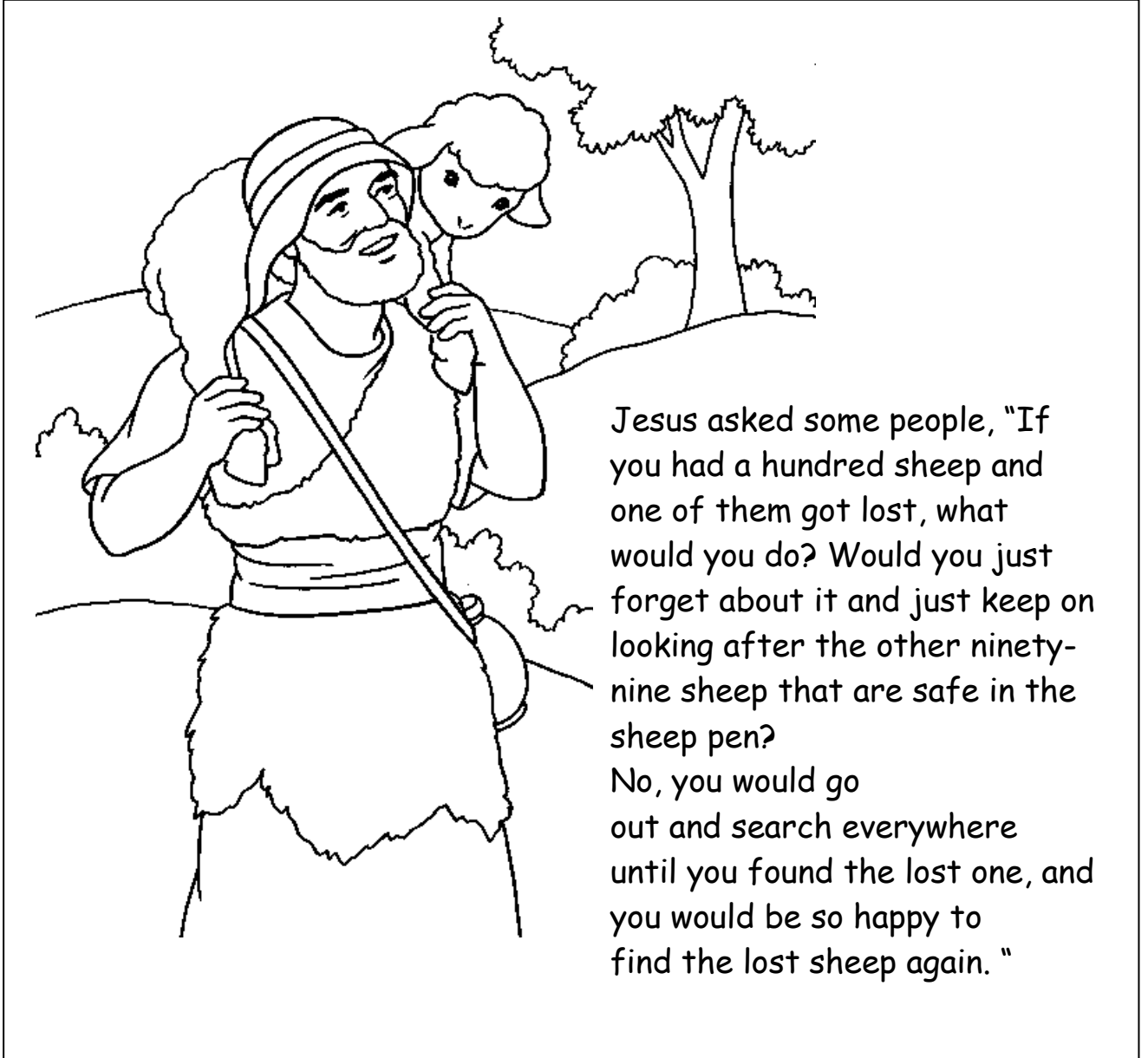


Your mum asks you to tidy your bedroom. You don't do it and your very tired mum ends up doing it instead.

Will your conscience tell you that you did the right thing?

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

In the Bible, Jesus is described in lots of ways. No-one can see Jesus, but the names used to describe him help us to know him well: **Christ the King, Light of the World, Prince of Peace, The Good Shepherd.**



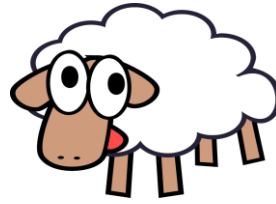
Jesus asked some people, "If you had a hundred sheep and one of them got lost, what would you do? Would you just forget about it and just keep on looking after the other ninety-nine sheep that are safe in the sheep pen?

No, you would go out and search everywhere until you found the lost one, and you would be so happy to find the lost sheep again. "

Jesus is just like a shepherd. He cares about every single one of his sheep (us) and wants to look after all of them. He wants to make sure that any sheep that wanders off comes back safely again.

Lost and Found

Sheep are animals that often get lost. Sometimes they leave the sheep pen and wander off on the wrong path.



Sometimes they get tangled in bushes or get stuck in fences. Sheep need someone to look after them, to guide and protect them.

Easy to understand ...



We can be like sheep and not follow Jesus our shepherd. When we don't follow Jesus we make wrong choices.

Think deeper ...



Sheep are free to wander away from their shepherd. People are free to choose which path to follow and which choices to make. God makes us free to choose because when you love someone you do not force them to do anything. God simply invites us ...

Have you ever been lost and needed someone to help you?

Draw a picture of a time when you got lost or needed help.

Making Choices

Jesus makes us free to make our own choices. Sometimes we make choices which are wrong and hurt other people. This is called SIN. We can fix our sins by saying sorry. When we make the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we tell Jesus about our sins. Jesus ALWAYS listens to us and ALWAYS forgives our sins.



***Write or draw a story about a time when you felt sorry for something.
Use the boxes to write or draw different parts of your story.***

The Sacrament of Reconciliation Booklet 2

Aims

- To introduce the idea of "conscience" and "free will."
- To talk about "sin" and what it means.
- To reinforce the continuous love of God and his willingness to forgive.

Method

1 "What is my "Conscience?" worksheet 20 minutes approx.

- Ask the children if they have heard of the word "conscience."
Explain that when we do something wrong we usually *know* it because something deep down inside us tells us so - this is what we call our "conscience." Explain that our conscience is actually the voice of God teaching us right from wrong ... that God gave us a conscience the moment we were created (in the womb). Explain that our conscience is a good thing because it helps us grow in our love for God - it helps us realise when we are doing wrong and reminds us to make better choices and choose to do the right thing. Emphasise the fact that we are free to make our own choices - God gives us the gift of free will. You could compare sin to the damaging/breaking of our friendship with Jesus, but that the break is only temporary because we have the capacity to say sorry and the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to do so in an intimate way with Jesus through the priest who "acts in the person of Christ." (Mention this phrase early on so that they can begin to understand it).
- Split the children into pairs or groups of 4 for a few minutes to discuss the three scenarios "What does your conscience tell you?"
- Come back together and ask the groups to give their views.

2 **Jesus, The Good Shepherd.** 20 mins approx.

Start by discussing the names we have for Christ and why they are appropriate. Ask if they know any other names we use for Jesus. Tell them that all of these names tell us about the qualities of Christ and his heavenly power given from God the Father. Tell them that God is human and divine all-in-one. This is a tricky concept but try to get them to understand that he is all-powerful.

Read the story, stopping at the end of each sentence to get them thinking about what they would do if they lost one sheep out of ninety-nine. The point of the story is to help them realise that they are actually just like the sheep that gets lost. We are free to choose to wander off, to stray from what God wants for us. God wants us to follow him but he does not force us to do anything because he loves. He wants us to come to him freely. When we do the wrong thing, i.e. sin, we get lost. But he never gives up on us. He tries to get us back - ALWAYS. He NEVER stops looking for the good in us. He always welcomes us back into the fold." Refer to the picture - he carries us like a father carries his child.

Give the children 5 minutes to colour in the shepherd/sheep picture.

3 Lost and Found

20 minutes approx.

Ask for examples of what can happen if a sheep wanders out of the pen.

Elicit from them stories of times when they got lost - in a shop, etc. How did they feel? How did they feel when they were found again? Explain that even if we turn away from Jesus when we do wrong, he searches for us to come back to being good again.

In the "Easy to understand" / "Think deeper" section, revisit the theme of free will/choice: God does not *force* us to do anything. We are completely free to make our own choices. Jesus' approach is always invitational, gentle and patient.

Ask them to write about a time when they were lost.

If they can't remember ever being lost, ask them to make up a story.

4 Making Choices

10 mins approx.

This worksheet revises the theme of the booklet - conscience/choices/repentance and forgiveness. You could remind them that the priest listens to them confessing their sins but is there in the place of Jesus and acts as the person of Jesus during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

You could ask the following questions to check their understanding:

- What does free will mean?
- Why does Jesus let us make our own choices?
- What does "sin" mean?