

The Good Shepherd and World Communion

This Godly Play presentation brings together the images of the Good Shepherd and Holy Communion, deepening each other's interpretation by setting them side-by-side.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustrations below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawings. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about these pictures?
- I wonder what these pictures have to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the lesson, another recall a single moment that had

meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation

There was once someone who did such wonderful things and said such amazing things that people wondered who he was. Finally they couldn't help it—they just had to ask him.

"I am the Good Shepherd," he said.

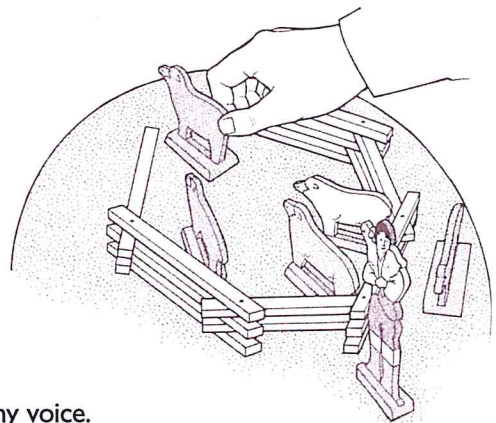
"I know each one of the sheep by name, and they know the sound of my voice.

"When I take the sheep from the sheepfold, they follow me.

"I walk in front of the sheep to show them the way.

"I show them the way to the good grass."

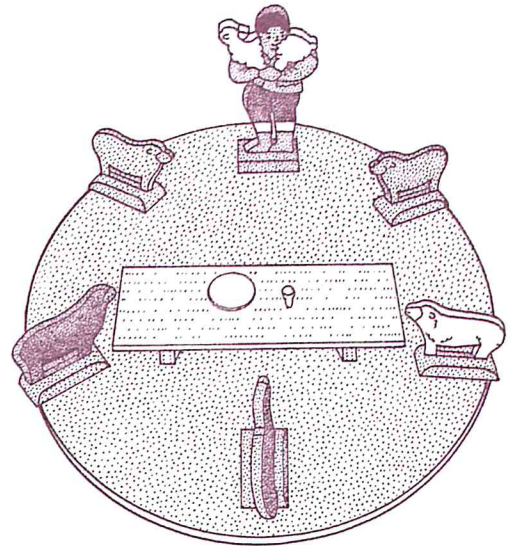
This is the table of the Good Shepherd.



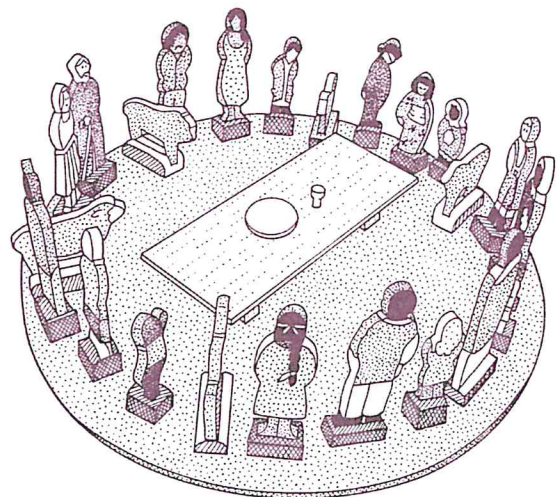
Wondering

- **I wonder** where this table could really be?
- **I wonder** if you have ever heard the words of the Good Shepherd?
- **I wonder** what the bread and the wine could really be?

Here is the bread and wine of the Good Shepherd. Sometimes we think we need to have a little statue or something on the table to remind us that this is the table of the Good Shepherd, but the Good Shepherd is in the bread and the wine, so we don't really need anything else to remind us.



Sometimes someone comes to read the very words of the Good Shepherd and to give us the bread and the wine.



Sometimes the people of the world come to this table. Even the children come.

Godly Play Hide and Seek

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Today we look at the first of three key concepts that children teach us about God: *God's presence is elusive*.

Our relationship with God is like the children's game of Peekaboo and, as it develops, one of Hide-and-Seek. This can be dignified in Latin by the phrase *Deus Absconditus atque Praesens* (God is hidden yet also present). This is because we do not play Hide-and-Seek with people we know are not there. The

possibility of a presence that *can* be revealed is necessary for the game to go forward.

Children will play what and with whom they please. You can't make children (or adults) play. If adults really want to know children they need to become childlike. This is like being born of heaven rather than earth, like Nicodemus said (John 3:3, 5), because it is so different from "normal" adult understanding. Theological Hide-and-Seek continues for a lifetime. In fact, the goal of the game is to keep the game going rather than ending it by winning or losing.