

# He Knows Your Name



**Theme:** The shepherd knows his sheep.

**Object:** A branding iron or some sample brands written on cards (You can find examples on the web or make up some of your own such as "Diamond M," "Lazy S," or "Rocking R").

**Scripture:** "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." John 10:4 (NIV)

Some of you may have seen a branding iron. A branding iron is used to put an identifying mark on cattle and sheep. When a calf is branded, they put the branding iron in a fire and burn the brand into the side of the calf. Ouch! I'll bet that hurts! When a brand is put on sheep, they dip the brand into a special paint and put the brand on the sheep's back. That sounds a little better, doesn't it? Okay, let's talk about branding sheep. Here is a photo that shows a sheep being branded. ([Click Here](#))

Do you know why they put a brand on the sheep? They do it so that they will know who owns the sheep. Each rancher has his own special brand. So, if a sheep wanders off and becomes lost or stolen, the brand will prove who owns the sheep.

I don't know whether they put brands on sheep in Jesus' day or not, but Jesus once told about a shepherd who went to a sheep pen to get his sheep. He said that the shepherd knew his sheep and called them by name. When he had called them out, he walked ahead of them and they followed him because they recognized his voice. Jesus said that if a stranger called to the sheep, they would not follow him. In fact, Jesus said they would run away from him because they did not recognize the stranger's voice.

That is a beautiful picture of our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is our shepherd. He loves us and cares for us -- he even knows our name. Jesus calls us to follow him and if we belong to him, we will know his voice and we will follow him.

Sometimes, Satan may try to get us to follow him. He may try to get us to do things that will do us harm. If we belong to Jesus, we will not follow Satan. In fact, we will run from him.

Heavenly Father, we are thankful that we have a shepherd who knows our name. Help us to follow him when he calls. In Jesus' name we pray.

# Finding the Way



**Theme:** Jesus is the Way

**Object:** A map and a compass

**Scripture:** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (NIV)

If you are going on a trip, you need to know where you are going and how to go to get there. I have a two things with me this morning that you might use to help you to find your way when you are traveling. I have a map and a compass. I'm sure all of you have seen a map, but perhaps some of you have never seen a compass. The map will show you where you want to go, and the compass will point you in the right direction. The compass shows you whether you are going north, south, east, or west.

I heard about a lady who was taking a group of children to a soccer game in another city. She knew the right road to take, but she became confused and turned east instead of west. They had traveled for almost an hour before one of the children told her that they were going the wrong direction.

When we are trying to find your way through the journey of life, we need some help in finding the right way to go, don't we? Each day we face many difficult decisions and it is sometimes hard to know which way to turn. Some people use their feelings to make decisions. They say, "I'm going to do this, because it just feels like the right thing to do." That's no good. Our feelings may change from day to day, and just because we feel good about something doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do.

Some people make choices by what's popular. Have you ever tried to convince your parents to let you do something by saying, "Everybody's doing it"? Just because everyone else is doing it doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do, does it? Besides, tomorrow everyone might be doing something else.

There is one sure way to know if we are going in the right direction in life—and that is to follow Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." We know where we want to go, we want to go to heaven. And now, we know the way. Jesus is the way. If we follow him, we know we are on the right path and headed in the right direction.

Dear Father, help us each day as we journey through life to follow Jesus, because we know he is the way, the only way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# "I Am the Way"



**Theme:** Jesus is the Way to the Father

**Object:** A map and a portable GPS

**Scripture:** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (NIV)

There was a time when a person going on a trip wouldn't think of beginning their journey without a road map. (Hold up the map for the children to see.) The map was very helpful to the traveler in finding the way to where they were going. Today we seldom ever use a road map. Do you know why? Most of us who own a car also have a GPS in our car. (Hold up the GPS.) How does the GPS work? When you are ready to go somewhere, you type in the address where you want to go and the GPS connects to a satellite up above the earth and computes the path to your destination. As soon as you start driving, a map appears on the screen and a voice from the GPS gives you turn by turn directions. "Turn right on Main Street in one mile, turn right in one half mile, turn right in 150 feet, turn right." What happens if you miss your turn? The GPS says, "Recalculating" and immediately computes a new route to get you back on the right path to your destination.

When we are trying to follow Jesus in our daily life, it would be nice to have a GPS to lead us in the right direction, wouldn't it? It would be nice to have something to keep us on the right path and keep us from getting lost...something that would help us get back on the right track when we made a wrong decision.

That is the way Jesus' disciples must have felt when Jesus told them that he was going to leave them. Jesus said to them, "I am going to prepare a place for you and when everything is ready, I will come and get you so that you will always be with me. You know the way to where I am going."

One of the disciples whose name was Thomas answered Jesus, "No, we don't, Lord. We don't even know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Another disciple named Philip joined in, "Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied."

"Philip," Jesus answered, "Have you been with me all this time and you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show you the Father? Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Anyone who believes in me will do the same things I have done."

That was all the disciples needed to know to get them on the right path to the Father.

So, how do you and I find our way to the place where Jesus has gone to be with the Father? We have not seen Jesus as Thomas and Philip had, but we can follow the teachings that he has given to us in the Bible -- God's Holy Word. That is our GPS and it will keep us on the right path!

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son to provide the way to eternal life. Thank you for your Holy Word which will keep us on the right path in our journey through life. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.