Sheep

This month we are thinking in assembly about different animals from the Bible.

Last week we talked about donkeys and today we are talking about another animal which was very common in the land where Jesus lived. Sheep.

Being a shepherd was not easy in the time of Jesus, in fact it was actually very dangerous. The shepherds could not sleep comfortably in their beds at night – they had to live out in the fields with the sheep. There were many predators out in the wild who would have loved the chance to eat a sheep or lamb. The shepherds had to protect their sheep. They had to frighten away wild animals, they had to guide the sheep in dangerous areas like rocky valleys and steep mountainsides. They had to bring them to grassy fertile areas by rivers so the sheep had enough to eat. They would have had a little stone enclosure for the sheep to sleep in at night time. The shepherd would have slept across the entrance.

Long before Jesus was born people used to sing a song in the Temple. It talked about God as a shepherd looking after his sheep. In our Bibles it is called Psalm 23 and it is one of the best known hymns and psalms in the Bible.

Read Psalm 23 (extract)

The Lord is my shepherd.
    I have everything I need.
He gives me rest in green pastures.
    He leads me to calm water.
He gives me new strength.
For the good of his name,
    he leads me on paths that are right.
Even if I walk
    through a very dark valley,
I will not be afraid
    because you are with me.
Your rod and your shepherd’s staff comfort me.

Shepherds keep being mentioned in the Bible – they were some of the first people to see Jesus when he was born. Jesus told a few stories about shepherds but this is the most famous story. As you listen to the story you need to imagine that Jesus was telling it outside with fields of sheep in the area, to people who knew what it was like to be a shepherd and to look after sheep. Jesus told the story about God – God cares for each of us just as the shepherd cares for the sheep. Now listen…..

Jesus told them this story: Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses 1 of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will keep on searching for the lost sheep until he finds it.And when he finds it, the man is very happy. He puts it on his shoulders and goes home. He calls to his friends and neighbours and says, ‘Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!’

Christians believe that this story is like a picture of God and his people. He wants to take care of each person.

This is the last of our assemblies about animals. I could have talked about other animals. I could have told you how Aaron’s stick turned into a snake or how ravens (big crows) came and fed Elijah or how Peter found a coin in a fish’s mouth or how Daniel was saved by God from being eaten by lions. Maybe you can do some more research.

Did you know that dogs are mentioned in the Bible 14 times, lions 89 times, but cats are not mentioned at all. The land of the Bible was quite different from our country today.

I wonder what your favourite animal is from our 4 assemblies – the donkey, the big fish, the sheep or all the animals on Noah’s ark.

All of our stories remind us that God loves everything he made and cares for us all.

Thanking God for Creation

We thank you God for the wonderful things you created:

 for the animals, big and small,

 for the oceans, deep and blue,

 for the land, green and fertile,

 for the sky and all the birds of the air,

 for the sun that shines and cheers us up.

 for the people that God made,

Help us look after this wonderful earth. Amen.

Thank you God for the beautiful trees,

 the bees and sea,

 the plants and animals,

 and everything around us.

***We will do our best to take care of them***.

Thank you for food and trees and the animals,

 the beautiful rivers and flowers,

 and thank you for the fields.

***We will do our best to take care of them.***

Thank you for this day,

 for the animals, flowers and the sea.

 Thank you for the beautiful trees.

***We will do our best to take care of them***.

Thank you for our world and all of the trees, flowers and plants.

 for the sunshine and the cats, the fish in the sea.

***We will do our best to take care of them.***

Thank you, God for food.

Thank you, God for family.

Thank you for flowers, animals, plants, the ocean and trees.

Thank you, God for everything. Amen

Thanking God for Creation

Dear God, please bless all the children in our school. Help them to learn in a caring and happy environment.

Please bless the teachers and staff in our school. May they continue to inspire and guide our students.

Please bless the parents, guardians and families connected with our school. We thank you for their continued enthusiasm and support.

Please bless the members of our Board of Management. We ask for your guidance, inspiration and direction in the decisions they make for our school.

Please bless our school bus drivers who are entrusted with the safety and care of our children.

Thank you for looking after our school and for loving everyone here. Amen.