



## EZEKIEL 34

# SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 34

**Open:** Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

**Supplies:** 12 Stuffed animals or sheep, flag belts (or just tag).

### **Open:**

For those that were here last week, we talked about the glory of God leaving the Temple. God was removing his protection from the people because they had chased after idols and fake gods. He was going to allow them to be removed from their homeland and in captivity for a 70-year timeout, because they had disobeyed him.

Today, we're going to look at a specific group that God planned to deal with: The Shepherds of his flock. Can anyone guess who the "Shepherds" are? (The priests, could also be kings). Yes, the Priests and the kings were supposed to lead and care for the people of Israel, but we're going to find out that they weren't doing a very good job. Grab a Bible and let's learn about it.

**Read:** Ezekiel 34:1-10

### **Explain:**

God is very concerned when the leaders aren't doing what they are supposed to do. They are supposed to be pointing the people to God, but these leaders only cared about themselves. Because of this, God is going to punish them. He sees when people are mistreated and when people are taken advantage of, he sees when they are left without protection, and God does not approve. Therefore, he removes the shepherds and rescues the flock himself.

### **Play a Game:**

Outside, divide the kids into two teams. One team will be the wolves, the other will be the shepherds. Each team will have multiple stuffed sheep that they must hide in their territory. (It's capture the flag, but with stuffed sheep). Each team must try to protect their sheep in their area, while either rescuing (if the shepherds) or stealing (if the wolves) the other team's sheep. The kids can use the flag football belts or just play tag. If the opposing team gets their flag or tags, they must go back to their area.

Throughout the game, at regular intervals, force a shepherd to sit down. Do this until all the shepherds are down. Explain that you will do this beforehand. You will play two games, with each team taking turns being shepherds or wolves. Because it is unfair, tell the kids it can just be a race for the wolves to see which team of wolves can get the sheep the fastest.

**Ask:**

Was that easy or hard?

Was it disappointing when the shepherds sat down?

It is disappointing when we see leaders that don't do their job correctly, too. Everyone will make mistakes and we should forgive, but the mark of a good leader is to care for the people you are leading and to sacrifice for them. Let's look at how God handles this.

**Read:** Ezekiel 34:11-16

**Main Point:**

God shepherds quite differently, doesn't he?

Later in this passage, God points to Jesus, saying that he will put one shepherd over them, his servant David. Here he is making a reference to the True King and High Priest that was promised through the line of David, he was pointing to Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. He also calls us to be sheep that know their shepherd's voice.

Jesus is still our Good Shepherd today. People may let us down, they may fail to protect us and wolves may be roaming around, but Jesus cares. He rescues the lost and protects the weak. It doesn't mean nothing bad will ever happen, but it does mean that he is right there with us, comforting us, helping us, seeing us, and eventually, he will make everything wrong to be right.

**Memorize:** Ezekiel 34:31

**Close in Prayer**