

*Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed! Eastertide is a period of 50 days, beginning on Easter Sunday and ending at Pentecost, when we celebrate the birth of the Church. During Eastertide, we celebrate the Risen Christ and imagine how we might live as Easter people. Rachel Held Evans wrote, "God showed us how to heal instead of kill, how to mend instead of destroy, how to love instead of hate, how to live instead of long for more. When we nailed God to a tree, God forgave. And when we buried God in the ground, God got up."*



## Scripture

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.



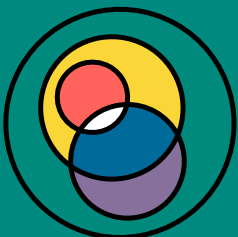
## Questions

- We are in the season of Easter, when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and focus on how to be his followers. In his story, what are the two kinds of people Jesus talks about who try to enter the sheepfold?
- What happens when the shepherd comes to the gate?
- Share about a time when you followed someone else's lead. Why did you need someone to lead you? How did it feel to trust them to lead you?
- Jesus tells us he is the gate, and following him is like being shepherds who enter through him. What are some ways you follow Jesus today?
- Jesus says he came so people can have a full life of abundance. What does a full life of abundance look like?

### Look it Up!

Look up shepherd dog breeds.

Also known as herding dogs, this categorization includes dogs as small as Corgis and as large as German Shepherds. These dogs can help with chores, protection, or herding sheep and other livestock.





## Activity

### Materials:

Obstacle course materials

In our Bible story today, Jesus tells us how important it is to follow a leader's voice. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to be able to listen and follow directions? Sometimes at school or home, listening can be challenging, but practice can help us become better listeners. Let's play a game to practice our listening skills!

As a group, build a small obstacle course from one side of the space to another, using materials you have on hand. You could use chairs, pillows, boxes, paper plates, string—anything that could be an obstacle for the game players! The goal of the course should be to make the players of the game go over, under, through, and around the obstacles. After you've built your course, pair off. Each pair should decide together who will be the leader and the follower.

Then, take turns navigating through the obstacle course, with the leader giving very specific directions to the follower. Similar to coding, the follower will have to do exactly what the leader says to do. For example, if there is a chair in the way, and the leader says, "Go right!" but not how far or how fast, the follower might end up all the way on the right side of the room but not past the chair. The leader will have to be careful to give specific directions, and the follower will need to listen well while interpreting the directions to achieve what the leader instructs!

Once each pair has finished going through the course in one direction, switch roles AND switch directions on the course so that you're going the other way. When all the pairs have successfully navigated the course, gather in a circle to discuss the following questions: What parts of this experience were challenging? Which role did you feel more comfortable in? How does this game remind you of our Bible story from today?

## Alternate Activity

### Materials:

Writing utensils  
Index cards

Cotton balls, popsicle sticks,  
tape, etc.

Jesus tells us an interesting story in our passage today. Jesus uses the example of sheep entering through a gate into their pasture to teach us about following Jesus and listening closely to him. Have you ever seen sheep in person? They can be very rambunctious! Like us, sheep sometimes have difficulty listening to their leader. Today, we will make a visual reminder of Jesus' story of the sheep and the gate.

In small groups, use the materials you have in front of you to build a sheep (or multiple sheep) and a gate. For example, you could use cotton balls to assemble your sheep and popsicle sticks for your gate, or you could make both out of paper, create a drawing, etc. When your group has finished, brainstorm an answer to the following question, and if able, write it on your index card to share with the whole group: Why are gates and shepherds important to the sheep? Read your index cards to each other and then tape them next to your creations.



## Micropractice

When we pray or meditate, our minds can wander. Thoughts distract us. Pay attention to the thoughts coming up when you are silent. What does your brain want to think about? How might a shepherd guide your thoughts back to prayer?

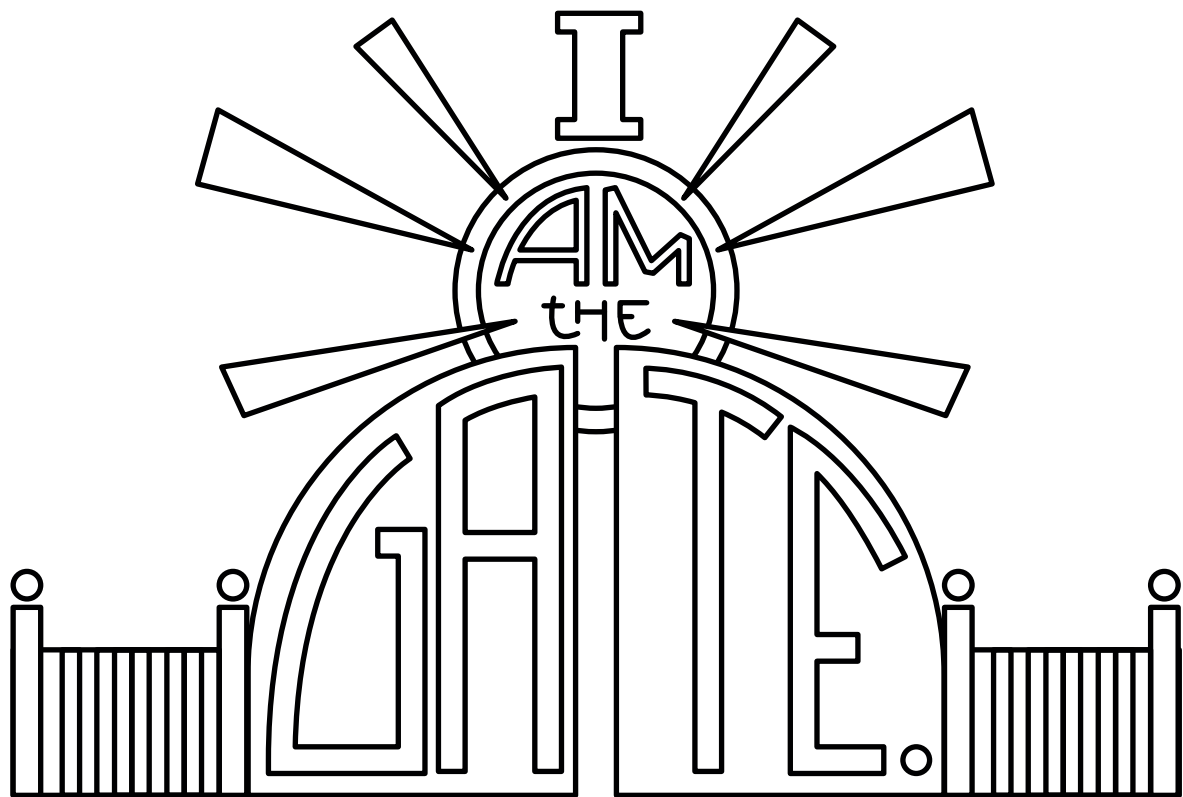


Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: [illustratedministry.com/minirevAEaster4](https://illustratedministry.com/minirevAEaster4)



## Prayer

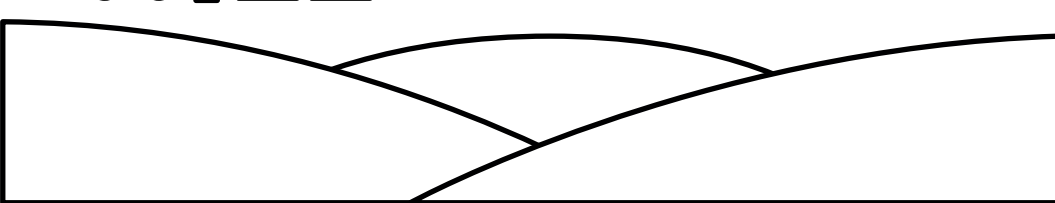
Dear God of green fields and still waters, lead us toward all that is beautiful and good. Teach us to listen to your voice so we may follow you like sheep entering safe pasture. Amen.



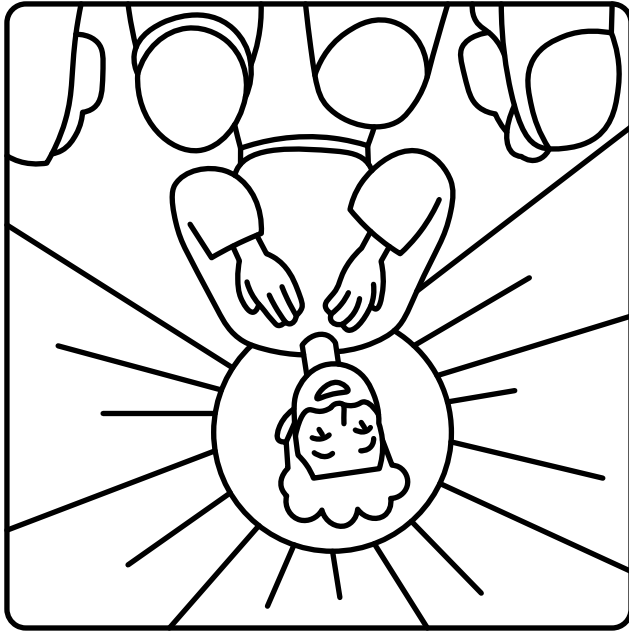
WHOEVER ENTERS  
BY ME

WILL BE SAVED

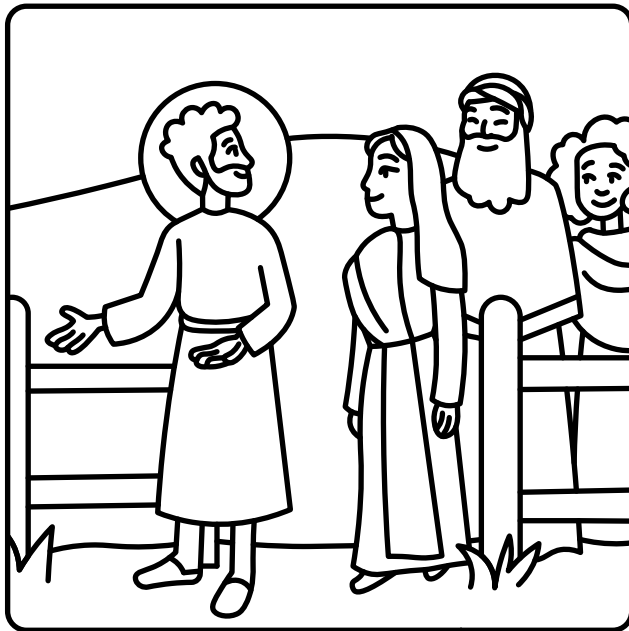
AND WILL COME IN



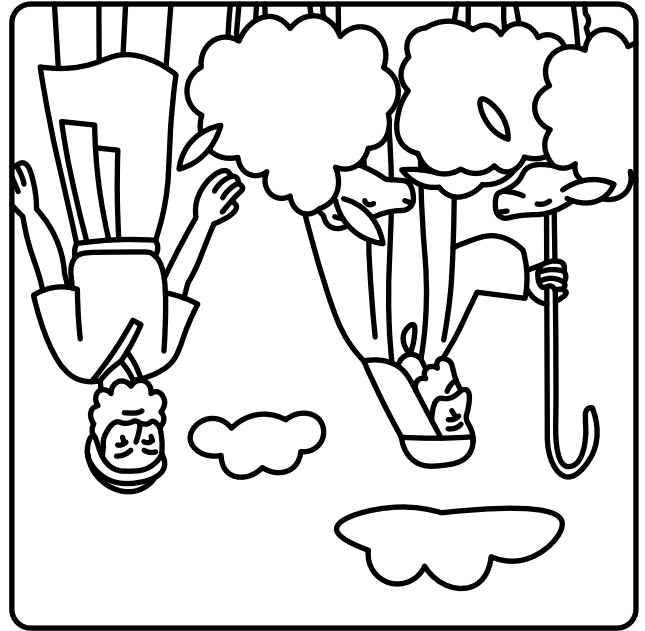
GO OUT & FIND PASTURE.



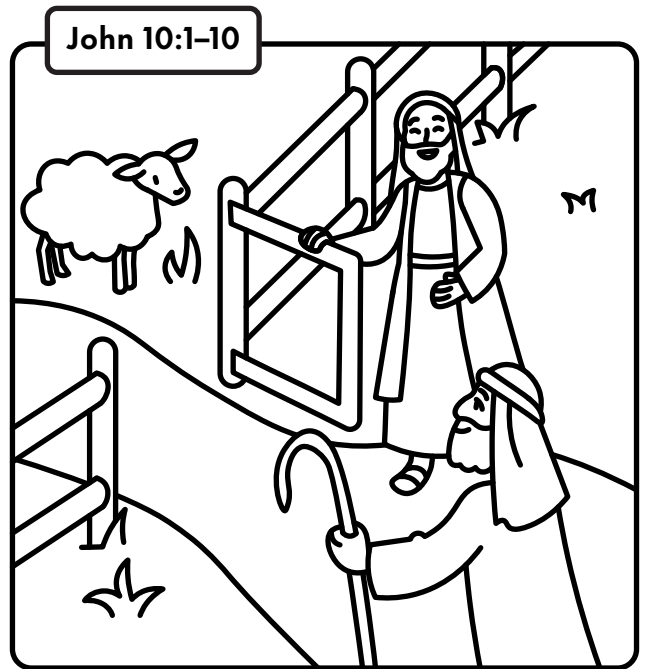
3. The people didn't understand what Jesus was saying, so he explained it another way. He said, "I am the gate for the sheep. Those who came before me were thieves; the sheep didn't listen to them."



4. "Following me is like being like the shepherd. Whoever enters by me, the gate, will be safe and find pasture. The thief only comes to destroy lives, but I came so people can have full lives."



2. He said, "The shepherd calls his sheep by name and leads them out, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger because they don't know a stranger's voice."



1. Jesus told the people a story about leaders and followers. "Anyone who sneaks into the sheep pen instead of using the gate is a thief. The shepherd uses the gate, and the gatekeeper opens the gate for him."