



SMALL GROUP WEEKLY
DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL



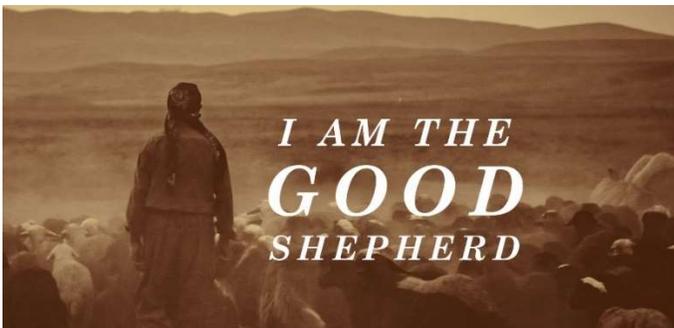
Week 4
25 April - 1 May 2021

Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation
Weekly worship song, reflection and small group questions

THIS WEEK AND UPCOMING WEEKS:

Lectionary year B – Easter to Pentecost – 4 April to 29 May

- Week 4: Sunday 25 April - The good shepherd
- Week 5: Sunday 2 May - The vine and the branches
- Week 6: Sunday 9 May – Love each other
- May 13 – ASCENSION DAY
- Week 7: Sunday 16 May – Jesus prays for His disciples.
- Week 8: Sunday May 23 – PENTECOST – The work of the Holy Spirit
- Week 9: Sunday 30 May - Trinity Sunday – Jesus teaches Nicodemus



WEEK 4: 25 APRIL
The good shepherd

DAY	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
Fourth Sunday of Easter	*Acts 4:5-12	Psalms 23	1 John 3:16-24	John 10:11-18



John 10:11-18 New International Version – UK

¹¹ 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.'

WORSHIP

The Great Shepherd. (Dr. Tumi)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JUboOQgXfkY

FOR REFLECTION:

DAILY DEVOTIONS, REFLECTIONS AND SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS WRITTEN BY KHANYISO NJWABULE

As I read through this passage, I start reflecting on the many times I have been disappointed by those in leadership positions that I expected to protect and guide me into a successful life path only to find out they had ulterior motives to serve themselves. I am reminded of St. Paul's statement that says "have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3b) and since then I have learned to put all my confidence on the good shepherd that is Jesus Christ our Lord who never disappoints us and has willingly laid down his precious life (John 10:17) for us thus showing his great love to all so that we can have an abundant and fulfilling life that lacks nothing.



The passage also reminds us not claim exclusive rights to our access to the good shepherd (John 10:16) by deciding who is in or out of the sheepfold since that is not our responsibility but the Lord's and thus we are warned against an attitude of 'holier than thou' towards others we deem not to be faithful believers. We need to rather focus on abiding on the good shepherd and his words so that he may abide in us and be affirmed in our identity in Christ so that we may confidently walk in our purpose of what God has called us for in this life. It is truly an honour and privilege to be redeemed back to the Father through the good shepherd who ensures that the Father's goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives (Psalm 23:6a).

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever put your all confidence on a person that was leading you and they failed you? Share at least one scenario where this occurred.
2. What feeling is invoked within you when reading the passage that states that Jesus willingly laid down his own life so that you may live a fulfilling life?
3. How well do you know yourself? Can you describe key characteristics that describe you?
4. If someone were to tell you that Jesus knows you more than you know yourself and that the more, you get to know Jesus the more you will get to know your true self. What is your view on this statement?



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR
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Sunday 25th April

Pray daily: Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Scripture Reading: [John 10:11-18](#) and or Psalm 23

Allow children/teens to read out loud for the family.

Activity/Family Moment:

Make sure everyone is comfortable. Ask a family member to read the Psalm 23, and then look at the labyrinth. A labyrinth is not a maze, but a one-way path in and back out again. Lots people use labyrinths when they pray, there a big one's which

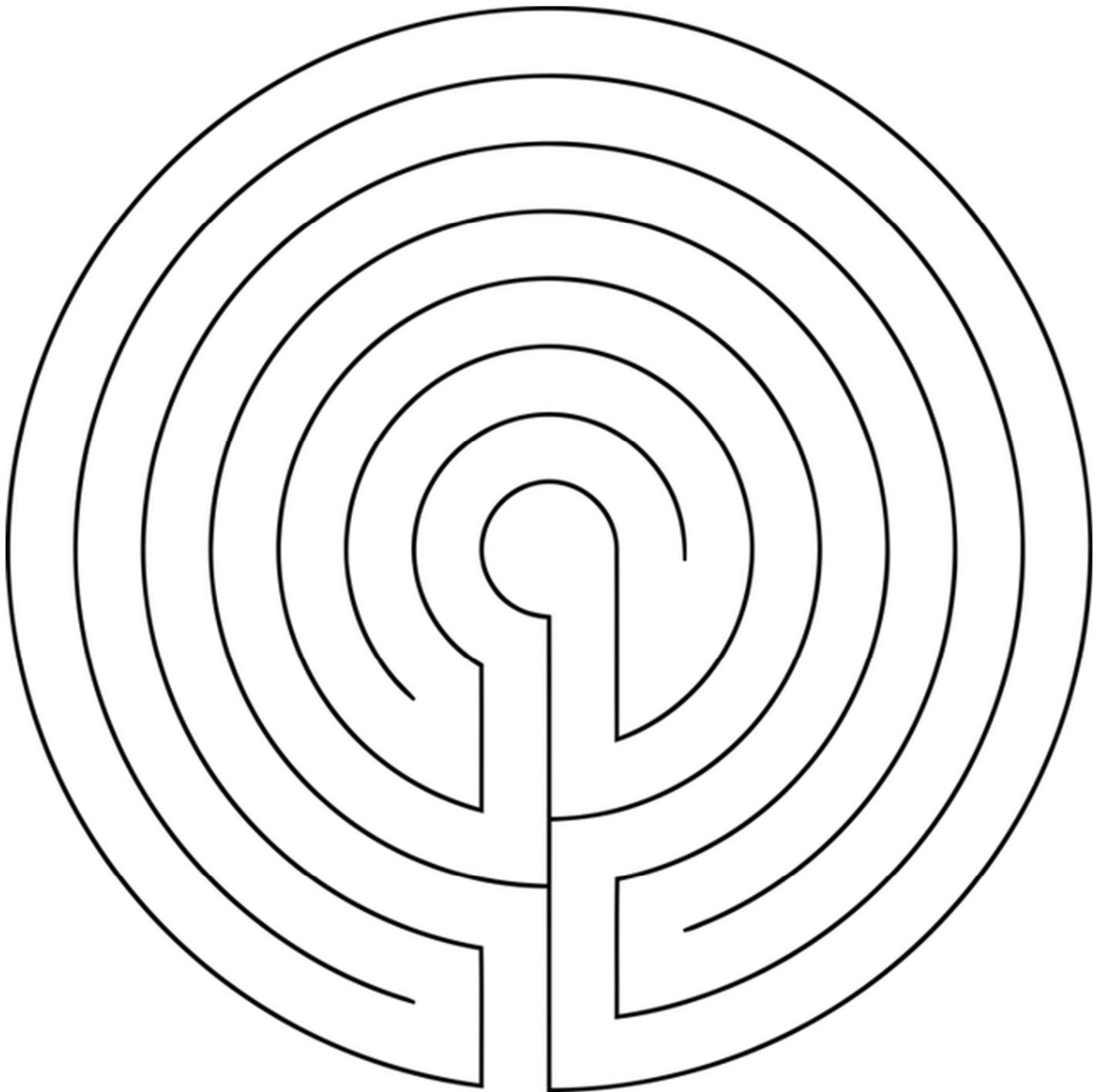
you walk, and little ones where you trace your finger (see below). Ask them to think about the stress in their lives, and how Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will be with them no matter what. Give kids time to relax quietly and trace the labyrinth with their fingers.

While tracing think about anything that is bothering you, making you stressed or sad. When you get to the center stop and give it all to God. While tracing back think about all the good things and how God is with you and loves you.

Start at the opening at the bottom and follow the open white space.

After a few minutes, debrief the activity: How might a labyrinth help you with stress? (Gives you a way to calm down and breathe quietly). With prayer? (focus, quiet) How does it feel to do something so quietly? (weird, calm, the same, cool). How can the moving through a labyrinth be like praying? (taking time to focus and listen).

Challenge: try the labyrinth again during the week, maybe while you read through your daily scriptures.



START YOUR DAY WITH
Devotionals Daily

- **Monday, April 26, 2021:** [Psalm 95](#); [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#); [1 Peter 5:1-5](#)
Memory Verse: "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7b)
Prayer: Father, thank you for the re-assurance that as my good shepherd you look at and know my heart. Thus, when I surrender my sinful heart fully to you, I can be assured that you will guide my heart to righteousness and holiness. In Jesus name, Amen.
- **Tuesday, April 27, 2021:** [Psalm 95](#); [1 Chronicles 11:1-9](#); [Revelation 7:13-17](#)
Memory Verse: "He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17b)
Prayer: Father, in these dark and unpredictable times that we live in, may you continue to lead us to springs of living water that refresh our souls in the midst of the desert that we find ourselves in. In Jesus name, Amen.
- **Wednesday, April 28, 2021:** [Psalm 95](#); [Micah 7:8-20](#); [Mark 14:26-31](#)
Memory Verse: "As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them my wonders." (Micah 7:15)
Prayer: Father, as we remain in lockdown from the COVID-19 pandemic and in bondage of this virus like the Israelites were in Egypt under Pharaoh, may you show us your great wonders to get us out of the bondage of this pandemic for your name to be glorified by every breath on this earth. In Jesus name, Amen.
- **Thursday, April 29, 2021:** [Psalm 22:25-31](#); [Amos 8:1-7](#); [Acts 8:1b-8](#)
Memory Verse: "For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations." (Psalm 22:28)
Prayer: Father, we acknowledge your power and authority over all the nations of the world. We therefore submit ourselves under your righteous rule as your children so that we may experience peace, joy and freedom on this earth. In Jesus name, Amen.
- **Friday, April 30, 2021:** [Psalm 22:25-31](#); [Amos 8:11-13](#); [Acts 8:9-25](#)
Memory Verse: "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart." (Acts 8:22)
Prayer: Father, may you cleanse my wicked thoughts as I hold them captive and make them obedient to my good shepherd Jesus Christ so that I may be equipped to do the good works that you have purposed for me. In Jesus name, Amen.
- **Saturday, May 1, 2021:** [Psalm 22:25-31](#); [Amos 9:7-15](#); [Mark 4:30-32](#)
Memory Verse: "I will bring my people Israel back from exile." (Amos 9:14)
Prayer: Father, as we continue to live in the pandemic lockdown exile of sickness, death and job losses may you bring us back to a life that is better than before by your power and grace for we know that you love us more than we can comprehend. In Jesus name, Amen.