

National Junior High Sunday 2018
“Abundant life in Jesus,” based on John 10:10 (NRSV)

Scripture Jam
by Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred

A: Stop me if you’ve heard this one before.

B: Oh boy, here comes Jesus with another one of his riddles.

A: How do you tell the difference between a shepherd and a thief?

C: Easy, a shepherd carries a staff and wears a long flowing robe.

B: But what if it’s a thief *dressed up* like a shepherd? After all, we’re talking about a sheep thief.

C: The lamb-burglar.

A: Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in another way...

B: Is a thief?

A: Bingo.

C: Back-up. What’s a sheepfold?

A: A pen.

B: Where shepherds kept their sheep at night for safekeeping.

C: Hey, what do you call a lamb doing origami?

B: What?

C: A sheepfold!

A: (*Sighing*) If you enter by climbing in the side...

B: You're a thief!

A: But the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd.

B: Got it.

C: Wait. Back to the sheepfold.

A: What now?

C: If multiple shepherds put their flocks in the same pen at night, how did they sort out all of those sheep the next morning?

B: Maybe they put numbers on them?

C: But we all know what happens when you try to count sheep. It puts you right to sleep!

A: The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd, and the sheep hear his voice.

B: The sheep spend all day, every day with the shepherd. They know his voice by heart.

A: He calls his own sheep by their names and leads them out.

C: Aw that's kind of sweet. The sheep all know their names?

A: When the shepherd has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him.

B: Because they know his voice.

C: Because he calls their cute little sheep names.

B: And they won't follow a stranger?

A: No, they'll run from him because they don't recognize the voice.

C: What a great lesson in shepherding! Thanks!

A: You don't get it, do you?

B: Get what?

A: The metaphor! The deeper message.

C: What could be deeper than learning that sheep know their own names?

A: Let me put it this way.

B: Great, I smell another metaphor.

A: I am the gate for the sheep.

B: Not the shepherd?

A: Well, yes. But in this metaphor, I'm the gate.

C: Posts and splinters and all?

A: I am the gate. Those who came before,

C: Climbing over the side?

B: Thieves. Bandits.

A: But the sheep did not listen to them.

B: Because the sheep didn't recognize their voices.

C: Because the thieves didn't know the sheep's names.

A: Right. And me?

B and C: You're the gate.

A: Yes! Whoever enters by me

B: The gate.

A: Whoever enters by the gate

C: Which is you.

A: Whoever enters by me, the gate, will be saved.

B: What does it mean to be saved?

A: To come in, and to go out, and to find pasture.

C: That sounds pretty great, if you're a sheep.

B: It's pretty great no matter who you are.

C: Grazing on sweet, delicious grass...

B: Frolicking in fields...

A: Life, in abundance.

B and C: What could be better?

A: Nothing. Unlike the thief.

B: Who climbs over the side.

C: To steal

A: And kill

A and B and C: And destroy.

A: I come

B: As the gate

A: To offer life.

B and C: Abundant life.