

Suggested All Age Worship plan Vocations Sunday 2025

Please feel free to take up or adapt this material as it best fits your context.

(As folk come into church hand them a slip of paper with 'ways people can help'
– see Appendix A)

Theme: Jesus is counting on you

Greeting and welcome:

Hymn

Story Intro: What are you good at? (take up some suggestions)

What was Dorcas good at?

First Reading: Acts 9: 36-43

A shepherd has to be **good at counting**. He needs to know he has got all his sheep so he can keep them safe. Have a go at Cumbrian Sheep Counting (depending on where you are this may be very familiar or quite unknown. Beware that there are different dialects across the county but do give it a go!)

You might want to get 10 children to lift up the words and put these 'numbers' into order.
Correct order: Yan, Tyan, Tethera, Methera, Pimp, Sethera, Lethera, Hovera, Dovera, Dick,

(please note the Appendix C is in the best order to print – not 1-10)

Keeping sheep in Jesus' time and place was different – can you spot the difference in this reading?

Second Reading: John 10: 22-30

Talk. (Suggestion Appendix B)

Possibly interview a pre-arranged member of the congregation about their calling at the point.

An Affirmation of Faith:

Let us declare our faith in God

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn

Intercessions

Collect

The Lord's Prayer

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures

And leads me beside still waters.

He revives my soul

And guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

Through I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil;

For you are with me;

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me

In the presence of those who trouble me;

You have anointed my head with oil,

And my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Hymn

Blessing

(Liturgy from 'Common Worship' and if printed will need to be acknowledged as such)

Alternatively please also see the suggested liturgies for Vocation Sunday on the Church of England website under 'Vocation Sunday'.

Appendix A

Make a cup of tea
Brush the floor
Help with official forms
Collect medication
Put out the bins for neighbours
Share unused toys
Make a meal and take it round
Create a community garden
Offer lifts to medical appointments
Invite somebody you don't know well for a dog walk
Make a card and take it round
Collect unused clothes for charity
Pray for people
Repurpose unused household items
Provide support to neighbours on social media
Help with gardening

Appendix B

Did you notice how Jesus talked about 'calling his sheep' and about how they knew his voice?

How is that different from keeping sheep in Cumbria? (we gather the whole flock and use dogs!)

In Jesus time and place the shepherds would, and still do today, gather all the different shepherds sheep together in a fold over night to keep them safe from bears and wolves.

Each morning each shepherd would go down to the fold and call each of his sheep by name. They would follow him away from the other shepherds and sheep to find fresh pasture.

How is this different from how shepherds look after their sheep in Cumbria? (they have stone walls to keep them in fields or sheep are hefted. They don't come when they are called!)

In Jesus' time lots of shepherds would be doing this at roughly the same point in the morning so it was important for the sheep to know the shepherd's voice and only follow him.

What would happen if they followed the wrong shepherd? (If they followed one of the other shepherds the other sheep might not like it and they might get driven out and lost.)

They called them out of the pen and then they counted them (recap Cumbrian counting or use ordinary counting so the children can participate)

In our story Jesus is using the fact that the sheep know the shepherd's voice to make an important point.

Jesus tells the Jewish authorities that his followers, his sheep, know his voice and follow him.

They will not follow other shepherds because **they don't know their voice and they don't trust them.**

Jesus' followers believe and trust in Jesus.

That is one of the questions we are asked when we come to baptism 'Do you believe and trust in Jesus', and we, or our parents on our behalf, say, 'I believe and trust in Him.'

Shepherds in Jesus time needed their sheep to trust them. To believe that when he leads them away from the familiar pen that he is leading them to a new adventure that will be really good. That there will be fulfilling times, good food there.

Today Jesus needs to know that he can count on his followers to respond to his call, trust Him and follow him.

Now Dorcas was an example of a lady who really followed Jesus' lead.

Can you remember what she did?

'She was devoted to good works and acts of charity'.

In the story Peter is told she had a gift for meeting people's needs by making clothes.

Now in Jesus' day it wasn't possible to go on line and order a new pair of trousers or a dress. Clothes were made and it seems Dorcas used the talent and the resources God had given her and shared them with other people who needed them.

I wonder if you think of being able to make clothes as a special gift, as a vocation?

Have you ever tried to do it?

I wonder if you know somebody who was really, really good at making clothes and knitting jumpers.

A special gift is often called a 'vocation'. It is where the gifts of a person meet the needs of the world. It may be another person or group of people.

Today is called 'Vocation Sunday'. It is the Sunday when we celebrate that God gives his people, you and me, His church; all the gifts we need to help those around us.

When you came in you were given a piece of paper.

Have a look at it.

In what way might this activity be a gift from God to the world?

Is it something that you, or someone you know, could do?

Have a chat with your neighbour. (pause)

Sometimes people think of vocation as just being only for people like Vicars, Readers and Church Wardens. However vocation is made up of little gifts God gives to his people to serve others, to minister – which is what that word ‘minister’ means.

But, and this is a BIG BUT...it takes you and me to hear Jesus’ voice and to respond.

It is no use if the shepherd Jesus stands at the sheep fold gate and calls and calls and His followers, His sheep, do not follow him.

Our theme today is, ‘Jesus is counting on you.’

Are you listening for his voice?

How does he want you to use your gifts and talents?

Do you trust him – even if the path he is leading you is scary and out of your comfort zone?

‘My sheep hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.’

Have courage, hear him, trust him and it will be the start of a very special adventure.

Shepherds in Jesus time just as today in Cumbria count their sheep.

(recap Cumbrian counting if it went well)

Can Jesus count on me, on you?

Appendix C