



# Sunday Celebrations

Fourth Sunday of Easter | **May 3, 2020**

Welcome to Sunday Celebrations, a free resource from RCL Benziger to help you celebrate Sunday with your family, in your home.

Each Sunday's celebration focuses on the Gospel of the day, and encourages family members of all ages to join in singing, praying, sharing, and celebrating. Suggested songs (search the internet for recorded versions) and craft activities help enliven and extend the celebrations.

Here are three simple ideas to help you get started:

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**1** Choose the place where you will gather for your Sunday celebration. It may be around your living room coffee table, around your kitchen or dining room table, outdoors at your picnic table, or any place that works for your family!

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**2** Decorate your chosen place with symbols of faith. These might include a placemat, napkin, or cloth in the color of the liturgical season; a Bible; a candle; a cross or crucifix; and a plant or flowers. Other suggestions will be offered on each Sunday Celebrations outline.

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**3** Each Sunday Celebrations outline is based on the flow of a Liturgy of the Word with children. Feel free to adapt the outline to best suit the ages and attention spans of your family members. It is most important simply to set aside time to pray and reflect on God's Word.

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RCL Benziger prays that by taking time for Sunday Celebrations, families of all ages will be encouraged and strengthened by God's Word. Our prayers are with you as you lead your family in Sunday Celebrations and the Good News of Jesus Christ.





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## Gospel Reading

John 10:1-10

(Reading is available at [usccb.org/bible/readings](https://usccb.org/bible/readings).)

## Symbol (optional)

Bowl of water; vase of spring flowers or an Easter lily; if available, stuffed sheep and/or image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd

## Get Ready

*Before today's celebration, create the illusion of a narrow gate/pathway by using two chairs, two end tables, painter's tape, or whatever you have on hand to mark off a narrow space.*

*Invite family members to name those who are their leaders at church, at school, at work, on a team, and at home, as well as some of the most important things those leaders have said to them.*

*Do not forget to invite family members to again bring noisemakers with them. It is still the joyous Easter season!*

## Begin

- Light a candle and make a joyful noise with your noisemakers as you sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"; "I Heard the Lord Call My Name;" or "Lead Me, Guide Me."
- Make the Sign of the Cross together and pray:  
**Jesus, Loving Shepherd, help us to hear your voice and follow you today and always. Amen.**

## Listen and Reflect

- Again, use your noisemakers as you sing "Alleluia!"
- Before proclaiming the Gospel, invite family members to listen for what Jesus has to say about shepherds and sheep.
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then ask family members to recall what Jesus said. (*Answers will vary, but may include: the sheep hear the shepherd's voice; the sheep follow him; the sheep will not follow a stranger; Jesus is the gate; Jesus came to give us life.*)
- Focus on sheep hearing the shepherd's voice, and invite family members to name how they hear Jesus, the Good Shepherd's voice. (*Responses may include: through the Bible, in my heart, in prayer, through my mom and dad, through grandma and grandpa, and so forth.*)



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- Connect back to the leaders whom family members mentioned at the beginning of today's celebration. Ask how those leaders are like shepherds too. (*We know their voices; we follow them; they give us life.*)

## Connect

- In today's Gospel, Jesus talks about entering through the gate. Point out the narrow gate and pathway you have created. Explain that disciples of Jesus follow only his voice and walk only in his way. Invite a member to role-play being Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who calls his disciples to follow him. Ask that person to stand on the far side of the narrow gate and pathway.
- Have another family member role-play listening to Jesus. Tell that person that a sibling or friend has just broken his or her favorite toy. Invite the entire family to name ways the disciple could respond (*Break that person's favorite toy, yell and scream, forgive that person, and so forth*). Ask the disciple, "What is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, asking you to do? (*Forgive that person.*)" Say, "You have listened to the Shepherd's voice. Enter through the narrow gate."
- Repeat the role-play using different real-life scenarios, such as: your favorite TV show is just starting, but your brother or sister needs help with homework; you want to text your friend, but you have not done your chores yet; your mom is really tired tonight and the kitchen sink is full of dirty dishes; you have been saving up for a new skateboard but the church needs food and money donations for the food pantry; and so forth.
- Encourage your family to keep listening for the voice of the Good Shepherd in the coming week.

## Conclude

- Lead your family in praying for the world, the Church, those in need, the sick and those who have died, and for your prayer intentions. Respond, "Loving Shepherd, hear our prayer," leading your family in raising hands, palms up, to Jesus.
- Pray together the Lord's Prayer.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and conclude by singing the song you sang at the beginning of this celebration.





# Sunday Celebrations

Celebrating Sunday Throughout the Week | **May 3, 2020**

This week's invitation is to continue to listen to and follow the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Here is a suggestion:

- Display the sheep you created for today's celebration (see last week's session). Place the cotton balls or paper circles and glue or glue sticks near the sheep. Invite family members to glue one cotton ball or paper circle onto the sheep each time they listen to and follow the Good Shepherd's voice in the coming week. Remind them that this might include listening to the Good Shepherd's voice in prayer, by reading the Bible, by listening to the leaders in their lives, by doing things for others, and by making right choices. The family challenge is to cover the sheep by the end of the week.
- At the end of the week, gather the family around the sheep. Celebrate the cotton balls and paper circles! Invite family members to share how they listened to the Good Shepherd's voice.
- If you have supplies on hand, bake a lamb cake and enjoy this fun Easter-time dessert.

## Prepare to Celebrate *Next Sunday*

In preparation for next week's session, invite family members to draw pictures, create symbols, choose songs, or write stories or poems about what they think Heaven will be like. Encourage them to bring their creations to next week's celebration.

