

## **Esther and Emmett talk about sheep and shepherds:**

Emmett: Baah! (looks around). Hi Esther!  
Baah!

Esther: What are you doing?

Emmett: I'm studying the Bible.

Esther: Really?

Emmett: Yep! Baaah! Baaah! Where are you?

Esther: Are you pretending to be a sheep?

Emmett: Yes I am...but I don't know how to say, "Where are you?" in sheep!

Esther: For whom are you looking?

Emmett: I am looking for...my shepherd!

Esther: Your shepherd?

Emmett: Yes! I am a sheep without a shepherd! Say, Esther, do you want to be a sheep without a shepherd? All you have to do is say 'Baaah', then look around and say. "Where are you?"

Esther: No thanks. I think I get the idea. This is about the story of Jesus getting out of a boat and seeing a crowd of people waiting for him.

Emmett: That's the one! A whole bunch of people ran around the shore of the lake so they could meet Jesus and his disciples when they got to the other side of the lake!

Esther: And when Jesus saw them, the Bible says that he had compassion for them. He cared about them...

Emmett: Because...they were like sheep without a shepherd! That's what the story says. Baaaah!

Esther: You don't think the people actually said 'Baaah', do you?

Emmett: No...of course not...they were just sheep without a shepherd...yep, sheep without a shepherd...just lonely sheep...

Esther: Hmmm...I wonder what it means to be 'sheep without a shepherd'!

Emmett: You know...I wonder about that too...soooo...what do you think it means?

Esther: I'm glad you asked! Shepherds were people who cared about sheep. Shepherds led sheep to green pastures where the sheep could graze, could eat. Shepherds carried oil and ointments that were like medicine they could put on a cut, so if a sheep got injured they could put some on and ease the sting of the injury and help the sheep to heal.

Emmett: Wow! Shepherds were kind of like parents. They wanted to keep the sheep safe and put a Band-aid on any owe-ees!

Esther: Yes. But people also used the image of a 'shepherd' to refer to their king. The king was a shepherd who cared for the people.

Emmett: Like a shepherd cared for sheep!

Esther: Right! So when the story says that people were like sheep without a shepherd...

Emmett: It meant...they didn't have anyone who cared about them...and they didn't have a king who cared about them!

Esther: Maybe. Many of the people who came to see Jesus may have been poor and life must have been tough. They may have wondered if even God cared about them anymore.

Emmett: But God always cares. God is like a good shepherd! God would want people to have enough to eat, and to be safe, and to have all their owe-ees looked after.

Esther: Right. When the story says that Jesus had compassion for the people, it means that he wanted all those things for the people.

Emmett: After all, a good shepherd would never want the sheep to have a 'baaaaad' life.

Esther: O Emmett! I thought you might say that.

Emmett: So the story tells us that God loves all of us.

Esther: Yes. The story tells us that Jesus loved people and wanted them to always know that God loved them.

Emmett: That's a good story!

Esther: But it tells us something else, also!

Emmett: Really! Something else about God and sheep?

Esther: Something else about God and sheep and Jesus and us. It tells us that if we are friends of Jesus we should also care about people and let them know that God cares about them.

Emmett: Neat! So I can practice being both a sheep and a shepherd.

Esther: ...a good shepherd. Just like Jesus!

Emmett: I'll say 'Amen' to that!

Esther: Amen!