A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

The Shepherd King

Based on Revelation 7:17 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 5 and up

PERFORMANCE TIME
6–8 minutes

CAST SIZE
7 puppets

PROPS REQUIRED
None required — sheep can be pictures on sticks

MAIN THEME
The King on the throne is also the Shepherd who knows His sheep by name.

Carrie Elderberry's Gospel Puppets · gospelpuppets.org
© 2013 · Free for ministry use
Illustrations © Sweet Publishing
v.1.6 · November 2026

To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–9.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

CHILD 2 can recite a Bible verse perfectly but doesn't understand a word of it. CHILD 1 brings out some real SHEEP to help, and a SHEPHERD arrives to explain what shepherding actually looks like—protecting, guiding, finding what's lost—before connecting it to Jesus as the unusual King who wears a crown of thorns instead of gold.

Spiritual Concept

Memorizing Scripture is valuable, but understanding it is what makes it come alive. Once CHILD 2 sees what a real shepherd does —protect, guide, and go looking for lost sheep—the verse about Jesus as Shepherd and King stops being abstract and starts making sense.

Age Suitability

Suitable for all ages.

Performance Time

6–8 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

CHILD 1 — A modern child and an admirer of memorization.

CHILD 2 — Also modern; good at memorizing Scripture but doesn't understand it, which frustrates her.

SHEEP — At least two, more if you want; get into mischief once they arrive onstage.

SHEPHERD — An adult man in work clothes, with a staff if possible; explains what shepherding really involves.

LION — Optional; enters briefly to roar and be shooed off by the SHEPHERD.

WOLF — Optional; enters briefly to growl and be shooed off by the SHEPHERD.

BEAR — Optional; enters briefly to snarl and be shooed off by the SHEPHERD.

Prop Options

- The SHEEP don't need to be actual puppets—any kind of toy sheep works fine, or pictures affixed to sticks. The same goes for the LION, WOLF, and BEAR.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

CHILD 2's frustration at the top of the play is genuine, not comic—she's proud of memorizing well but embarrassed that it doesn't mean anything to her yet. Her excitement at the end, reciting the verse “with lots of expression,” should land as a real breakthrough.

The SHEEP shift from cute and sweet to mischievous (chewing, climbing, fighting) once they arrive—that shift is what sets up the SHEPHERD's entrance and explanation.

Staging

The LION, WOLF, and BEAR each get a brief “enter, threaten, get shooed off” beat—these are optional and can be cut if puppets aren't available, per the author's note.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity or emphasis.

Ellipsis (…) = the author's pacing notation.

THE SHEPHERD KING

Based on Revelation 7:17 · Written by Carrie Elderberry

(Enter CHILD 2 and CHILD 1.)

CHILD 1: Wow, you sure are good at memorizing!

CHILD 2: *(sadly)* Thanks.

CHILD 1: Why are you sad? You said your Bible verse perfectly today!

CHILD 2: *(sadly)* Well, yes…I am very good at memorizing.

CHILD 1: You sure are! You are the best!

CHILD 2: Thank you. But what good does it do?

CHILD 1: You even got a "SUPER" sticker on your chart today!

CHILD 2: Yes. I have more stickers than anyone else right now, for Bible memorizing. But—

CHILD 1: So what are you so sad about?

CHILD 2: Well, those verses…they might as well be in another language.

CHILD 1: Really?

CHILD 2: I do not understand them! At all.

CHILD 1: Oh!

CHILD 2: Like today's verse. I do not understand it. At. All.

CHILD 1: But you——you said it so perfectly!

CHILD 2: *(flat, no expression)* I know. Listen, I will recite it to you again. Revelation 7:17. "For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

CHILD 1: You are amazing!

CHILD 2: But I don't understand it! It makes no sense!

CHILD 1: But…it's just…it's the Bible!

CHILD 2: *(bitterly)* How can a LAMB be on a throne?

CHILD 1: What? Oh! I'm not sure…

CHILD 2: And what is a shepherd, really? I have no idea! At all!

CHILD 1: Something about sheep…

CHILD 2: And have you ever even SEEN a real sheep?

CHILD 1: Not up close.

CHILD 2: I haven't either. Just pictures.

CHILD 1: That does make it harder. Wait! I have an idea!

CHILD 2: Oh, no. You and your ideas!

CHILD 1: No, this will be great! This is a puppet show! Let's add some sheep!

(CHILD 1 looks backstage.)

CHILD 1: Are there any sheep back there? Here, lamby, lamby, lamby!

(Enter SHEEP.)

CHILD 2: Oh look! Oh, aren't they sweet?

CHILD 1: I do know one thing about your Bible verse. It is talking about Jesus. He is called the Lamb of God because He took away our sins.

(SHEEP start to spread out.)

CHILD 2: Right. I get that part. In the olden days, lambs were sacrificed because of sins.

CHILD 1: That was horrible.

CHILD 2: True, but sin is a horrible thing.

CHILD 1: That is why, when Jesus died on the cross it was called a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. And no more animals had to die. Jesus was so perfect.

CHILD 2: Lambs sure are cute. I never really thought about them getting killed for our sins before…that's horrible.

CHILD 1: Yes. And Jesus was a very special Lamb. When He was sacrificed, He broke the power of sin over all of us.

(SHEEP start getting into mischief.)

CHILD 2: Hey, they are starting to chew on things!

(SHEEP start climbing into dangerous places.)

CHILD 1: Look out! You better catch that one before it falls!

(SHEEP start fighting, butting heads.)

CHILD 2: They may be cute, but they sure are trouble! We are going to need some help!

(CHILD 1 looks backstage.)

CHILD 1: Is there a shepherd back there? Help! Help!

(Enter SHEPHERD.)

SHEPHERD: All right, you silly little lambs. Settle down.

(SHEEP instantly quiet down and focus on the SHEPHERD.)

CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2: Wow. How did you DO that?

SHEPHERD: They know my voice. They follow me.

CHILD 2: Please, tell us why the Bible says, that Jesus is both a Shepherd and a King at the same time!

SHEPHERD: Do you know what a shepherd does?

CHILD 1: Not really.

SHEPHERD: My sheep are very very foolish.

CHILD 2: We have seen that!

SHEPHERD: So, I keep them safe.

CHILD 1: From what?

SHEPHERD: From lions…

(If you have a lion, have it enter and roar.)

SHEPHERD: Shoo!

(Exit LION.)

SHEPHERD: And wolves…

(If you have a wolf, have it enter and growl.)

SHEPHERD: Go on, beat it!

(Exit WOLF.)

SHEPHERD: And bears!

(If you have a bear, have it enter and snarl.)

SHEPHERD: Scram!

(Exit BEAR.)

CHILD 1: Wow! You are brave!

CHILD 2: Sheep also get lost, don't they?

SHEPHERD: Yes. They wander away from me, sometimes. I always go and find them.

CHILD 1: OK, but how can a shepherd also be a king?

SHEPHERD: You must be thinking about the Lord Jesus.

CHILD 2: Yes! How did you know?

SHEPHERD: Jesus is a very unusual King.

CHILD 1: We know He is the Son of God…

CHILD 2: We know that He died for us…

SHEPHERD: Yes. And now He is King over all the earth.

CHILD 1: Even higher than a President?

SHEPHERD: Jesus did not come to be like a President. Or even like a king of the olden days.

CHILD 1: No crown?

SHEPHERD: Only one that was made of thorns.

CHILD 2: And His throne?

SHEPHERD: He is on His throne in heaven now.

CHILD 1: No soldiers?

SHEPHERD: No. He came to care for His people, just like a shepherd cares for his sheep.

(SHEEP baa and cuddle up and frolic.)

CHILD 2: Oh! Oh! Oh! All of a sudden, I understand my memory verse!

CHILD 1: Can you say it one more time?

CHILD 2: *(this time with lots of expression)* Sure! Revelation 7:17! For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd! He will lead them to springs of life-giving water! And God will wipe every tear from their eyes! It is so wonderful!

SHEPHERD: Do you understand how God will wipe away every tear, now?

CHILD 2: Yes! Yes! With my good Shepherd leading me, I will always be safe and obedient, even when life is hardest!

CHILD 1: And even now, we can have hope.

SHEPHERD: Yes. He takes care of the scary and troublesome things in our lives.

(LION, WOLF, and BEAR enter and roar.)

LION, WOLF, BEAR: And when the King returns, there will be no more death, and ALL will be at peace!

ALL: You can find out more about Jesus, the Shepherd King, in the Bible. Start with Psalm 23!

CHILD 1: And that is all for today. Goodbye!

ALL: Goodbye!

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Why was CHILD 2 sad even though she'd memorized her verse perfectly?
2. What does a real shepherd actually do for his sheep?
3. Why is it strange to picture a “Lamb” sitting on a throne? What does that tell us about Jesus?
4. What kind of King is Jesus, compared to other kings?
5. Has there ever been a Bible verse you knew by heart but didn't really understand? What helped it click?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Revelation 7:17 — the Lamb on the throne will be His people's Shepherd, leading them to springs of life-giving water and wiping every tear from their eyes.

Additional Scripture:

- Psalm 23 — “The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.” (Full psalm; reference only.)

Song Suggestions

- “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” — Integrity Kids — https://open.spotify.com/track/5Hw8GY6YSqc2FFLPnX7Ib9
- “Micah 6:8” — The Maranatha! Singers — https://open.spotify.com/track/4bPrQ6nJbMvHxrRqnhw4Dp
- “What Does the Lord Require of You” — Neill A. Burgess & Howard J. Prior — https://www.threeleggedmusic.com/songhtml/what_does_the_lord_require_of_you.html · © 2000 Three Legged Music Limited · CCLI Song No. 3154072 · Used by permission

Ministry Context

This play works well for a series on who Jesus is, or on Scripture memory—it makes a nice pair with a Psalm 23 study, since the Shepherd imagery carries straight through. It's also a good fit for a class or program that emphasizes verse memorization, since it directly addresses memorizing without understanding.