Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He knows us (His sheep) and we know Him. He loves us, and gave His life for us. We are safe in His hands.

1. Faces in a Crowd
   First, gather some pictures of strangers from magazines or newspapers (preferably not pictures of celebrities). Have your children tell you about these people. Are they moms or dads? What do they do for a living? What do they like to do for fun? Do they enjoy reading or gardening or playing sports?
   After you've done this, pull out (gather ahead of time) some family photos or photo albums. Spend some time looking through these photos/albums together, encouraging your children to pick out Mom, Dad, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins -- any family members. Talk about these people together. Ask your children questions like:
   What does Mom or Dad like to eat? What does Grandma do for fun? What does Mom or Dad (or an aunt or uncle) do for work?
   Then point out the differences between these two conversations...
   When I asked you questions about the people in the magazine (or newspaper) pictures, could you give me the right answers? (No). Why not? (Because we don't know those people; they're strangers to us). When I asked you questions about your family members, could you give me the right answers? (Yes, because we know our family members).
   Knowing makes all the difference. In today's story, we're going to read about God's role as the Good Shepherd. You will hear how He knows us (His sheep) and we know Him. To be known by Jesus and to know Jesus is the most wonderful thing in all the world!

2. Snatch it if You Can
   Set out some items on a table, beginning with something very small (like a coin or a button), and ending with something large (like a large-ish stuffed animal), each item getting progressively larger. For example, you could set out (in this
order) a coin, a tube of chapstick, a small candle, a small cup, a book, a large cup, a ruler, a cereal box, and a large-ish stuffed animal.

Gather your family and choose the tallest person to stand in the center of the room, near these items. One at a time, in order from smallest to largest, have your tall person pick up and hold each item high above his/her head. Encourage your children to stretch and jump to try and snatch the item out of tall person’s hand. Begin with children trying one at a time. Then, move to everyone together. The rule is...your children may not touch tall person in the process.

Once everyone has had a turn to attempt to snatch the each item from tall person's hand, ask:

**Are you worn out yet?**

That was a lot of fun, but there *is* a point. You all tried very hard to snatch each item out of (fill in tall person here) *hand*. You tried, but were you successful? Were you able to grab the coin or the chapstick or the cup out of his/her *hand*? (hopefully none of your children were able to, so they will be able to answer NO. If you have older kids who were able to, these next words will still fit). If your children *were* able to snatch an item or two, say this:

You may have been able to snatch something out of (so-and-so’s) *hand*. BUT, it’s quite different with the Lord. In the story we’re about to read, Jesus tells us that we are *safe* in His *hand*. We can *never* be snatched out of our Lord’s *hand*! That is good news.

If your children were *not* able to snatch any items, say this:

That was fun, but that was hard. No matter how hard you tried, no matter how high you jumped, you were unable to snatch something out of (so-and-so’s) *hand*. That’s how it is with the Lord. In the story we’re about to read, Jesus tells us that we are *safe* in His *hand*. We can *never* be snatched out of our Lord’s *hand*! That is good news.