



## Wednesday Prayer

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Safe Adults

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.” John 10:11-14**

Those who abuse, exploit or traffick look for the most vulnerable, scattered, lost – seeking a place to fit in. Maybe a young person comes from a home where they were abused. Maybe they come from a home where they were cared for, but the exploiter’s manipulation and false promises for love or adventure win them over.

These “wolves” start by giving them a false sense of belonging, telling them they are loved or providing for unmet needs. As Christians, we’re called to be the sheep dogs of the Good Shepherd. But how does a young person know who to truly trust? Do they know who the safe adults are in their lives? Do they know to trust their gut if something seems off or they get an uneasy feeling around someone they have trusted?

These are easy conversations we can be having with the young people in our lives. Help them identify 2-3 safe adults, people they can go to and talk about anything that might be bothering them. That may be a parent or grandparent, or it could be a coach, music teacher, counselor, youth leader. Unfortunately, any of these people could also be an exploiter. We can help children learn how to identify if they feel safe and who to go to if they do not.

- If an adult tells you, “This is our secret, don’t tell anyone else” that’s not okay.
- If you get an “uh-oh” feeling for any reason (online or in-person), get out of the situation and go talk to another adult.
- If an adult asks you to do something for them, come with them, gives you gifts unexpectedly, takes your picture – without your or your parents’ consent – tell someone. Exploitation thrives on isolation and secrecy.
- A trusted adult is someone who will respect your boundaries.

[Being a Trusted Adult \(missingkids.org\)](http://missingkids.org)

We can support young people who are lost and bring them in close to the shepherd, offering a safe place where they know they are truly loved.

**God our Good Shepherd, guide us to be safe adults in the lives of all young people that they may know your love and protection. Amen.**

---

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

\*Join us April 21 at Valley of Peace Lutheran Church for [Sing, My Soul: Love in Heaven and the Sky](#) offered by Caritas Vocal Ensemble. A free-will offering supports Cherish All Children.