



THE LOST SHEEP

I'm going to tell you a story.

I have one hundred sheep; I do – one hundred sheep! I'm very lucky to have that many actually. Usually I have to stay out in the fields and look after my sheep, with my young helper, Geronimo. But today I've sent him home early because yesterday we had such a day. It was really busy. Poor Geronimo is extremely tired so I sent him home early today. I'll tell you all about what happened.

Every day, first thing in the morning, after our breakfast we go out into the fields and we take the register. "Amelia", "Baaaa"; "Amy", "Baaaa"; "Alfred", "Baaaa": and so we go on. Up until we got to "Zorba", "Baaa"; "Zelda", "Baaa"; "Zebedee" ... nothing – no reply. "Zebedee!" ... nothing again. We didn't know what to do. Zebedee wasn't answering his name. He was our hundredth sheep. How many sheep did we have? Only 99 sheep! And I should have had one hundred sheep.

So we called, and we called and we called. We looked everywhere: in his favourite snack bar, McGrasses; we went to his favourite shop, Grassbase; we went to his favourite tree, Grassberries; but he was not at any of those places. We looked down by the river; we looked up in the hills; we looked out in the valleys; we looked everywhere! We shouted 'til we were hoarse – we were getting worried and it was getting dark. And as it got dark we knew we had to get our other 99 sheep in.

"Amy, Amelia, quick; Barbara, Bethany, quick - you've all got to get into the barn." So we gathered our 99 sheep into the barn and shut the door. And they were worried. Sheep get worried you know – they were worried about their mate. I'll tell you why – Zebedee was a bit special, all the other sheep were like this – big sheep; big fat woolly sheep and they baaaa'd all day long. Zebedee wasn't like that: Zebedee was tiny and quiet. That means he could have fallen down a hole, he could have fallen in a ditch, he could have got lost just about anywhere. So we took our torches, because we knew we had to carry on looking for him, and we thought one place we haven't looked is out near the woods. The sheep don't usually go near the woods, they like the fields really. So we went off to the edge of the woods. "Zebedee!", "Zebedee!", where are you Zebedee!". "Baa" we heard him whisper. We heard the tiniest little bleat. Geronimo ran into the woods because we could hear where it was coming from, and do you know what he saw? He saw this tiny little woolly tail sticking out of the end of a log. Silly, silly Zebedee had gone off exploring which he likes to do and he must have sniffed at the end of this hollow log, decided to go up inside and have a look, and got stuck! There might have been grassberries in there, you never know. All you could see was his tiny little tail wiggling around, sticking out the back of this log. So we grabbed his back legs and gently pulled him out. We were so relieved!

Geronimo picked him up, popped him inside his coat and off we went, back to the barn. When we got back, everyone was so excited! "Baa!", "Baa!", "Baa!", "Baa!", "Baa!", "Baa!", all the sheep went on and on for hours – we had such a party: it was

fantastic! We were so pleased to have our little Zebedee back with us in the barn, making one hundred sheep again. But, my goodness, we were tired.

It reminds me of another story actually; one that Jesus told about a sheep that got lost. And He said we're like that. I don't look much like a sheep – do you look like a sheep? No – are you all woolly and shaggy and sheepish? No. I do have a woolly jumper, and woolly boots too, but Jesus said we're like Zebedee and He's like the shepherd. He looks and looks for us, and when He finds us, and when we turn round and spot Him and we find Him, He scoops us up in His arms and He has a huge party with the angels in heaven because when we believe it makes Him so happy. Isn't that wonderful, so wonderful!

Sarah Mir.