

## Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)



### Shepherd's Purse Flowers and Seed Pods

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. John 10:14-16. (NRSV)

### The Good Shepherd

Through the centuries shepherds have lived in the fields keeping watch over their flocks. The things they carried with them were simple and limited. In Medieval times, shepherds carried a purse that was shaped something like the flat wedge-shaped or heart-shaped seedpod of the plant that now bears its name. Inside that purse, they carried some of life's necessities.

The Shepherd's Purse originated in Europe but now is a very common weed in gardens and waste places throughout the temperate zone. It is a member of the Mustard Family.

Those who belong to the one flock of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, come from all nations. They live in all the countries where the Shepherd's Purse plant lives and in other countries as well. Perhaps this little weedy plant can be a reminder that the Good Shepherd is with us wherever and in whatever conditions we live. The little seedpod shaped like a shepherd's purse can remind us that the Good Shepherd has all that is needed for us as sheep in the flock. The small cross-shaped flowers can remind us that the Good Shepherd went to the cross so that we might live now and forever.

Good Shepherd,

Remind us that you are with us and all members of your flock throughout the world. In your name we pray, Amen.

### **Things to Think About and Do**

- Examine the shapes of the blossoms and seedpods of the Shepherd's Purse plant. Think about the meaning of the symbols of the seedpods and flowers. Pray for people throughout the world who also belong to the Good Shepherd's flock.
- When you are sure you have correctly identified the plant, try tasting the seedpods and leaves.
- Observe a Shepherd's Purse plant throughout the seasons.