



Date: _____
Series: Great Chapters of the Bible
Winter Year 2, Lesson 41

He Provides: Psalm 23

Take Home Point: *The Lord is my shepherd—I am never in need. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Psalm 23; John 10:1-15

Key Verse: Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd. I am never in need.”

We will help kids know:

- Psalm 23 uses the imagery of the Lord as our shepherd, so we can understand our relationship to him as sheep to a shepherd.
- The result of trusting and following him is that he supplies our needs.
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.




We will help kids feel:

- Peace in knowing that Jesus is our good shepherd.
- Motivated to follow his leading.

We will help kids do:

- Make their own creative version of the 23rd Psalm.
- Decorate the Psalm 23 page to fit into their Great Chapters of the Bible folder.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids receive a marshmallow as they talk about skills that give them confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large marshmallows, one per student
Large Group 	4 8 8 12	Overview Baa-Baa Game: Kids play the “Baa-Baa” game. Dramatic Presentation: A shepherd visits and explains the 23 rd Psalm. Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large marshmallows, one per kid • costume for shepherd – this could be a t-shirt for a head covering and a hoe for a staff, or an original costume from Bible times • librarian costume for presenter • signs (see appendix)
Small Group Application 	4	Students make a custom version of the 23 rd Psalm to put in their Great Chapters of the Bible folders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • markers, crayons, colored pencils • <i>My Version of Psalm 23</i>, one per person (see appendix)

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

As kids gather: Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.

Supplies: large marshmallows, one per student

When people have confidence, they feel pretty sure of themselves and are pretty certain that things will work out. What do you feel confident doing?

For example, maybe some of you are pretty good at math. You are confident that you will get a good grade in math on your report card. Maybe others are confident in a sport or a special talent you do well.

Share with the group a hobby, an activity, an interest, or a subject you do well in that gives you confidence.

Share a personal example such as: I feel confident when I drive my car because I have never had a traffic ticket. Then give a marshmallow to the kids as they share their story.

Do you know why I passed out marshmallows? They are to remind us of sheep. This might sound strange, but when are sheep confident? Any guesses?

Let kids respond.

Sheep are confident when their shepherd is nearby. When the shepherd is not close, the sheep get nervous, scared, and wander off. Then they usually get into trouble. They may wander into a dangerous area with cliffs, or wild animals, or away from food or water.

David wrote a poem that describes God as his shepherd. Anyone who knows God as his or her shepherd has confidence. They will never be in need. Today we will learn **the Lord is my shepherd—I am never in need.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Baa-Baa Game: Kids play the “Baa-Baa” game.

Dramatic Presentation: A shepherd visits and explains the 23rd Psalm.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?/Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids look up John 10:1-15 in their Bibles to see more imagery of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Have kids try to identify what this imagery represents.

Read John 10:1-5.

How do the sheep respond to the shepherd's voice? (*John 10:3-4. They recognize his voice and respond by following him.*)

How are we like the sheep in this passage? (*We follow Jesus when he calls because we recognize his voice.*)

Read John 10: 7-10.

How does the shepherd protect and provide for the sheep? (*He is the gate for the sheep to enter the pen where they are safe. He guards them from robbers, thieves, or wild animals. They go in and out of the sheep pen to find food. The shepherd gives them life and everything they need.*)

Who is the thief that comes to steal, kill, and destroy? (*Satan.*)

How does Jesus, the Good Shepherd protect us from Satan? *(We are saved when we enter God's Kingdom, the sheep pen, through Jesus, the gatekeeper. Jesus came to give us life and everything we need.)*

Read John 10: 11-15.

How is the Good Shepherd different than a hired hand? *(A hired hand is concerned only about his pay. He is not really concerned about the sheep. He will run away when danger approaches. The Good Shepherd loves and owns the sheep. They belong to him and he would give up his life for the sheep.)*

How is Jesus like the Good Shepherd in this passage? *(We are his sheep. We belong to him and he gave his life for us.)*

If we don't remain close to the Shepherd, Jesus, how may we wander off into danger?

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Supplies: copy of appendix with their own custom version of Psalm 23, markers, colored pencils, crayons to decorate the page

Remember earlier we talked about skills or abilities that helped you feel confident? What would it be like if you wrote your own version of the 23rd Psalm? Instead of saying the Lord is my shepherd, you might say something like, "The Lord is my mini-van. I am never in need. The mini-van takes me to the places that feed me and give me all that I need. He leads me besides peaceful gas stations. He fills me up with premium."

What could be another example? How about the Lord is my dance instructor? She teaches me all I need to know. She leads me through stretches and warming up. She leads me in quiet music. She restores the bounce in my step.

Give kids the handout and encourage them to make their own version of the 23rd Psalm with a different analogy. Give them time to think. This may take a while and they may need to finish at home. Encourage some of your creative thinkers to help the others.

Conclude the lesson with:

Today we learned that **the Lord is my shepherd—I am never in need.*

Closing prayer:

Have each student thank the Lord that he is his or her shepherd (or whatever analogy they chose to write in version of Psalm 23). Thank God for Jesus who gave up his life for us.

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Large Group Presentation

Great Chapters of the Bible

The 23rd Psalm

The large group presenter will assume the role of a librarian. His/her name will be either Ms. Freda Rita or Mr. Gudenbuch. Costuming might include reading glasses (if you wear your own, place a piece of tape on the bridge), bow tie or special librarian hat. The presenter should portray the caricature of a “bookworm.”

Ms. Freda Rita or Mr. Gudenbuch will introduce the favorite chapters in the best book in the library, the Bible. This librarian operates with a different set of rules than what is typical. Instead of the rule “no chewing gum,” now kids must chew gum and play with it. Every week, a new rule will be revealed. Hopefully, the rules are so absurd or goofy that the kids think it is funny. We are not advocating misbehavior.

The stage for large group should be set up to look like a library: a bookshelf with some books, maybe a desk, and an old computer. Make it as elaborate as you would like. A sign should be hung somewhere that says “RULES of the Library.” Each week a new rule will be revealed.

Supplies: librarian costume, an adult actor to play the part of a shepherd, large marshmallows (enough for each student), shepherd’s costume, sign that can be held up that says NOISE, PLEASE

The Lord is My Shepherd

Psalms 23

Introduction of Ms. Freda Rita/ Mr. Gudenbuch

Hello, I am Mr. Gudenbuch (or Ms. Freda Rita) of the _____ (put in your church name) Memorial Library. This is a very special and unique library. When I am in charge, the rules are a little different than what you would see at your school or city library. Today we will enforce the goofy rule: *NOISE, PLEASE*.

Hold up sign.

We have way too much quiet in the library. We *cannot* allow this. Whenever you see this sign, I expect you to make the noise of a sheep. What does a sheep say? Very good, they say “ Baa-Baa.”

Let's all try this together. Remember when the sign goes up, I need to hear those sheep.

Raise the sign as the students "Baa." Lower the sign and continue with the game.

The "Baa-Baa" Game

Today, I have a Baa-Baa challenge for you.

Hold up large marshmallows and say:

This sheep food will be awarded to the groups that complete the "Baa-Baa" challenge.

Here is how it works. When we begin, everyone will stand and identify what month you were born in the following way. If you were born in January, you will say, "Baa." If you were born in February you would say " Baa-Baa." How many "baas" would you have to say if you were born in October? (10.) That's correct. That would be " Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa, Baa-Baa."

All of you will be sheep "baa-ing" your birth month at the same time. You will try to find other sheep that were born in the same month. Remember that the only thing you can say is "baa." Once you find two others with the same birthday, come to me. Then, "baa" together your birthday month and you will receive some sheep food.

Ready, begin.

Raise the sign. Let the students begin and continue until groups of three have been found. If there are kids left over who are not able to find a group of three let them "baa" to you and still receive a marshmallow. Then have kids return to their seats.

Dramatic Teaching of the 23rd Psalm

I am sure you are wondering why you were "baa-ing" to day. It is because one of the Great Chapters of the Bible is the "baa" chapter. I mean the "Lord is my shepherd" chapter. This is the 23rd Psalm.

To help us understand this Psalm, I have invited a shepherd to join us. I will also need six volunteers to come up when they are instructed to read a verse from the Psalm. Let me number you off in order.

Select six volunteers and number them one to six.

When I point to you, come up front to read your verse from Psalm 23 and then sit down. Let's welcome our guest.

The shepherd enters, dressed in his/her costume.

Shepherd:

Thank you for inviting me here today. I knew I was in the right place when I heard the familiar sound of sheep "baa-ing." At first, I was afraid they had followed me to church.

First reader comes forward, reads verse one, and sits down.

David wrote this Psalm. As a child and young adult, he was a shepherd, so he understood the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep.

The sheep learn to depend on the shepherd to lead them to food and water, and to protect them. Without a shepherd, the sheep are lost. With a shepherd, they feel safe and secure.

Point to the next reader to come forward and read verse 2.

When we think of green pastures, we might think of tall, knee-high, lush green grass. This was not the case. David came from a desert area, and the grass was scarce. The green pastures were not very tall, but rather patches of short green grass in various locations. The shepherd had to lead the sheep to food. The sheep trusted the shepherd. The Lord leads us day by day, giving us just what we need for today. God wants us to trust him for the day and not be anxious for tomorrow.

The quiet waters were the safe waters to drink from. Sheep could easily drown in deep water, or in rushing waters that often occurred right after a rain. Sheep need quiet and still waters. How is this like the Lord? The Lord protects us if we follow him.

Point to the next reader to come forward and read verse 3.

A shepherd's job is to lead and guide sheep. If the shepherd left the flock, the sheep would soon wander away. Goats in the flock were always first to leave and the sheep would follow.

The Bible in Matthew 25:32 says that God will separate the goats and the sheep on Judgment Day. Goats were the ones who ignored the

shepherd and did not follow him. If we follow our shepherd, he keeps us on the right path and he fills our soul with his love.

Point to the next reader to come forward and read verse 4.

The shepherd knew there could be danger in the valley. Valleys were places where wolves or attackers could hide. For sheep without a shepherd, it could be very dangerous. However, going through a place of danger with the shepherd, we too can say, "Because you are with me, I fear no harm."

A shepherd also used a rod or a staff. They could be used as weapons for protecting the sheep. They could also be used to tap or pull the sheep and keep them in the group so they would not wander off.

Point to the next reader to come forward and read verse 5.

This is a picture of the shepherd inviting a friend to dinner. It was a sign of great honor to have one's head rubbed with oil at a banquet and have his cup filled to the top. This is the shepherd who welcomes you and me to his banqueting table. When dangers or enemies lurk around us, we can have confidence in him.

Point to the next reader to come forward and read verse 6.

Shepherds often had dogs follow after their sheep. They made sure the sheep didn't wander off. Imagine two dogs named Goodness and Love. They will follow after you all the days of your life. But the best thing of all is that you will "remain in the Lord's house for days without end." It won't be a temporary house like it is here, but it will be a permanent home in heaven.

Shepherd exits.

Reading of the 23rd Psalm

Mr. Gudenbuch reads the 23rd Psalm one more time. Then says:

It is much too quiet in here right now so I need (raise the NOISE, PLEASE sign) to hear those sheep one more time.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

In John 10:11 it says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." When we think of the Lord we follow, we think of Jesus who calls himself not just the shepherd, but the Good

Shepherd. Why? As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down his life for the sheep. He did this when he went to the cross on our behalf. He is alive now to lead us and guide us as the Good Shepherd.

Option: Mr. Gudenbuch at this time could give a short testimony of what it has meant for him/her to follow the Lord and not be in want, or what it means to rely on God day by day even in difficult situations.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are our Good Shepherd. You gave your life for us. Help us to follow you, just like sheep follow their shepherd.

Help us to remember that when times are tough, we can have peace because you are our Good Shepherd leading us through the danger. We are never in need and can always have peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Make two copies of this appendix. Then print them back to back so that the **God's Word** portion is behind the student's version.

My Version of the 23rd Psalm
The Lord is My Shepherd Psalm

The Lord is my _____
I am never in need. He makes me _____

_____.
He leads me beside _____.
He renews my _____.
He guides me along the paths of _____

for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the _____
_____,
because you are with me, I fear _____
_____.
Your _____ and your _____ give
me courage.
You keep me calm by _____

even while my enemies watch.
You anoint me with _____.
My cup overflows.
Certainly, goodness and mercy will stay close to
me all the days of my life, and I will remain in the
Lord's house for days without end.

The 23rd Psalm
The Lord is My Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd.
I am never in need.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside peaceable waters.
He renews my soul.
He guides me along the paths of righteousness
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the dark valley of
death, because you are with me, I fear no
harm.
Your rod and your staff give me courage.

You prepare a banquet for me while my
enemies watch.
You anoint my head with oil.
My cup overflows.

Certainly, goodness and mercy will stay close
to me all the days of my life,
And I will remain in the Lord's house for days
without end.

RULES OF THE LIBRARY

**NOISE,
PLEASE**