



THE SHEPHERD'S PSALM

Preschool-K • #OT18 • October 8, 2023

Concept

Jesus is the good Shepherd.

Goal

Children will learn that God takes care of His children like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep. They will know that He wants to be their good shepherd.

Passage

Psalm 23

Key Verse: "The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need."

Psalm 23:1

Planning Ahead

| Lesson Supplies | Craft Supplies |
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| <p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Beginner's Bible, Karyn Henley</i> <p>Activity Station/ Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Tunic</i>• <i>Head covering</i>• <i>Shepherd's staff</i>• <i>Animal mask</i> | <p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sheep face printed on cardstock, 1/child• Yarn, 18"/child• Cotton balls, 5/child• Markers, crayons• Glue sticks• Hole punches |

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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Psalm 23, written by David, is a description of God as “The Shepherd.” The image of a shepherd was well understood by the Israelites and by David, who was a shepherd (1 Samuel 16:11). It is culturally more difficult for us to understand or picture a shepherd caring for his sheep, but as you read the Psalm the imagery is clear.

God as shepherd aroused emotions in David. The shepherd cared for, provided for and protected his sheep. A good shepherd was personally concerned for the welfare of his sheep. He knew his sheep and would risk his life protecting them. David described God as “My Shepherd” because he had a relationship with God. He knew God took care of His people as a good shepherd cares for his sheep. He described the results of God's care in his life in verses 1-4, “I shall not want, He makes me lie down.” He also leads, guides and restores us. Therefore, he said, “I will fear no evil.”

The rod and staff symbolize the shepherd's care. The shepherd carries a rod to club wild animals that attack his sheep. The staff keeps the sheep in control and guides them. The rod and the staff represent God's constant vigilance over us, bringing us comfort by His personal presence and involvement. The shepherd guides his sheep through paths that would lead them directly into danger. The shepherd knows what is ahead, and he remains with the sheep throughout the journey.

God, like the shepherd, is always present and will protect us. That doesn't necessarily mean we will be directed down an easier path. At times God allows us to go through periods of darkness and uncertainty. The more difficult path may be the way to righteousness. Like David we have an opportunity to depend on God and experience His provision in profound ways in the midst of trials.

David concluded with a picture of everlasting fellowship with God. God is the host of a banquet and we will be the honored guests. God will honor us before our enemies and we will have fellowship with God as His children forever.

As we go through trials, we can reflect on God's character. David obviously saw this as a necessity while walking through trials. If we keep in mind that God is with us the whole way and if we follow Him, God will be glorified. As a result our lives will be blessed and enriched with a deeper relationship with Him. (Additional Reading: John 10)

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

- The day of class: Cut the eyes out of the sheep masks; cut two 9" pieces of yarn per child for the Activity Station craft.
- In classroom before class – Teacher will dress like a shepherd.

Activity Stations:

- **Craft – Sheep masks**
 - **Instructions:** Give each child a mask to color and put cotton balls on the furry part between the ears. Punch a hole on either side and tie a piece of yarn to each side. They can tie them around their heads to participate in the Dramatic Play Activity Station and Learning Activity #1.
- **Story – King David, pages 192-195 of The Beginner's Bible**
 - **Instructions:** Read the story about King David and the 23rd Psalm. Talk about David's friendship with God and that David knew God as His good shepherd.
- **Dramatic Play – Sheep & Shepherd**
 - **Instructions:** In order for the children to get a picture of the shepherd's role, a teacher will play the part of the shepherd and the children will be the sheep. Call the sheep by name. Use the staff to move them gently back on the path. Discuss with them how a shepherd cares for his sheep.

Introduction Lg. Group

Last week we learned about David, a boy who really loved God. Can anyone tell us what David did? (He killed Goliath with 5 stones.) Today we are going to learn about David's very important job. He took care of his daddy's sheep. Do you know what things David had to do to take care of the sheep? (He had to feed, water and protect them from wild animals.) Wild animals would sneak up on the sheep to eat them for dinner. What kind of wild animal might eat a sheep? (Bears, wolves and lions might.) It was the shepherd's job to take care of the sheep and to keep the wild animals away. Since David was just a boy, do you think he could fight off wild animals? You're right, David couldn't do it himself. David had help. Do you know who helped him? (God did.) David knew that God was his shepherd. He knew that God was with him all the time and would help him protect the sheep.

Transition

We're going to pretend now that we are David and his sheep. I am going to be David. You can get your sheep masks to pretend you are my sheep.

Lesson Lg. Group

Drama – Role play, "David and His Sheep"

Instructions: Tie the masks on the children to be sheep. The teacher playing the "wild" animal should hide and put the animal mask on. Note: Be aware that some children are easily frightened so avoid any physical contact or excessive loud growling.

Lesson Continued

David, the shepherd, had a special stick called a staff. It helped him to keep the sheep where they were supposed to be. (Show the children the staff.) Do you think you sheep can obey the shepherd? Everyone get down on your four legs and follow my staff. You will need to stay close so you do not get lost or so wild animals do not eat you.

What sound do sheep make? Are you following me? Do you think God will be our good Shepherd? We don't need to worry because the Bible says in Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need."

Let's go find some green grass to munch on. Are any of my sheep hungry? Let's stop here so you can eat some grass. (Take time so children can pretend to eat.) Are you ready to go? Watch out for wild animals! (Have the children crawl around to the water.) Are my sheep thirsty? What do you think sheep drink? Okay, come to this "stream" of water here for you to drink from. Are you ready to follow me back to the barn? We have to climb a mountain to get back home. Watch out for wild animals! Who will be with us on our trip? God is the good Shepherd. (Have the children crawl around for a few seconds. Remind them to make sheep sounds. Have the wild animal ready to jump out when the teacher and children pretend to climb up the mountain.) We have to climb the mountain now. Up, up, up, up. Whoa, I'm getting very tired. Are you getting tired? (The animal jumps out and says, "I am so hungry!" "I want a sheep for dinner!") Do not be afraid! God is the good Shepherd. I won't let the animal get my sheep! God help me to take care of my sheep. Give me strength to fight off the wild animal. (The teacher pretends to hit the wild animal. The animal runs away yelping.) Is everyone okay? That was a close one, but we're okay because God is the good Shepherd. Let's go home.

All you sheep take off your masks and get in your small groups.

Discussion

- What was David's job? (He was a shepherd.) David was a good shepherd, wasn't he? He took care of his sheep. Who helped David take care of his sheep? (God did.) God is the good Shepherd. David wrote in the Bible in the book of Psalms that God takes care of us like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. Psalm 23:1 says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need." (Have the children say the verse.)
- What do you think makes a good shepherd? (what qualities?)
- Did David take good care of his sheep? Did David love his sheep? What did David do when the animal attacked? (He prayed.) David says that God is the good shepherd! God wants us to talk to Him all the time—when we are happy or when we are afraid or lonely. He says in His Bible that He wants to be our good shepherd.

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Learning Activity#1 Continued

- Have you ever heard of Jesus? What special job did Jesus have? He died on the cross to pay for our bad choices so we can be God's friend and go to heaven some day. The Bible says that everyone makes bad choices and needs to ask God to forgive them. When you ask God to forgive you for your bad choices Jesus comes into your heart and you become God's child. Jesus becomes your good shepherd.
- Can you think of some ways Jesus takes care of you?

Let's pray together now. Let's say thank you to Jesus, for dying on the cross. Let's say thank you to God that He is the good shepherd. We can thank God that He takes care of us like a shepherd does his sheep.

Optional Activity

Free Play – Return to Activity Stations