

The Shepherd: God Cares for His People

Big Idea: God provides for every one of His children.

#2

Bible Text: Psalm 23

Pray for Wisdom

Thank You, Lord, for being my Shepherd. Give me the tools I need to teach these children today, and guide me gently as we seek Your face together.

I ask, Father, that You would make clear to each child how precious he or she is to You. Give me and the other people who are investing in these children's lives Your Shepherd's heart for them. I pray this in the name of the Good Shepherd, amen.

Supply Checklist

Welcome & Worship Time:

- ☐ building blocks and cotton balls

Bible Time:

- ☐ Bible teaching picture #2
- ☐ student activity pages 5-8
- ☐ stickers from sticker page
- ☐ snacks

Disciple Time:

- ☐ Dee-Cy-Paul picture #2
- ☐ puppets (optional)
- ☐ pipe cleaners, colored beads, small bowls

Additional "Learn by Doing" Activities:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Children will:

Know

- God is like a good shepherd who takes special care of every sheep.

Feel

- Secure because God is taking care of them.

Do

- Acknowledge ways that God provides for them.

Lesson Summary

The Psalms were Israel's songs of praise. They were included as part of temple worship much the same way hymns and choruses are used today. Through them, people could express their hearts to God, and also learn truth about Him. This collection of praise songs has a unique and important role in Scripture: instead of history or theology, the Psalms give us a picture of the intimate relationship that is possible between God and His people. When people want to learn to pray or worship, they turn to the Psalms.

No Psalm is more familiar to us than Psalm 23. In fact, it may be so familiar that we often miss its significance. Out of all the ways he could have described God, David chose to portray Him as a loving shepherd. Later, Jesus also called Himself the Good Shepherd. What do we learn about God through this image? David gives two different applications. First, God guides us to the things that are good for us. He is our source of blessing, the one who restores our souls. Second, when times are hard, when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death," we can trust that our Shepherd is still with us, and be comforted by His strong presence.

Many Christians memorize the 23rd Psalm when they are young, and find that it comes back to them in times of need. Now is the perfect time for your preschoolers to learn that God, their Shepherd, always takes special care of them. Encourage your children to think of ways that God blesses them and provides for their needs. Remind them that wherever they go, He is there too, protecting His sheep.



Greet Each Child

Welcome each child warmly.

Encourage children to present their offerings to the Lord as they arrive.

Learn by Doing

Enjoy the suggested activity below or refer to the *Additional "Learn by Doing" Activities* on page 15 for alternate ideas to introduce this lesson.

A Safe Place for My Sheep

You will need: building blocks and cotton balls.

Show the children how to use the blocks to build a pen for the sheep. Let them have several cotton balls to represent the sheep. Have them find a safe place for the sheep to sleep, water for them to drink, and grass to eat. Tell them they will hear about how a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

Sing with Joy

Move the children from the initial learning activity to the worship time with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *The Lord is My Shepherd* (traditional)
- *Jesus Loves Me* (traditional)
- *Oh, How He Loves You and Me* (praise chorus)
- *Jesus Loves the Little Children* (traditional)

Rehearse the Verse

Use the suggested idea below to help your children learn the Bible words. We have chosen preschool-friendly language based on a verse from the Bible story passage. We provide new Bible words for each story, for each month, or for the entire unit. You are free to decide which will work best for your children, or use a verse of your choice from the Bible version you prefer.

Lesson Memory Verse:

Psalm 23:1.

"God is my Shepherd who takes care of me."

Monthly Memory Verse:

Psalm 96:4.

"The Lord is great—praise Him!"

Unit Memory Verse:

Daniel 2:20.

"Praise God because He knows everything."

Have your children say the words while saying "baa" on their hands and knees.

Seek God's Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

As you pray, use meaningful and simple words from your heart. The children will learn to pray by listening to you.



Tell the Truth

Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. Show Bible teaching picture #2 as you tell or read the story. (The Bible story is printed on page 14 and on the back of the teaching picture.)

The story "The Shepherd" is based on Psalm 23. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching

younger preschoolers, you may want to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

Read the Bible story twice. The second time, have the children pretend to be the sheep and act out the actions in the story. Have them pretend that you are the shepherd and follow you around the classroom as you read.

Complete Page 6

Distribute student page 6.

Place the appropriate stickers (from the sticker page) on the picture as you reinforce the Bible story.

Talk and Snack

Consider serving sheep snacks from large marshmallows and pretzel sticks. Connect two marshmallows for the head and body. Add pretzel sticks for the legs.

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- What does a shepherd take care of?
- What does a good shepherd do when his sheep need food or drink or rest?
- Who is your shepherd?
- How does God take care of you?

Wash Up

Allow time for your children to clean up and use the restroom.

Play and Move

Let the children pretend to be sheep crawling around on the floor, making sheep sounds, drinking water from a stream, eating grass, and lying down to sleep.

Complete Page 7

Distribute student page 7.

2 & 3 Year-olds: Talk about the ways shown in each row that God provides for us. One item in each row does not match the others. Help the children trace the circle around the item that is different from the rest of the row.

4 & 5 Year-olds: Talk about the ways shown in each row that God provides for us. One item in each row does not match the others. Have the children draw a circle around the item that is different from the rest of the row.

Learn by Doing

Enjoy the suggested activity below or refer to the *Additional "Learn by Doing"* Activities on page 15 for alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story.

God Takes Care of Us

Teach your children this song to the tune of "The Ants Go Marching."

God takes care of all of us.

Hoorah! Hoorah!

Yes, God takes care of all of us.

Hoorah! Hoorah!

He gives us food and a place to live.

He gives the Bible to learn of Him.

And we love Him for it,

*For He's good. And He's kind. And
He's love.*

Boom, boom, boom.

Pray for People

Ask for prayer requests. Pray for each personal concern.

Pray that your children would feel secure in knowing that God is near and is taking good care of them.

Bible Story: "The Shepherd"

(based on Psalm 23)

Baa, baa, baa. The Lord is my Shepherd. I am like a sheep. God will always take care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. Sometimes I am tired. I need a place to rest. My shepherd leads me to the meadow where I lie down in the soft grass. After my nap, I feel rested and strong. My shepherd always takes care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. Sometimes I am thirsty. I need a cool drink. My shepherd leads me to the stream where I drink the clear water. Then I am ready to play. My shepherd always takes care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. Sometimes I am lost. I don't know where to go. My shepherd shows me the way home. He leads me to the right path. My shepherd always takes care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. Sometimes I am afraid when it is dark and lonely. My shepherd walks right beside me every step of the way. He is strong. He is good. He always protects me. I am safe when we walk together. My shepherd always takes care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. Sometimes I am hungry. I need something to eat. My shepherd fixes my favorite food. He lets me sit right beside him while I enjoy the wonderful meal. Then he brushes my wool. He pets my head. He tells me that I am very special. My shepherd always takes care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. I know that my shepherd will always love me. I know that He will always do good things for me. I know that He will always take care of me.

Baa, baa, baa. The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything that I need.

"The Shepherd"

(Summary/Review)

The Lord is my Shepherd. I am like a sheep.

When I need a place to rest, my shepherd leads me to the soft grass.

When I need a cool drink, my shepherd leads me to the clear water.

When I don't know where to go, my shepherd shows me the way home.

When I am afraid, my shepherd walks right beside me. He protects me.

When I am hungry, my shepherd fixes my favorite food. I sit right beside him while I enjoy the wonderful meal.

My shepherd will always love me. He will always take care of me.

The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything that I need.

Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities

All three *Learn by Doing* sections in this lesson include a suggested learning activity. However, you may want to substitute one or more of the activities below to capture the specific interests and needs of your children.

Select activities based on the ages of your children, their learning style preferences, and their developmental needs.

Coloring Page

(for all preschoolers)

Provide copies of the reproducible Bible story picture for this lesson (#2) for children to color. (See page 85 of this *Teacher Guide*.)

God’s Blessings

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: paper plates, glue sticks, pictures cut from magazines, scissors.

Before class, cut out pictures from magazines that show ways God has taken care of people (food, houses, families, pets, clothes, toys, flowers, rain and so on). Around the edge of each paper plate, write the words “Thank you God for Your blessings.” Give each child a paper plate and let him or her glue pictures of blessings they are thankful for onto the plate.

Sheep Magnets

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: small and large white pompoms, magnetic strips, small wiggle eyes, tacky craft glue.

Have the children glue two large pompoms onto a magnetic strip. Have them put a smaller pompom on top as the head of the sheep. Then add an eye on each side of the head. Talk about how God takes care of us like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

A Shepherd’s Day

(for all preschoolers)

Have the children sit in a circle and do the actions with you as you describe a shepherd and what a shepherd’s day might have been like.

A shepherd loves and takes care of his sheep. (Hug self.)

He looks for nice grass and fresh water for them to drink. (Hand above eyes and look around.)

When a baby lamb gets lost, the shepherd carries it to its mother. (Pretend to carry a lamb.)

He keeps the sheep safe from anything that would want to hurt his sheep. (Make strong arm muscles.)

At the end of the day, the shepherd will call, and all the sheep come to him. (Hand by mouth, as if calling out, motion hands to self.)

Tell the children that the shepherd works hard to take care of the sheep and that God makes sure He takes good care of us.

People Who Take Care of Me

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: paper, glue sticks, magazines, scissors.

Before class, cut from magazines pictures of moms, dads, doctors, teacher, police officers, firefighters and other adults who help or care for children. At the top of each sheet of paper, write “People Who Take Care of Me.” Let the children glue pictures onto the paper of people who represent those who take care of and protect them. Remind them that God is the one who makes sure there are people to take care of them.

Shepherd’s Crook

(suggested activity for Dee-Cy-Paul story, page 15; for all preschoolers)

You will need: pipe cleaners, colored beads, small bowls.

Give each child a pipe cleaner and several beads in a bowl. Help the children thread the beads onto their pipe cleaner. Twist each end so that the beads will stay in place. Show the children how they can bend their pipe cleaner to form a shepherd’s crook like the ones used to keep the sheep together and to protect them from other animal. Remind them that God takes care of us like a shepherd takes care of the sheep.

My Own Sheep

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: cardboard, spring clothespins, fine-tip marker, cotton balls, wiggle eyes, tacky craft glue.

Before class, cut the cardboard into strips one inch by four inches. Give each child one strip of cardboard, two clothespins, and two wiggle eyes. Glue the eyes to the ends of the cardboard, one eye on each side. Show the children how to clip the clothespins to the cardboard strip to make legs for their sheep. Then have them gently pull the cotton balls to make them fluffier. Have the children cover the cardboard strips with a thin layer of glue, leaving the area near the eyes uncovered. Have them put cotton on the glued area of the cardboard. Encourage the children to tell about the ways God takes care of them, like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

See Learning Centers

on pages 80-81 for ideas that can be used as additional “Learn by Doing” activities.

The Shepherd

God Cares for His People
Psalm 23

Name: _____

God provides for every one of His children.

The Lord is my Shepherd. I am like a sheep.

When I need a place to rest, my shepherd leads me to the soft grass. When I need a cool drink, my shepherd leads me to the clear water.

When I don't know where to go, my shepherd shows me the way home.

When I am afraid, my shepherd walks right beside me. He protects me.

when I am hungry, my shepherd fixes my favorite meal.

My shepherd will always love me.
He will always take care of me.

The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything that I need.

*"He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures;"*



God Cares for His People - Psalm 23



Parent Partners

Lesson Focus: God provides for every one of His children.
Ways to reinforce this truth with your child:

ASK:

- What does a shepherd take care of?
- What does a good shepherd do when his sheep need food / drink / rest?
- Who is your shepherd?
- How does God take care of you?

ACT:

- Read the Bible story together (or read the summary on the front of this page).
- Lesson Bible Verse: **Psalm 23:1**
"God is my Shepherd who takes care of me."
- Drive around town and talk about the places where your child can see how God provides: grocery stores, police and fire stations, the hospital, etc.

*"He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures;"*

