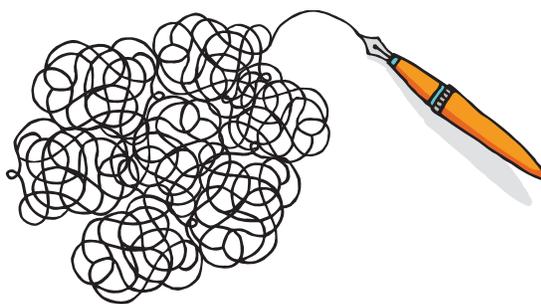


**BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM**

**Preschool
The Writings**





THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Lesson 1 - Preschool

Bible Basis: Psalm 23
Key Verse: Psalm 23:1 (NIRV): “The Lord...gives me everything I need.”
Key Idea: God gives me everything I need.

Master Supplies List

- stuffed animal dog or cat
- stuffed sheep
- paper cups, water
- play tunnel
- snack that all children can enjoy
- *My Bible Story Coloring Book*
- Family Page (1 per child)

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in Step 3 | Explore More.

- Option 1: Psalm 23 coloring sheet (1 per child), crayons, optional: cotton balls and glue
- Option 2: Psalm 23 Sentence Strips, light blue construction paper, marker, white paint, black paint, sponge, paintbrush, plastic plate, baby wipes, googly eyes, glue
- Option 3: four traffic cones, cardboard tube (wrapping-paper size)



- Option 4: audiovisual equipment to play music or project a video
- Option 5: A Dog's Life script, dog puppet or stuffed dog

STEP 1 | Come Together (10 min)

Supplies: stuffed animal dog or cat

Note: This activity is written as if speaking about your own dog. Adjust the wording as necessary.

- ASK: Do any of you have a pet? *(take responses)*
- SAY: It's a lot of fun to have a pet. I have a pet dog named Scraps.
- SHOW the stuffed dog *(and, if you like, a picture of your own pet)*. Hand the dog to the child closest to you.
- ASK: What is something you think I do to take care of Scraps? After each child gives one response, have him or her pass the dog to the next child to respond. *(give him food, give him water, buy him a bed, take him for walks, pet him, clean up after him, give him toys, take him to the vet)*
- COMMENT: I love Scraps and I want to take good care of him. I do all those things you thought of.
- ASK: Do you think Scraps loves me? *(Yes, of course)*
- ANNOUNCE: I love Scraps, and I take care of him. And he loves me back.
- SAY: Today we'll learn how God loves us and takes care of us. And how we can love him back.

KEY VERSE

- INTRODUCE this week's Key Verse. Repeat the verse slowly a few times as you teach children the hand motions. (Note: You also may choose to review last week's Key Verse together.)

Psalm 23:1

The Lord...

gives me everything

I need.

(point toward heaven)

(sweep arms open to show everything)

(bring hands into chest)

STEP 2 | Hear the Story (20 min)

Supplies: stuffed sheep, paper cups, water, a few chairs and small obstacles, play tunnel, snack that all children can enjoy (be sure you're aware of any food allergies)

Teacher Prep: Fill the cups with some water (1 per child) and set aside on a table. Read through the story and plan a path through your classroom as described: set out some chairs and small obstacles in one area, and the play tunnel in another area.

VERSE 1

- SHOW children the stuffed sheep.



- **SAY:** This is Cotton, my sheep. We want to share a poem with you from the Bible. The man who wrote the poem was named David. David was a shepherd, so he knew about sheep. He also knew about God and he loved God.
- **CONTINUE:** His poem starts like this, “The Lord is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need.” Let’s pretend I’m the shepherd and you and Cotton are my sheep. Follow me.

VERSE 2

- **LEAD** the children to another open area of the room. Tell them to lie down and rest for a moment. Set Cotton down on the floor with them.
- **SAY:** The next part of the poem says, “He lets me lie down in fields of green grass.” That’s because God gives us what we need, like rest. It also says, “He leads me beside quiet waters.” Follow me, sheep, to get a drink of water.
- **LEAD** the children to a table where you have small cups of water set out. Allow them to take a quick drink.

VERSE 3

- **CONTINUE:** The next part of David’s poem says, “He gives me new strength. He guides me in the right paths for the honor of his name.” Just as sheep follow the shepherd, we need to follow God. See if you can follow my path.
- **LEAD** the children around the room, looping around chairs and stepping over small obstacles, follow-the-leader style.

VERSE 4

- **SAY:** Next, David wrote, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid. You are with me. Your shepherd’s rod and staff comfort me.” Now I’m going to lead you through a dark place, but don’t be afraid. I’ll be right here.
- **TURN** off the lights and guide children to crawl through the tunnel.

VERSE 5

- **COMMENT:** David’s poem also says, “You prepare a feast for me right in front of my enemies. You pour oil on my head. My cup runs over.” That’s because God gives us so many good things. Let’s enjoy a little feast now.
- **LEAD** the children to an area where they can enjoy a quick snack (either sitting at tables or on the floor).

VERSE 6

- **LEAD** children back to the main meeting area.
- **CONCLUDE:** The last part of David’s poem says, “I am sure that your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will live in the house of the LORD forever.” That’s because God is like a good shepherd who always wants us to be near him.



STEP 3 | Explore More

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Let's Color! (15 min)

Supplies: Psalm 23 coloring sheet (1 per child), crayons, optional: cotton balls and glue

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Psalm 23 coloring sheet.

- GIVE each child a copy of the Psalm 23 coloring sheet to color.
- HELP the children glue cotton balls onto the sheep in their picture if you like.
- TALK about how God takes care of us just as the shepherd takes care of his sheep.

Option 2: Handprint Sheep (20 min)

Supplies: Psalm 23 Sentence Strips, light blue construction paper, marker, white paint, black paint, sponge, paint brush, plastic plate, baby wipes, googly eyes, glue

Teacher Prep: Recruit an adult assistant. Put the sponge (damp) on a plastic plate and soak it with white paint. Cut apart the Psalm 23 Sentence Strips.

Note: This option works well with one or two children at a time while the others sing or color with an adult assistant.

- HELP each child press one **palm** onto the white paint sponge.
- PAINT the child's **fingers** with black paint (palm side only).
- HELP each child press a handprint onto construction paper. When turned upside-down, the handprint will look like a white sheep with four black legs and a thumb face. Clean the child's hand with a baby wipe.
- ASSIST as each child glues googly eyes onto the sheep and glues the verse at the bottom of their paper. As children work, talk about how God takes care of us just as the shepherd takes care of his sheep.
- LABEL each paper with the child's name.

Option 3: Herding Sheep (20 min)

Supplies: four traffic cones, cardboard tube (wrapping-paper size)

Teacher Prep: Create a "sheep pen" by setting the four cones in an open area of your room.

- SHOW children the cardboard tube.
- EXPLAIN: Shepherds use a staff like this to show their sheep which way to go. They use the staff gently.
- CALL for a child to volunteer playing the part of a sheep. Demonstrate gently tapping the sheep with the staff.
- CHOOSE one child to be the shepherd. He or she should hold the staff and wait with eyes closed.
- INSTRUCT all of the "sheep" (other children) to quietly go hide around the room.



- TELL the shepherd to go look for the sheep. He or she should gently tap the sheep with the staff, at which point they should crawl back to the “pen” (the area inside the four cones). Once all sheep are found, choose a new shepherd and play again!
- WRAP UP by telling children how God gently guides us along his path by verses in the Bible and adults we trust.

Option 4: Praise and Worship (15 min)

Recommended song: “Good Shepherd (Psalm 23)” by VeggieTales®

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Potential sources: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpgsGi2tlhI> and <http://www.veggietales.com/>

Purpose for this song: Favorite characters bring to life Psalm 23 for your “little sheep.”

Recommended song: “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” by Praise in Motion Music

Public Domain

Potential sources: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIVtXFP9I8> and CCLI #33681

Purpose for this song: This classic Sunday school song reminds children they can trust God to give them what they need because he is in control.

Option 5: Act it Out (20 min)

Supplies: A Dog’s Life script, dog puppet or stuffed dog

Teacher Prep: Print the A Dog’s Life script.

- PERFORM the skit, along with a puppet.
- ASK the children if they have any questions about how God takes care of us and gives us what we need. Answer as honestly and simply as you can. If you can’t answer a question now, assure children you’ll find an answer and get back to them.

STEP 4 | Going Home (5 min)

Supplies: Family Page (1 per child)

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Family Page.

- THANK God for loving us, guiding us, and giving us everything we need.
- GIVE each child a copy of this week’s Family Page.
- SAY: Give this page to your family when they pick you up. It will remind you to tell your family about God our shepherd.
- ENCOURAGE children to practice telling you what they remember about the 23rd Psalm.
- REVIEW today’s story and Key Idea as you wait for the children to get picked up.
- PRACTICE saying today’s Key Verse along with the hand motions.



- REMIND children to prepare for next week's lesson by doing The Writings Week 2 in *My Bible Story Coloring Book* with their parents.
- REMIND each child to take home any activity sheets or craft projects and the Family Page.



FAMILY PAGE

Lesson 1: The Lord Is My Shepherd

Bible Basis: Psalm 23

Key Verse: Psalm 23:1 (NirV): “The Lord...gives me everything I need.”

Key Idea: God gives me everything I need.

How to Use This Page

This week, your family can read the Bible Basis passage from your Bible to help your child remember the lesson. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table, while driving in the car or just about anywhere. The Living Faith activity is designed to remind your child of the Bible lesson through a drama or other engaging activity. The Extra Mile idea provides interactive ways for your child to connect with the story.

Table Talk

1. Ask your child, Do you remember a time when I didn't give you what you wanted? Why do you think I didn't give you what you wanted?
2. What do you do to help take care of our family pet (or younger sibling or do a household chore)?
3. What are some ways we take care of you?
4. What are some ways God takes care of us?

Living Faith

Option 1

From fighting bears and lions, to defeating a giant, to escaping a mad king, David certainly lived an exciting life. Help your child choose some favorite scenes from David's life to act out, either in person or using action figures. Get creative with props - perhaps the family dog is a bear attacking stuffed sheep, or a giant pillow pile is Goliath. After each victory, read a psalm or sing a praise song.

Option 2

Put your child in charge of a household chore or the family pet this week. Guide your child in taking care of this new responsibility. Look for opportunities to point out how this is similar to how God takes care of us. If your child forgets or fails in the tasks, remind your child that God will never forget or fail us.

Extra Mile

- Enjoy a family movie night. Choose a cartoon or live-action version of David's life. Pop some popcorn and enjoy reliving the life of a "man after God's own heart."
- Remember to thank God for giving you everything you need. Every day this week, spend time sharing as a family something God has given you. It can be something tangible, like the food on your table, or intangible, like the courage to speak up for what's right. You may find you like this exercise enough to make it a regular routine.
- Look for opportunities this week to talk as a family about wants versus needs. Your children are constantly bombarded by media messages that appeal to their "wants." Make sure you counter this influence by pointing out how God provides for all of your needs.

Prepare for Next Week

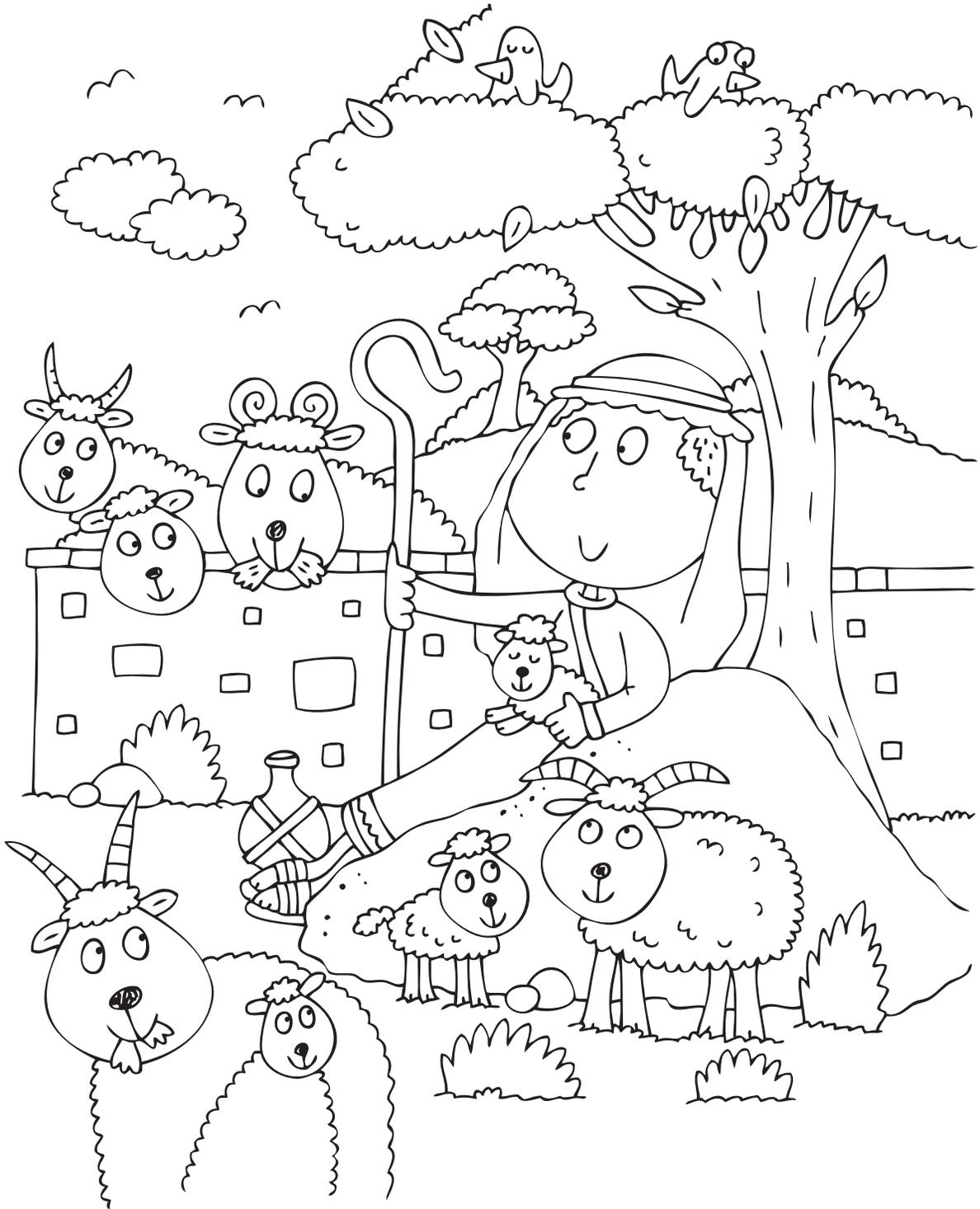
Help your child prepare for next week's lesson by reading *My Bible Story Coloring Book*, *The Writings Week 2* together, and encourage your child to respond with coloring.

If you are reading *The Books of the Bible, The Writings* with your small group, you are discussing your questions and insights with them from week to week. Include your family in the conversation about this week's reading, using the following discussion-starters:

- What is this story about?
- How did [character name] love God?
- How did [character name] love others?

PSALM 23

Name _____ Date _____



"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD." PSALM 23:1

PSALM 23 SENTENCE STRIPS

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD." PSALM 23:1

SKIT: A DOG'S LIFE

Characters

Teacher Cocoa

Teacher: This is my friend Cocoa. He's a good boy!

Cocoa: Ooh! Yes, a good boy! Can I have some scratches?

Teacher: Sure, Cocoa. I'm happy to give you scratches.

Cocoa: Mmmmmm. Thanks! Can I have a treat?

Teacher: Of course you can. It's my job to make sure you have healthy food.

Cocoa: Yummy! And can we go for a walk?

Teacher: Well, we're teaching the kids right now, but as soon as we're done, I'll take you for a walk. I know you need exercise, and I have to take good care of you.

Cocoa: Oh, thank you! But this time, I don't want to wear a leash. I like to run around.

Teacher: Now wait a minute, Cocoa. You have to wear a leash.

Cocoa: I don't want to! Why are you so mean to me? Why won't you let me run around?

Teacher: Cocoa, you know I love you, and I want to take good care of you. I give you scratches and treats and walks.

Cocoa: So why won't you let me run around without a leash?

Teacher: Because I know what's best for you. If you run around without a leash, you could get hurt or lost. I have to take good care of you, and that means giving you only things that are good for you.

Cocoa: Hmm. Is that why you made me take a yucky bath?

Teacher: Yes, I want to keep you clean. That means taking a bath even when you don't want to.

Cocoa: So you're not just being mean to me?

Teacher: No, Cocoa. I make rules to keep you safe and healthy. I know you don't like the rules sometimes, but you can always trust me to give you what you need.

Cocoa: Hey, that reminds me of how God gives us everything we need.

Teacher: That's right. God is good and loving. He wants us to have a safe, healthy life. He wants us to do what's right. That's why he gave us rules about how to live.

Cocoa: And we can always trust God to take good care of us.

Teacher: Yes, and because of Jesus, we know we always will have a home with God in heaven.

Cocoa: Is it almost time for our walk now?

Teacher: Yes. On the leash.

Cocoa: Okay, on the leash.