**May 16th, 2021: Elementary Sunday School lesson
PSALM 23 lesson 2: god is with me**

***In the second lesson covering Psalm 23, the kids will learn that we can feel safe and protected because we have a Good Shepherd to watch over us, to make sure we do not stray and to show us the way.***

**AS KIDS ARRIVE: PSALM 23 CROSSWORD PUZZLE (Materials: printed puzzle, pencils or markers)**

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Have the children look up and read Psalm 23:1-6. They can use either the NIV or KJV. Then, give each child a pencil or a marker and a copy of the crossword puzzle. For younger children, you may want to have them work in pairs, or do one crossword puzzle as a class project.

**OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE AND MEMORY WORK: PSALM 23 ACTIVITY:**

As you continue to have the kids memorize Psalm 23, this week concentrate on verse 4.
**"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." NIV (1984)**

**PREPARATION:** Before class print one copy of each picture card. Children can memorize the Psalm all at once, or in three parts. For example, you can cover one card each Sunday over a three week period. After three weeks, the kids will know the whole Psalm.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Have the children read Psalm 23 from their Bibles several times. Then, using the picture cards, point to each picture as indicated below while the children recite the verses from memory together.

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| PICTURE CARD 1: | PICTURE CARD 2: | PICTURE CARD 3: |
| 1: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. | 7: Even though I walk through the valley | 13: You prepare a table before me |
| 2: He makes me lie down in green pastures, | 8: of the shadow of death, | 14: in the presence of my enemies. |
| 3: He leads me beside quiet waters, | 9: I will fear no evil,  | 15: You anoint my head with oil; |
| 4: He restores my soul | 10: For you are with me | 16: my cup overflows. |
| 5: He guides me in paths of righteousness | 11: your rod and your staff, | 17: Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, |
| 6: for His name’s sake. | 12: they comfort me | 18: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever. |

**ALTERNATE MEMORY WORK: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God." Isaiah 41:10a NIV**Divide the class into two teams. The challenge is for each team to outdo the other in saying the memory verse in a creative way. The teacher can lead one team, and a helper can lead the other. Teams alternate saying the verse and its reference. Example: The leader of team 1 can have the kids say the verse while hopping on one foot. The leader of team 2 will respond by having the kids say the verse while clapping after each word. Team 1 then says the verse while turning around in circles. Team 2 while doing the twist, and so on. There really is no winner, but the kids will have a lot of fun, and they will unknowingly memorize the verse.

**SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION**

**Introduction:** In David's time, shepherds were in constant watch over their sheep because danger was all around. Sheep would make great food for wild animals, which were always nearby and on the prowl. A good shepherd was ready to protect his sheep, or grab them from danger with their rod or staff. David acknowledges how God was his Good Shepherd and Protector. David found much comfort in God's constant presence.

**Read Psalm 23:4** Have several children read this verse.

**Discussion Questions:**1. What kind of valley did the shepherd sometimes have to walk his sheep? *(A valley of the shadow of death.)*2. How could you feel safe if you had to walk through such a valley? *(If you were in the presence of the Good Shepherd.)*3. We may be pretty safe from wild animals, but whom do we need protection from? *(The devil.)*4. How can a rod and staff be a comfort to the sheep? *(They can be used to guide the sheep, fight off wild animals, and grab a sheep that has wandered astray.)*5. David feared no evil because of God's presence. How can we have God's presence in our own life? *(By obeying His commandments and following Jesus.)*

**Read John 10:1-18 -** While the class listens to this passage as it is read, have them keep count of how many times they hear the word "sheep". Sheep is used 16 times in the NIV.

**Discussion Questions:**1. Who did Jesus say He was? *(The Good Shepherd.)*2. Who did Jesus lay down His life for? *(His sheep, you and me.)*3. Jesus compares Himself to a gate for the sheep. A gate to where? *(The only way to Salvation.)*4. What happens to someone who enters through the gate of Jesus? *(They are saved.)*5. What other characters are named in this passage, and what did they do? *(Wolf, stranger, shepherd, gate keeper, hired hand, robber, thief, Father.)? (Safe, loved, well fed, clean, happy, welcome.)*

 **CLASS EXERCISE: SHEPHERD’S STAFF CRAFT (Materials: cardboard, verse cutouts, markers, scissors, glue)**

***Children are reminded how Jesus is the Good Shepherd by creating a shepherd's staff.***

**PREPARATION:** Cut out the cardboard staffs before class. Used cardboard packing boxes will work well. If possible, make the staffs large, about 2 1/2 feet tall. Determine the number of staffs you will need. You can have the children work on their own staffs, or break them into small groups to work on a staff together. How the staff is decorated during class will depend on the age of your children, and how much time is available.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Give each child or team a staff to work on. Provide markers for the children to decorate their staffs. If you want to do this craft with children who are still developing their writing skills, write the different names of Jesus, or ways we can follow Jesus on paper along with pictures. The children can cut these out and glue them to the staff during class.

The children will write or paste, "The Lord is My Shepherd, Psalm 23" at the top of their staff. Then they will write either the different names of Jesus or how we can let Jesus be our shepherd, along with Bible verses if they can. You can brainstorm with the class before doing the craft, and write responses on the board. The kids can then copy the ideas onto their craft. However, older students can gain experience with the Bible Concordance by looking for the verses themselves. *Examples of what can be added to the staff:*

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| **Different Names of Jesus**Redeemer (Psalm 19)The True Vine (John 15:5)Living Water (John 4:10)Alpha and Omega (Rev. 22:15)Bread of Life (John 6:35)Creator (John 1:3)Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6)Friend, Potter, PhysicianPrince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)Living Way (Hebrews 10:20)Savior (Luke 2:11) | **How We can let Jesus be our Shepherd**Read the BibleSing PraisesChoose good friendsBe careful what I watch on TVObey parents and teachersPrayGo to churchDo good deeds |

**ALTERNATE CLASS EXERCISE: ONE WAY or MANY OBJECT TALK (Materials: picture of One Way sign optional)**

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** (Hold up the one-way sign as you speak.)
Did you know, there is only one way to do many things? For example:
1) You must drive with the flow of traffic on the interstate.
2) You must stop at red lights.
3) You must take medicine in the proper doses.

Some people may foolishly argue that you do not have to do these things only one way, but they would be wrong. If you did these things differently, you would be putting yourself in danger and could quite possibly die.

Also did you know, many things are always true.? For example:
1) If you jump off the roof of your house, you will fall.
2) If you touch fire, it will be hot.
3) Your body must have air to stay alive.

Once again, some people may want to disagree with you on these things and say these things are not always true, but once again, they would be quite foolish. How many people can live without air? Gravity affects everyone and fire is always hot.

Jesus tells us that there is only one way to get to Heaven when He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." *(John 14:5-7)* The Bible also tells us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." *(John 3:16)*

There is but one way to Heaven, we must believe that Jesus, God's one and only son, died for our sins. We must repent and turn from our sins and ask Jesus to forgive us. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be saved.*(Acts 16:31)*

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

**APPLICATION:** Jesus is our Lord and Shepherd. He laid down his life to save us from the valley of the shadow of death. If we follow Him, we are counted as one of His sheep. The fear of sin cannot overcome us, because Jesus already laid down His own life for our sins. When we enter through the gate of Jesus, and follow in His paths, we can be sure that He will protect us from the evil one. Even when we stray, He will take His staff to grab us and bring us back to him. Now that is a great comfort!

**What we learned:** As the children continued learning from Psalm 23, this week they discovered how they can feel safe and protected because they have a Good Shepherd to watch over them, to make sure they do not stray and to show them the way. (Scripture used: Psalm 23:4, John 10:1- 18)

**Memory Verse:** "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4 NIV (1984) Last week's verses "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Psalm 23:1-3 NIV (1984) This week your child can memorize verse 4 of Psalm 23. Read this verse several times and then have your child say it from memory. Then, practice saying all four verses from memory. If your child already knows Psalm 23, he or she can memorize the alternate verse below. Alternate Memory Verse: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God." Isaiah 41:10a NIV

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** If the weather permits, take a short walk with your child in the woods. Find a path that is not too well traveled, and as you walk together, talk about how God is with us all the time, ready to guide us down the right path. When finished, thank God together for His protection.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank You for protecting me. Why should I be afraid when I have such a powerful God? Even when things seem hopeless, or when my way is dark, You are my Light. You are the Good Shepherd who comforts me always in Christ Jesus. Amen.