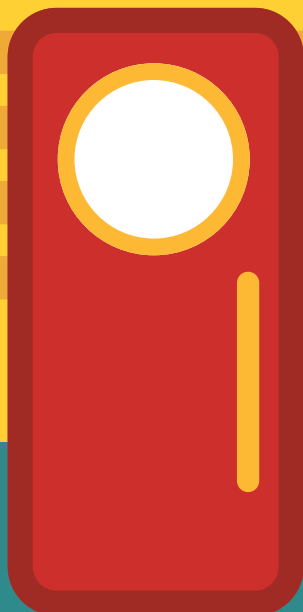


Diner



LESSON 1

UPPER ELEMENTARY BIBLE STUDY

MAIN POINT The Lord Is My Shepherd.

SCRIPTURE Psalm 23:1; John 10:1-5

MEMORY VERSE Psalm 23

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of
righteousness for His name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the
days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”



The PANTRY

S U P P L I E S

LARGE GROUP

GAME OPTION 1:

- Instruction sheets
(pg. 85, 87)

GAME OPTION 2:

- None

BIBLE LESSON:

- Psalm 23 Poster
(See pg. 5)

SMALL GROUP

ACTIVITY 1:

- 4 colors of
butcher paper
- Buckets

ACTIVITY 2:

- None

LEADER DEVOTION



PSALM 23:1 & JOHN 10:1-5.

For the next several lessons, we will be studying Psalm 23. Written by David, at one time a shepherd by trade, Psalm 23 reminds us there is great comfort in having the Lord as our Shepherd. The role of the shepherd is to provide, guide, protect, discipline, and generally care for the needs of the sheep. The role of the sheep is to simply follow the shepherd. This week, we will be studying exactly what it means to have the Lord as our Shepherd.

In Jesus' analogy in John 10, the Good Shepherd is the owner of His sheep, giving Him a more vested interest in their welfare. In fact, God owns us twice. First, He owned us because He made us. (Psalm 139; Genesis 1:26-27) God created us to live in a perfect relationship with Him. **However, as Isaiah 53:6 says, "All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all."**

When our sin separated us from God, Jesus came to pay the price for our wrongdoing with His death. He bought us back with His blood and became our Owner a second time. For those who have accepted His gift of forgiveness and restored relationship, Jesus is their Owner not only once, but twice.

A shepherd has authority over his sheep. The sheep do not find a shepherd's authority oppressive, but comforting, because the shepherd cares for his sheep. A good shepherd has the flock's best interest in mind at all times. There is great rest in acknowledging God's authority over our lives. No matter how "out of control" a situation may feel in the moment, we can rest in knowing that God, our Owner who knows us each by name, is always completely and totally in control.

Imagine what would happen if a single sheep tried to control the flock on its own. It sounds ridiculous, but we do it all of the time. We try to take daily situations under our control and simply inform God of our progress. Ask yourself this question: Am I resting in God's ownership and authority over my life, or am I constantly fighting for control?

Pray over the kids in your group as you prepare. Ask the Lord to bring young hearts to Him. Acknowledge that He is in control and ask Him to work through you. Thank Him for being your Shepherd, your Owner, and your Authority.

LARGE GROUP

GAME OPTION 1: LISTEN TO YOUR SHEPHERD

MATERIALS: Instruction sheets (pg. 85, 87)

DIRECTIONS: Split everyone into their small groups. Hand one person in each group an instruction sheet. Have each group choose one person to be the shepherd of the group. The shepherds must come to the front of the room, take an instruction sheet, and line up against one wall of the classroom. On your mark, shepherds must call out the instructions in order to their groups. Groups must only obey their shepherd's instructions. The first team to finish wins!

When everyone has finished, gather everyone together to make the connection in Large Group.



MAKE THE CONNECTION:

In this game, you had to obey YOUR shepherd in order to win. Listening to your shepherd was hard when everyone was yelling! It can be hard to listen to God when you have a lot going on around you. This week, take time to listen to God. Read Psalm 23 on your own and thank Jesus for being your Good Shepherd.

GAME OPTION 2: SHEPHERD SAYS

MATERIALS: None

DIRECTIONS: Play a game of Simon Says, but choose a "Shepherd" to give commands instead of a "Simon." The person who obeys the most commands correctly wins!



MAKE THE CONNECTION:

When you disobeyed one of the Shepherd's commands, you were out of the game! It is very important for sheep to listen to and obey their shepherd's instructions. Psalm 23 calls the Lord our Shepherd. It is very important to listen to and obey God, our Shepherd. He loves us and knows what is best for us!



BIBLE LESSON



INTRO

For the next few lessons, we will be learning Psalm 23. Psalms is a book of songs in the Old Testament. Many of the Psalms were written by David. Psalm 23 is one of the psalms David wrote. David was one of Israel's greatest kings, because he loved and followed God. But before David was a king, he was a shepherd boy. As a shepherd, David knew how to take care of sheep. He realized that God is like our Shepherd, and we are like His sheep.

"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1) Psalm 23 is one of the most famous passages in the Bible. It is well known for its comforting words and beautiful pictures of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and His people as His sheep. Throughout the psalm, the shepherd provides, guides, and protects his sheep as the Lord does for His people. But before a shepherd can do anything for his sheep, the sheep have to be his. The sheep belong to the shepherd. Today, we are going to learn that the Lord, Jesus, is our Shepherd. Those who have believed in Jesus belong to Him and are under His authority.



READ THE BIBLE

Read Psalm 23.

Today we are going to focus on only the first verse in Psalm 23. Listen to this story about a young shepherd boy. It is not in the Bible, but it might help you understand why David sang, **"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want."**

There once was a boy who lived in open farm country. His family raised sheep. One day, the boy's father gave him a brand new baby lamb. The boy was so excited! He fed and watered the lamb. He watched over his lamb every day, so it would not get hurt or lost. The boy loved the lamb very much and took very good care of it. He was a very good shepherd.

One day, the little lamb wandered away from the flock. The lamb was not where it was supposed to be. It wandered into a neighboring farm, where the sheep were not cared for well. The sheep in this farm did not have enough food and were often sick or hurt. When the boy saw that his lamb had wandered away, he was so sad. He immediately started to call for his lamb, spending days and days looking all over the farm, wondering if it had been hurt.

One day, as the boy was searching for his lamb, he looked across the fence to the neighbor's farm. There was his lamb! It did not look very good. It looked hungry and a little weak. The boy talked to the owner of that farm to ask for his lamb back, but the farmer would not listen. The lamb had come onto his property, so it was his. The boy was very upset. He looked at the farm owner and said, "I want to buy back my lamb. How much will it cost to buy my lamb from you?"

The farm owner thought that was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard. Why would anyone want to buy back a lamb that was scrawny and weak? But the boy did not give up. He asked again, "How much will it cost to buy my lamb back from you?"

The farm owner looked at the boy for a moment, noticing his dirty and old clothing and his worn out shoes. He said, "This lamb is going to cost you \$200." That was more money than the young boy had ever even seen! His family was poor and could not afford to spend that kind of money.

But the boy was not about to give up on his lamb. He asked his father if he could earn money by doing extra chores around the farm. He asked other families if he could earn money by pulling weeds, mowing the grass, or even cleaning out horse stalls. After several months of hard work and early mornings, the boy finally had enough money.

He went to the farm owner's property and headed to the farm owner's house. When the owner came to the door, the boy handed him the money and asked for his lamb. The farm owner said, "If he comes to you, you can have him." The boy walked over to the sheep and called for his lamb to come. The lamb immediately recognized his shepherd's voice and came to him! Quickly, the boy picked up the lamb and proudly walked away from that awful farm. The lamb was his not just once but twice, because the boy had bought back his own lamb.



PRESENT THE GOSPEL

Boys and girls, Jesus is like the boy in the story and we are like the little lamb. In the beginning, God created us. We belonged to Him, because He made us. Then every one of us chose to sin. We chose to do wrong things, just like the lamb who wandered away. Wrong choices hurt our hearts, because sin separates us from God. But God did not leave us. Like the boy, Jesus came to earth to buy us back – not with money, but with His own life. You see, the punishment for sin, our wrong choices, is death. Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life. Then He died on the cross to take the punishment you and I deserve for our sins. Jesus died in our place and then rose from the dead – came back to life – three days later!

Now we can belong to Him forever. If, like the lamb who came to his boy, we choose to follow Jesus, we can become His a second time. Admit you have done wrong things, that you have sinned. Believe Jesus is God's Son, who died for you and came back to life. Then choose to make Jesus your Lord, your Boss, your Shepherd. Put Jesus in charge of your life from now on.

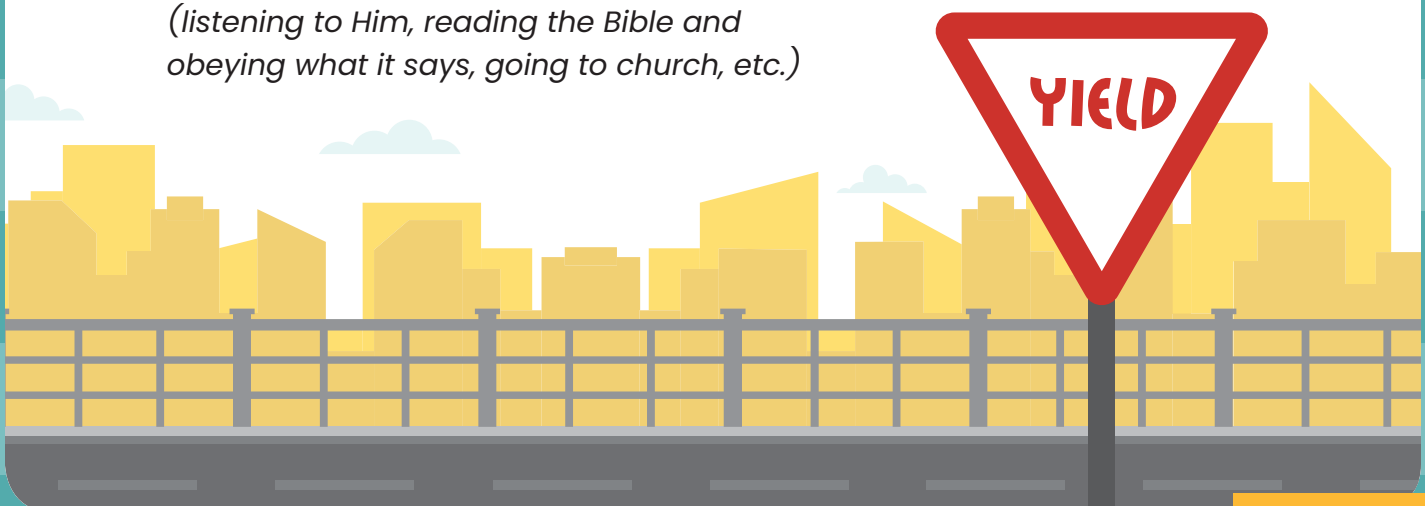


APPLICATION

In each lesson, we will use a different road sign to help us remember what we have learned from Psalm 23. Today's sign is a YIELD sign. We are to YIELD to God's authority over our lives. We are to listen to what God says and obey Him. We can trust that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows what is best for us and loves us very much. We can be confident He is in control no matter what happens around us.

As you go to small groups, think about your answer to these questions:

- Is Jesus the Shepherd, the Lord, of your life?
- If you have already made the choice to belong to Him, how can you make sure you are always letting Him be in charge?
(listening to Him, reading the Bible and obeying what it says, going to church, etc.)



SMALL GROUP

ACTIVITY 1: SHEEP SCRAMBLE

MATERIALS: Four colors of butcher paper, Buckets

DIRECTIONS: Split your group into four even teams. Assign each team a color of paper. Have each team tear their papers into small wads and mix the colors together in one area. Have teams line up on the opposite side of your area with a sheep pen (bucket). On your mark, teams must run relay style to pick up a sheep (paper wad) from their color flock and return it to the sheep pen (bucket). The first team to collect all of their sheep and put them in the pen wins!



MAKE THE CONNECTION:

- How did you know which sheep belonged to your team? Shepherds know each of their sheep. They make sure everyone knows the sheep belong to them by placing a mark on the sheep's ear. In the same way, God knows each of you by name!
- How do people know you belong to God? How can they tell you apart from people who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior?

ACTIVITY 2: MEMORIZE PSALM 23:1

MATERIALS: None

DIRECTIONS: Choose one person to be the shepherd. This person makes up motions to the words in the verse that everyone in your group must follow. Give everyone a chance to be the shepherd, making up different motions each time.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT."

PSALM 23:1



MAKE THE CONNECTION:

It is easy to follow someone when they are right in front of you.

- What are some ways we can follow Jesus, our Good Shepherd, in our daily lives?
- A shepherd gives his sheep directions. How does Jesus give us instructions?



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why do you think David compares God's people to sheep?
2. How is God like a Shepherd to His children, Christians?

WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

Read John 10:1-5.

1. How does it make you feel to know God knows everyone in the world by name? (verse 3) What does that tell you about God? (**Read Psalm 139:1-6** for more on this topic.)
2. What do the sheep do when the shepherd speaks? (verse 4)
How is that like what we should do in everyday life?
3. **Read Psalm 139:13-14** and **Ephesians 1:7-8**. The shepherd in Psalm 23 owns his sheep. In what ways does God own us?

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Is Jesus the Shepherd, the Lord, of your life?
2. If you have already made the choice to belong to Him, how can you make sure you are always letting Him be in charge? (*listening to Him, reading the Bible and obeying what it says, going to church, etc.*)
3. Lead your group in a prayer of thanks. Thank God for being the Good Shepherd. Thank Him for buying you back by dying on the cross for your sins. Thank Him for taking care of you.