



Session

11



# A PSALM OF DAVID

## Psalm 23

The Book of Psalms is divided into five “books” or collections. They were possibly grouped this way because they were passed around for worshipers to use, or they were grouped by theme and content. The five books together comprise what we know today as the Book of Psalms. The individual psalms are identified by seven specific categories: hymns, laments, songs of thanksgiving, royal psalms, enthronement psalms, penitential psalms, and wisdom or didactic psalms. The psalm we will look at this week is a psalm of thanksgiving.

This psalm is one of the best-loved, and its short text can easily be recited by even young children. David, the author of this psalm, had been a shepherd in his early years, so the context about which he spoke had deep personal meaning to him. David’s life as a shepherd led him to many encounters with wild animals and other dangers, but through it all God sustained David. It’s with that intimate knowledge of shepherding and life-sustaining grace from God that David wrote this psalm.

David introduced God as a shepherd. The shepherd imagery would have been one of care and concern for the sheep. The job of a shepherd was to gently guide the sheep from location to location, taking great pains to ensure the animals’ safety along the way. The sheep were completely dependent on the shepherd for everything. In David’s mind this was the relationship between God the Father and His sheep.

Exchanging images from the constant care of a shepherd, David next compared God to a gracious host. Hosting responsibilities during this point in history were very important. How your host greeted and treated you would say a lot about how you stood socially in their midst. David agreed that in God’s eyes each guest is the same, and each guest receives the same treatment. God is a host who provides not just physical sustenance but also safety from harm. When you are in the presence of the Lord eating at His table, He will invite you to dine with Him forever.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Psalm 23

**MEMORY VERSE:** Psalm 23:1

**BIBLE VERSE:** John 10:11

**TEXT TRUTH:** God cares for His people.

**BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT:** Knows the Bible teaches people how God wants them to live. Locates many books in the Bible without assistance. Memorizes individual Bible verses. Understands that God told the writers of the Bible what to write.

### BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Jump In:** “Psalms” (*Books of the Bible Posters*), “David Mosaic” (*Slide*)
- ☐ **Examine the Text:** ¼ sheets of copy paper, pencils, Bibles, “Text Truth 11” (*Slide*), Family Cards
- ☐ **Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location* video
- ☐ **Memory Verse:** “Psalm 23:1” (*Poster Pack*), heavyweight paper, painter’s tape, scissors, permanent marker
- ☐ **Prayer:** none

### APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Explorer Guides:** *Bibles*, *Explorer Guides*, pens
- ☐ **Review:** painter’s tape, large coin, small sticky notes, permanent marker, “Review Questions” (*Printable*), table
- ☐ **Tech Connect** (Optional): a device with the LifeWay Kids app

### ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Bible Skills:** multiple sets of letter titles, large bowl, “Bible Book Cards” (*Printable*), Bibles, “Bible Books” (*Books of the Bible Posters*)
- ☐ **Move:** cotton balls, painter’s tape, smoothie straws
- ☐ **Make:** popped popcorn, inexpensive paper plates, pretzel sticks, pretzel thins, mini chocolate chips, hand sanitizer, “Allergy Alert” (*Printable*)
- ☐ **Explore:** poster board, markers

Leaders, grow on the go! Listen to session-by-session training every week on Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, LifeWay’s Digital Pass, or visit [goexplorethebible.com/kids-training](http://goexplorethebible.com/kids-training).

## A PSALM OF DAVID

### Psalm 23

*David wrote a song about God. David talked about God being like a shepherd to His people. “The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need.”*

*David described how God had cared for him. “God leads me to peaceful places to rest. He helps me become strong again. God leads me to the right paths because He is always good and true.”*

*Then David said, “God leads me during tough times so I do not need to be afraid. God cares for me like I am a special guest at a meal. God provides for me while my enemies watch. God’s goodness and faithful love will always be with me.”*

### CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Psalms reveals our need for a Savior. Psalms includes prophecies about Jesus, the Messiah and Savior. Jesus explained in Luke 24 that the Book of Psalms taught people about Him. Psalms highlights our need for salvation and that God, our Redeemer, provides salvation to those who trust in Him.

### DON'T FORGET TO SEND HOME THESE FAMILY RESOURCES EACH WEEK:

- “Explore the Bible at Home” (Printables)
- Explore the Bible: Kids Family Cards

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: "Psalms" (Books of the Bible Posters), "David Mosaic" (Slide)
- Examine the Text: ¼ sheets of copy paper, pencils, Bibles, "Text Truth 11" (Slide), Family Cards
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Psalm 23:1" (Poster Pack), heavyweight paper, painter's tape, scissors, permanent marker
- Prayer: none

Need an Opening Activity? Choose one of the activities in the *Activities* section and adapt it to introduce the session.

### JUMP IN

- Greet your kids at the door as they arrive. Ask how their week went and if anything fun or exciting happened that they want to share with the group.
- Ask your kids to join you in an open playing area. Instruct them to do 23 of everything that you do. Ask your boys and girls to do 23 jumping jacks, 23 toe touches, 23 seconds of running in place, hold a knee plank for 23 seconds, hold a squat for 23 seconds. Add any other fun exercises that kids can do for a count or hold of 23.
- Display the "Psalms" poster and the "David Mosaic."
- Begin: "This week, we are going to start studying from the Book of Psalms. The word *psalm* means 'song.' Who wrote the Psalms? Our poster tells us that many people wrote the Book of Psalms. One author was King David. Our object this week is the 'David Mosaic.' The Hebrew writing on this mosaic is the name of David. David is the author of the Psalm we are going to be studying this week. Which Psalm do you think we are going to study today? Here is a hint, it has to do with our exercises! Today, we are going to study Psalm 23. We are going to learn how **God cares for His people**. Let's learn more!"

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Give each kid a ¼ sheet of paper and a pencil. Ask your kids to form groups of 3 to 4. Ask half the groups to work together to come up with things that can make you stronger and the other half to come up with things that can make you weak. Encourage them to come up with things that make us physically, mentally, and spiritually stronger or weak. Assist as needed.
- Discuss these things with your group.
- Begin: "Let's take our Bibles and find Psalm 23. Is the Book of Psalms in the Old or New Testament?" Assist as needed.
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you to use as a guide.
- Ask a volunteer to read Psalm 23:1.
- Ask: "What is the job of a shepherd? A shepherd's main job is to keep his flock safe. God is our shepherd. He wants to keep us safe. God gave us the Bible to help show us how to live. When we follow God's plan, He will provide us with everything we need."
- Ask a volunteer to read Psalm 23:3-4.



- Ask: “What are two things these verses tell us that God does for us? Remember, God has a plan for our lives. We can trust God’s plan and trust Him to lead us down the right path. We all will face tough times, but we can trust God that He will help us through those tough times. We have nothing to fear when we trust in God. **God cares for His people.**”
- Display the Text Truth.
- Continue: “Our Text Truth says that **God cares for His people.** Let’s say our Text Truth together: **God cares for His people.**”
- Distribute Family Cards to each kid.
- Conclude: “When we see the ‘David Mosaic’ on our card, let it be a reminder to us that **God cares for His people.** This includes you and me! Review our Psalm this week with your family by answering some of the questions on the back of the card.”

### PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the Session 11 video.
- Ask: “What location did Joel visit? What did he learn about sheep? Why does David say God is our shepherd in Psalm 23?”

### MEMORY VERSE

- ☐ *Bonus Verse Option: The Memory Verse activity each week is focused on the monthly Memory Verse, Psalm 23:1. If your kids quickly memorize the Memory Verse, you may opt to challenge them to learn an additional weekly Bonus Verse. This week’s Bonus Verse is John 10:11.*
- ☐ *Before group, use ½ sheets of heavyweight paper and write one word from the verse on each piece of paper. Add extra words that do not belong in the verse. Make two sets of the verse.*
- ☐ *When laying the words out, group two words that are in the verse together, then insert a word that is not in the verse that kids will need to hop over. Continue in this manner: lay one word that is in the verse and another that is not, lay down two words from the verse and one word that is not. Tape the pages down to prevent them from sliding.*
- Help kids hop out the verse while they say it out loud. They can only hop on the words that are in the verse.
- Display the “Psalm 23:1” poster. Say the verse with your group in short segments. Ask your kids to repeat it after you. Play the game as suggested. Review the verse as a group to finish.

### PRAYER

- Ask your boys and girls if they have anything that they would like the group to pray for.
- Pray with your boys and girls.

## **APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)**

### **TOOLS:**

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: painter's tape, large coin, small sticky notes, permanent marker, "Review Questions" (Printable), table
- Tech Connect (Optional): a device with the LifeWay Kids app

### **EXPLORER GUIDES**

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help kids find today's pages, "A Psalm of David."
- Guide kids to read "Make Some Music!"
- Select a volunteer to read aloud "All About the Book of Psalms."
- Help kids identify the "Missing Words." (*Answers: shepherd, rest, right, afraid, guest, watch, always*)
- Review today's object, the "David Mosaic."
- Conclude by allowing kids to quietly "Color and Think."

### **REVIEW**

- *Using painter's tape, prepare one end of a table to make 8 squares. Assign each square a number 1-4 using small sticky notes.*

- Form two groups with your kids. Allow a child to thump a large coin from the opposite end. Ask a question from the "Review Questions."
- If the child gets the question correct, assign the number of points his coin landed on to his group. Alternate between the two groups. Continue play as time allows using any questions from sessions 1-11.

### **TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)**

- Prior to Small Group, download the LifeWay Kids app. Use the activity labeled "Explorer Plus" in the Explore the Bible: Kids section of the app.

## ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

### SPELL THAT BOOK



*Tools: multiple sets of letter tiles, large bowl, "Bible Book Cards" (Printable), Bibles, "Bible Books" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- ☐ *Option: You can create your own sets of letter tiles by printing the alphabet on a piece of paper, copying the page several times, and cutting apart the letters.*
- Ask your kids to form groups of 4 to 5 kids. Lay the "Bible Book Cards" facedown on the playing area. Allow one child from each group to come draw a card and take it back to the group.
- Ask your kids to work together to spell the Bible book using the letter tiles. Then instruct your kids to find the book in their Bibles. As you float from group to group, ask each group if the book is in the Old or New Testament or which division of the Bible it belongs to. Encourage your kids to use the "Bible Books" poster for help.

### LEADING THE SHEEP



*Tools: cotton balls, painter's tape, smoothie straws*

- ☐ *Prepare crazy paths with the painter's tape for kids to follow with their "sheep." You may choose to make crazy paths on tables for a higher ground.*
- Form two groups with your kids. Give each kid his own smoothie straw and a cotton ball. Instruct the kids that they will lead the cotton balls down the paths that you have prepared by tapping the cotton ball with the smoothie straw.
- Say: "Psalm 23 tells us that God is our shepherd. His job is to keep us safe. David writes in this Psalm that God will lead us down the right path. We had to lead our "sheep" down a path. God's path might not be easy, but if we trust Him, He will keep us safe. **God cares for His people.**"

## POPCORN SHEEP



*Tools: popped popcorn, inexpensive paper plates, pretzel sticks, pretzel thins, mini chocolate chips, hand sanitizer, "Allergy Alert" (Printable)*

- Instruct each kid to clean his hands. Give each kid 2 pretzel sticks, 1 pretzel thin, and two mini chocolates. Give each kid a handful of popped popcorn. Tell your kids that the pretzel thin is the sheep's face, the mini chocolates are the eyes, the popcorn is the body, and the pretzel sticks are legs. Ask your kids to make a sheep with suggested supplies.
- Say: "A shepherd keeps his sheep safe. God is our shepherd. He keeps us safe by guiding us down the right paths. We never have to worry when we trust God to lead us in the right direction. Even if our days are hard, **God cares for His people.** God cares for you!"

## LEAVING BEHIND



*Tools: poster board, markers*

- Display the posters on a wall or set them on the floor on one side of the room. Form two teams and ask kids to stand in a line. Choose a volunteer to go first. Explain that they will have two minutes to make a list on the poster board of things that they would miss from their home if they had to move and leave everything behind. Instruct the first volunteer that they will write one thing on the poster, then allow the next person in line to have a turn.
- Review some of the things that they put on their poster. Invite kids to share why they would miss that thing or person.
- Say: "Missionaries leave a lot behind, but they know they are doing what God wants them to do. Dr. Larry Pepper left behind his home to move to Tanzania. He misses a lot of people and things, but now Tanzania is his home and he loves the people there."
- Pray for the work of Dr. Pepper.