

LESSON 2

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Cares for Us

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23

GOD'S BIG STORY: David writes a psalm describing how God is our Good Shepherd, the One who watches out for us and cares for us. God knows exactly what we need and when we need it, and He is our protector and comforter!

WORD OF WONDER: How God made me is amazing and wonderful. —from Psalm 139:14

- Play Stations:
 - Sheep Search
 - Pet Care
 - The Lord Is My Shepherd Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Needs and Wants
- Word of Wonder: From Psalm 139:14
- Craft: Woolly Sheep
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: All of Me, Be a Light
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Circle Time: God Cares for Me
- Game: Lost Sheep
- Responding in Worship: Psalm 23 Path
- Prayer and Blessing
- Closing Game: Listen to the Shepherd





LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Cares for Us

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 139:14

Psalm 23 could be the most famous of David's compositions. Take a moment to read it, even if the words are familiar.

David probably used imagery of his experience as a shepherd while writing this psalm. But unless you live in a verdant countryside, you probably don't see shepherds leading sheep from place to place.

Unlike their reputation, sheep are intelligent. They have an impressive memory, recognizing other sheep and familiar humans. This is crucial to the survival of these domesticated animals. Sheep are also dependent on their caretakers.

In David's imagination, his previous role is reversed. He becomes a sheep under the care of God—an ideal shepherd. God plans for the physical needs of those in His care. Yet David admits that God leads the sheep into dangerous places. Just as a human shepherd must bring the sheep through treacherous paths, God guides and protects His sheep on a hazardous road. God's care is not superficial.

In the same way, the life of faith is not free of risk. God has a destination in mind, a place of abundance and redemption. God cares so much for His sheep that He will bring them into dark places, which leads to future triumph. Have you felt like you are under the watchful care of God this week? If you are finding yourself in dark places, have you stayed close to your shepherd?

—Jason Hitchcock

Theology Editor and Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

David grew up as a shepherd boy in the Judean hill country. His experience in leading sheep, directing their paths, and providing nourishment and shelter gave him insight into God, the Great Shepherd who leads and restores us.

WHAT?

Psalm 23 is the most famous psalm in the whole Bible. It has brought truth and comfort to people throughout the ages. The psalmist finds security and rest in the shepherd who cares for him.

WHERE?

David grew up in Judah—the southern part of the nation of Israel. It's not a lush area but is filled with deserts and hills. Shepherds were responsible for finding clumps of grass and rare streams of water to feed and nourish the sheep.

WHEN?

The psalms were written over hundreds of years—from the time of Moses to after the exile from Babylon. David—the author of Psalm 23—would have written it sometime during his life, likely between 1035–970 BC.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

Psalm 23 is a wonderful encouragement that we are invited to rest securely in the care of the Great Shepherd. Centuries later, God came to earth in the person of Jesus, who said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).



LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Cares for Us
SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23
WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 139:14

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: container; green Easter grass or crinkle paper; small toy animals (including one sheep); stuffed animals; items to care for stuffed animals such as toy food, bowls, blankets or cushions, leashes; coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [The Lord Is My Shepherd Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Sheep Search

Set up: Place green Easter grass or crinkle paper in a container along with a variety of small toy animals. Include one sheep.

Leader Tip: If you don't have toy sheep, you can print a picture of sheep.

Play: Invite the kids to be shepherds by searching through the grass until they find the sheep.

Play Station: Pet Care

Set up: Provide stuffed animals and items needed to care for various animals. These can include toy food (mostly vegetables and fruit), bowls for water, blankets or cushions, and leashes.

Play: Invite the kids to play with the stuffed animals and use the items to take care of the animals. Talk with the kids about the pets or animals they may have at their homes. **What do the animals eat? Where do the animals sleep? How do their families provide warmth or comfort to the animals? How do people help their animals exercise (such as taking dogs for a walk)?**

Play Station: The Lord Is My Shepherd Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite animal.

Curiosity Activity: Needs and Wants

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), marker (prep only), index cards (2)

RESOURCES: Needs and Wants Cards (1 set/SG)

Ahead of time, print the Needs and Wants Cards and cut the cards apart. Using a marker, write the word *NEEDS* on one index card and *WANTS* on the other index card.

We all need certain things to live. Some of those things are food, water, shelter, and clothes. Can you think of any other things we need? Set out the *NEEDS* card. **We also have things we want, things that aren't necessary to live. Some of those things might be desserts, games, toys, and computers. Can you think of other things we might want?** Set out the *WANTS* card.



You all had some good thoughts on needs and wants. Let's play a game where I'll show you a picture and you'll share whether it's a need or a want. Then we'll take turns putting each picture under the *NEEDS* or *WANTS* card, depending on which you think it is. Go through each card one at a time and have the kids help you decide to which category it belongs.

The Bible says God is our shepherd. A shepherd takes care of the sheep and makes sure they have everything they need—such as food, water, and somewhere safe to sleep. We'll learn more about how God is our Shepherd and how He cares for us!

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, shatterproof mirror

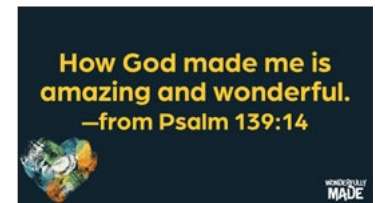
WORD OF WONDER

How God made me is amazing and wonderful.

—from Psalm 139:14

Display the Word of Wonder Slide. **Our Word of Wonder for the Wonderfully Made series is from Psalm 139:14. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.** Practice the verse with the kids.

Hold up a handheld mirror, looking at yourself as you say the Word of Wonder. Pass the mirror around the room and invite each kid to say the verse while looking in the mirror.



In today's God's big story, we learned about David, who wrote lots of poems and songs. Did you know poems and songs are one way we can praise God and thank Him for making us and knowing us?

After everyone has had a chance to say the verse, ask the kids about what they noticed in the mirror. **God is our Creator! He created us in amazing and wonderful ways! We have eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, a nose for smelling, and a mouth for tasting. Look around the room. Do we all look the same? No—we're all different, but we're all the same in one way ... we're all made by God to be amazing and wonderful!**

Craft: Woolly Sheep

SUPPLIES: thick paper or cardstock (1 sheet per kid), glue sticks, cotton balls (handful for each kid), construction paper (green and blue; 1 sheet of each color per kid)

RESOURCES: [Sheep Template \(1/KID\)](#) *back of coloring sheet

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Sheep Template on thick paper or cardstock for each kid.

We learned about David today. He knew that God cared for him so much. He trusted that God would love and take care of him forever. God is our shepherd too. And He loves us so much. God looks out for us and cares for us. God gives us what we need. He protects us and comforts us. We can trust the Lord as our shepherd because God cares for us.

Give each kid a Sheep Template. Show the kids how to use a glue stick to attach the cotton balls to the sheep to make its wool. Some cotton balls may need to be stretched out to cover the entire sheep.

Then have the kids tear the green and blue construction paper into small pieces. Have the kids glue the small green pieces to the template as grass. Do the same thing with the blue construction paper to make water for the sheep. As the kids work, talk about how God provides for us and cares for us.

[Read Psalm 23 aloud to the kids.](#)

The shepherd provides clear water and fresh grass for the sheep. God provides everything we need. He loves us and takes care of us. We can trust God and follow Him! We're like sheep, and He is our shepherd.



Circle Time: God Cares for Me

SUPPLIES: bottle of water, toy food, toy house (or dollhouse furniture), item of clothing, paper heart, family photo

Ahead of time gather various supplies that show ways God takes care of us or gives us what we need. Gather the kids in a circle and put all the supplies in the middle. **We learned today that David was a shepherd before he was the king of Israel. David always remembered when he was a shepherd. David wrote, “The LORD is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need” (Psalm 23:1). David called God his shepherd, the one who takes care of him. God took care of David like David took care of the sheep. God is also our shepherd. He takes care of us. God knows just what we need and when we need it.**

Go around the circle and let each kid choose an item, one at a time, from the middle of the circle. Invite each kid to share how that item is like a way God takes care of us. For example: A water bottle reminds us that God gives us water to drink.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who wrote Psalm 23?** (David)
- **What does David call God in Psalm 23?** (our shepherd)
- **How do you think a good shepherd takes care of sheep?**
- **How do you think a good shepherd protects the sheep?**
- **What could happen to a flock of sheep if there was no shepherd?** (The sheep could get hurt or lost; they might not have enough food or water; etc.)
- **How are we like sheep?** (We need help; we wander; we need to be led.)
- **What are some ways God cares for you?**
- **How can you care for someone this week the way God cares for you?**

Leader Tip: Some kids may say they're not afraid of anything. You can give a gentle reminder that almost everyone feels nervous or afraid about something, and that's OK! It reminds us that we can trust God to help us!

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for hearing us and caring about us. God hears all our prayers!

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

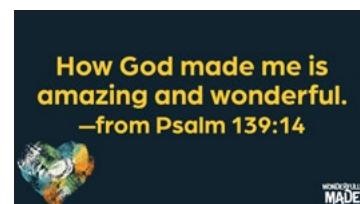
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for being here with us. We're ready to hear from You today and to respond to You. Thank You, God, that You protect us, provide for us, and care for us as our shepherd. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about how God is our shepherd and how He cares for us. He leads us, guides us, and provides everything we need. Let's sing about the Lord, our shepherd, and praise Him for taking such good care of us.

Play songs All of Me, Be a Light and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the Bible.

Read from the God's Big Story Script provided.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

Before telling God's big story, teach the kids the American Sign Language sign for *Lord*. Place your fingers in an L shape with your palm facing out. Move your L from your left shoulder to your right hip to make the sign for *Lord*. As the kids listen to God's big story, tell them to sign *Lord* each time you say, "Lord" or "God."

You're going to be a part of the story today. Each time I say, "Lord" or "God," you can do the sign for Lord. Review the sign for *Lord* again. Then each time I say, "sheep," you can "bahhh" like a sheep. Let's hear you practice! Have the kids practice their "bahhh" sound.

A long time ago, God's (kids sign) people (the Israelites) had a great king named David. Before David was a mighty king, he was a young boy who took care of his family's sheep (kids respond). Someone who takes care of sheep (kids respond) is a shepherd. Every day, David made sure the sheep (kids respond) had water to drink and grass to eat. He protected the sheep (kids respond) if anything tried to hurt them. David lived in Bethlehem.

David grew up and became a brave leader. He won battles. He was Israel's greatest king! David wrote lots of song poems to God. These song poems are called psalms. The psalms are in the Bible. One of them is Psalm 23. Remember to sign *Lord* when you hear me say *Lord* or *God*. For those who haven't heard it before, *Lord* is another name for *God*. Lead kids in doing the sign for *Lord*.

David always remembered when he was a shepherd. David wrote "The LORD (kids sign) is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need" (Psalm 23:1). David called God (kids sign) his shepherd, the one who takes care of him. God (kids sign) took care of David like David took care of the sheep (kids respond). God (kids sign) is also our shepherd. He takes care of us. God (kids sign) knows just what we need and when we need it.

David said that God (kids sign) brought him to green grass and quiet water. God (kids sign) helped him feel strong.

God (kids sign) cares for us. He guides us and leads us the right way. A good shepherd leads the sheep (kids respond) on the safe and right path.

David said that even when he was in dark and scary places, he wouldn't be afraid. David knew God (kids sign) was always with him (from Psalm 23:4). God (kids sign) is strong and powerful. God (kids sign) always knows how to protect His children.

David then said that God (kids sign) prepares a huge meal for him right in front of all the people who don't like him! God's (kids sign) love and kindness never run out.

David knew that God (kids sign) cared for him so much. He trusted that God (kids sign) would love and take care of him forever. David would live with God (kids sign) forever.

God (kids sign) is our Shepherd too. And He loves us so much. God (kids sign) looks out for us and cares for us. Like a good shepherd takes care of the sheep (kids respond). God (kids sign) gives us what we need. He protects us and comforts us. We can trust the Lord (kids sign) as our shepherd because God (kids sign) cares for us.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is GOD CARES FOR US. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Psalm 23 is a wonderful encouragement that we're invited to rest securely in the care of the Great Shepherd. About a thousand years later, God came to earth in the person of Jesus, who said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for being our shepherd.

Let's pray and talk to God and thank Him for all the ways He cares for us.

God, thank You for being our Shepherd. We're so grateful that You give us everything we need.

You comfort us, and You care for us. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: The Lord is your shepherd. He wants to lead and guide you. He wants to provide for you and comfort you. May you always remember that He's with you and cares for you.

Game: Lost Sheep

SUPPLIES: toy sheep or stuffed animal, green paper (optional), fabric (optional), tablecloth (optional)

Sometimes sheep wander away, and then it's the shepherd's job to find them. If the sheep comes to a scary place like the edge of a cliff, the shepherd may need to use the hook on his staff to pull the sheep back to safety.

Let's pretend we're shepherds, and we have lost a sheep! We're going to take turns looking for our lost sheep. First, close your eyes or turn away from me. Then I'll tell you when it's time to search.

Hide the toy sheep somewhere in the room before giving kids the command to look for the sheep. Let the kids take turns being the shepherd searching for the sheep. If you need more hiding spots, you could use green paper, fabric, or a tablecloth to make some bushes where the sheep could hide. Play until everyone has had a chance to find the lost sheep.

We can remember that like a shepherd takes care of sheep, God takes care of us. We can thank God for taking care of us.

VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO

