

3rd and 4th Grace Sunday School - Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd

Object: We can trust God to always be with us.

Read Psalm 23 aloud – if you do this as a group/more than one person, have one person read aloud and others close their eyes and envision the pictures in their mind.

In the Old Testament, the part of the Bible written before Jesus came to earth, there is a collection of 150 prayer and praise poems called "Psalms." The Psalms were used to worship and sing to God, and still are today. The Twenty-Third Psalm is probably one of the most loved and read passages of the Bible. It was written a long time ago by a young man named David, when he was a shepherd.

Because David was a shepherd, it was natural for him to think of God as a good shepherd. Shepherds cared for their sheep night and day. They led them to grassy areas to graze and took them to clean, calm water to drink. In the hot summer, shepherds moved their flocks to cooler pastures on higher ground. For days on end, shepherds worked and slept outdoors. Sheep had complete trust in their shepherd and followed the shepherd's voice even when walking through dangerous places. At night, shepherds guarded the sheepfold or sheltered the flock in a cave. If the howl of a hyena scared the sheep in the darkness, the shepherd's voice would calm them. Each evening, shepherds counted the sheep and checked their health. The shepherd would call and the flock would follow him to the pasture. Shepherds used a heavy wooden rod as a weapon against wild animals that would harm the sheep. The shepherd's staff was a long stick, often with a crook or hook on one end. Shepherds leaned on the staff when climbing and also used it to guide the sheep and to rescue them when they got stuck.

Questions for reflection:

- What are some of the important things the shepherd does for the sheep?
- How is God like the shepherd we just read about?
- What are some ways we hear our Shepherd's (God's) voice?
- What is your favorite image in the Psalm? Do any of the images make you feel safe or bring you comfort?

Good Shepherd scavenger hunt:

Complete this scavenger hunt and place all the items you made/found together on a table or the floor. If you can't move them, take a photo of that item. Then, take a picture of your answers and send them to formation@washingtonparish.org or text to Mary at 202 368 8346

1. Find something that meets your daily needs
2. Find something you use for rest
3. Find something from beautiful from nature
4. Find a set of instructions or rules – something you need to follow
5. Find something that helps you build strength, stay strong, stay healthy
6. Find a directional tool, like a flashlight, map, compass, GPS tracker
7. Find something you use for protection – think creatively
8. Find something you would use if you were hosting a big party or feast
9. Find something that everyone in your family agrees is special

Prayer: Good Shepherd, Your presence in our lives gives us great comfort. We remember that we are always in your care. When we are afraid, we know that you are there. Your goodness and your love are with us as long as we live. Thank you for caring for us and that we will live with you forever. Amen.