



DAY 1

Lost to Found

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:1
1 Samuel 17:34–37

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Is the Lord a distant God? Did he create the universe and then just sit back and watch?

MEMORY VERSE

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1

NAME OF GOD

Shepherd

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.

ANIMAL PAL

Mia (My-a) the Connemara Sheep

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
 - Sheep Farm in Donegal
- Teach It!
 - Part 1: This Way, That Way
 - Part 2: Gospel Presentation
- Review It!
 - Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game
 - Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23 several times. Memorize it.
- Read 1 Samuel 17:34–37 several times.
- Read “Leading a Child to Christ”
- Read this lesson thoroughly and prepare the materials.
- For more information, visit AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaqa.
- Pray.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Different Sheep Poster
- ★ Lost/Found Crossing Signs
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teacher
- Mounting putty or tape for posters
- Blank paper to cover map
- Optional: Large easel for map



- ◆ David as Shepherd Poster
- ★ Optional: This Way, That Way Sheets

Introduce It!

Sheep Farm in Donegal (5 minutes)

Study your lessons each day and know them well but feel free to say things in your own way.

Prep: Prepare your set backdrop and costumes. Bookmark the Scripture passages in your Bible for the whole lesson. Use the blank paper to cover the Days 1–5 photos on the two posters that make up the MAP OF IRELAND POSTER. Mount or hang the posters so they look like one big map. Or place the mounted map posters on a large easel. Cut apart the LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS.

Hello from Ireland, lads (boys) and lasses (girls)! Or should I say “dia duit” (dee-uh-gwit), which means “hello” or “God be with you” in the Irish language. [Have everyone say “dia duit” to each other](#). My name’s _____. I’m here to take you on a shepherd’s tour of Ireland. We’ll start right here at the Emerald Crossing bridge where we’ll be discovering what life is like when we live our way ([hold up the “Lost” sign](#)) versus God’s way ([hold up the “Found” sign](#)).

Show the map. In Ireland, there are lots of green pastures, farms, and sheep. We’ll be talking about sheep and shepherds all week as we learn from Psalm 23 in the Bible. [Point to it in your Bible](#). Psalm 23 was written by a man named King David, who was a shepherd himself early in his life before he became a king.

Okay, let’s begin our journey. Imagine we’re on a sheep farm in the town of Donegal. Show the farm drawing on the MAP OF IRELAND POSTER and uncover the Day 1 Sheep Farm photo. Can you hear the sheep baaing? Do you feel the light rain coming down? Do you see a rainbow over there?

Show the DIFFERENT SHEEP POSTER. Not all sheep look alike. What differences do you see on this poster? [Take responses](#). Although they don’t all look alike, farm sheep have this in common—they sometimes wander from the flock and get lost from their shepherd.

How about you? Have you ever gotten lost? [Show of hands](#). Sheep and people have some things in common, including being lost at times. That’s why God sometimes compares us to sheep in the Bible. We’re going to check out Psalm 23 to hear more about going from being lost to being found, our first Emerald Crossing ([put up the LOST/FOUND SIGNS at the top of the bridge](#)). But first, let’s play “This Way, That Way” to learn a few things about this psalm.

Teach It!

Part 1: This Way, That Way (5 minutes)

Prep: Print the THIS WAY, THAT WAY SHEETS to hold up during the activity or simply point each direction as you read the statements.

To play, everyone needs to stand. [Do so](#). Now, listen to each statement and decide whether to turn this way ([point one way](#)) or that way ([point the other way](#)).

Here’s the first one: There are 150 psalms in the Bible. Turn this way ([point one way](#)) if you think *King David wrote all of those*. Turn that way ([point the other way](#)) if you think *other people wrote some of them*. [Pause as they move](#). David wrote many of the psalms, but not all of them, so you should have turned that way. He *did* write Psalm 23, which we’ll be learning about this week.

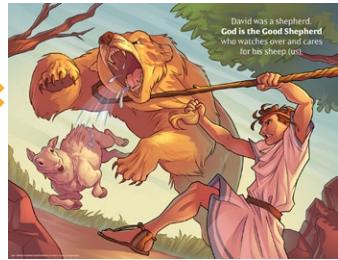
Next one. Turn this way ([point one way](#)) if you think the psalms were written as *letters* or that way ([point the other way](#)) if you think they were written as *songs*. [Pause as they move](#). They were written as songs for a group of people called the Israelites and were meant to be sung.

Next one. Turn this way ([point one way](#)) if you think David wrote Psalm 23 when he was *young* or that way ([point the other way](#)) if you think David wrote it *toward the end of his life*. [Pause as they move](#). He wrote it toward the end of his life. We’ll be able to see how he wrote from experiences he had lived through, like being a shepherd.

Ready? Turn this way (point one way) if you think Psalm 23 is a picture of *us* as sheep or that way (point the other way) if you think it's a picture of *God* as a sheep. Pause as they move. It's a picture of *us* as sheep and *God* as the shepherd.

Last one. I'm going to read a passage about David when he was a young shepherd. Listen carefully. Read 1 Samuel 17:34-37. Turn this way (point one way) if David killed *a lion*. Turn that way (point the other way) if he killed *a bear*. Pause as they move. This is a trick question. They can go either way because he killed both when he was a shepherd. Have them sit down then show the **DAVID AS SHEPHERD POSTER**. The job of a shepherd wasn't a wimpy job. It took a lot of strength, courage, and care.

Did anyone get all those right? Okay, now we're ready to roll into Psalm 23.



Part 2: Gospel Presentation (10 minutes)

Prep: Put up the **DAYS 1-5 MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** so they are stacked with 1 on top and 5 at the bottom. Cover each word and picture on the **GOSPEL POSTER** with a piece of paper or sticky notes. Copy the **IS THE LORD MY SHEPHERD? PATTERN** on white card stock and put each on a hard surface (e.g., a table, a clipboard, or a magazine with a binder clip). Gather pencils for each child. To speed things up, place the supplies at each child's place (under a chair) before they arrive. Reset before each new rotation.

Let's stand and start by reading Psalm 23 together. Do so, using all the **MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** as a reference.

We know shepherds care for sheep, right? What kinds of things do you think a good shepherd would do? Take responses. One thing shepherds would do is lie down at the gate of the sheep pen once all the sheep were in for the night so no animals or robbers could get them. Shepherds laid down their lives for the sheep. Shepherds would also search for sheep that had strayed, or gotten lost, and bring them back to the fold.

Did you know the Bible calls Jesus our Good Shepherd? He laid down his life for us, too, just like shepherds would do for their sheep. And he cares about every lost person, or "lost sheep," out there.

Now when I say "lost person," I don't mean a person who's actually wandering around physically lost somewhere, like in a store. I mean spiritually lost. A person is lost in a spiritual way if they aren't part of the Good Shepherd's flock. To be in his flock, I have to belong to Jesus and ask him to be *my* shepherd—like in our verse, the Lord is *my* shepherd. It doesn't say the Lord is *a* shepherd. It says he is *my* shepherd. This is personal for each one of us. God takes a personal interest in *you* and wants to be *your* shepherd, caring for you.

Let's get out our supplies, then we can hear more! Pass out the supplies or have kids get them out if the supplies are already at each person's spot.

What does it say at the top of your sheet? Pause for responses. Right—"Is the Lord *my* shepherd?" That's the most important question you could ever ask yourself. Let's take some time to look into it.

First, while we're talking, quietly draw the earth in space 1. Uncover the earth on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

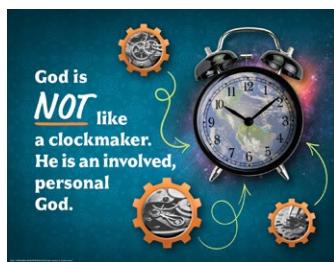
Before time began or the universe came to be, God existed. He has always been. But then, at the beginning of *time*, God created a very good world. You're drawing earth right now to remind yourself of the very good world God made. He made green plants, blue waters, the sky, birds, fish, animals, and the first two people, Adam and Eve. We learn about this in the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis. Show Genesis.

Now, draw a piece of fruit in space 2. Uncover the fruit on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

God gave the first man, Adam, a command to obey and lovingly warned him that the punishment for disobedience would be death. But instead of obeying God, Adam and Eve disobeyed and ate fruit from the tree they weren't supposed to eat from. Disobeying God's commands is called sin. When they disobeyed God, it changed the very good world into a place that now has not only good but also sad and bad things.

- ◆ Days 1-5 Memory Verse Posters
- ◆ Gospel Poster
- ◆ Clockmaker Poster
- ★ **Is the Lord My Shepherd? Pattern**, 1 per person
- White card stock, 1 sheet per person
- Hard surface per person (see Prep)
- Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
- Pencils, one per person





Okay, now draw a manger, a small animal feeding trough, in space 3. [Uncover baby Jesus in the manger on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). About 4,000 years after God created everything and sin came into the world, the most amazing thing happened. Jesus, God's Son, came to earth as a baby! It talks about this right here in the Bible. [Show Luke](#). Jesus knew we were like lost sheep needing a shepherd, and he came to rescue us.

Now, some see it differently because they aren't basing their thoughts on the Bible. [Show the CLOCKMAKER POSTER](#). They believe God *was* the Creator of the world, as the Bible tells us, but they say God is like a clockmaker who made a clock then let it sit on the windowsill to work on its own. That would be like God making the universe (which he did), then letting it run by itself without his involvement or help.

Of course, the Bible tells us a very different view. We see throughout its pages that God is a personal God who cares about us. We learn about that in Psalm 23 where he describes himself as a good shepherd. A good shepherd is involved in his sheep's lives. He loves and cares for them, just as Jesus loves and cares for *you*!

God created each person in his image. You are fearfully and wonderfully made with great care and purpose. No one is a mistake. We're all here for a reason—to glorify God (give God all the attention and credit) and to care for others. The Good Shepherd cares about you so much, he came to earth to rescue you!

Now, draw a man (or heart) in space 4. [Uncover the grown Jesus on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Jesus grew up and lived a perfect, pure life without any sin. He never did anything sinfully wrong—not even one time. Jesus was all good and did all things right, including doing miracles, teaching people, and sharing his love.

Now, draw a cross in space 5. [Uncover the cross on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Even though Jesus was perfect in every way—perfect in love, in care, and in goodness as the Good Shepherd—when he was in his 30s, some bad men who hated Jesus decided to put him to death. They hung him on a cross and left him to die a horribly painful death.

Jesus allowed them to do this because he didn't want any of his sheep—and that means you—to stay lost. Draw a sheep in space 6. [Uncover the sheep on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Isaiah 53:6 says we are all like sheep that have gone astray, doing what we want instead of what God wants. Whether you realize it or not, if you don't have Jesus as your shepherd, you're lost in your sin. But Jesus wants you to be in his flock.

[Uncover the tomb on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Draw a tomb with the stone rolled away in space 7. After Jesus died, he was put in a tomb, which was sealed and guarded so he couldn't get out—or so the bad guys thought! But Jesus is God, and he came back to life, rose from the dead, and burst out of that tomb! Jesus didn't stay dead!

Now, he lives in heaven where he's preparing a place for all who call on him as their Good Shepherd. And remember—Jesus doesn't want us to be lost like sheep without a shepherd ([Matthew 9:36](#)).

You know, that reminds me of a story called a parable that Jesus told ([Luke 15:3-7](#)). Jesus said there was a shepherd who had 100 sheep. When one wandered off, the shepherd left the 99 sheep and searched for the one lost sheep. And guess what! He found that sheep and carried it home. When the shepherd told his friends about it, they all celebrated. Let's all do a happy dance! [Have kids quickly stand and get their wiggles out](#).

This parable reminds us that *we* are like sheep who are lost and wandering from our Good Shepherd, Jesus. We need to decide that we're going to follow him.

Remember how we said everyone sins ([Romans 3:23](#))? Everyone does wrong things. We sin every day when we say or do or even think things that don't please God. God is truth. Can you think of a time you told a lie? [Pause for responses](#). God is kind. Can you think of a time you weren't kind? [Pause](#). God is caring. Can you think of a time you thought a mean thought about someone? [Pause](#). Those are all examples of sin. [Uncover the word Admit on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). God wants you to admit you do wrong things—admit you're a sinner. You need to tell him you know you don't obey all the time and you're sorry for it and want to turn from it ([Mark 1:15](#)).

Uncover the word *Believe* on the **GOSPEL POSTER**. Then you must believe what the Bible says, that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins (Romans 10:9–10). But then, he rose from the dead. This shows us God was pleased with his payment.

Uncover the words *Forever Receive* on the **GOSPEL POSTER**. Finally, forever receive Jesus by asking him to forgive you and make you part of his family. Remember, you aren't born belonging to the Good Shepherd. But you can become one of his sheep—one of his children—by admitting, believing, and forever receiving (John 3:16). If you do, you'll not only be part of your family here on earth, but you'll have God as your heavenly Father, and you'll be part of *his* family.

If you want to be a child of God, make sure you talk to your leader or parents or me today. And remember—the most important question you can ever ask yourself is this: Is the Lord *my* shepherd? I hope you can say yes!

You may want to give children an opportunity to leave for salvation counseling with a pastor or qualified leader. This should be in a visible, safe place.

Review It!

Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game (5 minutes)

Prep: Print and cut apart the **SHOW YOUR SHEEP PATTERNS**, one set per child. Glue or tape each sheep to a craft stick to use for each class all week (laminate if possible).

Review the lesson each day by playing a true or false game. Pass out one set of sheep (one black and one white) attached to craft sticks to each child. Read each review statement and instruct the children to raise the appropriate sheep (T or F) to show their answer. Be sure to read any extra explanations given. Collect the sheep after the game to use with each class all week.

1. Point to the **ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. Our animal pal is a fluffy bear. **False**. It's a sheep.
2. We named our sheep **Mia** because it means "mine." **True** or false, God wants each of us to be able to say that the Lord is mine or he is *my* shepherd. **True**.
3. God is the Good Shepherd. **True**.
4. It is possible for us to go through life without ever doing anything wrong. **False**. We all disobey God. This is called **sin** when we don't obey God.
5. Whining and grumbling are both examples of **sin**. **True**.
6. God will forgive our **sin** if we ask. **True**. (Review the gospel if time.)
7. God made the world, then he sat back and watched it run on its own. **False**. God is actively involved in sustaining his creation and working all things for his glory and our good.
8. You can become part of God's flock (a Christian) by admitting your sins, believing in Jesus, and forever receiving him. **True**.

Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse (5–10 minutes)

Today's Verse (also the theme verse): The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1

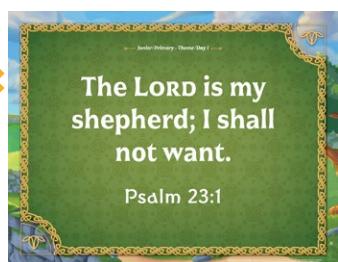
Discuss the verse—if the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want. You will have everything important that you could ever want—salvation, God's love, God's goodness, etc. You may not have everything you wish for, but that's not most important. Having the Lord as your shepherd is truly important. Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference, or by using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

- Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.
- You also may want to pass out the gospel bookmarks today.

- ◆ **Day 1 Animal Pal Poster**
- ★ **Show Your Sheep Pattern**, 1 set per child
- White card stock, 1 sheet per 4 children
- Craft sticks, 2 per child
- Glue or tape



- ◆ **Theme/Day 1 Memory Verse Poster**
- ★ Optional: **Psalm 23 Hand Motions** and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Emerald Crossing Maps, one per child
- Optional: Student Guides, one per child
- Optional: Gospel Bookmarks, one per child





◆ DAY 2 ◆

Wrong Path to Right Path



BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:2–3
1 Samuel 17

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Is the Bible a trustworthy guide to lead me through life?

MEMORY VERSES

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Psalm 23:2–3

NAME OF GOD

Leader

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I need the Lord to lead me on the right path through his Word.

ANIMAL PAL

Guide the Border Collie

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Green Pastures and Still Waters in County Galway
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Goliath
Part 2: Bible Boxes
- Review It!
Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game
Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23 and recite it from memory. Read 1 Samuel 17 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information, see AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaq.
- Pray.



Introduce It!

Green Pastures and Still Waters in County Galway (5 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark the Bible passages that will be used today. Move the Day 1 Crossing Signs down one block on each side of the bridge. Every day, all signs will continue to be moved farther down, with the current day's on the top two blocks of the bridge. Cut apart the **WRONG PATH/RIGHT PATH CROSSING SIGNS**. Cue the Irish jig music (e.g., on a phone, a computer, or a video player).

Welcome back, lads and lasses! Let's start off with a lively Irish jig. Many people in Ireland enjoy this fun dance. [Play music or video loudly from your device and have the kids hop around or just watch/listen.](#)

Well, that was fun! But now, I'm going to count down while everyone gets completely still by the count of 1. Ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 . . . caaallmm. [As soon as everyone is still, continue.](#)

Today, we're traveling to a peaceful place in western Ireland where there are plenty of green pastures and calm, still waters. It's here in County Galway. [Show the sheep, green pastures and still waters near Galway on the MAP OF IRELAND POSTER and uncover the Day 2 Green Pastures photo.](#) Ireland is known for many green pastures. It rains more in Ireland than in many countries of the world, making it a beautiful, green country.

With all the green grass, it's a great place for sheep to graze. Does anybody remember what we learned about sheep yesterday? Sheep on farms sometimes stray from the flock or get ___. [Pause for answers.](#) Right—lost. But here's something else about sheep. Did you know *sheep are helped by a shepherd's guidance*? They can overgraze a pasture, eating the grass down to the bare dirt. So their shepherd leads them to new pastures. But sometimes sheep wander off on the wrong path toward danger. A good shepherd leads his sheep on the right path so the sheep stay safe.

Also, *sheep like calm water* rather than rushing water, so a shepherd may lead them to calm, *still* waters. It definitely is a good thing for sheep to follow their shepherd on the right path. Let's put up our crossing signs to remind us that we, like sheep, need the Lord to lead and guide us from the wrong path, full of bad choices, to the right path, God's way. [Put up the WRONG PATH/RIGHT PATH CROSSING SIGNS on the top two blocks on the bridge.](#) One way God leads us is through his words in the Bible.

Let's stand and say Psalm 23:1 through 3. [Refer to the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS.](#) Well, I can't wait to hear more about God guiding us, so let's move on!

Teach It!

Part 1: David and Goliath (10 minutes)

Prep: Measure and mark off 9 feet, 9 inches high on a visible wall or as high as you can get it. Mount the **DAVID AND GOLIATH MOTIONS POSTER** on the wall so your hands are free to do motions.

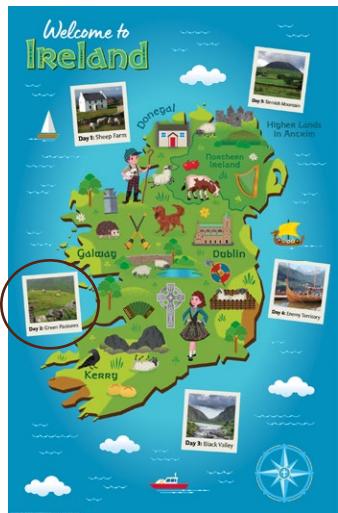
Now, remember, we said King David wrote Psalm 23. He wrote it when he was older, but he would have remembered his younger days as a shepherd when he had to fight off enemies. What kinds of enemies did he fight to protect his sheep? *Lions and bears.*

Today, we'll hear about another enemy David fought. His name was Goliath, a giant who stood over 9 feet tall! Let's check out how tall that is on the wall. [Do so.](#)

As you listen to the account of David fighting Goliath told right here in the Bible, [\(point to your open Bible at 1 Samuel 17\)](#) you're going to see how David had a strong relationship with God. God led David throughout his life. It didn't start when he met Goliath. David had already been spending time with God long before this.

Refer to the **DAVID AND GOLIATH MOTIONS POSTER**. While I tell you about this, be listening for these things: Every time I say, "David," you should cheer. Every time I say, "Goliath," make strongman muscles. If I say, "Fight," make a sword motion. And when I say, "Sheep," you should baa. Ready? Here we go!

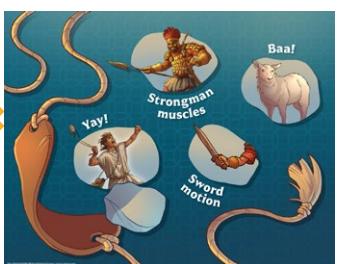
- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Days 1-2 Memory Verse Posters
- ★ Wrong Path/Right Path Crossing Signs
- Irish jig music (audio or video) and player
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teacher
- Mounting putty or tape for posters



♦ Gospel Opportunity—Quickly review the Lost/Found Crossing Signs.

- ◆ David and Goliath Poster
- ◆ David and Goliath Motions Poster

- Measuring tape



There were two groups of people—the Philistines, which included Goliath (do the strong-man motion with them), and the Israelites, which included David (cheer).

These two groups of people got in a fight (fight motion). Goliath's people (strongman motion) were on one mountain, and David's people (cheer) were on the other, with a valley in between.

Goliath (strongman motion) shouted out a challenge. He told the Israelites to choose someone to fight him (fight motion). The two would battle it out, and whoever won would be the winner for their whole country. But the losing country would have to become the winners' servants.

The problem was that Goliath (strongman motion) and his people didn't believe in or obey God. David (cheer) and his people were God's special people, and he loved and followed God. So when Goliath (strongman motion) threw down his challenge, he was really saying something like, "Do you really think your God can win over us? I challenge you to a fight (fight motion) to show we are greater than your God."

Well, that scared the Israelites. It's too bad they were afraid because they had God as their guide. But they were forgetting how great and mighty he is. But then . . . along came David (cheer). He'd been out caring for his sheep (baa). When he heard Goliath (strongman motion) shouting his challenge, David (cheer) said he would go to battle against him.

David reminded everyone he had taken care of sheep (baa), and sometimes, he had to fight (fight motion) a bear or a lion to keep the sheep (baa) safe. So he knew God would be with him as he fought Goliath (strongman motion).

And that's exactly what happened. Even though David (cheer) didn't have all the armor and fancy battle equipment on, he had something much more important. He had a relationship with the Lord. He had been spending time with God all that time he was out in the fields with his sheep (baa), and he knew he could count on God to lead him in this fight (fight motion).

Hold up the **DAVID AND GOLIATH POSTER**. So with just a sling and five smooth stones, David (cheer) beat that giant. His first shot hit Goliath (strongman muscles) on the forehead, and the giant fell down dead. Let's act out that sling move. Do so. Raise your arm up or to the side and move it in a circle then push your hand forward in front of you.

David (cheer) trusted God to lead and guide him, and God did.

We need to trust God to lead and guide us too. Yesterday, we talked about how to become part of his flock. Do you remember? **Take responses and do a quick review of the gospel.**

Once we're part of his flock, we need God to lead and guide us. One main way he does that is through the words he's written in the Bible. **Hold it up.**

Part 2: Bible Boxes (10 minutes)

Prep: Number the sticky notes or pieces of papers 1–8. Cover each box on the **BIBLE BOXES POSTER** with a sticky note, beginning with number 1 on the box showing a puzzle, then moving clockwise.

Did you know the Bible's kind of like a puzzle? It's the most special book in the world. It isn't like any other book ever written because it was written by—guess who. **Allow guesses.** It was written by God! Now, God didn't get out a pen and write it. He chose some men and helped them know what to write. And of course, since God is perfect, his book is perfect too.

Refer to the **BIBLE BOXES POSTER**. Our poster will show us some reasons why we can completely trust the Bible to lead and guide us through life. When I ask you a question, you must clap twice if the answer is yes or stomp your feet twice if the answer is no. Then I'll uncover the answer to see if you were correct. Ready?

Here's your first question: Is God's Word, the Bible, like a puzzle that fits together perfectly? Clap if your answer is yes or stomp twice if it's no. **Do so. Yes.** Let's uncover the answer. **Uncover number 1 on the poster and read it.**



❖ Gospel Opportunity

◆ Bible Boxes Poster

□ Eight sticky notes or paper and tape



God wrote the Bible over many, many years—1,500 years! That's a really long time. In fact, the men who wrote the first part had died long before the men came along to write the last part. [Show the Old Testament and New Testament sections in your Bible.](#) And the men God chose to write his words lived all over the world, spoke different languages, and had different jobs like fishermen, kings, doctors, and shepherds, yet it all goes together perfectly like a beautiful puzzle.

Question 2: Does God always keep his promises? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. Yes.](#) [Uncover number 2 on the poster and read it.](#)

Another reason we know God wrote the Bible and that it can be trusted is that there are promises, or predictions, that were made ahead of time about certain things happening. And then, hundreds of years later, they did happen! For example, there were lots of predictions of Jesus' birth long before it happened. But of course, God keeps his promises, and Jesus was born exactly as predicted.

That prediction coming true is basically impossible from a human point of view. It would be like hiding one red quarter in a sea of quarters that cover the whole state of Texas three feet deep—and then finding that one red quarter on the first try, blindfolded! It just wouldn't happen. But God's prediction about Jesus' birth DID happen—just as he said it would. All of God's predictions have happened or *will* happen just as written in the Bible!

Question 3: Are the people and places in the Bible made up? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. No.](#) [Uncover number 3 on the poster and read it.](#) When we read about people and places in the Bible, we need to remember they're real! We've even found some of them! For instance, the Bible talks about a place called Jericho where the walls came tumbling down. Archaeologists have found those tumbled down walls. The Bible also talks about a man named Gideon, and a small jar with his name has been found. Many objects and places have been found that confirm what the Bible says.

Wow! The Bible really *is* an amazing book! Sadly, not everyone believes the Bible is true. Here's another question: Do you think anyone could actually destroy the Bible? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. No.](#) [Uncover number 4 on the poster and read it.](#) People have tried to destroy the Bible, burn it, and outlaw it. But it *will* never work because God will never let that happen ([Matthew 24:35](#)). He will never let it be destroyed from this planet.

Are there any mistakes in the Bible? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. No.](#) [Uncover number 5 on the poster and read it.](#) There are no mistakes in the Bible. It is completely true because God wrote it and God can't lie.

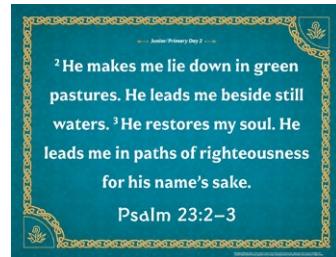
Next question: is the Bible like any other book? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. No.](#) [Uncover number 6 on the poster and read it.](#) It's a supernatural book that changes people's lives, and people have even been willing to die for it.

How about this question? Does the Bible say true things about science? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. Yes.](#) [Uncover number 7 on the poster and read it.](#) Since it's 100% true, then you know the Bible is right even about science! For instance, Job 26:7 talks about the earth hanging on nothing. Recent photos from space have shown that the earth floats in space—it isn't supported by any other object. And Psalm 8:8 talks about the paths of the seas. People have discovered there are paths (ocean currents) in the seas.

Last question: Can we understand the Bible and know it's completely true? Clap for yes, stomp for no. [Do so. Yes.](#) [Uncover number 8 on the poster and read it.](#) Listen to this. [Read John 10:27.](#) Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." Anyone who belongs to the Good Shepherd knows God's Word is true. It's God's voice speaking to me from the pages of the Bible. The God of the universe is talking to me! How incredible is that?!

I should never forget about the Bible but should read it, study it, and talk to God about it. He'll lead and guide me through his Word so I won't be on the wrong path (what the world says to do) but will be on the right path (what God's Word says to do). As you can see, we can trust the Bible. It's God's special words that lead and guide us through life!

- ◆ Day 2 Animal Pal Poster
- Show Your Sheep cards sets
(See Day 1 for details)



- ◆ Day 2 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Optional: Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Emerald Crossing Maps
- Optional: Student Guides

Review It!

Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game (5 minutes)

Pass out one set of the true and false Show Your Sheep cards to each child. Read each review statement and instruct the children to raise the appropriate sheep (T or F) to show their answer. Be sure to read any extra explanations given. Collect the sheep after the game to use with each class all week.

1. Point to the ANIMAL PAL POSTER. Border collies are good at guiding sheep. **True.**
2. The border collie's name is Follow. **False.** His name is Guide to remind us that Jesus is our leader and guides us through life with his Word.
3. During the big battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, Goliath beat David. **False.** David beat Goliath with his first shot.
4. David had a strong relationship with God and was on the right path even when he was young. **True.** He trusted God to help him defeat Goliath.
5. God wrote the Bible. **True.** God chose some men and helped them know what to write.
6. The Bible is like a puzzle that fits together. **True.** It was written over 1,500 years by 40 authors, but it all goes together perfectly.
7. There are only three mistakes in the Bible. **False.** There are no mistakes because God wrote it, and he is perfect and can't lie.
8. God's Word is our trustworthy guide to lead us on the right path. **True.** Let's brainstorm some "wrong paths" we can be on and how God's Word can lead and guide us to the right path. Make sure they realize the first and foremost wrong path is to not be part of God's family. That can potentially lead to bad life choices, such as not obeying authorities, lying, bullying (being mean), using bad language, etc. You may want to give an example or two to get them started. (People who look "good" can still be on the wrong path if they have not accepted Christ.) Being on God's path starts with being a Christian, which hopefully grows into a love for God and a desire to obey him and follow his instructions in the Bible.

Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse (5–10 minutes)

Today's Verses: He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23:2–3

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the DAY 2 MEMORY VERSE POSTER as a reference, or by using the PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS video.

- Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each day's use.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.



◆ DAY 3 ◆

Fearful to Peaceful

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:4
1 Samuel 19–23

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Why do we even have hard times?

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

NAME OF GOD

Comforter

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can turn to the Lord for comfort when I'm feeling anxious or afraid.

ANIMAL PAL

Shadow the Raven

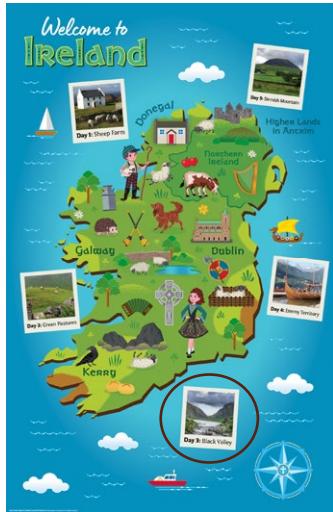
Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Black Valley in County Kerry
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Saul
Part 2: Fluffy Sheep Game
- Review It!
Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game
Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23. Recite it.
- Read all or part of 1 Samuel 19–23 and Philippians 4:6–8 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information, check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaqaq.
- Pray.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Days 1–3 Memory Verse Posters
- ★ Fearful/Peaceful Crossing Signs
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape



❖ Children's fears can include things like fear of the dark, spiders, or monsters, fear of speaking, fear of something happening to a loved one, or fear of death. Validate their responses, as there are many things that can be a source of anxiety for a child, then point them to what we are talking about today—how to experience peace that comes from knowing God as your shepherd and walking closely with him.

- ◆ David and Saul Poster
- ◆ Why Do Bad Things Happen? Poster
- Blank paper
- Rod (can be a walking stick)
- Staff (can be a cane)



Introduce It!

Black Valley in County Kerry (5 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all Bible passages used in today's lesson. Move the Day 1 and Day 2 Crossing Signs down farther on the bridge, leaving the top two blocks empty. Cut apart the **FEARFUL/PEACEFUL CROSSING SIGNS**.

Welcome back, lads and lasses. Let's try to remember some things about sheep we've learned. If you think it's true, stand up. If not, stay seated.

- Sheep can wander away from their shepherd and get lost. [They should stand up then sit back down.](#)
- Sheep all look alike. [They should stay seated.](#)
- Shepherds help lead and guide sheep. [They should stand up then sit back down.](#)
- Sheep like calm water more than rushing water. [They should stand up then sit back down.](#)

Okay, let's find out some more about sheep. Did you know *sheep get scared*? They're timid and easily frightened. Maybe it's because they have fabulous hearing, which makes them jittery. If one sheep gets jittery and starts to run, they all panic and run.

Sometimes a sheep gets scared because it's a cast sheep. This means it ends up on its back with its legs in the air, unable to get up. It may panic and start to paw, which can make it even worse. Sheep can sometimes die within hours if they're a cast sheep.

Who do you think can help the sheep when they're scared? [Their shepherd](#). When sheep get scared, they are comforted by their shepherd. But remember—we're like sheep too. We get scared too—don't we? What's something you think is scary? [Take answers](#). See sidebar note.

Put up the **FEARFUL/PEACEFUL CROSSING SIGNS**. We're going to talk about moving from being scared (fearful) to not being scared (peaceful). Peace comes from being part of God's family—his flock—and being led through his Word and prayer.

We'll travel to a place today called the Black Valley. It's right here on our map. [Show the black rocks near Kerry on the map and uncover the Day 3 Black Valley photo](#). Sometimes shepherds had to move their sheep through dangerous, scary valleys that were full of shadows. Those shadows could make the sheep balk (be afraid to move). We can think of this when we think of today's verse.

Let's say the first three verses of Psalm 23 together, and then we'll say verse 4, which talks about fear and valleys. [Reference the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS](#).

Teach It!

Part 1: David and Saul (10 minutes)

Prep: Use pieces of paper to cover the three sections of the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER** so you can remove one at a time.

So, talking about fear . . . do you think you would be afraid if a madman was chasing you? That's what happened to David at one point in his life, so it makes sense that he wrote verse 4. He probably remembered that time.

Okay, so more about the madman. There was this king named Saul. He was the first king of Israel, but he didn't have a heart for God. Saul was fearful, afraid of what people would do to him. One of those people was David. Saul thought David was out to take his throne, and he got it in his mind to kill David. Now, David hadn't done anything to Saul or his kingdom. In fact, he'd been a blessing to Saul. But one day, Saul and David were sitting together in Saul's house. David was peacefully playing an instrument called a lyre. Saul was holding a spear at the time. [Uncover picture 1 ON THE DAVID AND SAUL POSTER](#). All of a sudden, Saul went kind of crazy and tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. David got away and escaped into the night. David hadn't done anything wrong, but Saul went after him.

Another time, David had to be let down from a window to escape Saul (1 Samuel 19:11–13). [Uncover picture 2 on the DAVID AND SAUL POSTER](#).

And still another time, Saul chased David around a mountain. [Uncover picture 3 on the DAVID AND SAUL POSTER](#). David was on one side and Saul and his army were on the other, with the mountain and valley in between (1 Samuel 23:24–28). Saul was hurrying around the side of the mountain, trying to catch David while David and his men were running around the other side, trying to get away from Saul.

Just as Saul and his army were closing in on David, a messenger came to Saul and told him he had to hurry back home to take care of an emergency. So Saul quit chasing David and went home. Whew! David was safe!

With all these chases, I can see why David wrote Psalm 23:4 about going through the valley of the shadow of death. But David remembered to rely on God. He wrote, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you [God] are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Do you know what a rod and staff are? Here’s what a shepherd’s rod looks like. [Hold up a rod](#). Shepherds used their rods to protect the sheep from their enemies, like wolves or foxes. Another use of the rod is to count the sheep to make sure they’re all there. Let’s count all of you. [Gently tap each child on the arm with the rod while you count](#).

Here’s what a staff looks like. [Hold up a staff](#). A shepherd would use a staff to guide a sheep that was getting off the right path. [Show how a staff would be used to guide a sheep by gently placing it on a volunteer’s side as he moves along](#). And the hook part of the staff was used to bring back a sheep that was heading toward danger. [Show how the hook part could be used to pull back a wandering sheep by gently catching the volunteer’s arm as he moves along](#). So the rod and staff were used to protect the sheep and help them not get lost and scared. Sheep felt comforted when the shepherd used them.

Refer to the [WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN? POSTER](#). But why do bad things like this even happen to people like David and us? Does anybody have a guess why bad and sad things happen—like bad guys and sickness and wars and divorce? [Take responses](#).

The answer to this question started back in the garden of Eden, like we talked about the other day. God created a perfect world and lovingly warned Adam not to eat the fruit from one tree, but Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and something huge happened. The world became “broken” in a sense because of sin coming into the world. Remember, sin is disobeying God. Before this time, everything was perfect—no earthquakes, no wars, no diseases, no arguing, no fear, no hunger, no people who were homeless, no getting in trouble—just all good things. God is good and whatever he does is good, so his creation was very good.

But God placed a curse on his creation after Adam sinned, and now bad and hard stuff happens to all of us. Sometimes bad stuff happens because of our sinful actions. For example, if we steal something and get in trouble; or we don’t clean our room when we’re told, so we can’t go to our friend’s house.

Sometimes bad or hard things happen to us because of the broken world we live in and not because of something sinful we directly did. Things like earthquakes, tornadoes, and sickness are all part of a broken world.

Some bad and sad things happen because of others’ sin. Some parents get divorced because they can’t get along. The kids didn’t cause it—but they are affected by it.

That’s what happened here with David and Saul. David was affected by Saul’s sinful choices. Although David was not trying to pick a fight with Saul or take over Saul’s kingdom, he had to deal with bad stuff because of Saul. This probably caused David to be anxious and fearful. It would have been scary being chased around by a madman for 10 years. What do you do when something is making you scared or anxious? [Take responses](#).

God’s Word has answers to help us deal with the hard things of life, like fear, worry, and anxiety. Let’s play a game and talk more about it.



- ★ Philippians 4:6, 7, and 8
- Verse Sheets
- ★ Fluffy Sheep Illustration
- White card stock
- Tape
- 24 cotton balls

† Gospel Opportunity

Part 2: Fluffy Sheep Game (10 minutes)

Prep: Print the [PHILIPPIANS VERSE SHEETS](#) and attach them to the wall. Print two copies of the [FLUFFY SHEEP ILLUSTRATION](#) on white card stock. Attach 12 pieces of rolled tape evenly around each sheep illustration then attach them to the wall. Count out 24 cotton balls.

This game is called Fluffy Sheep. It's a contest between the students and the teacher. I'll read a question then count to three. On three you all must shout out your answer, true or false. If most of you say the correct answer, your sheep will get some fluff added to it by placing a cotton ball on the tape. ([If time, choose a student to place it.](#)) But if I hear too many incorrect answers, then I'll add fluff to my sheep. Let's see whose sheep is the fluffiest by the end. Ready? Here we go.

1. True or false: Every person has times when they feel worried or anxious. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). In our fallen, sinful world, it's one of those hard things everyone has to deal with sometimes.
2. True or false: Sheep find comfort in the shepherd's presence. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). To find comfort, you need to belong to the Good Shepherd, Jesus. So first thing you need to ask yourself is: Is the Lord *my* shepherd? You're not going to experience his peace and comfort if you aren't part of God's family.
3. True or false: Jesus said he would take away all our problems. One, two, three . . . [False](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). He didn't promise to make all our troubles go away, but he did promise to be with us through them ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).
4. Show the [PHILIPPIANS 4:6 VERSE SHEET](#). Read Philippians 4:6 together. True or false: God says to be anxious about the big stuff in life. One, two, three . . . [False](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). Do not be anxious about anything. God wants us to trust him and not worry.
5. True or False: God is bigger than our problems. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). He is in control, has all power, knows everything, is everywhere all at once, is faithful, and is worthy of our trust.
6. Read Philippians 4:6 again. True or false: The first thing this verse mentions to do when we're anxious is to pray. One, two, three . . . [True](#). Prayer is key! Don't worry, just pray!
7. True or false: Prayer is talking to God. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). 1 Peter 5:7 tells you to throw your worries on God because he cares for you. Be honest with God about your feelings and concerns. David certainly was.
8. True or false: Another thing this verse says to focus on is your problems. One, two, three . . . [False](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). You should focus on giving thanks and praising God. Think about the Good Shepherd and what makes him good. Is he there for you? Yes—thank him. Does he care? Yes—thank him.
9. True or False: Nothing takes God by surprise. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). God is in control over everything.
10. Show the [PHILIPPIANS 4:7 VERSE SHEET](#). Read Philippians 4:7 together. True or false: when we pray to God and thank him, we will have peace. One, two, three . . . [True](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). Peace can guard your mind just like a shepherd guards the sheep pen to keep the sheep safe. Remember that God, the Good Shepherd, is with us through good times or hard times, and he's working all things out—good or bad—for his glory and our good.
11. Show the [PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET](#). Read Philippians 4:8 together, alerting the kids to count how many things God tells us to think about. True or false: This verse lists seven things to think about. One, two, three . . . [False](#). [Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration](#). It lists eight. [Read them together](#). The Bible teaches us to renew our minds to overcome worry and fear. That means we need to fill our minds with good stuff, like this list.

12. True or false: Thoughts about God are the greatest thoughts you can have. One, two, three . . . **True**. Add a cotton ball to the appropriate sheep illustration. Fix your thoughts on God.

- It also helps to think of someone else you can pray for or help.
- Think about how you could change behavior patterns—are there TV shows you shouldn't be watching? Are there movies that fill your mind with fear? Are there books that give you anxiety? Games that make you fearful?
- If you're having trouble with being worried or scared, or if someone is treating you badly, talk to a trusted grown-up.

Great job! The Bible says to think about things that are true and lovely and good. Instead of thinking over and over about scary stuff, think about how good and kind and loving God is.

Now let's see who won the game. Compare the sheep to determine a winner.

◆ One teacher at a test church shared how she doesn't read magazine articles or watch medical dramas on TV because she starts thinking she has that sickness. Practical, age-appropriate examples like that can be helpful.

Review It!

Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game (5 minutes)

Pass out one set of the true and false **SHOW YOUR SHEEP CARDS** to each child. Read each review statement and instruct the children to raise the appropriate sheep (T or F) to show their answer. Be sure to read any extra explanations given. Collect the sheep after the game to use with each class all week.

1. Point to the **ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. Today's animal pal is a crow. **False**. It's a raven.
2. The raven's name is **Shadow**. **True**. Our verse mentions the valley of the shadow of death, which can also mean any hard times in life. Shadow reminds us that God is with us.
3. Sheep and people get scared sometimes. **True**.
4. We should keep thinking about things that scare us. **False**. We should think about how **loving, kind, and good God is**.
5. We should pray to God when we're afraid. **True**.
6. Thanking God and thinking about his goodness helps us not to worry. **True**.
7. David trusted God even when King Saul was trying to kill him. **True**.
8. God wants us to deal with our worries by ourselves. **False**. Every time you get anxious, **you can turn to God for help**.

◆ **Day 3 Animal Pal Poster**
 □ **Show Your Sheep** card sets
 (See Day 1 for details)



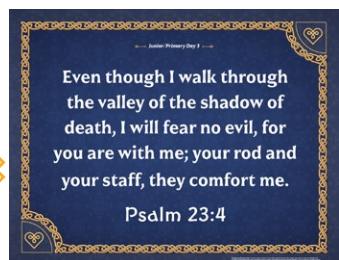
Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse (5 minutes)

Today's 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

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 3 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference or by using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

- Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each day's use.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.

◆ **Day 3 Memory Verse Poster**
 ★ Optional: **Psalm 23 Hand Motions** and video player
 □ Optional: Memory verse music and player
 □ Optional: Emerald Crossing Maps
 □ Optional: Student Guides





DAY 4

Grumbling to Grateful

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:5
2 Samuel 9:3–7
1 Samuel 16:1–13

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Are good things because of “good luck” or a good God?

MEMORY VERSE

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Psalm 23:5

NAME OF GOD

Provider

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can have an attitude of gratitude even if surrounded by enemies.

ANIMAL PAL

Pesky the Woolly Aphid

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Enemy Territory in Dublin
- Teach It!
Part 1: Prepare a Table
Part 2: “Good Luck” or Good God
- Review It!
Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game
Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23. Recite it.
- Read 2 Samuel 9:3–7 and 1 Samuel 16:1–13 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information, check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaqa.
- Pray.

Introduce It!

Enemy Territory in Dublin (5 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all the Bible passages used in today's lesson. Move the previous Crossing Signs down. Cut apart the GRUMBLING/GRAEFUL CROSSING SIGNS.

Nice to see you again, lads and lasses! Are you enjoying your tour of the Emerald Isle? We're moving into enemy territory today in a town called Dublin.

On the map, show the city of Dublin with the Viking ship in the water and uncover the Day 4 Enemy Territory photo. Have you ever heard of the Vikings? They were one of Ireland's first enemies, landing in this city of Dublin. Show the VIKING PICTURES. The Vikings were cruel people who attacked the Irish people and took over.

You really don't want to be defenseless against your enemies, right? They'll win the battle if you don't know how to defend, or protect, yourself. This reminds me of sheep. We learned that sheep sometimes stray, or get l__. Pause for responses. Right—lost. And it's helpful for a leader to guide them. And they like still, calm w__. Pause for responses. Correct—water. And they get easily sc__? Pause for responses. Yes—scared.

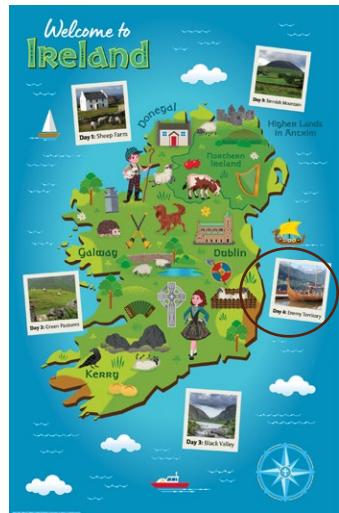
Well, today, we'll learn that *sheep are not very good at protecting themselves*. In fact, they're somewhat helpless and vulnerable to other animals. Show the ANIMAL ENEMIES PICTURES as you mention them. Some animals have claws or fangs, others have poison or bad odors, and others can count on camouflage or moving fast. But sheep don't really have much of a way to defend themselves. They might dash around in a panic and kick at their enemies, or they may just huddle together.

The best protection farm sheep have is their shepherd's protection. He comforts and cares for his sheep, even in the midst of their enemies, like foxes, wolves, or bugs, such as nose bot flies. They'll crawl on the sheep's faces and drive them crazy!

All this reminds me of the next part of Psalm 23. Let's stand and say verses 1–4, and then we'll try verse 5 about enemies and God's goodness. Reference the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS.

Even though David had enemies, he still had an attitude of gratitude. Rather than complain and grumble, he was usually grateful—whether it was during a good time or a tough time. Put up the GRUMBLING/GRAEFUL SIGNS at the top of the bridge. Let's hear more!

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Days 1–4 Memory Verse Posters
- ★ Grumbling/Grateful Crossing Signs
- ★ Viking Pictures
- ★ Animal Enemies Pictures
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape



Teach It!

Part 1: Prepare a Table (10–15 minutes)

Prep: Cover the three sections of the DAVID AS KING POSTER with blank pieces of paper so they can be removed as noted below. Gather pencils, paper, and optional clipboards if tables are not available. Or gather two dry-erase markers and divide a large whiteboard into two sections.

By the time David wrote Psalm 23, he was a king. Kings had big fancy tables full of food, didn't they? So when David wrote this, he may have been thinking how good God was to him and about the big tables of food he had and how he could invite people to eat with him.

Let's pretend we're sitting around a king's table with lots of fancy food. We're going to play a quick game just to get you thinking. Divide the class into two teams. If using a divided whiteboard on the wall for the "tables," have each team line up facing the whiteboard. Place two dry-erase markers on the whiteboard tray for each team to use in a relay. If using paper for the "tables," have teams sit in a circle (around a table if possible) or attach each paper to a clipboard for the team members to pass around. Set a timer for one or two minutes. Teams must race by taking turns drawing one item of food on their team's "table" to fill it before time is up. Explain that the team whose table is filled with the most recognizable food will win. Take a minute to discuss the outcome and determine a winner. These are some crazy meals! How would you like to be invited to dinner serving all these foods?

- ◆ David as King Poster
- Blank paper
- 2 pieces of paper or large whiteboard space, divided
- Pencils, one per person, or 2 dry-erase markers
- Optional: 2 clipboards



Well, speaking of tables filled with food, today's verse starts by saying God is preparing what? [Pause for responses](#). Right, a table. Who was there at the table? [Pause for responses](#). Yes, David's enemies. [Recite the first line of Psalm 23:5 then say](#): Sheep would have animal enemies, like coyotes and foxes, but their shepherd would prepare a good table (their pastures) by checking the area to make sure no enemies were there and by making sure it was a good place to feed.

Although David had enemies, he still enjoyed God's goodness to him in the midst of them. Remember—he wrote this psalm out of his own experiences.

One of *David's* enemies was Saul. He had chased David around and tried to kill him for 10 years. After Saul died, David became king. Later, David showed great kindness to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth, by inviting him to sit at his overflowing table. [Read 2 Samuel 9:3–7](#) and [uncover the first section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER](#). David showed kindness to this man even though his grandfather, Saul, had been David's enemy. This is a good reminder for us to show kindness to others too.

So David had an enemy named Saul. Do you know we have an enemy too, named Satan (the devil)? He's a real enemy, but his power is limited to what God gives him. He can only do so much. But God has *all* power. And God, the Good Shepherd, is looking out for each of his sheep. He's our protector and provider. If we belong to him, we don't have to worry. We can sit at the table in peace, knowing that God is caring for us.

[Recite the next section of Psalm 23:5 \(anointing head with oil\) then say](#): Back in Bible times when someone was to become a king, his head would be anointed with oil. This happened to David ([1 Samuel 16:1–13](#)). [Uncover the second section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER](#). So when David wrote these words, he was probably remembering when his head was anointed with oil before he became a king.

Shepherds also anointed the sheep's heads with oil to keep the bugs from bothering them. A shepherd would take a sheep in his arms and put oil mixed with other things all over its head—even inside its nose. This protected the sheep from flies and other bug enemies. It's a reminder that God is protecting us and caring for us.

[Recite the last line of Psalm 23:5 then say](#): Shepherds would sometimes fill a bucket with water from a well to overflowing for their thirsty sheep. As David wrote this, he probably remembered doing this as a shepherd. [Uncover the third section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER to show the overflowing cup picture](#). David would've also remembered how, as a king, he sat at a table overflowing with good things. He was so grateful (thankful) to God.

David had a lot of hard things happen to him in his life, and he had a lot of enemies, but overall, he had an attitude of gratitude toward God. He focused on God and all the good things God blessed him with instead of complaining. When we complain, it's like we're telling God we know better than he does or that we don't like who he is or what he's given us. David had learned to focus on the overflowing cup of the goodness of God.

God also fills each of his children's lives ("cups") with good things. And he doesn't just fill them part way—he fills them to overflowing. They're running over. What a picture of God being so good and kind to us.

Did you know every good thing you have is from God? Here's a question: Did you sleep in a bed last night? [Pause](#). Beds and food and a place to live are good gifts from God. Did anyone smile at you or laugh with you this week? [Pause](#). Those good gifts are from God. Do you have clothes on? [Pause](#). Having clothes to cover you is also a good gift. Can you think of somebody who loves you? [Take responses](#). Did you know love is from God? We wouldn't have love from *people* if God himself wasn't love. And the best good gift of all is Jesus coming and being our Savior so we can be part of his family. All of these show God's goodness to overflowing.

Keep in mind that God can only do *good* things. In the beginning, God created a good world because he is good and whatever he does is good. But our sin messed up his original good world. Yet God keeps showing us his goodness even in this sinful world. So as we think on all the blessings of God, we should be thankful, grateful people.

❖ There can be a time for godly, faith-filled lamenting, a cry to a big God who can heal (David lamented at times), which is different from having a grumbling, complaining attitude that doesn't turn to God or trust God.

❖ Gospel Opportunity

We may not have a lot of stuff in life or things don't always go how we want, but if we have God, we have the most important things—his love, his care, his kindness, his hope, and his promise of eternal life. *That* is good!

Part 2: “Good Luck” or Good God? (5 minutes)

Prep: Use sticky notes or blank paper to cover the bottom words on each picture of the **GOOD GOD RIDDLES POSTER**.

We've been talking about how everything good comes from our good God. But here's a question: Do you think “good luck” can be a reason we have good things? [Take responses](#).

In Ireland and throughout the world, there's a lot of belief about luck and wishes. Have you heard about any of these? Show the **“GOOD LUCK” OR GOOD GOD? POSTER** and discuss.

- Kiss the Blarney Stone—at Blarney Castle, people bend over backwards (literally) and stretch way down to kiss a stone that's supposed to give them the “good luck” of receiving the “gift of gab.”
- “May the luck of the Irish be with you”—some use this saying to wish people “good luck.”
- Four-leaf clovers—if you find one of these, it's supposed to bring you “good luck.”
- Horseshoes—hang one up, and this charm is said to protect you from “bad luck”—as long as it's pointing the right way!
- Leprechauns and fairies—these mythical creatures are said to bring both good fortunes and “bad luck” on people.
- Wishing wells—if you toss a coin in and make a wish, supposedly the spirits in the well grant the wish.
- Pennies—finding a penny face up is thought to bring “good luck” that day.
- Wishbone—when two people each grab a side of a wishbone and pull, whoever gets the bigger side is supposed to have their wish granted. Are you sure that none of these bring “good luck”?

We already talked about who gives all good things, and who is that? [Pause](#). Right, God! God is not a magical, make-believe character. He's a real being who really exists. Remember: God is in control of everything. Nothing happens by chance, or luck. So remember the next time you're tempted to say “good luck!” to someone, there's no such thing. We should instead thank our good Creator, God, for all good things.

You can either be on the complain train or have an attitude of gratitude (thankfulness). It's all in what you think about. Instead of thinking about stuff that's frustrating or annoying, God tells us to think about whatever is lovely and good and beautiful and true to move from grumbling to grateful.

Let's practice thinking on some good things about God. [Refer to the GOOD GOD RIDDLES POSTER](#). Here are just a few in the endless list of ideas. I'll show you a clue, and you have to guess what it has to do with God.

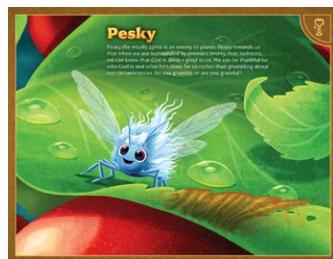
Good God Riddle Clues

1. Show the picture. Say: God doesn't _____. (Change—Malachi 3:6)
2. Show the picture. Say: God is _____. (Kind—1 Corinthians 13:4)
3. Show the picture. Say: God is the giver of good _____. (Gifts—James 1:17)
4. Show the picture. Say: God is _____. (Wise—Romans 11:33)
5. Show the picture. Say: God is right _____. (Here—Isaiah 41:10)
6. Show the picture. Say: God is the ____ over all. (Ruler—Psalm 103:19)

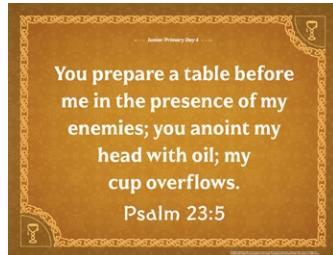
- ◆ “Good Luck” or Good God? Poster
- ◆ Good God Riddles Poster
- Optional: Sticky notes or blank paper



- ◆ Day 4 Animal Pal Poster
- Show Your Sheep card sets (See Day 1 for details)



- ◆ Day 4 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Optional: Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Emerald Crossing Maps
- Optional: Student Guides



Review It!

Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game (5 minutes)

Pass out one set of the true and false **SHOW YOUR SHEEP CARDS** to each child. Read each review statement and instruct the children to raise the appropriate sheep (T or F) to show their answer. Be sure to read any extra explanations given. Collect the sheep after the game to use with each class all week.

1. Point to the **ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. Today's animal pal is a teeny-tiny sheep. **False**. It's a bug/woolly aphid.
2. The **woolly aphid's name is Peaceful**. **False**. It's name is Pesky to remind us that pests can bug us and can be like annoying enemies. But even when we've got hard things going on, we can have an attitude of gratitude for God's goodness.
3. David invited his enemy's grandson, Mephibosheth, to join him. **True**.
4. God gives good things in tiny amounts. **False**. His goodness overflows.
5. It's okay to whine and complain. **False**. Complaining is like telling God you don't like who he is and you're not content with what he's given you.
6. We should be grateful instead of grumbling and complaining. **True**.
7. Besides God's goodness, there is also such a thing as "good luck." **False**. Luck is make-believe, but God is real.
8. Thinking about God's goodness helps us be grateful instead of grumbling. **True**.

Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse (5 minutes)

Today's Verse: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Psalm 23:5

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 4 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference or by using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

- Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.



◆ DAY 5 ◆

Shaky to Sure



BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:6
1 Chronicles 22

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

What should rainbows remind us of?

MEMORY VERSE

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6

NAME OF GOD

Promise Keeper

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I need to be on the lookout for God's goodness and mercy, my traveling companions through life.

ANIMAL PAL

Shirley the Highland Cow

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Higher Lands in County Antrim
- Teach It!
Promise Keeper
- Review It!
Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game
Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23. Recite it.
- Read 1 Chronicles 22.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information, see AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaqaq.
- Pray.



- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Days 1–5 Memory Verse Posters
- ★ Shaky/Sure Crossing Signs
- ★ St. Patrick Picture
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape



Introduce It!

Higher Lands in County Antrim (5–10 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all Bible passages used in today's lesson. Move the previous Crossing Signs down and cut apart the **SHAKY/SURE CROSSING SIGNS**.

Well, here we are, lads and lasses, at our last spot in the Emerald Isle! It's been quite a grand week, hasn't it? We need to end on a high note, so let's climb to higher lands in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. [Show the higher lands on the MAP OF IRELAND](#) and [uncover the Day 5 Slemish Mountain photo](#). Today we're using a mountain in higher lands, to remind us of heaven. This particular mountain in Northern Ireland is called Slemish Mountain and was thought to be where Ireland's most famous shepherd lived. Anyone know who that shepherd might be? [Take responses. St. Patrick](#).

Of course, David was the famous shepherd in the Bible who wrote Psalm 23, but St. Patrick was also a shepherd for a while—although he didn't start out as a shepherd. And he didn't start out with the name Patrick either.

- St. Patrick was born in Britain to Christian parents and was given the first name Maewyn.
- As a boy, he heard the truth about God but didn't believe it himself.
- When he was 16, he was captured by pirates and taken by ship to Ireland where he was sold as a slave.
- For the next six years in the Irish countryside, he was a shepherd to his master's sheep. It was during those lonely times he began praying to God.
- He finally escaped and hiked 200 miles to the coast, where he boarded a ship and eventually returned home.
- Back in Britain, he studied and became a bishop, changed his name to Patrick, and headed back to Ireland. [Show the ST. PATRICK PICTURE](#).
- He used his next 30 years to tell the people of Ireland about God.
- He died on March 17, 461, the day we celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

So both David and Patrick were shepherds and would have known a lot about sheep. We've already discovered that sheep can stray, or get lost from their shepherd, and they benefit from lots of guidance. Sheep can get scared of many things, and they're not great at defending themselves. But one last thing we'll talk about today is that *sheep are loyal*. They form deep bonds with their shepherd. In fact, they even know their shepherd's specific voice.

When sheep from different flocks are all together in a large sheep pen at one time, they'll ignore every other shepherd who calls. But when they hear their shepherd's voice, they come to him and follow him wherever he goes. Sheep are loyal to their shepherd because he's shown them love and care. Jesus even talked about this as a picture of us and the Lord. [Read John 10:4–5 and 14–15](#).

Just like sheep follow their shepherd, the last part of Psalm 23 reminds us that something will follow us as well. Let's stand and say the first five verses together, then we'll try verse 6. [Refer to the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS](#). The last part of Psalm 23 has to do with us going to heaven, or the house of the Lord.

Do you see the word *shall* in verse 6? How many times? [Pause for responses](#). Right, two. It doesn't say goodness and mercy *might* follow us. It says they *shall* follow us. It doesn't say *maybe* we'll dwell in the house of the Lord. It says we *shall*. We're not on a shaky foundation. It's a sure thing for any child of God. [Put up the SHAKY/SURE CROSSING SIGNS](#).

♦ Adjust this if using KJV, which has one "shall" and one "will."

Teach It!

Promise Keeper (5 minutes)

When you hear or say Psalm 23:6, think about David's experience—he wanted to build a house for the Lord. He was that sure of his relationship with God. David loved God and wanted to show his thankfulness by building a magnificent house, called a temple, to put the ark of the covenant in. The ark of the covenant was a special box that represented God's presence with his people.

This temple would be a special place for God and his people. But God told David he wouldn't be the one building it because of all the wars he had been in. Instead, God said David's son Solomon would build it.

Show the [DAVID GETS SUPPLIES POSTER](#). Even though David wasn't going to build the house of the Lord, he did get it ready. He gathered all kinds of supplies that were needed for a beautiful place of worship. [Read or paraphrase 1 Chronicles 22:1-5](#).

Now, take a look at today's verse again. After the goodness and mercy part, what does it say? Let's read that together. "I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

After Solomon built the temple, there was a house of the Lord here on earth. But something that's cool is . . . there's even *another* house of the Lord. Where do you suppose that is? [Take responses](#).

It's in heaven. When the psalm talks about dwelling in the house of the Lord forever, it means I'll live in heaven with God forever—if I'm in God's family. And that's for sure. God said it, so that settles it because God is a promise keeper. He even put a big rainbow in the sky to remind us that he keeps his promises!

Do you remember hearing about Noah building a big ship called an ark? Many years before David was born, God sent a huge flood all over the earth. But he chose Noah to build an ark to keep his family and some of the land animals and birds safe.

After the flood, God promised Noah he would never send another global flood again. He put a rainbow in the sky as a sign of his promise. And he has kept that promise. He never sent another global flood that covered the whole world.

Show the [RAINBOWS POSTER](#). God keeps every promise. The rainbow reminds us of that. There are real rainbows in the sky, but sometimes people use rainbows in ways that have nothing to do with God and are against God's design for rainbows. For instance, you might see rainbows with pots of gold. Are they for real? **No!** The pictures you see of rainbows with pots of gold are just pretend, even if they're fun to look at.

Some people show flags or signs of rainbows, which signal their rebellion against God and his good ways found in the Bible. Those are not what rainbows are meant to be about. True rainbows are meant to be reminders of God and his sure promises.

True rainbows are beautiful! When you see a rainbow in the sky, let it remind you that God is a promise keeper, and you really *will* live with him someday if you are his child! Remember, admit, believe, forever receive. That's how we're part of the Good Shepherd's flock, God's family.

It's been a great week! We've learned so much about our Good Shepherd. Let's play a game now to see how much we can remember.

Review It!

Part 1: Show Your Sheep Game (5-10 minutes)

Pass out one set of the true and false [SHOW YOUR SHEEP CARDS](#) to each child. Read each review statement and instruct the children to raise the appropriate sheep (T or F) to show their answer. Be sure to read any extra explanations given. Ask as many questions as possible in the remaining class time. Collect the sheep after the game to use with each class.

1. Point to the [ANIMAL PAL POSTER](#). Today's animal pal is a Highland cow. True.

- ◆ [David Gets Supplies Poster](#)
- ◆ [Rainbows Poster](#)



- ◆ [Gospel Opportunity](#)

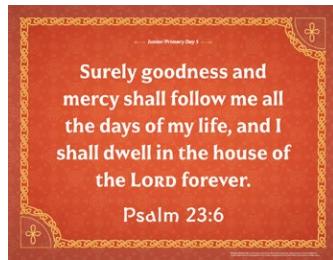
- ◆ [Day 5 Animal Pal Poster](#)
- [Show Your Sheep card sets](#)
(See Day 1 for details)



❖ Share a personal example of a mercy you have noticed today or yesterday.

2. The cow is named Shirley to remind us that God's promises are sure. **True.**
3. The word *surely* means something that is shaky and may not happen. **False.** God is a promise keeper; what he says *will* happen for sure.
4. The two things the verse says shall follow me all the days of my life are goodness and mercy. **True.** We've talked about God's goodness. His mercy means God is being kind and not giving us what we deserve. For instance, we don't really deserve to go to heaven because we're sinful and disobey God. But God shows us mercy and lets us go if we truly admit, believe, and forever receive him. Review the gospel here if time.
5. David decided to build the temple even though God said he shouldn't. **False.** David collected all the supplies so his son Solomon could build it, just as God said.
6. The word *follow* means "to pursue, or go after, with great energy." **True.** God will be pursuing me every day of my life. He will never give up on me, go away from me, or get tired of me. Nothing will separate me from God. Read Romans 8:38-39.
7. The house of the Lord means heaven. **True.** We're using the higher lands of Ireland to remind us of heaven.
8. God always keeps his promises, including what he says in Psalm 23:6. **True.** God is a promise keeper. If God says it in his Word, it is for sure.
9. When God made a promise to Noah, he showed him the stars as a sign of his promise. **False.** He showed him a rainbow. God has kept his promise never to flood the whole world again. There have been floods here or there since then but not covering the entire world (Genesis 6-9). God is a promise keeper!
10. Good things come about because of "good luck." **False.** Everything is under God's control. There's no such thing as "good luck." All good things are from our good God.
11. Philippians 4:8 says we should think about whatever is true, pure, excellent, and worthy of praise. **True.**
12. When we're worried or afraid, we should pray and think about scary things. **False.** We should think about the good qualities of God, such as his kindness, goodness, love, gentleness, or comfort.
13. The most important thing in life is to have the Lord as your shepherd. **True.** You can become part of God's flock when you admit you're a sinner, believe in Jesus Christ, and forever receive him as your Lord and Savior.
14. God promises his children shall "dwell in the house of the LORD forever." **True.** Again, there's a certainty there. Are you sure you are God's child? Is he your shepherd? That's how you can know you will dwell, or live, in the house of the Lord forever. If you have questions or doubts about it, please talk to someone.

- ◆ Day 5 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Optional: Copies of *Philippians and Lamentations Verse Sheets*
- ★ *Psalm 23 Hand Motions* and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Emerald Crossing Maps
- Optional: Student Guides
- Optional: *Exploring God's Word* booklets and/or bookmarks



Part 2: Good as Gold Memory Verse (5 minutes)

Today's Verse: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 5 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference or by using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

- Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Allow the kids to take these home today.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.
- You may want to show the *Exploring God's Word* booklets or bookmarks that are available if you plan to give these out.
- Remind the kids that they should keep memorizing God's Word. They can start with Lamentations 3:22-23 and Philippians 4:6-8. Pass out copies of these sheets to take home.