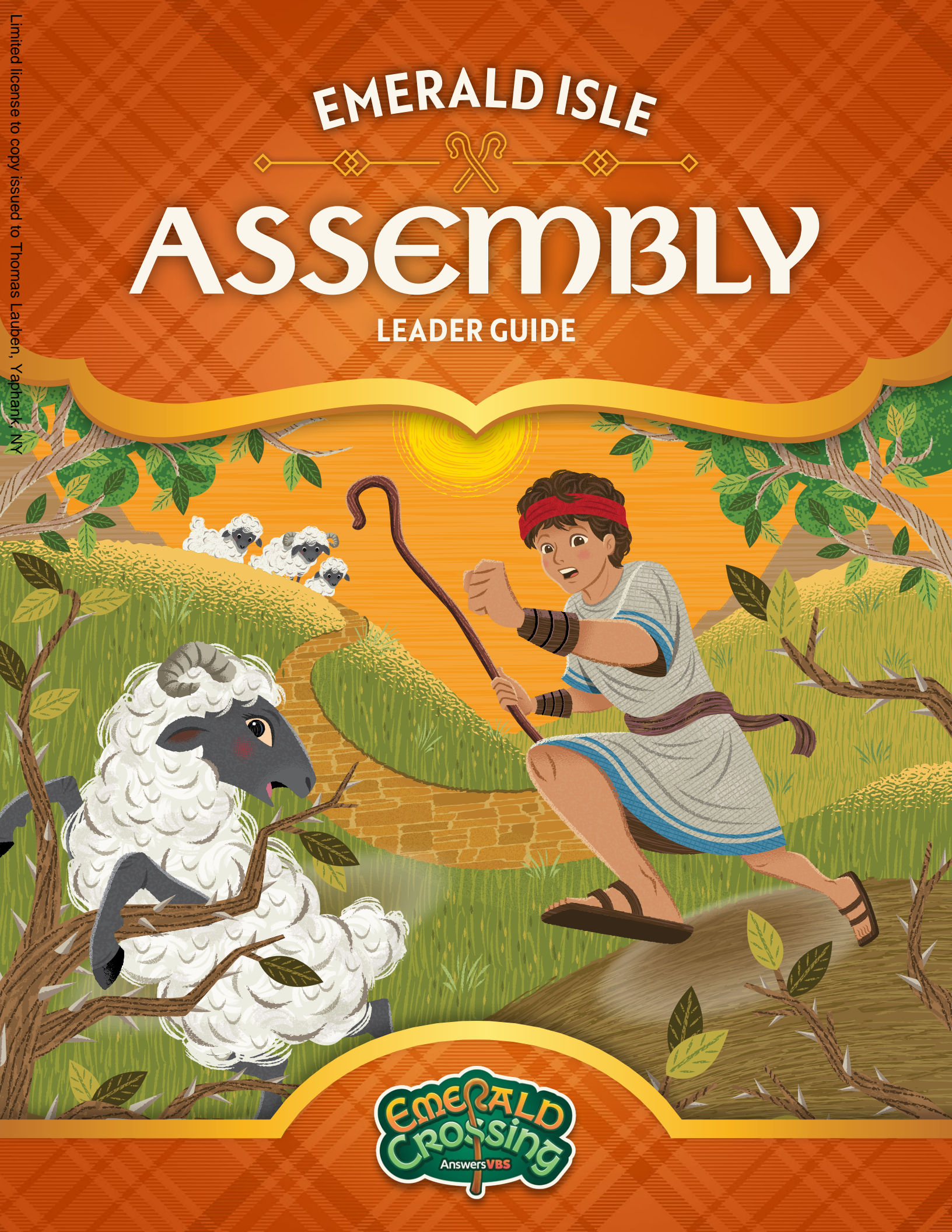


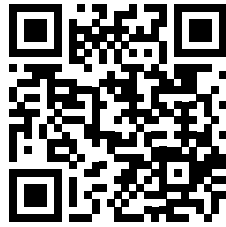
EMERALD ISLE



ASSEMBLY


LEADER GUIDE





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ASSEMBLY GUIDE

Course Overview

Theme Verse: Psalm 23:1

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Titles	Lost to Found	Wrong Path to Right Path	Fearful to Peaceful	Grumbling to Grateful	Shaky to Sure
Locations	Sheep Farm in Donegal	Green Pastures in County Galway	Black Valley in County Kerry	Enemy Territory in Dublin	Higher Lands in County Antrim
Bible Passages	Psalm 23:1 1 Samuel 17:34–37	Psalm 23:2–3 1 Samuel 17	Psalm 23:4 1 Samuel 19–23	Psalm 23:5 2 Samuel 9:3–7 1 Samuel 16:1–13	Psalm 23:6 1 Chronicles 22
Lesson Focus	Like David, I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.	Like David, I need the Lord to lead me on the right path through his Word.	Like David, I can turn to the Lord for comfort when I am anxious or afraid.	Like David, I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.	Like David, I need to be on the lookout for God's goodness and mercy, my traveling companions through life.
Apologetics Content	Is the Lord a distant God? Did he create the universe and then just sit back and watch?	Is the Bible a trustworthy guide to lead us through life?	Why do we even have hard times?	Are good things because of "good luck" or a good God?	What should rainbows remind us of?
Memory Verses	Psalm 23:1	Psalm 23:2–3	Psalm 23:4	Psalm 23:5	Psalm 23:6
Names of God	Shepherd	Leader	Comforter	Provider	Promise Keeper
Animal Pals	Mia the Connemara Sheep	Guide the Border Collie	Shadow the Raven	Pesky the Woolly Aphid	Shirley the Highland Cow
Celtic Corner Crafts	Baa-loved Sheep Keepsake Ornament—Shepherd's Staff	S.O.A.P. Bible Puffball Zipper Pull	"Don't Worry, Just Pray" Magnet Night-Light in the Darkness	Thankube Gratitude Attitude Game	Psalm Scroll Highland Cow
Celtic Corner Science	Sink or Float Wet Woolly	Genetically You Sling Fling	Shadow Play Fear Not	Sticky Stuff Overflow Your Cup	Firm Foundations Real Rainbows
Green Meadow Games	Gaelic Football Lost Sheep Relay	Shamrock, Riverdance, Viking Strongman Challenges	Run, David, Run Walk Through the Valley	Raiders My Cup Overflows Relays	Psalm 23 Partner Obstacle Course Pot o' Gold
Still Water Snacks	Cross Trail Mix Sweet Sheep	Scene 23:2 Border Collie Paw Print	Stuffed Staff Bird's Nest	Piled-High Popcorn Full Float	Cow Patties Spud Circles
Cool Contests	Guess the Rainbow Skittles	Group Spirit Day	Dress-Up Day	Bible Challenge	Mission Money Mania



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Assembly Guide

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Handy Helps

Top o' the Morning to Ya!

It's early morning on the Emerald Isle. Gaze ahead as the sun rises on the cool, green pastures dotted with grazing sheep. Listen to the waves crash at the staggering Cliffs of Moher as their towering crags ascend majestically from the sea. Catch the earthy scent of sheep and cattle, fertile meadows, and dense forests. Step into a local restaurant and taste the rich flavors of a land known for its butter and potatoes. Run your hand over the soft wool of a pastured lamb or the rough, stony exterior of an age-old castle. Tune in as lively folk music entertains and delights all who listen.

From the lush meadows of its countryside to the cobblestone streets of its cities, there is something to delight the senses everywhere we turn in Ireland. So journey with us to *Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure Through Psalm 23*. Every stop along our path will teach us about the Good Shepherd and how he cares for his sheep. Like David discovered throughout his life, first as a shepherd and later as a king, we'll discover important truths such as:

- I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.
- I need the Lord to lead me on the right path through his Word.
- I can turn to the Lord for comfort when I'm feeling anxious or afraid.
- I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.
- I need to be on the lookout for God's goodness and mercy, my traveling companions through life.

Beauty and adventure await us each day at Emerald Crossing, where lads and lasses will gather at the **Emerald Isle Assembly**. This high-energy beginning includes wacky intros, lively songs, a Mission Moment, and prayer.

Then they're off to rotate through five fun sites:

Flock Talk Time, where Bible lessons are taught in creative, hands-on ways.

Celtic Corner Science and Crafts, where kids will create their own crafts and explore God's world through science activities.

Still Water Snacks, where kids enjoy scrumptious Irish fare.

Green Meadow Games, the rambunctious rec time where kids join in some lively competition.

Top o' the Morning Missions, Music, and Memory Verses, where kids sing songs, learn their memory verses, or go in-depth with the Mission Moment featuring Children's Hunger Fund.

Finally, everyone heads back to the **Emerald Isle Assembly** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. Lads and lasses will be introduced to an Irish sheep farmer named Grandpa Fitz, who runs Stillwater Farm. Through some challenges, some fun, and a few big surprises, Grandpa Fitz shows how the Lord has been his comforter and guide his whole life.

So pull on your work boots, grab your walking staff, and get ready for a grand ol' time at *Emerald Crossing!*

Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place? And why are we still at it by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-charts, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

Your Role

Your role as music coordinator, mission coordinator, and/or drama director is outlined in the following pages. This is *your* guide. Read it carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives!

Music Coordinator

- Learn all music and motions for the songs (see the Music Leader Download).
- Help plan and run the daily assemblies, including standing up front and enthusiastically leading the music.
- Train others to learn songs and motions so they can also help lead music.
- Help plan and run the closing program.

Mission Coordinator

- Choose a mission project or projects for all ages.
- Arrange all details related to presenting the mission project during VBS week.
- Act as the presenter of the mission information the week of VBS.
- Deliver the mission collection to the appropriate parties after VBS is over.

Drama Director

- Choose actors for the drama and prepare folders for each with copies of the scripts.
- Organize a rehearsal schedule.
- Run the drama practices and oversee all aspects of the production (lighting, sound, costumes, props, etc.).
- Provide direction for the design of the set.
- Oversee the production of the dramas during the week of VBS.
- Help plan and run the closing program.

Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *Emerald Crossing* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaq.

Terms to Know

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here is a list of some of the most common terms you should know.

Lads and Lasses: Terms used when referring to children during VBS week.

Travel Groups: Groups of children (individual classes) named after animals that live in Ireland, such as Hedgehogs, Red Deer, Sheepdogs, and Irish Hares.

Group Guides: Group leaders who lead the travel groups from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required for this position.

Flock Talk Time: Bible and apologetics lesson time.

Shepherds: Teachers of the Flock Talk Time.

Celtic Corner Science and Crafts: Rotation site where crafts are made and science experiments are explored.

Still Water Snacks: Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

Green Meadow Games: Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

Top o' the Morning Missions, Music, and Memory

Verses: Rotation sites where kids can spend additional time learning songs, memory verses, and missions.

Good as Gold Memory Verse: Daily Bible verse to learn.

Animal Pals: Our friendly animal mascots that remind us of the main theme of each day.

Toddlers: 2–4-year-olds.

Pre-Primaries: 4–6-year-olds or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

Primaries: 6–9-year-olds or children who have completed grades 1–3.

Juniors: 9–12-year-olds or children who have completed grades 4–6.

For multiage K–6 travel groups, we recommend using the material for the Primaries.

Assemblies

Daily Assemblies

One of the most exciting parts of *Emerald Crossing* is the opening and closing assembly time. Each day begins and ends with an assembly of all classes and includes an array

of activities. The assemblies can be led by the VBS director, children's pastor, music coordinator, drama director, a volunteer, or a combination of these.

Assembly Activities

Welcome

Welcoming everyone to VBS is the first thing we do at *Emerald Crossing*. And we have a fun intro to start us off each day.

Top o' the Morning Tunes

Kids love to sing, and kids love song motions. That's why we do both at *Emerald Crossing*. These fun songs reinforce the spiritual theme. See the Music Leader Download link that is included with a Super Starter Kit for audio files (stereo, split-track, instrumental-only versions of each song), hand motion videos, lyric videos, presentation images, and the song lyrics. Both styles of music (contemporary and traditional) are included with the Music Leader Download, as well as all the memory verse music. Sheet music and student CDs are also available.

Mission Moment

During the opening assembly (or closing if that works better for you), the VBS mission project is highlighted. Collecting money for Guided by Grace in partnership with Children's Hunger Fund allows the kids to contribute to the physical needs of children around the world, giving them an opportunity to hear the gospel. See the Mission Moment section for more information and download [videos](#) and [printable handouts](#).

An expanded version of this section is also featured in the *Missions, Music & Memory Verses Guide*. Some churches may want to have a separate mission time and only announce the total collected during the assembly. Be sure to check with your director to find out when this will be done.

Creature Feature

During the closing assembly (or opening assembly if that works better for you), kids learn about each day's animal pal. See the Creature Feature section for information.

[Videos](#) and [presentation slides](#) are available to download.

Drama

Because each day's drama segment is part of a continuing week-long story, it is one of the most anticipated events of VBS. The dramas are presented in the closing assembly each day. See the Drama section for information, including set design and construction and the daily scripts.

As an alternative, shorter [Daily Skits](#) that use fewer people are also available to download. A separate Drama Video Download to show can also be purchased from AnswersVBS.com.

Cool Contests

Not only do kids love to sing, but they also love a contest. That's why *Emerald Crossing* has contests each day to keep excitement running high. Contest results are presented daily during the closing assembly. See the Cool Contests section for more information.

Announcements

Announcements can be made toward the end of each opening and closing assembly and should include information about the next day's contest and a reminder to bring mission money.

Prayer

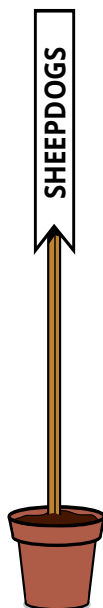
Ask for God's protection and blessing on your day during the opening assembly. At the end of the closing assembly, thank God for a good day at VBS.

Takeaway Time

Just before everyone is dismissed to go home, take a minute to go through Psalm 23 together using hand motions.

Tip Corner

- Use class signs to identify where each class should sit. Signposts can be made and reused each year.
- Play VBS music before and after each assembly to enhance the atmosphere.
- In preparation for VBS, ask some (or all) of your leaders to learn the song motions.
- To add variety, wear something on theme.



Daily Assembly Scripts

For your assembly leader, a detailed program for each assembly, including all **scripted segments**, is provided beginning on page 13. These include the welcomes, Mission Moments, songs, and Creature Features.

Order of Program Forms

Blank, reproducible **Order of Program forms** are provided for the opening and closing assemblies. Before each assembly, insert the songs of your choice and your notes. Then, photocopy the completed form and distribute to your production crew to keep everyone informed.

Top o' the Morning Tunes

We have provided a variety of songs to go along with each day's teaching and reinforce the spiritual theme. Feel free to choose the songs that work best for your children. You can use all of the songs throughout the week or just choose a few to repeat every day so the kids can learn them. You may also want to begin teaching the songs to your children a few weeks before VBS begins. Use your

Sunday school, children's church, or Wednesday evening programs to familiarize them with the VBS music. Hand out CDs of the music or encourage parents to stream the songs and play them for the children in the car and at home. These songs are available to stream through all major streaming platforms (AnswersVBS.com/streaming).

Music Leader Download

Included with each Super Starter Kit is a link to download all components of both contemporary and traditional music. The Music Leader Download contains files of hand motion videos and song lyric videos, as well as MP3s of the music in stereo, split, and instrumental versions. Presentation images and printable song lyrics are also included. If you did not purchase a Super Starter Kit, you may purchase the music download from AnswersVBS.com.

Contemporary Songs

Theme Song: "Emerald Crossing" (2:17)

Day 1 Song: "His Name Is Jesus" (2:59)

Day 2 Song: "The Lord Himself Will Lead Me" (2:33)

Day 3 Song: "Christ Is Here" (1:40)

Day 4 Song: "Provider" (2:08)

Day 5 Song: "Surely Goodness and Mercy" (3:02)

Any Day Song: "Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us" (2:26)

Traditional Songs

Theme Song: "Emerald Crossing" (1:49)

Day 1 Song: "He Searched High and Low" (1:50)

Day 2 Song: "Through Every Up and Down" (1:07)

Day 3 Song: "In the Valley" (2:46)

Day 4 Song: "I'm Sittin' at a Table" (2:00)

Day 5 Song: "All the Days" (1:38)

Any Day Song: "Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us" (2:25)

Additional Music Aids

Sheet Music

The Super Starter Kit includes a sheet music book with both contemporary and traditional songs. This book includes the lyrics and the accompaniment for each song. This book can also be purchased separately (1230650).

Student CDs

Audio CDs of the full-track songs are sold in packs of 10. These can be distributed to the children and their parents before or during VBS to help with learning the songs. They make great rewards and souvenirs of VBS, as

well. The memory verse songs and the theme songs are together on one student CD. (Contemporary—1230610; Traditional—1230620)

Lyrics

Printable lyrics for each song are available with the Music Leader Download.

Streaming

Visit AnswersVBS.com/streaming to find links to the various streaming platforms.

Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! The contemporary memory verse songs (ESV) are produced by Seeds Kids Worship and the traditional memory verse songs (KJV) are produced by Majesty Music. Both are available with the Music Leader Download, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. Majesty Music produced one song for all of Psalm 23. Songs produced by Seeds Kids Worship are:

"The Lord Is My Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1–3 / 2:23)

"You Are with Me" (Psalm 23:4 / 2:09)

"My Cup Overflows" (Psalm 23:5 / 2:11)

"Goodness and Mercy" (Psalm 23:6 / 2:52)

"I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord" (Psalm 23 / 2:32)

Cool Contests

It never fails—announce a contest and watch kids light up! Daily contests run in one of three ways. Decide which option best suits your situation and plan accordingly.

Individual Effort

Each child earns points daily for the following:

- Attendance
- Learning the daily memory verse
- Bringing a visitor
- Participating in the daily special contest (see specifics below)
- Doing the daily Go and Do section in the Student Guides

These points are tallied, and the child receives a prize if he or she reaches a certain point total.

Team Effort

Kids earn points as above, but all the points are tallied and scored for the whole team instead of each individual. When the team reaches a certain point total, they receive a special prize.

Another option for team effort is to tally the team points daily and award prizes to the top one or two teams. Group guides can use their team rosters to keep track of points.

Whole Group Effort

All the children in VBS work together to reach a certain number of points. If they reach the goal, they receive a prize. This could be something for them or for someone else, such as a special gift given to a mission organization.

Other Contest Info

- Send the Student Guide home daily and encourage the kids to do the Go and Do sections. They will receive 1,000 points for each Go and Do they complete. They do not have to bring these back. Just take their word for it.
- Our test churches include the Pre-Primaries in the contests, but they don't keep score for that age group because they don't really understand or care about the points. They just enjoy the fun of everything.

- Kids can receive points for attending VBS, bringing a friend, learning each memory verse plus bonus memory verses, doing their Go and Do sections, and participating in the daily contests. The daily contests are as follows:

DAY 1—GUESS THE RAINBOW SKITTLES

Prepare a see-through jar with rainbow-colored Skittles candy. Count how many are in the jar and write the number on a piece of masking tape. Put the tape on the inside of the lid and put the lid on the jar. Place the jar, some slips of paper for kids to write their guesses on, some pens, and a small basket somewhere near your assembly area. At any point in the day when they are passing by, each child can write their guess (just one guess per person) and name on a slip of paper and put it in the basket. Have an adult figure out whose guess is closest and award the jar to that person during the closing assembly or at the next day's opening assembly.

DAY 2—GROUP SPIRIT DAY

Each group comes up with a group cheer, song, motion, or sign. Or they can each wear something depicting their group. For example, if a group's name is Golden Eagles, everyone wears something gold.

DAY 3—DRESS-UP DAY

Everyone dresses up in any attire related to the VBS theme—shepherds, farmers, farm animals, Irish animals, Vikings, King David, or other Irish-themed costumes.

DAY 4—BIBLE CHALLENGE

Have kids take home the [Bible Challenge Sheet](#) on Day 3 and bring it back completed on Day 4. Encourage them to use either an online Bible or a print Bible in ESV or KJV, depending on which version you are handing out.

DAY 5—MISSION MONEY MANIA

Encourage everyone to bring in their final mission money today. Double points for anyone who brings in any amount.

Suggested Prizes

If you are interested in giving out prizes for any of the contests or for anything else, here is a list of items available from AnswersBookstore.com.

- Tubular bandanas (1231520; 1231530; 1231540; 1231550; 1231560)
- Wristbands (1230830)
- Stickers (1230880)
- Puzzles (1230940)
- Water bottles (1230810)
- Pencils (1230850)
- Carabiners (1230820)
- Pens (1230860)
- Puffy stickers (1231430)
- Child backpacks (1231440)
- Notepads (1231460)
- Scratch art (1231470)
- Squishy Highland cows (1231490)

You can also check online retailers, such as Oriental Trading Company (OrientalTrading.com) and Rhode Island Novelties (RINovelty.com), for inexpensive bulk prizes and local discount retailers that sell individually wrapped candy or other edible treats in bulk. Some prize possibilities include lamb bouncy balls, sticky shamrocks, green glow sticks, shamrock rings, green bubble tubes, mini squishy farm animals (especially cows or sheep), border collie Squishmallows, shamrock necklaces, mini green footballs, shamrock water bead squeeze balls, sheep key chains, potato squishies or stress balls, mini Highland cow figurines, Highland cow plush backpack clips, assorted Irish stickers, shamrock lollipops, shamrock silicone wristbands, green play dough, rainbow slap bracelets, mini rainbow erasers, rainbow silly straws, mini farm character bendables, barnyard animal stampers, wool felt balls, orange and green mini inflatable balls, cheese squeeze toys, and green yo-yos.

Fun Candies

Candy can be used as prizes too. Here are some thematic possibilities.

- Gold coins
- Rainbow Skittles
- Rainbow Sour Straws
- Rainbow Twizzlers
- Rainbow Airheads
- Peppermint sticks (shepherds' staffs)
- Andes Mints
- Toffee
- Cadbury Dairy Milk Chocolate
- Tootsie Roll Lime Fruit Chews

Creature Features

During the assemblies each day, we'll share a Creature Feature to highlight the incredible design features of five amazing animals the Creator has made. These are written into the closing assembly but can also be done during the opening assembly—your choice! Do these live using the provided scripts and **Presentation Slides**, or show the **Creature Feature videos** instead. Check the Resource Download for the slides and videos.

Day 1: Mia (My-a) the Connemara Sheep

Today, we'll meet Mia the sheep. As we learn some of the amazing design features of this animal, we'll also be reminded that we can cross from being lost to being found by having the Lord as our shepherd.

Mia represents a breed of sheep called the Mayo blackface sheep. However, in light of cultural sensitivities to the term "blackface" in the US and out of a desire to prevent stumbling blocks to the message of the Good Shepherd, we have chosen to refer to her as a Connemara sheep—this is a region where these mountain sheep are found in Ireland.



Day 2: Guide the Border Collie

Guide the border collie is a beautiful creature with a glossy coat and sleek body. She will teach us that the Lord guides us on the right path through his Word.



Day 3: Shadow the Raven

Today's animal pal is Shadow the raven. This stunning bird is mentioned throughout the Bible and will point us to the truth that God is the best comforter who helps us handle anxiety and fear.



Day 4: Pesky the Woolly Aphid

Did you know there's an insect out there that looks like a flying fluff ball? Meet today's animal pal, Pesky the woolly aphid. These creatures cause infestations on plants that can wreak havoc. Pesky teaches us that when we are surrounded by tough times, we can still give thanks to God.



Day 5: Shirley the Highland Cow

Time to meet Shirley the Highland cow. As we check into some of the Highland cow's design features, we'll also see that *surely* we can trust God to keep us secure all the way to the "higher lands"—heaven.



Download from AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources

Mission Moment

The mission emphasis to your VBS program provides an amazing opportunity for children to participate in giving to ministries that share the gospel. **Check with your director to see when the Mission Moment is featured—either during the assembly time or during one of the rotations.** The *Missions, Music & Memory Verses Guide* contains additional activity ideas.

This year, we've partnered with Children's Hunger Fund to provide food and the hope of the gospel to children facing food insecurity in the US and around the globe. Guided by Grace is a fun and meaningful addition to your VBS program, teaching kids about poverty around the world, and empowering them to make a difference.

Guided by Grace



Your kids will explore five different countries and learn about children living in poverty and ways to make a difference.

As your students explore Ethiopia, Romania, the Philippines, El Salvador, and the US, they'll hear the stories of boys and girls whose lives have been impacted by poverty. These children have no guarantee of meals, shelter, or education. They need help. And they need the hope that only comes from salvation in Jesus Christ.

The good news is you and your kids have the power to make a difference!

The Bible says that giving generously to the poor is really giving generously to God himself (Proverbs 19:17). Teach your VBS class the great joy that comes from sacrificing for the sake of Jesus and his gospel.

During the Mission Moment, your group will meet Quinn, an enthusiastic shepherdess-in-training. Quinn is preparing to join her cousins on their sheep farm in Ireland and has been busy learning everything there is to know about raising sheep. Join her as she attempts to train her dog, Penny, to be a sheepdog. Throughout the week, she'll also be sharing stories about children around the world.

Your mission is to collect coins and help provide meals for children in need, just like the ones Quinn will introduce to you throughout the week.

When your VBS children earn coins for their Coin Paks, they make it possible for Children's Hunger Fund to fill Food Paks. A Children's Hunger Fund Food Pak is a box of nutritious food that can provide meals for a family in need. In a Food Pak, just 25 cents can provide one meal!

The Food Paks are provided to partner churches in the US and around the world who deliver them to homes of families in need. Along with food delivery, relationships are built, and the gospel is shared.

The following items are available with the Resource Download that comes with your Starter Kit.

- **Daily videos**
- **Daily scripts and activities**
- **Child Profile Slides:** Daily profiles of the children your VBS students will meet
- **Printable Prayer Journals**, featuring informative prayer briefings that will help your kids connect with the real needs of suffering children
- **Printable Map of the World activity sheet**, featuring locations of the children from the daily videos
- **Printable banner artwork**
- **PowerPoint images** to help your kids track their fundraising progress
- Printable **Coin Pak bank** for collecting coins
- **Donation Submission Form** to accompany your donation to CHF at the end of your VBS program

Coin Paks Available to Order

Included in your Starter Kit is a sample of the sturdy pop-up Coin Pak bank for your kids to use as they collect quarters for meals. Check with your director for this sample. After VBS, these will be fun souvenirs that can be kept as reminders to always care for the needs of others. Coin Paks are available from Children's Hunger Fund.

Please visit ChildrensHungerFund.org/answersvbs or call 1 (800) 708-7589 to order. Orders must be received 14 days prior to your VBS date. Available while supplies last.

For questions regarding your Mission Moment resources, please email info@childrenshungerfund.org or call 1 (800) 708-7589.

Collecting Donations

Give children their own Coin Pak bank for collecting donations. Encourage your kids in the weeks leading up to VBS to save their money and then begin collecting on the first day. Or plan on passing out the Coin Paks on Day 1 and begin collecting on Day 2. Work with your director to set up a fun area for kids to deposit their money each day as they begin VBS.

Once you've totaled the coins, you can submit your donation online at ChildrensHungerFund.org/answersvbs. If you wish to mail your donation, please write a check to Children's Hunger Fund, indicating "Guided by Grace" in the memo area, then fill out the [Donation Submission Form](#). Send your check with the form to:

Children's Hunger Fund
Attn: Guided by Grace
P.O. Box 104556
Pasadena, CA 91189-4556

Learn more about the gospel-centered mercy ministry of Children's Hunger Fund at ChildrensHungerFund.org.

Tracking Your Progress

To help your kids maintain their excitement, announce how many meals they provided each day. Check with your director to find out when to do this, either during a

special mission rotation or during the opening or closing assembly.

Here are some fun ways to help your kids see their progress as they raise funds:

1. Show your progress with Guided by Grace [Daily Count PowerPoint slides](#). Update the slides with the total number of meals that can be provided each day.
2. Make your own goal tracker and update it throughout the week. Create or print a large shepherd's hook and put equally spaced marks on it, going up. Each day, you can color in spaces as you fill in the hook. Color to the mark representing the kids' offering and write the total number of meals that can be provided so far on the corresponding line.
3. Consider having a contest between boys and girls, or between teams, to see which group can bring in the most money. (Printable [Teams](#) artwork is in the Resource Download.)

NOTE ON COUNTING COINS: It may be helpful to recruit two or three adult volunteers to count and/or roll the coins at the end of each day. Some banks provide a coin counting service, but they may require several days to do so. Check ahead with your local bank or see if anyone has a coin counting machine you can borrow.



Download from AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources

Daily Assembly Scripts

Day 1: Opening Assembly

Welcome (2 minutes)

Props: A suitcase loaded with a few clothes but mostly snacks—big bags of chips, granola bars, etc. It can be a normal suitcase, a little wacky, beat up, or it can have lots of travel stickers on it.

Person 1: Welcome to *Emerald Crossing*, everyone! Are you ready to take an Irish adventure through Psalm 23? We're going to learn about King David, who was a shepherd when he was young, and we'll hear how the Lord can be our Good Shepherd. To Person 2, as he is entering. Oh, top o' the morning (evening) to ya! Are you ready for our tour around Ireland?

Person 2: Enter rolling or carrying a suitcase, looking a little frazzled. Whew! I guess I'm ready. They lost my luggage at the airport, but it's been found.

Person 1: That's good. It would be hard to go on a trip without any luggage.

Person 2: Open the suitcase so the kids can see what's inside. Tell me about it! I can't make it a week here in Ireland without some good eats!

Person 1: I think we're gonna enjoy lots of good eats in Ireland, but it looks like you've at least got snacks covered! I'm so glad your lost bag was found.

Person 2: Me too!

Person 1: You know, it's not just luggage that can be lost. People can be lost too. Either of you can share a quick story of a time you were lost. Today, we're talking about a different way we can be lost—being spiritually lost, which means living apart from God. There's a way to be found by God, our Good Shepherd, and I can't wait for you to hear more about it. But for now, let's get started by singing our theme song.

Song (3 minutes)

Theme Song: "Emerald Crossing"

Song (3 minutes)

Contemporary: "His Name Is Jesus" / Traditional: "He Searched High and Low"

Mission Moment (5 minutes)

Note: You may want to do the Creature Feature in the opening and the Mission Moment in the closing.

SHOW: Guided by Grace slide

This week, we are learning all about how the Lord is our shepherd, but we aren't the only ones who need to know this. There are boys and girls around the world who need to know about God too. This week, we're going to meet some of them. Sadly, many of them don't have enough food, so we're partnering with Children's Hunger Fund to help provide meals for children who don't have enough to eat.

You can not only help provide them with meals but also help them learn about Jesus!

SHOW: Guided by Grace—Hani slide

Are you ready to meet the first child? Pause for participation. Great! Today, we're going to meet a little girl named Hani, who lives in Ethiopia.

SHOW: Video 1—Hani

Country: Ethiopia

Problem: Extreme Hunger

Hani's mother wanted nothing more than to care for her children, but without any education or skills, it was very difficult for her to find work so she could buy food. The local church not only provided her family with food but also taught them how to grow vegetables and raise chickens and goats. This meant that she would always have fresh food for her children.

Sadly, many other children around the world are in need, just like Hani. But there's good news! You can help! Do you want to learn how? Pause for participation. This week at VBS, we will be collecting coins to provide meals just like the ones that Hani received from the local church. You will get one of these Coin Paks that you can use to collect your coins. Show Coin Pak. Take this home today and tell your family and friends about Hani. Ask them to help you collect coins for meals. Just 25 cents can provide a nutritious meal for a hungry child.

SHOW: Daily Count Day 1 slide

With the coins you collect, nutritious food can be packed into a Children's Hunger Fund Food Pak. These Food Paks can feed a family for several days. And because these Food Paks are delivered to families by local pastors and church volunteers, it provides local churches the opportunity to grow relationships with these families and share with them about Jesus Christ.

Bring back the coins you've collected each day this week so we can count how many meals you can provide. You can help deliver hope to suffering families around the world.

Announcements (time varies)

Announce any info pertinent to your situation. Today, you need to explain how the contests work so the kids can participate. Check with your director for details.

Prayer

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

Contemporary Memory Verse Song: "I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord" (Psalm 23) / Traditional MV Song: "Psalm 23"

C: "The Lord Himself Will Lead Me" / T: "Through Every Up and Down"

Day 1: Closing Assembly

Song (3 minutes)

C: "His Name Is Jesus" / T: "He Searched High and Low"

Song (3 minutes)

Theme Song / C Memory Verse Song: "The Lord Is My Shepherd" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"

Creature Feature: Mia the Connemara Sheep (5 minutes)

Use the **PRESENTATION SLIDES** or show the **CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO**. The live version can be shortened more as needed each day.

SHOW: 01 Creature Feature title slide

This week, we're going to take a look at a few of the animals found in Ireland. Here are a couple of clues to guess the first one.

- It's a really *ewe*-nique animal.
- In fact, it's *wooly* fabulous.
- It can have a special relation-*sheep* with a shepherd.
- Did you guess it? Okay, no more *bleating* around the bush.

SHOW: 02 Connemara sheep

Today, we're talking about sheep. You may not think about sheep very much, but God designed these amazing creatures to glorify their creator!

Finding sheep in Ireland is pretty easy because there are over three and a half million of them! Some sheep, like the Connemara sheep, have a thick coat of wool that keeps them warm, even on the windy hills of Ireland. And wool is the main reason people raise these sheep.

SHOW: 03 Sheep shearing

Sheep are usually sheared about once a year for their wool. Shearing is like giving the sheep a big ol' haircut.

Do you know what wool is used for? Tell the person you're sitting next to something you think might be made of wool. *Do so*.

SHOW: 04 Wool items

Wool can be used to make blankets, hats, and lots of clothing items. But the Connemara sheep has more brittle wool, better suited to making carpets or rugs.

SHOW: 05 Sheep eating

Sheep spend a lot of time eating—sometimes up to 12 hours a day! Tell your neighbor one of your favorite foods. *Do so*. Sheep eat mostly grass. There's a problem, though. Have you ever tried to chew on grass?

Chew on a piece of grass. It's very tough and hard to digest. So how can sheep eat it and survive? They have to chew it twice! When a sheep takes a bite of grass, it chews it up, swallows it, and sends it down to its four-chambered stomach.

Now get ready, because this next part may seem a little gross. After a while, the sheep coughs the chewed-up grass, called the "cud," back up into its mouth to chew

it all over again. What do you think about that? It may seem yucky, but it's really an amazing design from God that allows sheep to break down the tough grass more to get the most nutrients from it.

SHOW: 06 Sheep eye

Of course, grazing sheep have to stay alert for enemies (predators) that might be lurking nearby, so God designed their eyes in a special way to help with that.

Take a look at your neighbor's eyes—at the pupils. They're the round black part in the center. *Do so*.

Did you know sheep have rectangular pupils instead of round ones like ours? That might seem strange, but God is an incredible designer. When a sheep wants to graze, it bends its head down. When its head moves, its pupils also move to stay level with the ground so they can still look around and keep an eye out for danger.

But that's not the only amazing thing sheep can do with their eyes. I want you to try something. Look straight forward and hold your head completely still. Now, without moving your head at all, try to look at the person on either side of you. *Demonstrate and let kids try*.

Were you able to see them? You probably had to move your eyes to do so. But if you were a sheep, you wouldn't have to move your eyes at all! That's because those rectangular pupils allow sheep to see in almost every direction at once. God gave them the ability to see things in front of them, next to them, and behind them at the same time. Now that's super cool!

SHOW: 07 Sheep headbutting

Another design that keeps sheep safe is that they live together in groups called "herds" or "flocks," often led and protected by a male sheep called a "ram."

Guess why they're called rams. *Pause as they guess*. Right! Rams use their heads to ram into each other! Rams butt heads to find out which one is in charge—and they can headbutt really hard! In fact, some wild sheep can ram with a force of around 800 pounds!

SHOW: 08 Monster truck tire

If a person could headbutt that hard, he could knock over a monster truck tire or a piano with just his head! Don't try it, though, because you would injure your brain. God gave sheep thick skulls with shock-absorbing spaces in them that protect their brains from the force of their ramming. Sheep will also headbutt to protect themselves from predators. However, the safest place for sheep to be is close to their shepherd.

SHOW: 09 Sheep with shepherd

People have been keeping sheep since the beginning. Throughout the Bible, we read that godly people like Abel, Rachel, and Moses were all shepherds! A shepherd's job is to lead the sheep to find food, water, and shelter and to rescue them from danger.

SHOW: 10 David fighting the bear

Today, we learned (*will learn*) about David. Before he fought Goliath, David was a shepherd, and he risked his life to save his sheep from being carried away and devoured by lions and bears. David recognized that the Lord does the same things for us, and he wrote Psalm 23 to reflect that. God guides, protects, and saves his people. During his earthly ministry, Jesus explained his purpose when he said he is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. And when people asked Jesus why he spent time with those who did bad things, Jesus compared himself to a shepherd who would leave behind 99 sheep that were safe to go after one lost sheep to save it. And he does that for us!

SHOW: 11 *Cross/Empty tomb*

Even though we run away from God by being selfish and unkind, and we deserve death as a punishment for our sin, Jesus came to this earth to save us. He lived a perfect life as fully God and fully man so he could take our penalty of death upon himself. He gave up his own life on the cross in our place as the perfect sacrifice. But the best news is that Jesus didn't stay dead; he rose again! God promises that whoever turns from their sin and trusts Jesus with their life will be saved.

SHOW: 12 *Mia the Connemara sheep*

Today's animal pal, Mia (*My-a*) the Connemara sheep, is here to remind us how we can cross from being lost to being found. So the question you need to ask yourself is this: Is the Lord my shepherd? If he isn't your shepherd,

then I encourage you to repent of (turn from) your sin and trust him today!

Drama (12 minutes)

See the Drama Production section starting on page 27 for details.

Announcements (time varies)

Cool Contests (3 minutes)

Announce winners of today's contests. Remind the kids to do their Go and Dos on the Student Guides, learn their memory verses, and make up a sign or team cheer for tomorrow.

Prayer

Takeaway Time (2–3 minutes)

Each day, everyone will say Psalm 23 together with the hand motions—today, just say verse one and then add verses daily. You can say it with them or give prompts along the way to keep them together but let them do it themselves. Don't use the hand motions video. It's a good challenge to see if they can do it without the video by the end of each day.

As we wrap up today, let's say today's verse with our hand motions. Recite Psalm 23:1 with hand motions.

Remember—that's the most important question you can ever ask yourself: Is the Lord *my* shepherd? If you don't know the answer to that, please come talk to me or ____.

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

Theme Song

Day 2: Opening Assembly

Welcome (2 minutes)

Props: *Slide of Giant's Causeway*

Person 1: Come in and begin to enthusiastically welcome everyone.

Person 2: Come in from the back, super excited.

Person 1: You're coming in the wrong way!

Person 2: I got on the wrong path, and guess where I ended up!

Person 1: Where?

Person 2: At a place in Northern Ireland called Giant's Causeway!

Person 1: Wow, why's it called that?

Person 2: Show slide of Giant's Causeway. Well, it's this really cool place that has lots of legends about it. One is about a giant named Finn MacCool who used the causeway (which is kind of like a land bridge) so he could travel across the sea without getting his feet wet to fight a challenger in Scotland. There are similar columns rising from the sea in the Scottish Isles too.

Person 1: Now that you mention it, I've heard of this place. It's got 40,000 or so strange interlocking columns

that form a sort of road out of stepping stones that go from the land down into the sea.

Person 2: Right! Right!

Person 1: Was it made by a giant?

Person 2: No. In reality, it was formed by volcanic eruptions—most likely as a result of the global flood of Noah's time. But it's fun to think of giants. Ireland has lots of legends about them.

Person 1: Well, that reminds me of what we're talking about today—a real giant. The Bible tells us some giants really did exist! Not make-believe ones like Finn MacCool but real ones like Goliath. Goliath was living on the wrong path, apart from God. He fought David, the writer of Psalm 23. David was living on the right path, following God. We'll be talking about crossing from the wrong path to the right path today.

Person 2: I can't wait to hear more about it, but for now, let's sing ____.

Song (3 minutes)

C: "The Lord Himself Will Lead Me" / T: "Through Every Up and Down"

Song (3 minutes)

“Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us” / C Memory Verse Song: “The Lord Is My Shepherd” / T Memory Verse Song: “Psalm 23”

Mission Moment (5 minutes)

SHOW: [Guided by Grace slide](#)

Do you remember the person we met yesterday who was training her dog? Right! Her name was Quinn, wasn't it? Does anyone remember the name of her dog?

[Pause for participation](#). That's right! Penny! In addition to showing us how she's training Penny to be a sheepdog, Quinn is introducing us to children around the world. Each one of these children live in poverty and need to hear how much God loves them. Thankfully, you get to help!

Remember, just one quarter can provide a meal to a hungry child.

SHOW: [Guided by Grace—Ivanna slide](#)

Today, Quinn is going to introduce us to a little girl named Ivanna, who lives in Romania. Let's hear her story.

SHOW: [Video 2—Ivanna](#)

Country: Romania

Problem: Displaced people

Raise your hand if you've ever been on a long car ride. [Pause for participation](#). Ivanna and her family basically went on a long road trip, but instead of going someplace fun like a vacation, she was leaving her home because

it was no longer safe. She also didn't know where she was going to end up. Thankfully, the church was there to help her family find a place to stay and to give them food to eat.

You can help children like Ivanna by collecting coins. Who did you tell about our goal to collect coins? [Pause for participation](#). Remember, every 25 cents you collect this week means one meal for a child like Ivanna.

Does anyone have a guess at how many meals we can provide so far? [Pause for participation](#). Well, we've counted the coins you brought in, and we can provide ____ meals! One dollar can provide four meals. To calculate your VBS meal progress, multiply the dollars raised by four.

SHOW: [Daily Count Day 2 slide](#) with current meal count filled in

That's a great start to our week, but we've still got a few more days to go. So keep bringing in your coins all week long! If you haven't already shared with your families what we're collecting coins for, be sure to do that today! Ask your parents if you can earn money for your Coin Pak by doing some special chores around the house. Get creative!

Announcements (time varies)

Prayer

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

[Theme Song](#)

Day 2: Closing Assembly

Song (3 minutes)

C Memory Verse Song: “The Lord Is My Shepherd” / T MV Song: “Psalm 23”

Song (2 minutes)

C: “His Name Is Jesus” / T: “He Searched High and Low”

Creature Feature: Guide the Border Collie (5 minutes)

Use the **PRESENTATION SLIDES** or show the **CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO**. Shorten this script as needed.

SHOW: [13 Creature Feature title slide](#)

Welcome back, everyone! I'm thinking about pets for a minute here. Stand up if you have a . . . lizard or snake . . . fish . . . rabbit . . . hamster . . . guinea pig or gerbil . . . cat . . . dog.

Today, we're going to talk about dogs—a particular breed of dog, in fact. Yesterday, we learned a lot about sheep and how shepherds take care of them. But I've noticed that shepherds aren't the only ones working with the sheep.

SHOW: [14 Border collie](#)

Sheepdogs do too! For almost as long as people have been keeping sheep, dogs have been helping to herd

them. We even read in the book of Job, one of the oldest books in the Bible, that Job had dogs tending his flock.

SHOW: [15 Sheepdog breeds](#)

Many different dog breeds work with sheep, including the German shepherd, the Old English sheepdog, the Pembroke Welsh corgi, and the Australian shepherd. But one of the most famous sheepdogs is the border collie.

Tell your neighbor why you think it's called a “border” collie. [Do so](#).

SHOW: [16 Border collie map](#)

This breed isn't originally from Ireland, but they come from another area with a lot of sheep: the *border* between England and Scotland, located one island over from Ireland. So that's why they're called “border” collies.

Now let me ask you a question. Have you ever started acting up in a store or a restaurant and your mom gave you “*the eye*”? You know what I'm talking about? [Share a quick story of a time this happened to you](#).

SHOW: [17 Sheepdog staring at sheep](#)

Well, border collies are exceptional herding dogs and are known for using “the eye,” which means they can

direct the sheep to move or to stop moving just by staring at them! That's a pretty impressive ability.

(If you need to shorten the script, skip to #26—Border collie staring slide.)

How did they learn to do that, and why do the sheep obey them with just one look? To answer that, we need to understand some history of border collies.

SHOW: 18 Dog kind

In Genesis 1, God tells us he made animals according to their kinds. Domestic dogs, like border collies, belong to the canine, or dog, kind. This kind also includes wild canines, like wolves, jackals, coyotes, and foxes. All the animals in this kind are related because they all descended from the original dogs created during creation week. You can think of a created kind like a family. Have you noticed that you don't look or act exactly like your brothers or sisters or cousins even though you're in the same family? In the same way, God put a lot of different traits in the original dog kind. Today, we have dog breeds with different shapes, sizes, colors, hair types, and behaviors. Even though they may look and act differently, they're all still dogs.

SHOW: 19 Coywolf

Even when they're crossbred to form hybrids like wolf-dogs or coywolves, they'll always be dogs. They won't ever turn into something else.

SHOW: 20 Wolves

Wolves were likely the great-great-great-great-great . . . you get the picture . . . grandparents of all domestic dog breeds, including the border collie. Wolves use many different impressive abilities to hunt their prey.

SHOW: 21 Wolf nose

They have a sense of smell estimated to be 100 times more powerful than ours.

SHOW: 22 Wolf running

Once they have caught the scent of their prey, they can run after it at up to 38 miles per hour

SHOW: 23 Wolf staring

If they're hunting a herd of animals, wolves may stand close by and stare at the herd to judge distances and look for the best target. Through a process called domestication, humans purposefully bred the friendliest and most helpful animals together over and over and were able to redirect and separate traits they liked best for human use. Today, nearly 400 dog breeds exist that were all bred for special purposes.

SHOW: 24 Bloodhound nose

For example, bloodhounds use their powerful sense of smell to find people who are lost.

SHOW: 25 Greyhound running

Greyhounds were bred to be racing dogs, sprinting at speeds even faster than wolves.

SHOW: 26 Border collie staring

God gave the border collie lots of features that make them awesome for herding sheep, like good peripheral vision, alert ears, and strong and nimble bodies that can run and move easily. Border collies don't use their eyes to hunt sheep, but instead, have learned to use their stares to herd and guide the sheep toward their shepherds! Isn't that amazing?

SHOW: 27 Border collie herding sheep

Do you feel pressure if your mom gives you "the eye?" Well, sheep feel pressure too. Just like sheepdogs have instincts to herd other animals, sheep have instincts to flock away from animals that put pressure on them. For the sheep, having a dog stare at them can be intense pressure that makes them want to move away.

SHOW: 28 Border collie staring

Border collies can use the pressure of their stare to move sheep where they need to go, whether it's away from danger, into shelter to protect them from harsh weather, or to a new pasture.

SHOW: 29 Shepherd with border collie

Now why do you think shepherds who love their sheep would use sheepdogs to herd them? Because sheepdogs can move sheep faster and farther than humans can. They don't replace the shepherds, since they don't make decisions about the sheep on their own. The shepherds instruct the sheepdogs on what to do, and then the sheepdogs do it. Although speedy sheepdogs guiding sheep to different places can startle the sheep, shepherds know that a little bit of discomfort is best for their sheep.

SHOW: 30 Sheep in danger

We can be like sheep in our relationship with the Lord. Sheep wander from shepherds and may be unaware of approaching danger. We can also wander away from a close relationship with God when we disobey him and try to do things our way. This puts us in danger of hurting others and hurting ourselves, which makes the Lord sad. Just like the border collie drives the sheep back toward the shepherd, the Lord allows the consequences of sin to motivate us to return to him. In Psalm 23, David wrote about how God kept him from being tempted to sin. He said that the Lord led him in paths of righteousness. Righteousness means doing what is right in God's eyes. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can turn from the wrong path of sin and follow the Lord on the right path of obedience.

SHOW: 31 Sheep with shepherd

We also enjoy the refreshment of God's presence, just like sheep following their shepherd get to enjoy pastures of green grass and fresh water.

SHOW: 32 Guide the border collie

Today's animal pal, Guide the border collie, reminds us that the Lord guides us toward the right path for our

lives through his Word. So what do you need to do today to follow the Lord? How can you plan to get to know God more?

Drama (12 minutes)

Announcements (time varies)

Cool Contests (3 minutes)

Announce the winners of today's contests. Remind them to learn tomorrow's verses, complete Go and Do activities, and dress up tomorrow for Dress-Up Day. Any shepherd/farmer, Irish animals, Viking, or King David attire works.

Prayer

Takeaway Time (2–3 minutes)

Okay, before we leave, let's try our first three verses with hand motions. Do so, having everyone recite Psalm 23:1–3 together with hand motions.

Remember to live on God's good path, which we learn about from the Bible. How do we get on the right path? By becoming part of God's family (his flock). Then we learn the Bible, love the Bible, and obey the Bible.

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

Song: C: "The Lord Himself Will Lead Me" / T: "Through Every Up and Down"

Day 3: Opening Assembly

Welcome (2 minutes)

No props needed.

Person 1 and Person 2 come in together. Person 2 pretends to badly stub his toe and starts hopping around dramatically, moaning and groaning.

Person 1: Welcome back to *Emerald Crossing*! Notice Person 2. What happened, ____?

Person 2: Continue hopping around. I stubbed my toe! Ohhh! Owwww!

Person 1: I'm sorry! That sounds really painful.

Person 2: It is! I didn't see that ____ (whatever is on your set—or something imaginary) and bam! There went my toe.

Person 1: Is it your big toe?

Person 2: Y-e-e-s-s! I'm afraid I may have broken it. Say the following with big emotion, as if it's just occurring to you. And . . . then I'll have to go to the hospital . . . and maybe they'll have to give me medicine. Or a shot. Or worse yet, maybe they'll have to cut my toe off! Oh no! I may not be able to walk right ever again!

Person 1: Hold it, hold it. Aren't you getting a bit carried away with your fears?

Person 2: Huh?

Person 1: You know, most of the stuff people worry about never even happens—like having to get your big toe cut off. But even if it did, God is with you and will comfort you. Psalm 23 tells us that!

Person 2: You mean you don't think I'll get my big toe cut off after all?

Person 1: No, I don't. But instead of worrying about the outcome, why don't you try praying?

Person 2: Don't worry . . . just pray. I like that.

Person 1: Yeah, we're going to talk more about going from fearful to peaceful today, and prayer is a part of that. First, though, let's get on our feet and sing.

Song (3 minutes)

C: "Christ Is Here" / T: "In the Valley"

Song (3 minutes)

C: "Surely Goodness and Mercy" / T: "All the Days" / C Memory Verse Song: "You Are with Me" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"

Mission Moment (5 minutes)

SHOW: Guided by Grace slide

Who remembers what we are collecting coins for this week? Pause for participation. And how much does it cost to provide one meal? Pause for participation. That's right! It only costs 25 cents to send a meal to a child in need. And that food that your coins provide is nutritious food that can be made into healthy meals for the whole family.

SHOW: Guided by Grace—Luciana slide

Today, we are going to meet a little girl named Luciana, who lives in the Philippines.

SHOW: Video 3—Luciana

Country: The Philippines

Problem: Disaster

Can you imagine living in a house that was sitting on an angle like Luciana's? Pause for participation. Do you think she felt safe and secure in her home? Pause for participation. Probably not. And with so many mouths to feed, it would take her parents a very long time to save enough money to fix their house on their own. Thankfully, there are pastors like the ones who visited Luciana's family who are willing to help them provide for their basic needs so they can focus on fixing their home.

There are pastors around the world ready to help other kids in need like Luciana. Have you been sharing what you have learned this week with others? Have you asked if your parents will help you provide meals for kids like the ones you've met so far?

Do you want to hear how many meals we can provide so far? Pause for participation. Well, we've counted your

coins, and we've already raised enough to provide _____ meals! To calculate your VBS meal progress, multiply the dollars raised by four.

SHOW: [Daily Count Day 3 slide](#) with current meal count filled in

I'm pretty excited about what you've collected so far, and we still have two more days! And that many meals means more opportunities for local pastors to share the love of Jesus Christ with children in need. I think more children around the world need to hear this good news,

don't you? I can't wait to see how many more meals we can provide tomorrow.

Announcements (time varies)

Prayer

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

C: "Provider" / T: "I'm Sittin' at a Table" / C MV Song: "You Are with Me" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"

Day 3: Closing Assembly

Song (2 minutes)

C: "His Name Is Jesus" / T: "He Searched High and Low"

Song (3 minutes)

C: "Provider" / T: "I'm Sittin' at a Table"

Creature Feature: Shadow the Raven (5 minutes)

Use the **PRESENTATION SLIDES** or show the **CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO**. Shorten this script as needed.

SHOW: [33 Creature Feature title slide](#)

Well, hello again everyone! You're here at a great time! I've been busy with my binoculars looking for today's animal. [Look through binoculars](#). And I just found it! But I want you to see if you can identify it. Here it is!

SHOW: [34 Raven through binocular lens](#)

It's a black bird with a curved beak and a peculiar "croak" sound to its call.

Do you think you can identify this bird? [Pause](#). If you guessed a raven, then you're correct! You may have thought it was a crow, and that's understandable, because crows and ravens look similar. In fact, crows and ravens are from the same created kind, called the corvid kind! The corvid kind also includes blue jays and magpies. Even though crows and ravens look a lot alike, they're different types of birds. So how can you tell the difference between a raven and a crow? Here are a couple clues.

SHOW: [35 Raven and crow comparison](#)

Ravens are bigger than crows, and ravens tend to soar, while crows do a lot of flapping.

SHOW: [36 Raven and crow tails](#)

Ravens have a wedge-shaped tail, but crows have a fan-shaped tail.

Ravens tend to fly alone or in small groups called "unkindnesses." Crows like to fly in larger groups called "murders."

Finally, ravens and crows have different calls. Make what you think a raven call would sound like. [Do so](#). A crow call sounds like a "caw," and a raven call sounds like a "croak."

Play [RAVEN SFX](#).

Speaking of calls, did you know the common raven is the largest songbird in Ireland? Ravens can even learn to mimic, or copy, noises! They've learned to imitate the calls of animals, the sounds of objects, and even human speech!

SHOW: [37 Dolphin, great apes, parrots](#)

In fact, some people consider ravens to be better mimics than parrots! However, their talents don't stop at mimicry. Ravens are really smart, possibly rivaling the intelligence of dolphins, great apes, and parrots! They can remember faces and have been known to hold grudges against people who haven't treated them well. So make sure you're not unkind to an unkindness (of ravens)!

SHOW: [38 Noah with raven](#)

These God-given talents make the raven one of God's fascinating creatures! And, indeed, people have been fascinated by ravens throughout history. Did you know the raven is one of the first animals mentioned by name in the Bible? Can anyone remember when a raven was mentioned in Genesis? [Take responses](#). We read that Noah released a raven from the ark to check if the floodwaters had gone down.

Many cultures, including the ancient Irish people, thought ravens had something to do with dead or dying things. Do you know why? Tell your neighbor your thought. [Do so](#).

This may seem a little creepy, but ravens are associated with dead things because they eat *dead animals*.

SHOW: [39 Raven eating](#)

But that's not the only thing they eat. Insects, worms, berries, grain, small animals, and even human trash can be on their menu. Eating dead animals may seem gross, but it's actually amazing how God has provided for his creation by designing scavengers, such as ravens, to clean up the mess of our sin-cursed world. These animals are kind of like the vacuum cleaners or garbage trucks of our world. If it weren't for ravens and other scavenger animals, we'd be living in a very gross and messy place.

SHOW: [40 Raven with Elijah](#)

We can be grateful for the role ravens play in God's creation, but did you know that God also uses these birds to

teach us some very important truths about himself? In 1 Kings 17, the prophet Elijah had to hide from an evil king who wanted to kill him. It was a frightening time for Elijah, and he could easily have been afraid of how he would survive. But God comforted Elijah by sending him food every day—and guess what delivered Elijah’s food? God told ravens to bring it to him! And Jesus comforted his followers when he told them to look at the ravens to see how God provided for them. He reminded them that they were much more valuable than the birds, so they shouldn’t worry. Jesus wants us to remember that he will comfort and provide for us even more than he does for the wild ravens.

SHOW: [41 David fleeing from Saul](#)

These truths were something that David had to learn through some very hard times. He had to face many enemies and flee for his life when King Saul wanted to kill him. David understood that God was with him even through the hard times. This brought him great comfort, which we read about in Psalm 23.

SHOW: [42 Shadow the raven](#)

Today, as we talk more about this world we live in and some of the things that make us anxious, we’ll be reminded that even if we’re walking through a shadowy valley, meaning hard times, God is always with us. Shadow the raven, who lives in the Black Valley of Ireland, reminds us of that. God can give you comfort

and strength to go from fear to peace. How can you rely on God and seek his comfort? I hope you’ll think about that today.

Drama (12 minutes)

Announcements (time varies)

Cool Contests (3 minutes)

Announce the winners of today’s contests. Remind everyone to learn tomorrow’s verses and complete their Go and Do activities. Pass out the Bible Challenge and have them bring it back completed tomorrow.

Prayer

Takeaway Time (2–3 minutes)

Before we go, let’s say Psalm 23:1–4 together. [Recite Psalm 23:1–4 with hand motions.](#)

God wants us to talk to him when we feel scared or anxious. Let him know how you’re feeling and why. Ask for his help. Think about how good he is. Think about the blessings he has given you. Study the Bible to find out more about who he is. Be thankful. God wants to help you have peace rather than fear.

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

[Theme Song](#)

Day 4: Opening Assembly

Welcome (2 minutes)

Props: Large, empty to-go cup from a coffee shop; optional: shirt with a tea stain for Person 2

Person 1: Welcome back to *Emerald Crossing!* Turn to Person 2. You got your “cuppa,” I see.

Person 2: Yeah, I went to the coffee shop, and it was . . . something.

Person 1: Why? What happened?

Person 2: Well, the barista started pouring my cup of tea, but then she got distracted talking to another customer. Before I knew it, the cup was overflowing and running all over the floor!

Person 1: Oh my! So it was an *overflowing* cup of tea?

Person 2: It sure was. I was so annoyed. The cup was so full it didn’t just go on the floor—it spilled on me too. I’ve been grumbling about it ever since.

Person 1: Well, you know, instead of grumbling, God wants us to be grateful (thankful) for all the blessings he gives us and for who he is to us.

Person 2: I guess you’re right. I did get my tea, after all.

Person 1: You know, that makes me think about the verse in Psalm 23 that talks about how God fills our cup to overflowing with good things.

Person 2: Like coffee or tea?

Person 1: Like anything good. Every good thing we experience is from God—hugs, laughter, food, and God himself, who is good. We’ll hear lots more about going from grumbling to grateful today as we think on the goodness of God. But let’s sing right now!

Song (3 minutes)

C: “Provider” / T: “I’m Sittin’ at a Table”

Song (3 minutes)

C: “Surely Goodness and Mercy” / T: “All the Days” / C Memory Verse Song: “My Cup Overflows” / T MV Song: “Psalm 23”

Mission Moment (5 minutes)

SHOW: [Guided by Grace slide](#)

Well, we’ve been collecting coins for four days now. Can anyone tell me what we’re collecting coins for? [Pause for participation.](#) Right! We’re raising money to provide meals for hungry kids! It just takes 25 cents to provide a meal! And when a family receives a meal, they also hear the good news that Jesus loves them!

SHOW: [Guided by Grace—Hugo slide](#)

Hugo is a boy from El Salvador, a country in Latin America, just southeast of Mexico.

SHOW: [Video 4—Hugo](#)

Country: El Salvador

Problem: Generational Poverty

Have you ever learned something so incredible that you just couldn't keep it to yourself? You had to tell everyone you knew about it? *Pause for participation.* That's exactly how Hugo's family felt when they learned about Jesus' love for them! And thanks to the Food Paks provided by the nearby local church, Hugo knows he will have food to eat. He has the hope that one day, he may be able to break the cycle of poverty.

So it's been a few days since you started raising money to provide meals for kids like Hugo. Are you excited to hear how many meals we can provide so far? *Pause for participation.* I don't think you sound very excited. Are you excited to hear how many meals we can provide so far? *Pause for participation.* The good news is you have raised enough to provide ____ meals! *To calculate your VBS*

meal progress, multiply the dollars raised by four. You guys are doing amazing! Keep it up!

SHOW: *Daily Count Day 4 slide* with current meal count filled in.

And remember, these coins are doing more than providing meals! The pastors and church volunteers delivering these meals will also share the hope of the gospel with children and families in need.

Tomorrow is the last day to turn in your coins. So see if there is anyone else you can ask to help donate coins or if there are any chores you can do to earn extra money.

Announcements (time varies)

Prayer

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

Theme Song / C Memory Verse Song: "Surely Goodness and Mercy" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"

Day 4: Closing Assembly

Song (3 minutes)

Theme Song

Song (3 minutes)

"Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us"

Creature Feature: Pesky the Woolly Aphid (5 minutes)

Use the **PRESENTATION SLIDES** or show the **CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO**. Shorten this script as needed.

SHOW: *43 Creature Feature title slide*

I've got a tricky question for you. What likes to eat plants and is covered in white fluff? On the count of three, shout out your answer! One, two, three! *Pause.* Did you say sheep? That's . . . not it!

No, today's animal is smaller than a sheep. Much smaller. Here it is! *Hold up a stick.* No, it isn't a stick. Hmm, we might need this to see it. *Hold up a magnifying glass and look through it at the stick.*

SHOW: *44 Woolly aphid*

This is the woolly aphid! A teeny-tiny species of plant-eating insect that can be found in several places around the world, including Ireland.

These guys have six legs, a pair of antennae (*put your fingers up to your head like antennae*), which help them to feel and smell, and three major body segments: the head, thorax, and abdomen. Hey! Let's sing about that.

Have everyone stand up and sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," substituting head, thorax, abdomen. Sing at a normal speed, then do it a couple more times, faster and faster.

Head, thorax, abdomen, abdomen
 Head, thorax, abdomen, abdomen
 Pair of antennae and six legs
 Head, thorax, abdomen, abdomen

Now, hopefully, you can see where they get the name woolly aphid. Their "wool" is not the same as sheep's wool, however. It serves a different purpose.

Look at your neighbor's hair. What color is it? *Pause.* Well, a sheep's wool is its hair!

But woolly aphids' "wool" is actually a waxy substance. Instead of keeping them warm, the woolly aphid's wool helps hide the aphid.

SHOW: *45 Woolly aphid predators*

You see, if you're that tiny, you could be lunch for a lot of different animals! But when an animal sees a pile of white fluff, it doesn't look good to eat, so it's tricked into staying away.

SHOW: *46 Katydid mandibles*

As mentioned, woolly aphids like to eat plants. They can't chew them up, though, because they don't have mandibles, which are kind of like jaws on an insect. Do you see the mandibles on this katydid?

SHOW: *47 Woolly aphid mouth*

Instead of mandibles, God created woolly aphids with a mouth that looks like a straw. Do you think it would be cool to have a mouth like a straw? *Pause.* We sometimes use straws to drink juice. The woolly aphid also uses its straw-like mouth to drink juice. Yum! Plant smoothie! Woolly aphids drink sap from the stems of plants.

SHOW: *48 Dead plant*

Woolly aphids need to eat, but their eating habits can be very bad for the plants they're eating. These guys can even disfigure or kill a plant when they eat it. Now, you may be thinking, "How can such a small bug kill a whole plant?" Well, usually, these aphids don't eat alone. They swarm!

SHOW: *49 Woolly aphid swarm*

There can be thousands of these bugs on one plant at a time. And since they drink the sap the plant needs to grow, the plant can get sick or die. Sometimes, these guys will destroy plants that are important to humans. Their feeding habits can also spread yucky diseases or fungi. While cute, these bugs can be pesky pests. You might say they're a plant's enemy.

SHOW: 50 David

Sometimes, we can feel like we're swarmed and overwhelmed by trouble and danger, like a plant swarmed by aphids. David certainly understood this feeling. He faced powerful enemies and dangers at every turn. It could have been easy for David to lose heart and grumble and complain about the circumstances he found himself in. But that's not what David did. Instead, David remembered God loved and cared for him and was with him even in difficult times. By trusting in God, David was able to experience gratitude in his life for all God had done for him, instead of grumbling and complaining. His cup was running over with God's goodness.

SHOW: 51 Pesky the woolly aphid

Today's animal pal, Pesky the woolly aphid, is here to remind us that when we're surrounded by tough times, God desires that we focus on his goodness rather than complaining about our circumstances. So take some

time today to think about how God has blessed you and what he has given you that you're thankful for!

Drama (12 minutes)

Announcements (time varies)

Cool Contests (3 minutes)

Announce the winners of today's contests. Remind them to learn tomorrow's verses, complete their Go and Do activities, and bring in their final mission money.

Prayer

Takeaway Time (2–3 minutes)

Before we go, let's try Psalm 23 together. We're almost to the end! Recite Psalm 23:1–5 together with hand motions.

Instead of being on the complain train, let's have an attitude of gratitude and focus on our overflowing cup of God's goodness.

Here's a special truth to remember through good times and hard times: God is good all the time, and all the time _____. Have them finish by saying, "God is good."

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

C: "Christ Is Here" / T: "In the Valley"

Day 5: Opening Assembly

Welcome (2 minutes)

Props: Dish or pan with real or imaginary Jello Jigglers

Person 1 comes in at the normal pace. Person 2 walks out carefully, tentatively, slowly poking along behind Person 1.

Person 1: Say to the kids: Good day to ya, lads and lasses! Welcome back to *Emerald Crossing*! Look back and talk to Person 2. You coming? What's going on back there?

Person 2: I just made some Jello Jigglers and they're really shaky.

Person 1: Ahh, so you're trying to walk carefully so you don't mess them up.

Person 2: Yeah, I'm not sure if these are gonna survive. What do you think?

Person 1: Go over and peer down in the dish. If you have real ones, show them to the kids. Otherwise, just pretend. Wow, they really are shaky.

Person 2: I know. I'm not sure if I followed the instructions right. I was going to serve them at VBS today, but now I'm not sure.

Person 1: Hmm . . . you want to go from shaky to sure. That reminds me of something.

Person 2: Another jiggly food? Uh . . . cheesecake?

Person 1: Nope—what we're talking about today at VBS. Psalm 23:6 tells us we will surely dwell in the house of

the Lord forever. It's not a shaky promise from God—it's for sure for any who believe in Jesus.

Person 2: I love that God is a promise keeper. If he promises something, it will happen.

Person 1: You better believe it! Well, maybe you should put those in the fridge for now, and we'll go ahead and get started with our singing.

Do so, while Person 2 runs backstage and comes back out without the Jello Jigglers.

Song (3 minutes)

C Memory Verse Song: "Goodness and Mercy" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"

Song (3 minutes)

Theme Song

Mission Moment (5 minutes)

SHOW: Guided by Grace slide

This week, Quinn has introduced us to children all over the world who are facing poverty and don't have enough money to meet their needs. But we've done more than learn about kids in need, right? Pause for participation. Did we learn how we can help them too? Pause for participation. That's right! We did!

SHOW: Guided by Grace—Sebastian slide

Today, we aren't going to learn about a child living on the other side of the world. This child lives in the United States.

SHOW: [Video 5—Sebastian](#)

Country: [United States](#)

Problem: [Invisible Poor](#)

Be sensitive to the population of children you are serving. Rephrase as necessary to be sure all children feel welcome and included. For someone like Sebastian, it can be difficult to tell if he is in need. He wears a uniform to school just like the rest of his classmates, so he doesn't look any different. But it also means that no one knows he needs help. This is why the local church is so important; they are working hard to learn about families like Sebastian's who need help.

You've also been working hard this week, collecting coins to provide meals for children like the ones you met. You met Hani in Ethiopia, Ivanna in Romania, Luciana in the Philippines, Hugo in El Salvador, and Sebastian in the United States. But the coins you collected this week aren't just going to help them.

The coins you are collecting will support Children's Hunger Fund, and they partner with churches in over 30 countries around the world! Those churches provide food to families in need and share the hope of Jesus. Every box of food means a chance to share the gospel.

Your quarters are making a huge difference! Isn't that amazing?

Are you ready to see how many meals we can provide this week? [Pause for participation.](#)

The grand total number of meals we can provide this week is ____meals! To calculate your VBS meal progress, multiply the dollars raised by four.

SHOW: [Daily Count Day 5 slide](#) with current meal count filled in

You did such an amazing job collecting coins! This can feed so many children in need. But do you know what's even better? Because of you, more children and their families will learn about the love of Jesus.

But it doesn't have to end here! Did you know you can keep sending meals to children in need even after this week? You can keep making a difference for children worldwide with Children's Hunger Fund. Ask your parents how you can continue sharing meals and Christ's love with children in poverty.

Announcements (time varies)

Prayer

Dismissal

Song (play as children leave)

[C Memory Verse Song: "I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord" / T MV Song: "Psalm 23"](#)

Day 5: Closing Assembly

Song (3 minutes)

C: "Surely Goodness and Mercy" / T: "All the Days"

Song (3 minutes)

C: "Provider" / T: "I'm Sittin' at a Table"

Creature Feature: Shirley the Highland Cow (5 minutes)

Use the **PRESENTATION SLIDES** or show the **CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO**. Shorten this script as needed.

Props: Shaggy wig, a thick fleece jacket, raincoat

SHOW: [52 Creature Feature title slide](#)

Come out wearing a shaggy wig. Run into something and say it's kind of hard to see where you are going. Take it off.

That shaggy hair reminds me of today's animal pal, the Highland cow.

SHOW: [53 Highland cow](#)

The Highland cow is not originally from Ireland, although they're found there now. They originated in one of Ireland's neighboring countries: Scotland.

Highland cattle are a unique cattle breed known for their long horns and shaggy hair. Their hair is the longest of any domestic cattle breed in the world! Of course, it makes them look absolutely adorable, but it can also be used to make clothes.

What color do you think of when you think of a Highland cow? [Pause.](#)

SHOW: [54 Highland cow colors](#)

Highland cattle have reddish hair, but they can also be black, white, yellow, dun (a dull grayish-brown), silver dun, or brindle (brownish with streaks of other color).

The most important function of this long hair is to keep the cattle toasty and dry, so God gave them two coats of hair. [Put on the thick fleece jacket.](#) The first is a shorter fluffy inner coat underneath that traps heat, kind of like this heavy fleece jacket. [Put on the raincoat.](#) The second is a long, oily outer coat that repels water like this raincoat. These layers keep the cows warm and waterproof! Staying warm is particularly important for these cattle because of where they live.

SHOW: [55 Highlands of Scotland](#)

As their name suggests, they were bred to live in the highlands or mountainous areas of Scotland.

SHOW: [56 Highland cow in higher lands](#)

The views in the higher lands of Ireland are beautiful, but it can be very windy, cold, and rainy. Thanks to their thick double coat, Highland cattle don't mind the harsh weather at all!

In the mountains, plants don't always grow as much as they do in lower grasslands, so these cows can't be picky

eaters. Not to worry, though, because God designed the Highland cattle to eat just about anything that grows up there. They're even able to eat poison ivy without any problems!

SHOW: 57 Highland cow comparison

Another thing that makes these Highland cattle suited for mountain living is their size. They aren't as big as many other cattle, so they aren't carrying as much weight climbing up and down the rocky hills. Although females can weigh up to 1,300 pounds, and males can weigh up to 2,000 pounds, these cattle have short, stocky legs that keep their weight close to the ground, making them very sure-footed!

SHOW: 58 Highland cow calf

Even a Highland calf can start roaming these hills within an hour of its birth. God designed Highland cattle so that no matter how rough the area is, they have what they need to help them thrive in their treacherous mountain homes.

SHOW: 59 David

When David thought of all God had done for him, he saw the same truth—that the Lord's presence provided everything he needed to make it through life. David looked back on how the Lord had saved him when he was lost, put him on the path of righteousness, calmed his fears, and filled his heart with gratitude. David's faith was sure because he knew he could trust God's goodness and mercy no matter what happened. God is always good and always full of mercy. David could trust God's promise that he would one day live forever in God's kingdom. God always keeps his promises.

When we praise and thank the Lord for what he has done for us, we grow in our faith in him. We move from

the shaky ground of our own thinking to the solid rock of trusting in the Lord's salvation and his Word.

SHOW: 60 Shirley the Highland cow

Today's animal pal, Shirley the Highland cow, who sometimes lives in the higher lands of Ireland, reminds us of that higher land all Christians can be sure of—heaven. We can trust the Lord to *surely* keep us all the way to his kingdom because God is a promise keeper.

Well, this week's Irish adventure sure has been fun! Remember to look at God's amazing creatures wherever you go and think about how they glorify him and remind us of his truth!

Drama (12 minutes)

Announcements (time varies)

Cool Contests (3 minutes)

Announce the winners of today's contests.

Prayer

Takeaway Time (2–3 minutes)

Before we go, let's try all of Psalm 23 together. Do you think you can do it? Here we go! *Recite Psalm 23:1–6 together with hand motions.*

I hope you keep saying Psalm 23 to yourself every day! Remember all the promises, hope, and help God gives us in this beautiful psalm! And remember that the most important question you can ask yourself is this: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?

Well, lads and lasses, it's been an amazing week together at *Emerald Crossing*! Thanks for joining us. See you next time!

Closing Program

Emerald Crossing Closing Program

A great week needs a great ending with a great closing program. The closing program is a time of celebration and provides an opportunity for parents, grandparents, and friends to learn what God has been doing all week at VBS. Be prepared to lovingly welcome any who do not normally attend church. This is a wonderful time to share Christ's love and build relationships!

Choose a time to host the closing program. For a morning VBS, the evening of the last day may be a good choice. For an evening VBS, the Sunday morning following your VBS week may work best. Include this information in

your Caretaker Handbook, and send out invitation postcards (item 1230300) mid-week.

Divide your program into three time segments: Before the Program, the Closing Program, and After the Program.

Involve Your Drama Characters

Kids enjoy costumed characters, so look for opportunities to involve your drama team. They can serve as greeters, ushers, and song leaders. They can also be involved in the review game. Be creative—use your imagination!

Before the Program (15–30 minutes)

Families can visit the various VBS areas. Leaders of these areas should be in their respective spots to meet and greet everyone and to share about the week. In addition, you can repeat a few activities from the pre-VBS carnival. (See the *Director Guide* for carnival ideas.)

The Closing Program (30–45 minutes)

Choose from the following possibilities to plan your program:

Share Terrific Trivia Tidbits

As a fun way to start things off, share some trivia. For individual slides, see [Trivia Presentation Images](#).

Sing Songs

Have the children sing favorite VBS songs.

Share Psalm 23

Have everyone recite Psalm 23 together with the hand motions. Or have various age groups share some of their memory verses.

Perform a Skit

Check the Resource Download for a wrap-up [skit](#) (Resources > Director Helps > Promo Skits).

Perform a Drama Segment

Have your drama team perform a favorite section from one of the dramas or even an entire day's drama.

Review the Daily Teaching Points

Review the daily crossings (e.g., lost to found, wrong path to right path) and include a gospel presentation.

Review the Creature Features/Animal Pals

See how much the kids remember as you review the animal pals that were presented during the week.

Announce Group Winners

Depending on how you structured your contests for the week, announce individual winners, group winners, or goals that were reached by the whole VBS.

Announce the Final Mission Project Total

Tell about the mission project you've been collecting money for and then have a dramatic final announcement.

Show Highlights

A short video of highlights from the week is an awesome way to recap the events. Parents love to see their children in pictures.

Share Stories and Testimonials

Allow those with compelling stories to share their experiences from the week.

Play a Review Game

Divide into teams and challenge each group with review questions from the week. Teams can be boys versus girls or kids versus parents.

Share the Gospel

Ask your pastor (or children's pastor) to share the gospel so the kids can hear it again as well as the parents and visitors.

Cheer the VBS Staff

Recognize your volunteers by having them all stand and receive huge applause!

Make Announcements and Pray

Ask your pastor to make any announcements, invite everyone to future church events, and then close the program in prayer.

After the Program (30–60 minutes)

Head to the snack area and serve some fun treats. Use snack ideas from the training workshops or repeat snacks used during VBS. (See the *Still Water Snacks Guide*.) If you didn't do the carnival before VBS, talk with your director about doing one after your closing program. Kids love carnival games!

Drama Production

Drama Overview

The *Emerald Crossing* drama is a major part of the VBS program and is presented during the closing assembly each day. It is a continuing story with each day's installment designed to touch upon the main spiritual themes of the day.

Why Live Drama?

At a time when kids are so accustomed to watching videos, live drama can be a treat. Not only do kids love to watch it, but your church probably has teens and adults who love to act and are looking for opportunities to use their gifts. Just try it and see if it isn't one of the best things about your VBS program and one of the reasons why kids want to come back the next day—and bring their friends!

OTHER SCRIPT OPTIONS AVAILABLE

As an alternative to the six-character, full featured drama, a **shorter three-person** skit is available.

Drama Summary

Grandpa Fitz, a life-long Irish sheep farmer, has never lived anywhere but the family farm. But now he's grown older, and the farm is getting to be too much for him. Reluctantly, he puts the farm up for sale, but then his son—and only heir—surprises him by moving back to Ireland after quitting his long-time law practice in New York City. The joy doesn't last long, however. A greedy, corrupt county official has other ideas and almost forces the sale until his evil plan is discovered. In the ups and downs of it all, Grandpa Fitz draws strength from God, the Good Shepherd, and his wayward son finds faith, all through Psalm 23.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The *Emerald Crossing* drama is unusual in that it calls for an Irish accent from every character except one. (Erin is the only one not from Ireland.) So have your actors start early to hone their accent work and, if necessary, check internet sites for assistance.

Cast of Characters

AIDAN FITZPATRICK "GRANDPA FITZ" (70s)

Father to Shane, Grandpa Fitz is a long-time sheep farmer and owner of Stillwater Farm, which was built by his grandfather in 1925. Now in his 70s, Fitz realizes the farm is getting to be too much for him. But he loathes the idea of selling it, having lived nowhere else. He's a good, kind man and a mature Christian.

MOLLY (70s)

Grandpa Fitz's long-time friend and neighbor. For her, age is just a number. She's fit as a fiddle and has more energy than a border collie. Good at many things, she has an eye for quality wool, spins her own yarn, and can knit you something for any occasion! She's also a mature Christian.

SHANE FITZPATRICK (EARLY 40s)

Husband to Erin and son of Grandpa Fitz, Shane just moved to Ireland to run the sheep farm that he grew up on and has been in his family for generations. He's a long-time New York City lawyer who remembers little about sheep farming. He's an unbeliever who comes from a Christian home.

ERIN FITZPATRICK (EARLY 40s)

Wife to Shane, Erin has lived in New York City her entire life and loves a posh urban lifestyle. She's also a bit of a clean freak. Knowing nothing whatsoever about sheep or farming or Ireland, she hates the idea of moving, but is trying to be a good sport about it. She's also an unbeliever.

PATTY (30s)

A quirky part-time employee who's been helping around Stillwater Farm the past couple years. Passionate about the culinary arts, she dreams of making her mark in the sheep cheese business, but that's highly unlikely. In fact, her friends have learned to approach her offerings with extreme caution.

VILLAIN (30s)

A bright young county official, recently elected to public service on promises of reform. He quickly traded that in for personal gain, however, when he discovered the power at his disposal. He may wear a smile and say the right thing, but don't be fooled—just below the surface is a greedy, corrupt man.

Production Notes

As the drama director, you will oversee and direct the drama. A well-performed production is very rewarding and will bring energy and excitement to your VBS program.

The Role of Prayer

“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

The importance of prayer in relation to every aspect of your VBS program cannot be overemphasized. Even if you, your cast, and your crew are exceptionally talented or experienced, your dramas will have little eternal impact upon those in the audience unless God blesses it. Pray for your actors, your crew, and yourself regularly. Pray for each meeting and rehearsal. Pray for the effectiveness of your dramas and for the children and adults who will watch them. When you encounter problems or challenges of any kind, pray and watch God do amazing things as you trust him. Finally, and most importantly, pray that God would be glorified and that he would save people as a result of your VBS!

First Steps

Become very familiar with the drama scripts by reading each day's script several times. Get to know each of the characters before you cast the parts and schedule your first rehearsal. Also, because each facility is unique, it may be necessary to adapt the script and stage directions to your particular setting.

Casting

The drama is written with six parts. Some parts are preferably male and some preferably female. However, the scripts can be adapted depending upon the gender of the actors available.

Because the drama is so important, take great care in choosing your actors. Choose teens or adults who not only have some dramatic ability but also are dependable and work well with other people. This will make your job easier and more enjoyable. Make sure the actors understand the level of commitment required before they agree to volunteer.

Rehearsal & Production Schedule

The following schedule should be used as a guide and should not be considered a comprehensive list of “to-do” items. Add to or adapt the schedule according to your situation.

Six Weeks Before VBS

- Host an orientation meeting with your entire cast.
- Distribute the daily scripts.
- Assign parts, then read through the scripts to acquaint the actors with the storyline and characters.
- Encourage actors to read scripts on their own and begin to learn their lines.
- Establish a rehearsal schedule. (Make sure cast members bring their calendars with them.) In addition, schedule an extended dress rehearsal of all five scripts onstage during the weekend before VBS.
- Communicate expectations regarding attendance and behavior during rehearsals.
- Exchange phone numbers and email addresses.
- Encourage the actors to read the scripts daily.
- Meet with the set design and construction crew to discuss those needs.

Five Weeks Before VBS

- Focusing on one script (or two) per rehearsal, begin to block scenes (movement and positioning of characters).
- Encourage actors to read scripts on their own and learn their lines.

Four Weeks Before VBS

- Focusing on one script (or two) per rehearsal, continue to block scenes.
- Encourage actors to learn their lines.
- Purchase/collect set materials.

Three Weeks Before VBS

- Focusing on one script (or two) per rehearsal, continue to block scenes.
- Begin to limit the use of scripts by the actors.
- Discuss costume needs and assign collection of props.
- Create set pieces.

Two Weeks Before VBS

- Continue with blocking rehearsals.
- Limit use of scripts.
- Discuss rehearsal schedule for next week (the most important week of rehearsals!). Remind the cast of

the extended dress rehearsal of all five scripts onstage. (Allow at least four hours, if possible.)

- Discuss progress regarding costumes and props.
- Meet with the sound and lighting crew to discuss microphones, music, sound effects, and lighting.
- Continue work on set pieces.

One Week Before VBS

- Conduct rehearsals with no scripts.
- Make sure all costumes are assembled and all props are collected.
- Install the set as early in the week as possible so practices can take place onstage.
- If possible, conduct an extended dress rehearsal of all five scripts onstage with sound and lighting.

During VBS

- Conduct run-through rehearsals onstage before each day's drama. Schedule the auditorium to be "closed" between the opening and closing assemblies for this purpose.

Tip Corner

- To help motivate actors to learn their lines, set deadlines to memorize each day's script.
- Record a complete read-through of all five scripts to use to help the actors learn their lines.
- Begin blocking as early as possible. It helps the actors learn their lines faster.
- Resist the tendency to neglect the Day 5 script because it's later in the VBS week. Your drama should end on a high note with a strong performance!

A Word About Drama for Children

When it comes to live drama for children, there are certain things you can do to make it better. It's like seasoning. Food without it can be very bland and boring, but with it, a meal can be extremely satisfying. So consider the following suggestions to leave the kids craving more!

Blocking

The movement and positioning of characters is a vital part of a successful drama. Well-designed movements bring life to the scripts and keep things from stagnating. Given the fact that your audience is primarily children, it is necessary to be conscious of pace and energy. When things slow down, children begin to lose interest, become fidgety, and start talking to their neighbors. Encourage your actors to learn their lines quickly so more time can be devoted to developing good blocking.

Voices, Gestures, and Facial Expressions

To further enhance the effectiveness of your drama, be sure to use dramatic voices and exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. Children respond favorably to characters who are very theatrical.

Foreign Accents

When appropriate, accents can also make a character more interesting. The *Emerald Crossing* drama is unusual in that it calls for an Irish accent from every character except one. (Erin is the only one not from Ireland.) Have your actors start early to hone their accent work and, if necessary, check internet sites for assistance.

Physical Comedy

Another way to liven things up is to add some slapstick. Kids love it when a character has funny mannerisms, falls off a chair, or gets his foot stuck in a trash can. So look for ways to sprinkle in some physical comedy where appropriate.

Volume and Clarity

Children will quickly lose interest if they can't hear or understand what's being said. Therefore, continually remind your actors to speak loudly and clearly and not rush their lines. If possible, every actor should have a wireless microphone (with fresh batteries daily).

Support Crew

You, as the drama director, will need assistance in the following areas:

Set Design and Construction

The set may require a team of people to design (using the *Emerald Crossing* set concept), purchase materials for, paint, and assemble it.

Sound and Lighting

In addition to your normal sound technician, you'll need someone to play the **drama theme music** and **sound effects** at the designated times. Someone will also be needed to handle the lighting cues.

Costumes and Props

For the most part, the actors can be responsible for their own costumes and props. However, it is helpful to have someone oversee and manage the collecting (or making), use, and return of costumes and props.

Rehearsal Assistant

Another set of eyes and ears during each rehearsal can be very helpful. This person can take notes, offer suggestions, and feed lines to the actors when the time comes to limit the use of scripts.

Costume Suggestions

Grandpa Fitz

Brown corduroy pants, collared shirt, cardigan sweater, Irish cap, scuffed leather shoes, glasses, shepherd's staff, gray beard (optional)

Molly

Plain jeans, blouse with sweater, scarf, leather boots, gray wig

Shane

Days 1 and 5: Business casual—slacks, shirt and tie, jacket (optional)

Days 2, 3, and 4: Blue jeans, golf shirt, ball cap, leather shoes

Erin

Loving high fashion and having never ventured out of the big city, she's always overdressed for farm life. Day 1 especially so. Days 2–5, maybe a bit more relaxed.

Patty

Plaid flannel shirt with dungarees (overalls) or faded sweatshirt over cargo pants, mismatched socks, scuffed leather shoes or boots

Villain

Professional attire—dark business suit, dress shoes, ID badge

Tip Corner

- Thrift shops are a good source for inexpensive clothing and accessories.
- Check the internet for a myriad of costume ideas.

Props List

Set Props

- “Stillwater Farm 1925” sign
- “FOR SALE” sign
- Bench
- Mailbox (freestanding)

Day 1

- Molly’s grocery bags (2)
- Grandpa Fitz’s shepherd’s staff
- Grandpa Fitz’s grocery bag (1)
- Patty’s dirty white apron and chef’s hat (see NOTES)
- Patty’s small plate of cheeses
- Grandpa Fitz’s handkerchief
- Shane and Erin’s luggage with cleaning supplies

Day 2

- Villain’s clipboard
- Villain’s letter in sealed envelope
- Villain’s cell phone
- Patty’s dirty white apron and chef’s hat
- Patty’s small plate of cheeses
- Villain’s ID badge
- Erin’s broom, feather duster, bucket, cleaning supplies
- Shane’s disguise (disguise glasses, hat, trench coat)
- Molly’s picnic basket

Day 3

- Erin’s cleaning supplies (including feather duster)
- Shane’s ball cap
- White toothpaste
- Patty’s sheep shears and wad of wool (see NOTES)
- Optional: smoke effect
- Grandpa Fitz’s shepherd’s staff
- Shane’s umbrella
- Villain’s envelope with food fine letter

Day 4

- Molly’s “moving” knitting basket (see NOTES)
- Grandpa Fitz’s journal
- Patty’s open box with pet turtle (see NOTES)
- Patty’s large bag of wool
- Molly’s knitting project for Patty
- Erin’s vacuum/sweeper (preferably cordless)

- Geese the goose puppet
- White toothpaste
- Grandpa Fitz’s towel

Day 5

- Erin’s trek supplies (boots, backpack, safari hat, sunglasses, camera, spray bottle, rag)
- Patty’s dirty white apron, chef’s hat, and “clouded” safety goggles
- Grandpa Fitz’s grocery bags
- Molly’s grocery bags
- Patty’s small plate of cheese samples
- Villain’s CPO document
- Villain’s pie basket
- Patty’s shallow wooden crate

NOTES

PATTY’S DIRTY WHITE APRON

A quick and easy way to make a white apron “dirty” is with sidewalk chalk. Choose two or three darker colors and don’t be shy—layer it on thick so it’s visible from a distance. And don’t worry, it should come out in the wash just fine.

PATTY’S SHEEP SHEARS AND WAD OF WOOL

If you can’t find authentic sheep shears, you can substitute with grass shears or some other small handheld clippers. Just be careful with them, especially when running out of the auditorium. For wool, use Poly-fil.

MOLLY’S “MOVING” KNITTING BASKET

Don’t tell the kids, but Molly’s knitting basket moves with the help of clear fishing line, not George the turtle! Simply attach the fishing line to the side of the basket and have it already in place when the lights come up. Then have someone backstage follow the script and pull on cue.

PATTY’S PET TURTLE

Use a toy turtle that’s not too small, so it can be seen from the audience. If you can’t find a toy that works, a coconut shell cut in half will look pretty authentic from a distance.

Music, Media & Sound Effects List

Day 1

- Theme Music
- Sheep Sounds

Day 2

- Theme Music
- Rooster Crows
- Sheep Sounds
- Goose Honks
- Aggressive Goose Honks
- Taunting Goose Flying Away

Day 3

- Theme Music
- Goose Honks
- Fly-By Goose Splat
- Goose Splat Fly Away
- Sheep Sounds

Day 4

- Theme Music
- Sheep Sounds
- Goose Laugh 1
- Goose Laugh 2
- Big Crash
- Goose Splat Fly Away

Day 5

- Theme Music
- Patty Crash
- Loud Crunch
- Sheep Sounds
- Psalm 23 Slides (for screens)
- Baby Goose Squeak
- Baby Goose Laugh



Download sound effects and printables from
AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources

Set Design & Construction

Main Stage Set



The main set for your VBS is very important. It not only serves as a setting for the drama, but also communicates the theme and helps set the mood for the entire VBS! So be sure to give it the attention it needs! The suggested design for the *Emerald Crossing* set is shown above and features a 100-year-old sheep farm in the beautiful Irish countryside. Use it as a guide and adapt it to your particular setting. You may need to make size and design adjustments to accommodate your stage.

Set Components

Your set pieces should be constructed using rigid materials, such as corrugated cardboard, polystyrene insulation, luan plywood, or a combination of these materials. For best results, consider making “flats” (panels attached to light-weight wooden frames) and “jacks” (wooden supports) to prop them up. For basic instructional videos on how to build stage flats and jacks, visit [YouTube.com/answersvbs](https://www.youtube.com/answersvbs) and scroll down to the “Building a VBS Set” videos.

Farmhouse

Traditional Irish farmhouses were often modest, one-story structures with whitewashed exteriors. Thatched roofs were common, but slate or clay tiles were also used. So your farmhouse should be plain white, but you can dress it up with a red door and window boxes (painted on) with colorful flowers.

Stone Barn

Irish barns were generally made of stone because of its abundance, weather resistance, and low maintenance. So unlike the whitewashed farmhouse, your barn will need to have a weathered stone look. Also, include large double doors, a small window or two, and a “1925 Stillwater Farm” sign above the doors.

Windows & Doors

The farmhouse windows can be painted on. But for purposes of the drama, the barn windows need one to operate as a puppet window.

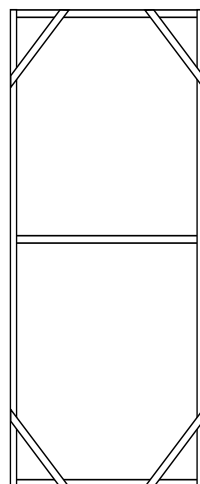
Construct the doorways with wood framing and inexpensive, unfinished hollow core doors. The barn doors’ curved design can be achieved with painted cardboard faces attached directly to the working doors. If you’re not doing the daily drama, however, you can simply drape the openings with black fabric.

Plants & Animals

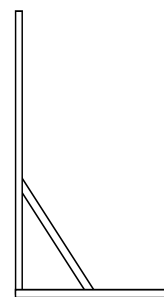
On the left and right sides and places in between, add some trees, shrubs, and flowers. You can also add some climbing Irish ivy to the barn, the farmhouse, or both. And don’t forget that kids love animals, so be sure to include a bunch on your set. [Clip art images](#) of sheep, cows, chickens, a border collie and other animals are available.

Backdrop

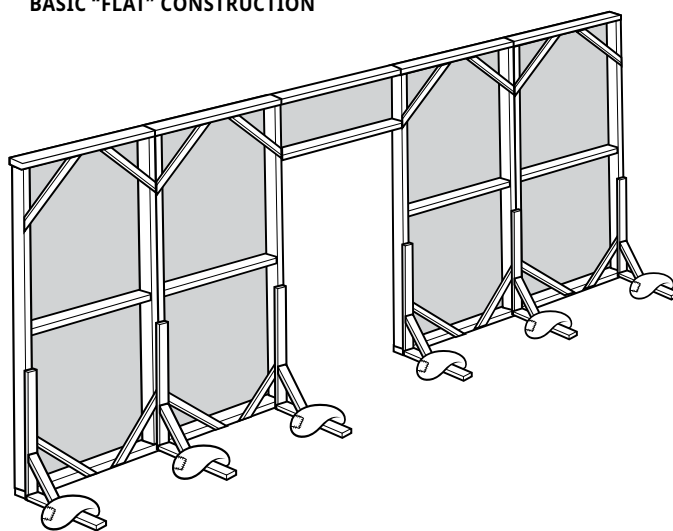
A backdrop is an important part of the set. Besides covering the back wall of your platform, it can also enhance the look of your set pieces. Construct a series of rolling green hills against a blue sky background. Add a winding pathway and a flock of sheep to one of the hills between the farmhouse and barn and some puffy white clouds to the sky.



BASIC “FLAT” CONSTRUCTION



BASIC “JACK” CONSTRUCTION



Clip Art Images

Use a projector to enlarge and transfer [clip art images](#) onto paper, poster board, or rigid materials, such as corrugated cardboard or wood. Some images can be painted directly onto the set panels.

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

1. If you aren’t using a laptop/projector setup, photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
2. Place rigid material against a wall.
3. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the material, adjusting for the desired size.
4. Trace the image outlines onto the material.
5. Paint the image and cut out.

Painting Tips

Paint Colors

When it comes to selecting your paint colors, the last thing you want is a drab set. Remember that kids like color, so look for ways to include some bright blues and reds, bold oranges, golden yellows, lime greens, and hot pink and purples. Be careful, however, with some colors, such as bright yellow, that work well in small doses but can be too intense over large areas. For the rolling hills, trees, and general foliage, use a variety of greens, then liven things up with lots of colorful flowers, shrubs, birds, and butterflies.

How to Paint a Stone Wall

For the barn, there are a number of ways to paint fake (faux) stone. One method is to use black and white to create three shades of gray (light, medium, and dark).

Step 1: Paint the entire surface the light color and let it dry.

Step 2: Use blue painter's tape to create mortar lines. The lines should be random to reflect the varying sizes and shapes of stone. You can also pinch the tape here and there so the thickness of the mortar varies.

Step 3: To add texture, lightly sponge the dark shade onto the stone faces then let dry.

Step 4: To add more texture, repeat with the medium shade. (You can continue to dab all three shades until you're satisfied with how it looks.)

Step 5: Remove the tape and finish with highlights and shadows to give the stones a 3D effect. Using the dry-brush technique, add a thin white line to the top and

right sides and a thin black line to the bottom and left sides of each stone, as if a light was shining down from the right.

"DRYBRUSH" TECHNIQUE

Use a "drybrush" technique over your dry base paint for highlights and shadows to create dimension in your artwork. This technique requires very little paint on the brush with any excess brushed off before applying paint to the surface. With what little paint remains on the brush, apply sparingly until the desired effect is created. Use lighter colors for highlights and darker colors for shadows.

Other Tips

- To save money, use flat paint instead of eggshell or satin. Matte finishes are also more forgiving under stage lighting.
- Corrugated cardboard tends to curl a bit when only one side is painted. To minimize curling, simply apply one coat of paint to the back of each piece.
- Practice painting techniques on scrap pieces before painting the real thing.
- Stage sets are viewed from a distance, so amplify details to ensure visibility. Step back often to see how things look from afar.
- Add black outlines to all your set pieces to make them stand out.

Installing Your Set

When it's time to install your set, start with the backdrop. Then assemble the farmhouse on one side and the barn on the other side, leaving ample space between the two for a view of the farm's rolling green hills. Decorate with animals, rocks, and shrubs. For the drama, you'll also need a bench and a freestanding mailbox.

Finishing Touches

Before your set installation is complete, close any gaps where the backstage area might be visible to the audience. Also, make sure all your set panels are adequately braced from behind with jacks and weighted down with bags of sand or rock salt. Finally, add some stage lighting to make your set come alive!

WHERE TO FIND CORRUGATED CARDBOARD AND POLYSTYRENE INSULATION SHEETS

Large cardboard boxes can be used for smaller decorations, but large 4 x 8-foot (48 x 96-inch) sheets (or "pads") are best for larger decorations and set pieces. Corrugated cardboard sheets, in various sizes, can be purchased from paper and packaging companies and online sources, such as Paper Mart, Shipping Supply, or Uline. Or check local home supply stores for recycled boxes.

Polystyrene insulation sheets are more expensive than cardboard but easier to find on short notice. It's also preferred by theater professionals because it's easy to carve and paint for more realistic 3D applications. Polystyrene sheets can be found at home improvement centers.

Scene Setters

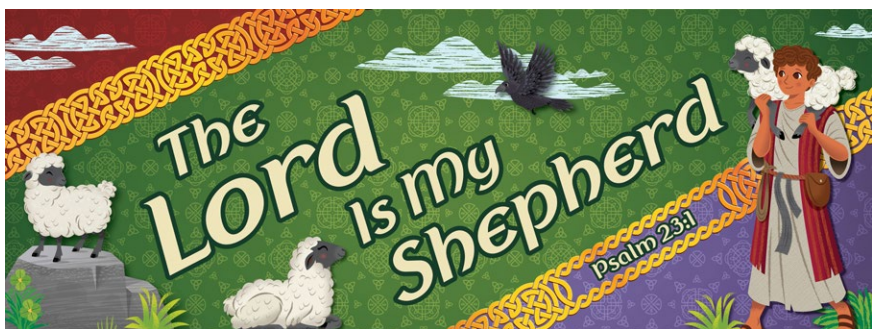
For those who would like help with their set, we have provided scene setters.

The stage portion of the Main Set Scene Setter (1231220) features 18 panels. Display this large scene setter at the front of your assembly area to set the mood for *Emerald Crossing* and to use with the daily drama. Each panel is approximately 62.6 x 42.3 inches (1590 x 1074 mm). The stage assembles to 375.6 inches across by 126.9 inches high.

Attach the panels to pieces of foam board, corrugated cardboard, or plywood using clear packing tape, staples, or spray glue along the edges. Then brace the panels from

behind with wooden jacks weighed down with bags of sand or rock salt.

For those with lower ceilings, the top row can be removed. For those with smaller stages, the barn can be removed and used elsewhere if you are not doing the drama live. Or bump out the barn from the field and move it slightly in front of the field. Enter and exit from the sides of the barn, rather than through the doors. If you decide to use the doors, you will want to build frames with hinges and carefully cut around the doors. Enter and exit the house around the side by the window.



A theme verse banner (1231210) is also available. This set has 4 panels. One side is oriented vertically for those who wish to hang the banner from the ceiling. The other side is oriented horizontally for those who wish to display it on a wall. This features a shortened version of the verse.

Visit AnswersVBS.com for ordering info.

DAY 1 DRAMA

Characters: GRANDPA FITZ, MOLLY, PATTY, SHANE, ERIN, VILLAIN

THEME MUSIC.

Scene opens at an Irish sheep farm, consisting of a whitewashed farmhouse, an old stone barn with a “Stillwater Farm 1925” sign hung over the door, a bench, and a mailbox. There’s a “For Sale” sign in the front yard. Then MOLLY, with a grocery bag in each hand, approaches the stage. GRANDPA FITZ, with a shepherd’s staff in one hand and a grocery bag in the other, is lagging a good bit behind.

MOLLY: What a view! Even after all these years, it still thrills me!

GRANDPA FITZ approaches the stage. He appears winded.

MOLLY: Why, Aidan Fitzpatrick, are you out of breath? You know, I’m five years older than you and not a bit winded by that climb!

GRANDPA FITZ: (*glares*) Congratulations! I don’t know how you have so much energy at your age . . . it’s unnatural.

MOLLY: (*shrugs*) Ah, well . . . it’s fitness, my friend, which I achieve through healthy food and exercise. (*does a few deep squats and stretches*) C’mon, you try!

GRANDPA FITZ: Nah, I’ll just watch.

MOLLY: Oh, no, you won’t! C’mon . . . you can do it! I know you can!

MOLLY begins some exercises for GRANDPA FITZ to follow. GRANDPA FITZ tries a couple, but quickly fails, eventually lowering himself to the ground in exhaustion.

MOLLY: Oh, Aidan! What am I going to do with you?

GRANDPA FITZ: Sorry, I can only exercise early in the morning before my body knows what’s happening.

MOLLY: Here . . . let me help you up.

MOLLY helps GRANDPA FITZ get up from the ground. Then PATTY enters wearing a dirty white apron and

a white chef’s hat. She’s carrying a small plate of assorted cheeses.

PATTY: (*with great enthusiasm*) Hey, friends! Guess what? It’s time to stop and savor the cheese!

MOLLY: (*as if she’s said it a million times before*) Sorry, Patty—I’m allergic to dairy, remember?

PATTY: Oh yeah.

GRANDPA FITZ: I’m still not sold on your experiments. Your last batch of cheese tasted like dirt.

PATTY: Yeah . . . sorry about that. Some dirt fell off the sheep and into the milk. And I’m convinced that filthy fluff ball did it on purpose!

MOLLY: Now hold on, Patty—don’t you go talking about dear Keely like that. She’s a good momma sheep—with the softest wool!

PATTY: Yeah—that’s full of dirt! (*to GRANDPA FITZ*) Anyway, I didn’t feel like starting over and was kinda hoping nobody would notice.

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, I did notice, and now I’ve lost my appetite.

PATTY: Oh, but this batch is clean. I made sure of it this time!

GRANDPA FITZ: (*reluctantly*) Well, all right. (*mutters*) It probably won’t kill me . . . I hope.

GRANDPA FITZ takes a piece of cheese and bites off a tiny corner only.

MOLLY: (*to GRANDPA FITZ*) Bet you’re wishing you had a dairy allergy like me right now!

PATTY: So, what do you think?

GRANDPA FITZ: I think you shouldn’t give up your day job. (*takes his handkerchief and spits it out*)

PATTY: That bad, huh?

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, now don't get discouraged. Like Thomas Edison, you just found another recipe that didn't work, that's all.

GRANDPA FITZ walks away and exits into the farmhouse.

PATTY: I didn't know Thomas Edison was into cheese making! Wow! I guess you learn something new every day!

MOLLY: No, Patty, what he meant was . . . oh, never mind.

PATTY: You know, Mr. Fitz just isn't himself lately.

MOLLY: It's that "For Sale" sign. It gets him down every time he sees it. To be honest . . . it gets me down too. Stillwater Farm has been in his family for over a hundred years and he's never lived anywhere else. But it's finally getting to be too much for him to take care of in his old age.

PATTY: I wish I could help him more, but there's only so much one farmhand can do. If only he had a family member to pass it on to.

MOLLY: He does.

PATTY: (*shocked*) What?

MOLLY: A son. A big shot New York City lawyer with absolutely no interest in an old Irish sheep farm. He left for college years ago and never came back.

PATTY: Really? That's a shame . . . because if I were Mr. Fitz's son, I'd definitely be interested in the farm. (*gets an idea*) Hey! Here's an idea! Maybe I could put myself up for adoption. What do you think about that?

MOLLY: Seriously?

PATTY: Yeah, you're probably right. I'm sure my parents wouldn't approve—then again—maybe they would.

MOLLY: Hmm. I'm gonna miss ol' Aidan. He's been my nearest neighbor for over 50 years.

PATTY and MOLLY are silent for a moment as they contemplate the sad situation.

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

PATTY: Well, I guess I've got some sheep to tend to.

PATTY exits into the barn.

MOLLY: Yep, no rest for the weary. That's life on a farm. (*mutters*) I think I'll check on Aidan.

MOLLY exits into the farmhouse. Then SHANE and ERIN enter from the rear of the auditorium with their luggage and proceed toward the stage. ERIN's luggage is massive and has some cleaning supplies hanging on it. SHANE is a few steps ahead of ERIN, captivated by the beautiful landscape.

SHANE: (*enthralled, doesn't hear her question*) Oh, Erin! Look at the countryside! As far as the eye can see—no skyscrapers, no crowds, no traffic jams, no pollution. Isn't it beautiful?

ERIN: But I like all those things. I'm used to them. Besides, all this fresh air is giving me a headache.

SHANE: (*still not hearing her*) And listen! No noise! Just peace and quiet. Shame on me for not bringing you here until now.

ERIN: (*impatient*) How much farther? My feet are killing me!

SHANE: There it is! C'mon! (*picks up his pace*)

ERIN: (*mutters*) I guess I'm talking to myself.

SHANE enters the stage ahead of ERIN.

SHANE: Stillwater Farm! Our new home! It's a dream, isn't it?

ERIN: (*mutters*) Funny, I was thinking nightmare.

SHANE: Oh, I have such a good feeling about this, Erin. Don't you?

Hearing the noise, PATTY emerges from the barn.

PATTY: Can I help you folks?

SHANE: Oh, hi.

PATTY: (*notices their luggage*) Uh . . . if you're looking for a place to stay, there's a real nice bed and breakfast just down the road!

SHANE: Thanks, but we're staying here (*as he pulls the "FOR SALE" sign out of the ground*). I'm Shane Fitzpatrick.

PATTY: Fitzpatrick? Now why does that name sound so familiar?

GRANDPA FITZ and MOLLY emerge from the farmhouse.

SHANE: *(still holding the “For Sale” sign)* Hi, Dad!

GRANDPA FITZ: Shane? Erin? Well, this is a surprise!

SHANE drops the “For Sale” sign, then GRANDPA FITZ, SHANE, and ERIN exchange hugs.

PATTY: Oh! *That* Fitzpatrick!

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, uh . . . this is Patty. She’s been helping me around the farm the past couple of years. And you know Miss Molly, of course.

SHANE: *(to MOLLY)* Yes, good to see you. It’s been a very long time.

MOLLY: It has at that. And look—you’re all grown up now.

GRANDPA FITZ: So . . . what’re you doing here?

SHANE and ERIN exchange glances.

SHANE: Well, believe it or not, we’re uh . . . we’re here to stay.

GRANDPA FITZ: Wait, what do you mean, “stay?”

SHANE: We’re going to live here.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(hopeful)* You mean you’re moving to Ireland?

SHANE: *(nods)* That’s right.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(excited)* Are you serious?

ERIN: *(sadly)* Yes . . . he’s quite serious.

SHANE: Dad, it’s a long story . . . but I just couldn’t do it anymore. I was climbing the corporate ladder—you know, getting promotions and earning more money, until I realized that ladder was leaning against the wrong wall. Having money and feeling important just weren’t bringing me happiness like I thought they would. Then I heard you were selling the farm, and I knew what I had to do.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(overwhelmed)* Wow! I can’t tell you what this means to me. I never wanted to see the day that I’d have to sell Stillwater Farm . . . but now I won’t have to?

SHANE: That’s right, now you won’t have to.

GRANDPA FITZ hugs SHANE.

GRANDPA FITZ: Wow! This is going to be a big life change for you both. *(to ERIN)* Are you sure you’re okay with this, my dear?

SHANE: Oh, yeah! She’s looking forward to it. Aren’t you, Erin?

ERIN just stares and starts to become unsteady on her feet.

SHANE: Erin?

PATTY: Suddenly, she’s looking a wee bit pale.

MOLLY: I think she’s going to faint.

As ERIN faints, SHANE catches her and then lays her on the ground.

PATTY: Nice catch. When I was in fourth grade, I fainted during a choir concert and took out the whole soprano section!

MOLLY: Poor thing.

GRANDPA FITZ: I hope she’s okay.

SHANE: She’ll be fine. Probably just tired from traveling. It’s been a big day. Erin? You there?

ERIN starts to move.

ERIN: What happened?

SHANE: You fainted.

ERIN: I did? Oh, how embarrassing! *(sits up)* Where am I?

SHANE: You’re in Ireland. Remember?

ERIN: Oh . . . yeah. *(faints again)*

MOLLY: Maybe we should carry her inside.

SHANE: Good idea. *(to GRANDPA FITZ)* Don’t worry, Dad. She’ll be okay.

MOLLY, PATTY, and SHANE carry ERIN into the farmhouse. GRANDPA FITZ watches until they exit, then drops to his knees, looks toward heaven, and prays a prayer of thanksgiving. While he prays, the VILLAIN enters from the side and proceeds toward the stage.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(with overwhelming gratitude)* Oh Lord, my Shepherd, you've loved me and cared for me all these years, and now you've blessed me yet again—saving the farm and bringing my son back to me in my old age. Thank you! *(short pause)* Still, as wonderful as all that is, it doesn't even compare with what you did for me all those years ago. You showed me that I was a sinner with no hope of heaven, but that your Son, Jesus, paid the penalty for my sin by dying on the cross then rising again. Just like a shepherd searching for a lost sheep, you found me, Lord, and brought me into your fold. And for that, I'll be thanking and praising you forever!

VILLAIN: Excuse me . . . are you the owner of this farm?

GRANDPA FITZ: *(startled)* Oh, yes. How can I help you?

VILLAIN: I understood the farm was for sale, but I don't see a sign anywhere.

GRANDPA FITZ: That's because we just took it off the market. Our circumstances have changed, so there's no longer any need to sell.

VILLAIN: *(disappointed)* Oh . . . that's bad news.

GRANDPA FITZ: On the contrary, it's the best news I've had in a long time!

VILLAIN: Would you consider an offer?

GRANDPA FITZ: An offer? No, I wouldn't be interested in selling now.

VILLAIN: Are you sure? You might be surprised at how much you could get for the place.

GRANDPA FITZ: I'm sorry, but it's not for sale.

VILLAIN: *(bold)* Oh, c'mon . . . everything's for sale at the right price.

GRANDPA FITZ: Not Stillwater Farm.

VILLAIN: Listen . . . I'm prepared to offer you a cash deal—that's money in your pocket.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(annoyed)* I've already said . . . the farm isn't for sale.

VILLAIN: Okay, then . . . just name your price!

GRANDPA FITZ: Sir, I'll say it once more. Stillwater Farm is not for sale at any price! And now, I'm very happy to say, this conversation is officially over. Good day to you.

GRANDPA FITZ exits into the farmhouse.

VILLAIN: So he's going to be stubborn about it. Hmm . . . this isn't going to be as easy as I thought. Now things are going to get a little messy, and the old man's not gonna like it one bit!

THEME MUSIC

DAY 2 DRAMA

Characters: VILLAIN, PATTY, MOLLY, SHANE, ERIN, GRANDPA FITZ

THEME MUSIC

ROOSTER CROW [SFX]

VILLAIN, carrying a clipboard, saunters confidently onto the stage facing Stillwater Farm, then stops in front of the mailbox.

VILLAIN: *(to himself as he pulls a sealed envelope from inside his jacket)* Let's see . . . how did you word it? "Stillwater Farm is not for sale at any price." Ha! Yeah, well . . . we'll see about that. I just wish I could see the look on your face when you read this! *(takes out cell phone and snaps a selfie holding the envelope with a big smile)* Ha ha! *(deposits the envelope into the mailbox)*

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

PATTY enters wearing a dirty white apron and a white chef's hat. She's carrying a small plate of assorted cheeses.

PATTY: *(samples some cheese)* Mmm, mmm, mmm! Delicious! Patty McPherson, you're becoming quite the cheese maker! *(she passes by the VILLAIN on her way to the farmhouse, then stops abruptly)* Oh! A customer! Sir, would you like to try a sample?

VILLAIN: What is it?

PATTY: Just the best cheese you've ever tasted!

VILLAIN: What kind of cheese?

PATTY: Sheep cheese.

VILLAIN: *(thinking)* Sheep cheese?

PATTY: *(proudly)* That's right, the finest in all of Ireland . . . if I do say so myself.

Then the VILLAIN gets the mean and nasty idea to levy a fake fine for "unlicensed food production" in addition to serving the CPO—the Compulsory Purchase Order.

VILLAIN: Hmm . . . interesting. So you made it with those filthy hands, wearing that dirty apron *(points to the dilapidated barn)* . . . in

that musty old barn with all those sorry-looking sheep?

VILLAIN makes notations on his clipboard as he inspects the place.

PATTY: Uh, well . . . no . . . I mean, yes . . . I mean . . . I guess you could say that. So would you like some?

VILLAIN: I think I'll pass. *(continues to make notations)*

PATTY: *(disappointed)* Okay . . . so what brings you to Stillwater Farm?

VILLAIN: Oh, uh . . . just doing some . . . county business, that's all. *(as he flashes his ID)*

PATTY: A government official? Say, are we in some sort of trouble?

VILLAIN: *(with a sinister smile)* Trouble? Nah . . . I think everything's gonna work out just fine.

PATTY: *(confused)* Huh?

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

PATTY: Be patient, Eleanor! I'm coming!

VILLAIN: Well, my work's done here. Have a wonderful day. *(laughs as he walks away)*

VILLAIN exits toward the rear of the auditorium.

PATTY: Everything's gonna work out just fine? I wonder what he meant by that.

PATTY exits into the barn as ERIN enters from the farmhouse. She has a broom in hand, a feather duster in her back pocket, and a bucket with other cleaning supplies.

ERIN: *(groans as she runs a finger along the outside of the door)* My goodness. I figured farms were dirty, but I had no clue they were this bad! Well . . . not any longer! If I'm going to live here, the grime has got to go!

SHANE enters from around the side of the farmhouse wearing a pair of disguise glasses, a hat, and a trench coat. ERIN stops and looks at him like he's crazy.

ERIN: What in the world? (*walks over and lifts the glasses off his face*)

SHANE: Shh!

SHANE quickly pushes his glasses back into place and puts his finger against her mouth to “shush” her. Then he turns to watch the skies.

ERIN: (*stage whisper*) What do you mean, “shh”? There’s nobody out here!

SHANE: Oh yes, there is!

ERIN: Who?

SHANE: Not “who” . . . what.

GOOSE HONKS [SFX]

SHANE: See?

ERIN: What was that?

SHANE: Geese.

ERIN: (*loud*) We have a flock of geese?

SHANE: Shh!

ERIN: (*stage whisper*) We have a flock of geese? I thought this was just a sheep farm!

SHANE: Not a flock of geese. Just one goose.

ERIN: But “geese” is more than one. I’m confused.

SHANE: It’s a goose named Geese.

ERIN: (*incredulous*) A goose named Geese? Are you kidding me? Don’t you think that’s a bit confusing?

SHANE doesn’t answer as he’s on the lookout for Geese.

ERIN: Shane?

SHANE: Stop saying my name! Geese will hear you!

ERIN: Don’t be silly. He doesn’t know English!

SHANE: Oh, yes he does!

ERIN: Okay, fine. So how long is all this going to go on—whispering and wearing disguises?

SHANE: Not long, because Stillwater Farm isn’t big enough for the both of us. It’s gonna be me or him!

AGGRESSIVE GOOSE HONKS [SFX]

ERIN: (*with a hopeful look*) Oh! So, we’re moving back to New York, then?

SHANE: Very funny.

GRANDPA FITZ enters the stage. He’s been out in the fields with the sheep.

SHANE: Dad, I can’t believe Geese is still around after all these years!

GRANDPA FITZ: He isn’t. That Geese passed a long time ago. This is Geese Jr. Jr. the Third, to be exact.

ERIN: Geese Jr. Jr. the Third? Say, who’s naming the animals around here?

TAUNTING GOOSE FLYING AWAY [SFX]

GRANDPA FITZ: There he goes.

SHANE: Sounds like he’s got Geese’s wild disposition, though.

GRANDPA FITZ: That he does, I’m afraid.

ERIN: (*exasperated*) Well, that’s just great. If quitting our jobs and moving to Ireland to run a 100-year-old sheep farm that we know nothing about wasn’t enough, we also have a crazy, psychotic goose on our hands . . . whose name is Geese and speaks English! (*takes a deep breath*) I think I need to lie down. I’m feeling lightheaded again!

ERIN exits into the farmhouse. SHANE watches her leave.

SHANE: (*to himself*) I didn’t mean he *speaks* English . . . just that he understands it.

GRANDPA FITZ: I hope Erin knew what she was getting into before she moved across the ocean. She knew it was a sheep farm, right?

SHANE: (*shrugs*) Sorta . . . I alluded to it. I told her we’d be farming . . . fluffy white puffs.

GRANDPA FITZ: Fluffy white puffs?

SHANE: I know . . . but she was already iffy about the farming part . . . and the living in the country part.

GRANDPA FITZ: So Erin flew across the Atlantic thinking she’d be a cotton farmer?

SHANE: Maybe, but I only said “fluffy white puffs.” Sorry, Dad. It looks like it’s going to be harder to get used to than we thought.

GRANDPA FITZ: You didn’t think it would be easy, did you?

SHANE: I guess I was hoping it would be.

MOLLY enters the stage carrying a picnic basket.

MOLLY: Good morning, you two!

GRANDPA FITZ: *(looks at his watch)* Morning? It’s almost time for lunch!

MOLLY: Which is what I’ve got right here. *(taps the top of the basket)* I just need a few minutes in the kitchen to get it ready.

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, that’s the best news I’ve heard all day! And would this meal happen to include some of your famous—

MOLLY: Soda bread? Of course!

GRANDPA FITZ: Shane, my boy . . . we are in for a treat!

MOLLY: So why don’t you boys carry on with your conversation, and I’ll let you know when lunch is ready.

GRANDPA FITZ: That sounds like a plan.

MOLLY exits into the farmhouse.

SHANE: Dad, why is it called “Stillwater Farm?” I’ve looked at that old sign so many times, but I’ve never thought about it before.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(walks toward the barn)* Funny, I remember asking my dad the same question.

SHANE: Really?

GRANDPA FITZ: Yeah. When your great-grandparents came to this area 100 years ago, newly married and looking for a place to start a life together, they immediately fell in love with this spot.

SHANE: *(looks around)* It is beautiful. I can see why they chose it.

GRANDPA FITZ: Then they built the house and barn and had to come up with a name. It’s customary for farms to have names, you know.

SHANE: Like Green Acres farm down the road.

GRANDPA FITZ: That’s right. So their first thought was “Pleasant View” because of its beauty. But then your great-grandfather, being a sheep farmer *and* a lover of the Bible, decided that something from his favorite psalm would be better. Psalm 23. You know it, of course.

SHANE: Hmm, I’m not sure.

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, c’mon . . . “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want”? They sometimes read it at funerals.

SHANE: I haven’t been to many funerals lately.

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, that’s a good thing. But, now that you’re a sheep farmer, you really should learn it. It was written by David, the shepherd boy who later became king of Israel.

SHANE: Yeah, I’ve heard of David and Goliath.

GRANDPA FITZ: Right, that’s him. Anyway, the psalm talks about how the Lord is like our shepherd and that he cares for and protects his sheep. The second verse is what inspired the name. “He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside *still waters*.”

SHANE: Still waters . . . like the pond behind the house?

GRANDPA FITZ: Exactly . . . it was your great-grandfather’s favorite spot on the farm. And you’d often find him there thinking or praying or reading his Bible. So . . . that’s the story.

SHANE: *(satisfied)* Hmm . . . thanks, Dad.

GRANDPA FITZ: But seriously, Shane . . . I really hope you’ll read Psalm 23 . . . and the rest of the Bible too. It’s God’s Word, so it has the answers you need for life, and it’ll help you stay on the right path. You do have a Bible, don’t you?

SHANE: *(a bit embarrassed)* Uh . . . well, I need to get one.

GRANDPA FITZ: That’s okay, I’ve got one you can have. You know, there’s no other book like it in the whole world. It’s like a priceless treasure.

MOLLY steps out from the farmhouse.

MOLLY: Lunch is ready!

GRANDPA FITZ: Great! Shane, would you check the mailbox? I forgot to check it yesterday.

SHANE: Sure. *(walks to the mailbox, opens it, and finds the sealed envelope)*

GRANDPA FITZ: Did we get anything?

SHANE: Just one letter. It's from the county.

GRANDPA FITZ: County?

MOLLY: It's probably just a newsletter or something.

SHANE hands the envelope to GRANDPA FITZ. He immediately opens the envelope and reads the letter. Then his countenance drops.

MOLLY: *(concerned)* What's wrong?

SHANE: Dad? What is it?

GRANDPA FITZ: *(stunned)* "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

SHANE takes the letter from GRANDPA FITZ.

SHANE: Bad news. It's a CPO.

MOLLY: A Compulsory Purchase Order?

GRANDPA FITZ: Yes. Looks like we may lose the farm after all.

GRANDPA FITZ and SHANE exchange glances.

THEME MUSIC

DAY 3 DRAMA

Characters: ERIN, SHANE, MOLLY, PATTY, GRANDPA FITZ, VILLAIN

THEME MUSIC

Scene begins with ERIN at the barn with her cleaning supplies. She's dusting the outside walls with a feather duster.

ERIN: *(groans as she tries to get the dirt off the outside of the barn)* I'll bet this barn hasn't been dusted in 100 years! Maybe 200! *(a bit overwhelmed, she stops to take a breath)* There's probably a better way to do this *(then starts dusting again).*

SHANE, wearing a ball cap, enters from the farmhouse. When he sees ERIN dusting the barn, he stops and stares.

ERIN: What are you staring at?

SHANE: Sorry, I've just never seen anyone dust the outside of a barn before.

ERIN: Well, now you have!

SHANE: Do you really think that's necessary?

ERIN: It is if I'm gonna live here.

SHANE: Okay. Well, I guess that's reason enough.

ERIN: Listen, we need to raise the standard . . . and maybe—just maybe—it'll catch on and everyone's farms will be clean like ours.

SHANE: *(looks up toward roof)* So, how're you gonna do the high parts?

ERIN: I'm not. You are.

SHANE: Oh . . . I guess I deserve it, huh? Dragging you away from the big city.

ERIN: Yeah, that's kinda what I was thinking too. Any sign of you-know-who?

SHANE: You mean—*(makes a puppet goose motion with his hand)*? No, thankfully. Maybe he flew south for the winter . . . a little early.

ERIN: Or maybe you just overreacted. Boy, the original—*(makes a puppet goose motion with her*

hand) you-know-who, must have traumatized you something awful when you were young.

SHANE: Oh, you have no idea.

ERIN: Well, anyway, I'm glad to see you're not wearing that silly disguise.

GOOSE HONKS [SFX]

SHANE immediately looks up and sees Geese Jr. flying overhead, so he quickly ducks into the barn and out of sight. While he's there, globs of white toothpaste are applied to the back of his hat and shirt.

ERIN: *(rolls her eyes)* Oh great, here we go again.

SHANE cracks the door open and peeks out.

SHANE: *(stage whisper)* Is he gone?

ERIN: *(as she looks around)* I don't know, but I don't hear or see anything.

SHANE cautiously steps out of the barn, facing the audience so the back of his shirt and head aren't seen.

SHANE: Whew! That was close!

ERIN: *(skeptical)* Well, maybe it's just me, but I think you're being ridiculous.

FLY-BY GOOSE SPLAT [SFX]

SHANE looks up at the sky and feels something on the back of his head. Then he turns so that the "goose droppings" are visible to the audience.

SHANE: There! Did you see that? Did you? That was definitely no accident!

ERIN: Yes . . . I saw it. But do you really think it was directed at you?

SHANE: Oh, absolutely! There's no doubt in my mind.

GOOSE SPLAT FLY AWAY [SFX]

SHANE: He did it again!

ERIN: Okay, I admit it . . . that seemed like it was on purpose.

SHANE: *(looks up in the sky and shakes his fist)*

Geese! I'm gonna get you for this!

ERIN: Shane, that's probably not going to help.

He must see you as a threat.

SHANE: Oh, I'm a threat all right—goose season

or not! *(tries to look at the back of his shirt)*

Disgusting.

ERIN: Here . . . stand still and let me clean you

up *(proceeds to go overboard cleaning SHANE*

up with her cleaning supplies). Wow! He got

you good.

SHANE: You know, I'm beginning to wonder if it

was a mistake to move here.

ERIN: I know, but let's give it more time. *(then to*

herself) I can't believe I just said that.

MOLLY enters the stage.

MOLLY: Good morning! Just came to get

some wool from Patty. My yarn supplies are

getting dangerously low. *(to SHANE)* Say, what

happened to you?

SHANE: Geese Jr. Jr. the Third happened to me.

MOLLY: Eww . . . I'm sorry.

ERIN: He seems to be fixated on Shane as a

target for some reason.

MOLLY: Well, you know . . . at one time, he did

seem to go after the men on the farm. But it

hasn't been a problem for a while.

SHANE: Until now.

MOLLY: So how's your father this morning? I've

been worried about him.

SHANE: Actually, I haven't seen him. He got

up early.

MOLLY: Hmm . . . poor Aidan. I think I know

where he is.

SHANE: Where?

MOLLY: It's a place he goes whenever he's

facing a problem and needs time to just think

and pray. He calls it the Valley of the Shadow

of Death.

ERIN: Valley of the Shadow of Death? Sounds

creepy to me.

MOLLY: It's a phrase from Psalm 23. I'm sure

you've heard it . . . "Even though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me . . ."

It means that when we go through difficult

times in life—times that seem like dark, scary

valleys—we don't have to fear because God is

with us.

SHANE: It's because of the letter he got

yesterday, isn't it?

MOLLY: Yes, I'm sure it is.

ERIN: You really think he's going to lose

the farm?

MOLLY: Yes, maybe so.

ERIN: Hmm . . . it just seems so unfair.

MOLLY: I know . . . I've heard of the government

taking people's land for public use, but I never

thought it could happen here.

SHANE: You know, I think I'll contact the

county. We need a better explanation about all

this. Maybe they can send someone out to talk

to us. *(starts toward the farmhouse)*

ERIN: That's a good idea. And while you're at it

. . . a shower and a change of clothes would be

a good idea too!

SHANE exits into the farmhouse.

ERIN: *(to MOLLY)* No doubt, Shane's gonna want

to fight this thing.

MOLLY: People do sometimes . . . but, they don't

usually win.

ERIN: Hmm, well . . . *(gathers up her cleaning*

supplies) . . . I'm going to go wash up. Nice talking

to you, Miss Molly.

MOLLY: Nice talking to you too.

ERIN exits into the farmhouse. Then MOLLY walks to

the door of the barn and calls for Patty.

MOLLY: Patty, are you in there?

Then a hysterical, wild-eyed PATTY bursts out of the

barn almost knocking MOLLY over. She has sheep

shears in one hand and a wad of sheep's wool in the

other. Add smoke effect from inside barn as an option.

PATTY: (*talking fast and starting to rhyme—emphasize the rhyming words*) Oh no! Where'd she go? She was just here a second ago!

MOLLY: Who?

PATTY: Cotton Ball, the little brat! I've never seen her run like that! She went berserk just like a cat!

MOLLY: Say, what's gotten into you? You sound like a Dr. Seuss book.

PATTY: Well, I made a potion for the sheep, to make them strong and not so weak!

"Sheeperade" is what they call it. I tried it myself, but it made me vomit!

MOLLY: Eww!

PATTY: (*distraught*) So I think I got the recipe wrong, and now that goofy ewe is gone!

MOLLY: Patty, I don't know what to do, you've made a mess, and that is true.

Oh no! You've got me rhyming too!

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

PATTY: (*excited*) I hear her now, she's over yonder, I'll run and run until I find her!

And when I do, I'll shear that sheep and bring you back a great big heap!

Patty quickly exits the stage, running like a cartoon character toward the rear of the auditorium.

MOLLY: Oh my! Sheep cheese and now Sheeperade. Well, one thing's for certain . . . Patty and recipes don't mix!

GRANDPA FITZ enters the stage with his shepherd's staff and notices PATTY running in the distance.

GRANDPA FITZ: Is that Patty running like that? What's going on?

MOLLY: Well, all I can say is . . . if she offers you something to drink, whatever you do, DON'T drink it, or you'll be sorry!

GRANDPA FITZ: Thanks for the warning.

MOLLY: (*mutters*) I guess I'll come back tomorrow for my wool.

MOLLY exits.

GRANDPA FITZ: I wonder what that was all about.

SHANE emerges from the farmhouse with an umbrella to protect him from Geese's droppings.

GRANDPA FITZ: (*noticing SHANE with an umbrella, he looks at the sky*) Shane? Is there rain in the forecast?

SHANE: It's not water I'm worried about . . . it's Geese's droppings.

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, I see. Well, don't worry . . . after a while, he'll get used to you.

SHANE: I hope you're right.

GRANDPA FITZ: He's just protecting the farm, that's all.

SHANE: Dad . . . I called the county, and they're sending someone over to explain what this CPO letter is all about. Just so you know.

Both sit on the bench, if there's room, or just Shane sits.

GRANDPA FITZ: Shane, you remember what a "cast" or "cast down" sheep is, right?

SHANE: Oh, sure . . . that's when a sheep is on its back and can't get up. I remember when you'd send me out to look for sheep that might have wandered off and were stuck on their backs.

GRANDPA FITZ: Right . . . and that's because it's really bad for them and makes them easy prey for wolves and coyotes. Remember when I'd say that people are often like sheep—prone to worry and wander and become easily cast down?

SHANE: I do remember. But Dad, what are you trying to say?

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, I just wanted you to know that I've been pretty cast down myself lately . . . worrying about the farm and the future. But someone once challenged me, "Don't worry, just pray." So I spent time in prayer with God this morning, and like a good shepherd, he picked me up and put me back on my feet.

SHANE: How did he do that?

GRANDPA FITZ: God comforted me like only he can do. And so, now I'm at peace with the situation. If we're able to save the farm, great . . . but if we end up losing it, I'll be okay, because I trust God. He dearly loves his sheep, but his ways are higher than ours; sometimes we just can't understand completely.

VILLAIN enters from the rear of the auditorium and proceeds toward the stage.

SHANE: Okay. Well, I'm glad you're feeling better. But I want you to know that I'm going to fight this as best as I can. I may not know much about sheep farming, but I think I'm a pretty good lawyer.

GRANDPA FITZ: I know you are . . . and I appreciate it.

VILLAIN approaches the stage.

SHANE: Oh, this must be the man from the county.

VILLAIN: Hello, everyone!

GRANDPA FITZ: So . . . we meet again.

SHANE: You know each other?

VILLAIN: Yes, I was here a couple days ago when the farm was for sale.

GRANDPA FITZ: But, now it's not, so you're using your government power to take it from us?

VILLAIN: Well, I wouldn't put it so crudely, but, yes . . . I guess you could say that. You see, the county wants—actually, *needs*—to put a new road through here, and your farm is in the way. It's really that simple.

GRANDPA FITZ: But it's my home . . . the only place I've lived for 74 years!

VILLAIN: Well, you're going to be paid for it. It's not like we're just going to steal it from you.

GRANDPA FITZ: I don't want your money.

VILLAIN: Listen, I understand how hard this is for you. I really do. These decisions are never easy for us at the county.

SHANE: (*sarcastic*) Yes, you seem *very* upset about it.

VILLAIN: Oh, we are! But we can't stand in the way of progress now, can we?

SHANE: Progress? How is it progress to build a new road out here in the country where there's already plenty of roads and no traffic? And what's the purpose of this new road? Have any other routes been considered?

VILLAIN: (*starts to get flustered*) Questions, questions . . . so many questions!

SHANE: Well, that is why you're here, isn't it? To answer our questions?

VILLAIN: (*annoyed*) Listen, I'm sorry if you can't accept it, but there's nothing I can do. The wheels are already in motion. I suggest you start packing.

SHANE: Packing?

VILLAIN: (*looks at his watch and interrupts*) Oh, look at the time! I'm sorry, but I must get back to the office. (*starts to exit, then remembers the food fine*) Oh, I almost forgot.

VILLAIN pulls an envelope out of his pocket and hands it to GRANDPA FITZ.

VILLAIN: Here you go. Just another little present from the county. Have a nice day!

VILLAIN exits the stage and heads toward the rear of the auditorium.

GRANDPA FITZ: (*opens the letter*) A fine for unlicensed food production?

SHANE: What?

GRANDPA FITZ: Patty's cheese.

VILLAIN: (*happy, he looks back over his shoulder and laughs as he rubs his hands together*) Ha ha! My plan is working! It won't be long now until I'm rich! (*skips his way out of the auditorium*)

THEME MUSIC

DAY 4 DRAMA

Characters: GRANDPA FITZ, MOLLY, PATTY, SHANE, ERIN

THEME MUSIC

Scene begins with MOLLY sitting on a bench knitting, with her knitting basket on the floor beside her. She's patiently waiting for PATTY to arrive with her wool. Soon, GRANDPA FITZ walks up holding a personal journal.

GRANDPA FITZ: Top of the mornin' to ya!

MOLLY: Well, Aidan . . . you're sure bright and chipper!

GRANDPA FITZ: And why shouldn't I be? I've got so much to be thankful for!

MOLLY: Yes, God is good, isn't he?

GRANDPA FITZ takes a seat next to MOLLY.

GRANDPA FITZ: So what brings you to the farm this morning?

MOLLY: Just waiting for Patty to arrive. She still owes me an order of wool, and my supplies are getting really low.

GRANDPA FITZ: Uh-oh.

MOLLY: Yep . . . so low I can't sleep at night!

GRANDPA FITZ: *(smiling)* Well, we can't have that now, can we? Let *me* get it for you.

MOLLY: No, wait here she comes.

PATTY enters the stage holding an open box with a box turtle in it.

PATTY: Sorry I'm late! Slept through my alarm. *(big yawn)* I don't know why I'm so tired this morning.

MOLLY: Probably because of that Sheeperade concoction you made. After it wore off, nothing was going to wake you up!

PATTY: Think that was it?

MOLLY: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, I'll let you two conduct business. I need to go count my sheep and count my blessings.

MOLLY: Well, you better get going then, 'cause that's gonna take a while!

GRANDPA FITZ exits.

MOLLY: What's in the box?

PATTY: Huh? Oh, I almost forgot! This is my new friend, George the box turtle. We met on Bailey Road this morning. Isn't he cute? *(holds him up toward MOLLY)*

MOLLY: *(leans away)* He's a reptile.

PATTY: He's still cute. *(then sees MOLLY's knitting basket with a bed of yarn inside)* Say, Miss Molly . . . would it be okay if I let him rest on your yarn? It's a whole lot softer than the bottom of this box.

MOLLY: But that's my good yarn.

PATTY: Oh, don't worry, I got all the dirt off of him, so he's clean as a whistle.

MOLLY: *(reluctant)* Well . . .

PATTY: You don't mind, do you? *(as she lowers the turtle into the basket)*

MOLLY: *(annoyed)* I guess it's okay. But if he does—you know what—on my yarn, you're gonna owe me.

PATTY: Oh, don't worry, he'll be good. *(leans down to talk to the turtle)* Won't you, buddy? *(pauses as she listens to the turtle)* What was that? Oh . . . *(to MOLLY)* He said thank you and that he'd be on his best behavior.

MOLLY: Right. I'm sure he did.

PATTY: Let me go get your bag of wool.

Patty exits into the barn, then MOLLY warns the turtle.

MOLLY: You better behave yourself or we'll be having turtle soup for dinner! You got that?

MOLLY turns up her nose, pushes the basket away with her foot, then continues to knit. Soon, PATTY returns with a very large bag of wool.

PATTY: Here's your wool! It's a pretty big bag. Want me to carry it home for you?

MOLLY: No, thank you. That's not necessary.

PATTY: Really, I will.

MOLLY: No, I *want* to carry it myself. That's how I keep myself fit—staying active and doing hard things. *(lifts the bag over her head and performs a couple squats before setting it down)*

PATTY: Well, it's obviously working.

MOLLY: Thanks.

MOLLY resumes her knitting.

PATTY: So what are you knitting today?

MOLLY: Oh, this? It's gonna be a winter hat for my granddaughter.

PATTY: Hmm . . . I sure could use a winter hat. My old one looks like a cat in need of a hairbrush.

MOLLY: Well, I'd be happy to make you one.

PATTY: Really?

MOLLY: Sure . . . on second thought, maybe you should give it a whirl.

PATTY: Me, knit? Are you serious?

MOLLY: Of course, I'm serious! It's not hard to do. In fact, I think I've got an old project I started a while ago. Let me see . . . *(tentatively reaches into the basket, not wanting to touch the turtle)* Yes, here it is. *(gives her old project to PATTY, then her basket suddenly moves a foot or so in the direction of the farmhouse, but they don't notice)*

PATTY: Are you sure?

MOLLY: Absolutely. It's already started for you.

PATTY: Well, okay.

While MOLLY helps PATTY hold her knitting correctly, the basket moves another foot or two.

MOLLY: So, you hold the needles like this and then . . .

SHEEP SOUND [SFX]

PATTY: Oh . . . for crying out loud! Can't those sheep see that I'm busy? Wait! That sounds

like Rosie! She's supposed to give birth today! Sorry, Miss Molly . . . I gotta go!

PATTY runs into the barn, taking her knitting with her. MOLLY's basket moves again.

MOLLY: Poor girl . . . so many responsibilities.

MOLLY's knitting suddenly gets yanked right out of her hands as it was somehow tied to PATTY's.

MOLLY: Hey! That's mine! *(lunges after it and falls)* Come back here!

As MOLLY follows her knitting into the barn, her basket starts to slowly move more steadily in the opposite direction, passing the farmhouse as ERIN emerges from the front door with a vacuum cleaner.

ERIN: *(notices the moving basket)* Hmm . . . I guess you just never know what you're gonna see on a sheep farm. *(goes from curious to impatient)* Well, hurry up! I've got work to do. *(watches it move along)* That's better! *(starts to vacuum the front yard)*

SHANE enters from the rear of the auditorium and proceeds toward the stage while ERIN vacuums and the basket continues to move until it's offstage. When SHANE enters the stage, he stops and stares at ERIN.

ERIN: *(seeing SHANE staring, she stops vacuuming)* What are you staring at?

SHANE: Sorry, I've just never seen anyone vacuum their front yard before.

ERIN: Well . . . now you have!

SHANE: Do you really think it's necessary?

ERIN: Of course, how else do you clean it?

SHANE: *(scratches head)* Uh . . . you don't.

ERIN: You don't? *(becomes upset)* Well, how was I supposed to know that? I'm from New York City. I've never even *had* a front yard before! *(sets the vacuum aside)*

MOLLY emerges from the barn with her knitting project. She grabs the large bag of wool, then notices her basket is missing, so she starts looking for it.

SHANE: *(consoling ERIN)* I'm sorry, things are just different on a farm. But I sure appreciate all you're doing to make everything neat and tidy.

ERIN: I guess it is silly to work so hard since we're going to lose the farm anyway. *(then notices MOLLY)* Miss Molly? Did you lose something?

MOLLY: *(puzzled)* Yes . . . my basket of yarn was there by the bench, and now it's gone.

ERIN: Oh, yes! I saw it! It went that way! *(points offstage)*

MOLLY: Did you say it "went" that way?

ERIN: Yes! It couldn't have gotten far. It was moving pretty slow.

Befuddled, MOLLY looks at SHANE for an explanation.

SHANE: *(shrugs shoulders)* Don't look at me.

MOLLY: *(suddenly figures it out)* Oh, wait . . . George! You said this way? *(points offstage)*

ERIN: Yes, that way!

MOLLY quickly exits in the direction of the basket.

ERIN: Hope she finds it. And who's George?

SHANE: *(confused)* I have *no* idea what you two are talking about. But anyway, I need to find Dad. Do you know where he is?

ERIN: Yeah, he's either in the barn or out in the fields.

SHANE: Thanks.

ERIN exits into the farmhouse with the vacuum cleaner as SHANE strolls to the barn. When he gets near the partially open door, it seems to close by itself. SHANE grabs the handle to open it, but it won't budge.

SHANE: Hmm . . . that's strange. I didn't know this door could lock. Hello? Is anybody in there? Patty?

GOOSE LAUGH 1.0 [SFX]

Then GEESE THE GOOSE (puppet) appears in the barn window mocking SHANE.

SHANE: *(irritated)* Geese? Did you do that? Did you lock the door?

GOOSE LAUGH 2.0 [SFX]

SHANE: That's not funny! I have something important to talk to Grandpa Fitz about. Now, you open the door!

GOOSE LAUGH 1.0 [SFX]

SHANE: I mean it! Open the door right now, or you're going to be sorry!

Suddenly, the barn door pops open.

SHANE: That's better. Thank you . . . I mean . . . oh, never mind.

As soon as SHANE enters the barn, a big crash is heard.

BIG CRASH [SFX]

SHANE: Ow!

GOOSE SPLAT FLY AWAY [SFX]

SHANE emerges a bit disheveled and with goose droppings on his shirt.

SHANE: *(fist in the air)* Geese Jr. Jr. the Third! I'm going to get you, if it's the last thing I do!

Then GRANDPA FITZ enters from around the side of the barn and sees SHANE in a sorry state.

GRANDPA FITZ: Shane? What's wrong?

SHANE: Geese Jr. Jr. the Third is what's wrong! *(then feels the bird droppings)* Disgusting!

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, did he do it again? I'm sorry. Let me get a towel. *(ducks briefly into the barn to grab a towel)* Here.

SHANE: Thanks. *(wipes his head and hands)*

GRANDPA FITZ: What are we going to do about that crazy bird?

SHANE: It's okay, Dad, I'll deal with it. But I wanted to talk with you.

GRANDPA FITZ: Yeah, I wanted to talk with you too.

SHANE: Really? What about?

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh . . . just about today. I've had the most wonderful time recalling all the ways God has blessed Stillwater Farm over the years. Like when the barn caught on fire. You were pretty young, but do you remember that?

SHANE: Oh, yeah . . . I remember you throwing buckets of water and praying at the same time. But the flames kept getting bigger and bigger. Then suddenly, it started raining and put the fire out. That was pretty amazing.

GRANDPA FITZ: Or how about the terrible sheep plague that swept through the valley, but not one of our sheep was affected. That was another answer to prayer. Then again, it wasn't always happy endings, was it? We've had our hard times too.

SHANE: Oh yeah, like the swarms of bugs that destroyed our crops. But you never complained. I'll always remember that.

GRANDPA FITZ: Well, that's because your mom and I wanted to focus on God and who he is, and not on our circumstances.

SHANE: Still . . . I'm sure it wasn't easy.

GRANDPA FITZ: No, it wasn't. And now, we're facing the loss of the farm, but I'm asking God to help me turn any grumbling into gratitude. God is always good, no matter what happens. And he's already filled my cup to overflowing and blessed me far beyond what I could ever

ask or imagine. *(short pause)* So anyway, I practically filled this journal with praises! *(holds up his journal)*

SHANE: Wow . . . I'd really like to read that sometime.

GRANDPA FITZ: Here, take it! *(hands SHANE his journal)* Now, what was it that you wanted to talk to *me* about?

SHANE: Oh, never mind. We can talk tomorrow.

GRANDPA FITZ: Really? Are you sure?

SHANE: Yes, I'm sure. It can wait.

GRANDPA FITZ: All right, well . . . I think I'll go lie down for a bit before dinner.

SHANE: Good idea.

SHANE watches GRANDPA FITZ as he exits into the farmhouse.

SHANE: *(to himself, with feeling)* I love you, Dad.

THEME MUSIC

DAY 5 DRAMA

Characters: ERIN, PATTY, GRANDPA FITZ, MOLLY, SHANE, VILLAIN

THEME MUSIC

Scene begins with ERIN emerging from the farmhouse ready to explore the great outdoors with boots, backpack, safari hat, sunglasses, and a camera around her neck. She also has a small spray bottle and rag hanging from her belt.

ERIN: Okay, let's take inventory—backpack, camera, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies . . . oops, I forgot to tie my boots. Can't have that. Wouldn't want to trip and fall into anything stinky.

ERIN walks to the bench to tie her boot laces, but before sitting, she sprays and wipes the seat. Then PATTY emerges from the barn wearing a dirty white apron, a white chef's hat, and safety goggles.

ERIN: Hello, Patty.

PATTY: *(turns away from ERIN)* Who said that?

ERIN: I did! Over here.

PATTY: *(turns toward ERIN)* Oh, hi, Miss Molly!

ERIN: It's Erin.

PATTY: *(confused)* You changed your name?

ERIN: Here, let me clean those for you.

ERIN grabs a spray bottle (with water) and sprays PATTY's face liberally, then wipes her goggles. PATTY sputters from the spray then raises the goggles to her forehead.

PATTY: Oh, it's Miss Erin! Sorry, I guess I need to get some new goggles. I can't see anything with these.

ERIN: So you're making cheese again?

PATTY: Yes, how'd you know?

ERIN: Oh, I don't know . . . apron, chef's hat . . . but, I didn't know you needed safety goggles for cheese making.

PATTY: You don't. I was chopping firewood earlier and forgot to take them off.

ERIN: Wait . . . so, you were chopping wood with safety glasses that you can't see through?

PATTY: *(suddenly occurs to her)* Uh, yeah, probably not a good idea, huh?

ERIN: I wouldn't recommend it. *(grabs her things to go)*

PATTY: Where are you off to?

ERIN: I just thought I'd explore the farm a little. There's so much I haven't seen yet, and if I don't go today, I might not get the chance because of the sale.

PATTY: Yeah, I guess they could kick us out any day now. Hard to believe this is all coming to an end.

ERIN: Well, I'll let you get back to your . . . uh . . . cheese making.

PATTY: Cheese making? *(short pause)* Oh! Right! I almost forgot! *(quickly puts her goggles back on and stumbles her way back to the barn)*

ERIN: Watch where you're going!

PATTY: Yeah, remind me to get some new safety goggles! *(she finds the door, opens it, and rushes inside).*

PATTY CRASH [SFX]

PATTY: *(from backstage)* I'm okay!

ERIN: All right, here we go, out into the wild blue yonder. Hmm . . . I probably should have asked if there are any wild animals I should know about. *(as she exits behind the barn)* Oh, well, too late now.

GRANDPA FITZ, with a grocery bag in each hand, approaches the stage. MOLLY, also carrying grocery bags, is a few steps behind, slowly jogging as she goes.

GRANDPA FITZ: What a view! Even after all these years, it still gives me a thrill!

Then MOLLY enters the stage. She's a little winded from her exercising.

GRANDPA FITZ: (*proud of himself*) Why, Molly Quinn, are you out of breath? I'm not a bit winded by that climb!

MOLLY: Really? Have you been exercising behind my back? (*sets the grocery bags down and does some squats and jumping jacks*)

GRANDPA FITZ: (*smiling*) Hardly!

MOLLY: Then what's your secret?

GRANDPA FITZ: (*joking*) Bacon . . . lots and lots of bacon!

MOLLY: You mean rashers?

GRANDPA FITZ: No, bacon . . . American bacon. Erin's been cooking it every morning, and it's delicious!

MOLLY: (*joking*) So you mean to tell me that I've been wasting time doing squats and jumping jacks, when all I needed was a few strips of American bacon?

GRANDPA FITZ: (*joking*) Sorry! I thought you knew! No, seriously, the secret is the time I've been spending with God lately. It's been so good, it must be putting a pep in my step.

MOLLY: That's wonderful! What have you been reading?

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh, an old favorite that this lifelong shepherd has read so many times, but it never gets old.

MOLLY: Psalm 23? It's my favorite as well.

GRANDPA FITZ: I love it because it reminds me of what a good shepherd God is. And you know what? His goodness and mercy really have followed me all the days of my life. I've got so much to be thankful for! And, as much as I'm going to miss this place . . . (*suddenly pauses as he becomes emotional*) . . . someday, I'm going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever! *Forever!*

MOLLY: That's right, Aidan. And no compulsory purchase order will ever take it away!

GRANDPA FITZ: Praise the Lord!

PATTY enters carrying a small plate of cheese samples.

MOLLY: Uh-oh. Didn't you tell Patty about the fine?

GRANDPA FITZ: Not yet . . . why?

MOLLY: Well, don't look now, but I believe there are some cheese samples in your future.

GRANDPA FITZ: (*rolls his eyes*) Oh no!

PATTY: (*with great enthusiasm*) Hey, friends! Guess what? It's that time again! Time to stop and savor the cheese.

MOLLY: Patty, I'm allergic to dairy . . . remember?

PATTY: Oh, right.

GRANDPA FITZ: I thought you gave up cheese making?

PATTY: (*joking*) Oh, no, not by a long shot! You were probably just wishing I did!

GRANDPA FITZ: (*mutters*) Well, I can't deny that.

PATTY: (*excited*) But, you know, I think I've really done it this time!

GRANDPA FITZ: (*mutters again*) Yeah, that's what I'm afraid of.

PATTY: Anyway, I'm so excited! I made up a new recipe, and I'm calling it "Patty's Surprise." So, who'd like to go first? (*looking at MOLLY*) I'm dying to know how it tastes!

MOLLY: (*annoyed at her forgetfulness*) Patty.

PATTY: Oh, yeah . . . dairy allergy. So I guess you're up, Mr. Fitz!

GRANDPA FITZ: Wait . . . don't you know that any good chef always tries her food before serving it to the public?

PATTY: Really? Okay, then I'll go first. Do you mind?

GRANDPA FITZ: No, no . . . by all means, please do!

PATTY takes a sample and bites down.

LOUD CRUNCH [SFX]

MOLLY: Uh, you know cheese isn't supposed to crunch, right?

PATTY: (*holding the side of her mouth*) I think I chipped a tooth!

PATTY quickly takes her cheese samples and returns to the barn. Then MOLLY and GRANDPA FITZ look at each other with relief.

GRANDPA: Hopefully, she'll finally give up this time.

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

Suddenly, a frantic ERIN springs from behind the barn looking for a place to hide.

ERIN: Help! They're chasing me!

GRANDPA FITZ: What?

MOLLY: Who's chasing you, dear?

ERIN: The animals! The white and black ones!

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

MOLLY: You mean the sheep?

ERIN: Yes, the sheep!

SHANE and the VILLAIN enter from the rear of the auditorium and proceed toward the stage.

MOLLY: *(smiling)* Don't worry, they can't get beyond the fence.

ERIN: Are you sure?

GRANDPA FITZ: Yes, that's why it's there. But still, you don't have to be afraid, sweetheart. If they're following you, that just means they like you. Sheep are very gentle animals.

SHEEP SOUNDS [SFX]

ERIN: Really? Oh, that makes me feel better.

Then SHANE and VILLAIN approach the stage.

MOLLY: Oh no, here comes trouble.

GRANDPA FITZ: Ah yes, the man from the county. *(quickly prays)* Lord, give me strength.

SHANE: Dad, wait . . . our friend here has something very important to tell you.

VILLAIN: *(humbled, he clears his throat)* Right . . . uh . . . good morning, everyone. It recently came to my attention that some people think my plan to improve the roads in our beloved county is a selfish trick. Of course, I was horrified to hear this!

SHANE rolls his eyes, reacting to the hypocrisy.

VILLAIN: Therefore, I did the only thing I could do as your trustworthy representative.

SHANE reacts with a cough.

VILLAIN: I immediately asked the county to reconsider its decision. And so, Mr. Fitzpatrick, I'm here to tell you that after much thought and many hours of discussion . . . the county has changed its plan and has chosen another route for the new road.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(confused)* I'm not sure I understand.

VILLAIN: We're withdrawing the compulsory purchase order. *(as he holds up a copy)* We're no longer interested in buying Stillwater Farm.

GRANDPA FITZ: *(astonished)* What?

SHANE motions to the VILLAIN, then he tears up the CPO notice.

GRANDPA FITZ: I can't believe it! So the farm is safe?

SHANE: Yes, Dad. The farm is safe!

Everyone starts to cheer, except the VILLAIN.

SHANE: But wait, that's not all. *(then to VILLAIN)* Keep going.

VILLAIN: *(has trouble making eye contact)* Right . . . and . . . you can also forget about the fine for unlicensed food production. There was no violation. I, uh . . . made that part up.

GRANDPA FITZ: Really?

SHANE nudges him to continue.

VILLAIN: *(to SHANE)* What? *(then to GRANDPA FITZ)* Oh, and uh . . . here's some humble pie . . . I mean apple pie as a peace offering.

GRANDPA FITZ: Wow! I can't believe it! So much good news all at once. Thank you, sir! *(shakes VILLAIN's hand)*

VILLAIN: *(flat)* Don't mention it.

Then SHANE escorts VILLAIN to the edge of the stage.

SHANE: That was some performance you put on there.

VILLAIN: It did the job. Satisfied?

SHANE: For now. But you better behave yourself, because I'll be watching. I won't go easy on you next time.

VILLAIN: (*humiliated*) I understand.

Then the humiliated VILLAIN quickly exits the auditorium.

GRANDPA FITZ: Tell us what happened, son. How'd you manage this?

SHANE: (*lets out a deep breath*) Well, it wasn't easy, but I did some digging and . . . let's just say our "trustworthy representative" from the county stood to gain quite a bit of money for himself from all this.

MOLLY: What? No!

GRANDPA FITZ: So you confronted him?

SHANE: I did. I told him I was a lawyer and that I'd turn him in unless he made it right. And so he did.

ERIN: Just like that?

SHANE: Just like that.

GRANDPA FITZ: That's my boy! (*gives SHANE an affectionate slap on the shoulder*)

ERIN: Yes, I'm so proud of you!

MOLLY: It just goes to show, crime doesn't pay!

GRANDPA FITZ: I'm so thankful right now. Why don't we pray?

SHANE: Dad . . . can I?

GRANDPA FITZ: Of course! I'd love it if you would!

SHANE: Okay . . . (*a bit of an awkward silence, then he clears his throat and begins*) Dear heavenly Father, I know I haven't been following you for a very long time, and I'm really sorry about that. But I just want to thank you for saving the farm. This is a special place for our family. And thank you for opening my eyes to see how good you are and how much I need you. And, finally . . . thanks for my dad, because I know he prays for me. Amen.

GRANDPA FITZ hugs SHANE.

GRANDPA FITZ: I love you, son.

SHANE: Dad, guess what?

GRANDPA FITZ: What?

SHANE: I finally read Psalm 23 . . . but I didn't just read it. I memorized it.

PSALM 23 SLIDES

Slides of Psalm 23 appear onscreen as SHANE recites the entire psalm.

Then PATTY emerges from the barn carrying a shallow wooden crate.

PATTY: Hey, everyone! Good news! We have a new member in the family!

GRANDPA FITZ looks into the crate and sees a baby goose.

GRANDPA FITZ: Oh no. (*looks at SHANE*)

BABY GOOSE SQUEAK [SFX]

SHANE: Oh, please! Don't tell me it's a goose.

PATTY: Yes! It's Geese Jr. Jr. Jr. the Fourth!

ERIN: (*mutters*) These names are getting ridiculous.

MOLLY: Aw . . . look at him. He's so cute! I'll bet he's as soft as sheep's wool!

ERIN: (*as she pets him*) Oh, he is soft! (*to SHANE*) Shane, come here. Feel how soft.

SHANE: (*timid*) No, that's okay.

MOLLY: Oh, c'mon . . . you're not scared of a tiny little gosling, are you?

PATTY: Yeah . . . he's only like 10 minutes old. He couldn't hurt you if he tried.

SHANE: Of course, I'm not scared. Don't be ridiculous. (*he looks into the crate*)

MOLLY: Isn't he adorable? Feel how soft he is. *SHANE reaches down to touch the gosling.*

ERIN: Aw, I think he likes you!

SHANE: Huh . . . you really think so? (*smiles, then suddenly yelps in pain*) Ouch! What on earth? Did you see that? He bit me! The little rascal bit me! (*as he shakes his injured finger and then holds it up*) I can't believe it!

BABY GOOSE LAUGH [SFX]

Then EVERYONE, except SHANE, looks at each other and laughs.

THEME MUSIC

Leading a Child to Christ

AnswersVBS presents many opportunities to share the gospel, and every teacher should be ready to explain how to be saved, whether it's one-on-one or with a small group. Use the following steps as a guide to explain salvation, ask questions, read scripture, and pray with and for students.

Pray. Salvation is God's work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone, but we can ask God to prepare a child's heart to receive the truth.

Explain. Prepare a clear presentation of the gospel. Avoid abstract phrases like "asking Jesus into your heart" and instead use clear biblical language, such as "becoming a child of God." You may want to use the following three key words to share how to receive eternal life:

- » **Admit** you have sinned (disobeyed God's commands). Ask God to forgive you of your sins. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23).
- » **Believe** Jesus, God's Son, died in your place and rose again, paying the penalty for your sins (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10).
- » **Receive** the gift of eternal life by telling God you want to be his child (John 1:12).

Ask. To encourage discussion and to gauge understanding, ask open-ended questions, such as the following:

- » What is sin?
- » Can you think of specific sins you have done?
- » Are you bothered by your sin?
- » Who is Jesus?
- » Why did Jesus have to die?
- » Why did Jesus rise from the dead?
- » When you receive the gift of eternal life, is there anything else you have to do? Emphasize that salvation is not based on what we do but is a gift from God through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Respond. When children demonstrate a basic understanding of salvation, encourage them to talk with their parents about what it means to become a child of God (if parents are believers). If they come from a non-Christian home, encourage them to express belief in Jesus through prayer, confessing sin and asking Jesus to save them.

Some children may not be ready to make a decision. For children who have previously made a decision, they may need reassurance or want to confess sin.

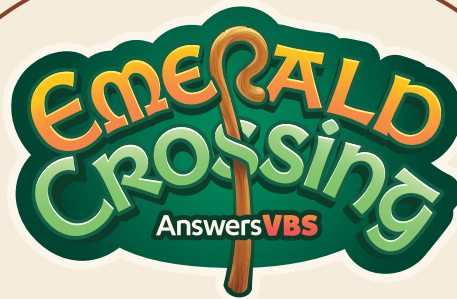
- » Read Romans 10:9-10 and John 10:28-29 with those who need assurance, encouraging them to trust in God's promises.
- » For those wanting to confess sin, read 1 John 1:9 and remind them that God forgives when they repent (turn from sin).

Celebrate. Rejoice together! Read Luke 15:10.

Grow. Explain that children of God receive the Holy Spirit, who helps them understand and obey the Bible. Share practical ways for them to grow in faith and follow Jesus:

- » Read the Bible and obey what it says. (Provide a Bible.)
- » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
- » Attend a church that teaches that the Bible is God's true Word.
- » Tell others about Jesus.

As you faithfully teach and guide children in the gospel, trust God to work in their hearts. Continue to pray for them and encourage them as they grow in their understanding of what it means to follow Christ.



At *Emerald Crossing*, children will journey through Ireland's lush landscapes, exploring the powerful words of Psalm 23. Along the way, they'll meet the shepherd-king David and the ultimate Shepherd-King, Jesus Christ. In a world filled with worry and confusion, kids will learn how to cross from anxiety to peace, from fear to faith, and from uncertainty to a firm foundation in God's Word through a relationship with the Good Shepherd. They'll discover there is a God who cares for them!

The Assembly Guide and the accompanying digital resources contain everything you need to effectively oversee and administer your VBS assemblies. From daily program scripts to daily drama scripts, from decorating ideas to clip art, you'll be equipped to lead your travelers to the truth of God's Word!

