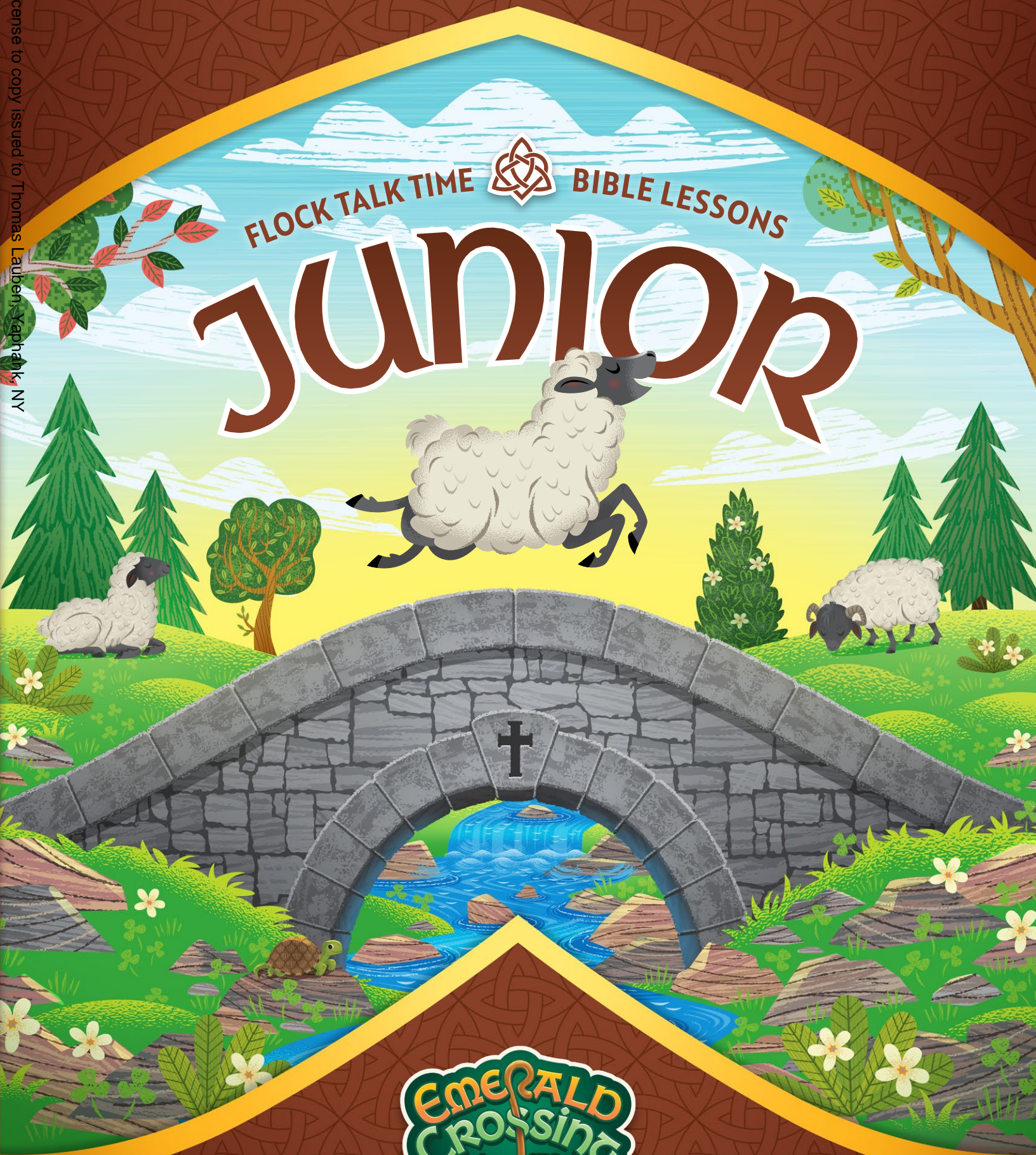


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FLOCK TALK TIME  BIBLE LESSONS

junior



EMERALD
Crossing
Answers **VBS**



Visit the Teaching folder at:

AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources

- Animal Pal Coloring Pages
- Memory Verse Coloring Pages
- Presentation Images
- Puppet Scripts (Primary, Pre-Primary, Toddler)
- Teaching Patterns (all age groups)
- Classroom Decorations



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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Junior Teacher Guide

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Printed in China.

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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 the teacher is outlined in the following pages and includes planning and preparing the daily lessons, enthusiastically engaging in teaching the lessons, and praying over all aspects of your job.

Read this guide carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! Get excited! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

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.

Top 20 Teaching Tips for Teachers

1. Pray and study God's Word. This is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of sharing his Word, so be well prepared. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the resources downloaded from AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources. Begin to pray and plan now and continue to pray during and after VBS.
3. In this guide:
 - » Teaching Tips are marked with a †.
 - » Materials are listed next to each activity.
 - » The "teacher says" portion is bold.
4. You may want to assign the task of gathering supplies for all the teachers to one person or have the teachers divide up the supply list, with each being responsible for multiples of certain items. It's also helpful to get all the supplies ready in containers ahead of time rather than gathering them day-by-day the week of VBS.
5. See Decorating Decisions for a picture and description of the teaching set. Also, when setting up the room, you may want to clear away tables and chairs depending on the room size and number of children expected.
6. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
7. Dress as if you are a modern-day farmer/shepherd in rural Ireland. This can include a T-shirt and hat (see Resource Catalog), a vest or sturdy shirt over the T-shirt, jeans, and a staff. You may even want to include a rain jacket and rain boots or hiking boots, as it rains a lot in Ireland.
8. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. Some teachers enjoy making up a fun name, adopting an Irish accent, or adding something new to their "costume" each day, such as adding a small animal pal stuffie to various pockets in a vest. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
9. Call the children by name. Name tags help with this.
10. Make sure to keep eye contact as you share the lessons, helping each child sense your warmth and care.
11. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills: plant seeds, bring to salvation, or strengthen and grow those who are already believers.
12. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access. Show the importance of the Scriptures through your facial expressions and your actions.
13. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs.
14. Be aware of your church's safety protocols and appropriate touching policies.
15. Be all there. Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care.
16. When kids are sitting on the floor for drawing or writing activities, give them a firm surface (e.g., clipboards, old magazines, or books) to use underneath the papers. Cut corrugated cardboard or coroplast sheets into 9 x 12-inch pieces and add a binder clip for inexpensive clipboards.
17. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
18. Children like order. Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
19. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and their take-home student guides and other challenges. Some may even want to try the bonus memory passages.
20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Prepare to confidently lead them using the following strategies.

Attention-Getters

Call and Response—The teacher will teach the kids that when she says something, they should reply with something else. Practice the following ideas so they know your expectations for responding to them.

- **Teacher:** Where are my sheep?
Kids: Everybody sleep! (they sit still and close eyes)
- **Teacher:** Potato, pot-ah-to!
Kids: Tomato, tom-ah-to!
- **Teacher:** Shamrock!
Kids: Sham-roll!
- **Teacher:** Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo . . .
Kids: Violet!
- **Teacher:** Emerald!
Kids: Isle!
Teacher: Emerald!
Kids: Isle!
Teacher: Shh!

Rainstorm—Use your fingers, hands, legs, and feet to simulate rain that goes from very light to heavy and back to very light. Start with silence then rub hands together for the wind. Snap fingers for light rain then pat your legs for a heavier rain. Clap hands and add stomping feet for heaviest rain. Do in reverse to wind back down to no rain.

Rhythm Claps—The teacher claps a little rhythm and the kids clap the exact rhythm back. Vary the clapping patterns.

Countdown—Hold up five fingers and start to count down from five to one. By the count of one, they need to be completely quiet.

Soft Talk—Start talking about something important very softly or in a whisper. They will often get quiet to hear what you are saying. Or say, “If you can hear me, clap once.” Continue softly with other commands.

Flash the Lights—This is a good signal to listen up.

Lining Up to Walk Through the Building

If You—Say different categories for lining up in fun ways, such as the following:

- “If you’re wearing green today, line up. Now, if you’re wearing ___, line up.”
- “If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up.”
- “If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up.”
- “If your first name starts with A–L, line up. Now, if your first name starts with M–Z, line up.”

Proactive Tips

Be Prepared—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. Think through and organize your schedule, leaving no downtime. Keep things moving! This takes more effort on your part, but it’s worth it.

Active Participation—Keeping kids actively engaged in the lesson is perhaps the best thing you can do to keep the class from getting rowdy. The lessons are written to be creative, fun, and full of active participation. Play the games, act out the Bible accounts, and do the other ideas listed. Occupy kids’ minds and attention with good stuff!

Helpers—Involve the kids. Let them be helpers. Some kids just want to feel needed, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task, like helping others learn memory verses, passing out papers, or holding a poster for the teacher. Sometimes a simple task can keep them busy and make them feel important!

Use Humor—Kids of all ages love to laugh! Have fun together. If you see a situation is getting tense or a child is getting upset for some reason, try thinking of a way to lighten the mood with humor.

Calming Rowdiness

Don’t Yell—Kids may respond at first if someone yells, but they eventually dismiss it. Try some of these other ideas instead.

Separate Kids—Separate kids who misbehave around each other but encourage problem-solving when possible. “What are some things we could do to help you and ___ get along?”

Give Choices—Avoid power struggles by giving choices. If a child is resistant to doing something you’ve asked, try your command another way. “You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen or sit with ___ (leader’s name) at the back of the room.”

Praise in Public, Correct in Private—If someone does need correction, be careful not to embarrass him in front of his peers. If you need to talk to a child about a misbehavior, pull him aside while everyone else is busy. Kids will be less defensive if they don’t feel they have to “save face” in front of their peers and if they feel you really care and aren’t just coming down on them.

Know Church Policies—Know your church’s policy for severe behavior issues. Do you take the child to your VBS director? Do you alert the child’s parents? Do you involve other staff members? Be prepared.

Age-Level Characteristics

Kids are awesome! Each one is unique and is a special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, they also share some common characteristics. That doesn't mean every child always exhibits the following characteristics at the suggested age, but these guidelines can be a benchmark to use when looking at characteristics of children as a whole. Understanding how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see characteristics of children in general and then specific characteristics of Juniors (ages 9–12 years).

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics.

- They are born sinners (Romans 3:23).
- God has given each a conscience, and they (generally) want good to win over evil.
- God has shown himself to all children through his creation, making it obvious to all that there is a Creator.
- Children enjoy active learning—moving around, seeing things, touching things, smelling and hearing things, and being involved.
- Children need to be loved, encouraged, and praised.
- Children are rapidly growing and changing.
- Children trust the adults who are responsible for them.
- Children can get discouraged with criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and God.

Characteristics of Juniors

Physical Characteristics

Juniors vary widely as they grow in height, weight, and physical maturity. Some may be experiencing a growth spurt launching them into puberty and causing them to tire easily. They're continuing to grow in physical abilities. Some are becoming known for athletic abilities.

Juniors enjoy going places and doing interesting things. They enjoy games and competitions.

Takeaways for Us

- Don't comment on physical appearance, such as someone's height. Juniors can feel sensitive and awkward about their bodies.
- Some may show physical, musical, or academic gifts/talents. Help each child realize that they are God's masterpiece, created exactly as they are for a special purpose.
- Some love being active, and some don't. But it's good to keep them all involved and moving.

Emotional/Social Characteristics

Juniors can't wait to grow up. They look up to teenagers/young adults. They like challenges and may develop interests and hobbies, although they're self-conscious about their abilities and failures. They're becoming more independent and can handle responsibilities. They enjoy small group discussion with peers and close friends. They're greatly influenced by their friends and want to be accepted. They look to friends for information and advice on issues. They like humor and jokes and may use sarcasm. As they head into puberty, they may experience mood swings.

Takeaways for Us

- Make sure the teens and young adults in their VBS world are good role models.
- Don't tear down Juniors or resort to sarcasm. Be an encourager, be a good listener, and be patient with them.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care for them.
- Incorporate small group discussion into the lesson time with activities that use groups or pairings.
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Juniors are beginning to think abstractly and are asking many questions, for which they want good answers. They have a much longer attention span than younger children. Their reading and memorization skills are improving. They're developing their views on current issues and often want to associate themselves with their parents' belief system. Juniors enjoy serving and caring for others.

Takeaways for Us

- Ask thought-provoking spiritual questions. Be a safe person to bounce thoughts and ideas off of.
- Listen well and pray with them.
- They can spot inconsistencies. Make sure to walk the walk and not just talk the talk.
- Be careful about asking children to read out loud unless they volunteer or you know they can read well.
- Give them opportunities to be involved in mission/serving projects.
- Challenge them to grow in their love for God and his Word. Help them set up Bible reading plans and encourage them to memorize passages of Scripture.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully. Show respect for your Bible and let them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Special Needs

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (1230530) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

Flock Talk Time

As we gather for Flock Talk Time, we will open God’s Word and mine the depths of Psalm 23.

This Bible lesson time is written as a 35–40-minute period divided into three sections.

Introduce It! (5–10 minutes): Each day, kids will head to a new location in Ireland and hear a new characteristic of sheep as we see how God compares us to sheep in Psalm 23.

Teach It! (25–30 minutes): The Bible teaching and apologetics content is presented during this time in creative, appealing ways.

Apply It! (Remaining class time): This is the memory verse review and practical application time.

The lessons are jam-packed, so try to be organized and keep things moving. Ideas are written into each lesson to help you adapt if you have a longer or shorter lesson

time than 35–40 minutes. Because of the content-rich lessons, a little extra time is great if you can swing it! But if not, there are lots of options, so you may want to shorten or skip some activities.

The lesson format is written for a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two or the Teaching Assistant. The lesson format can also work if teaching alone. If you are team teaching, decide ahead of time who will be responsible for what. If you are teaching alone, simply find someone (e.g., a staff person or teen volunteer) to help on any day you can use an extra set of hands. A shorter (20 minutes) **one-person script** is also available in the Resource Download.

Below is a sample schedule of a typical day at VBS. Check with your director for a copy of the schedule and room assignment for your VBS.

Sample Schedule

Time	Group One	Group Two	Group Three
9:00–9:15	Emerald Isle Assembly: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		
9:20–10:00	Flock Talk Time	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks
10:05–10:45	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks	Flock Talk Time	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts
10:50–11:30	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks	Flock Talk Time
11:35–Noon	Emerald Isle Assembly—Closing: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		

Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! The contemporary memory verse songs are produced by Seeds Kids Worship (ESV), and the traditional memory verse songs are produced by Majesty Music (KJV). They feature the full verses. Both are available with the Music Leader Download, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. If you

choose to use these songs, we suggest using them during the memory verse time in each lesson. The memory verse songs and the theme songs are together on one student CD. Student CDs in packs of 10 are available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (Contemporary—1230610; Traditional—1230620). You can also find streaming options at AnswersVBS.com/streaming.

Student Extras

Check with your VBS director, and choose one or more of these fun optional materials to give to your students so they can take home a review of the daily lesson content.

Also, decide with your director when it will work best to give out the various items: at the beginning of the day, during lesson time, during snack time (a good time to review), or at the end of the day (a good time to pass out student guides, bookmarks, and other items that need to make it home safely).

Emerald Crossing Maps: Use these maps with stickers as a fun, daily review of each day's stop in Ireland.

- Pack of 10 maps (1230780)

Student Guides: These daily, age-appropriate take-home papers feature a lesson review activity, the memory verse, and a suggested verse review game. The “Go and Do” section parallels the Apply It! part of the lesson. You can either go over these during class time or send them home with the students to be completed with a parent or caretaker. This is what our test churches do. If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good information. Give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day. Then have the guides check with the kids the following day to see how they did and make a big deal about their hard work. The student guides are available in packs of 10.

- Junior ESV (1230710)
- Junior KJV (1231320)

Travel Guides: These fun, interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, animal pals, stickers, and a place to stamp (1230930) for attendance. Check with your VBS director to find out when he or she would like to give these to the kids. They can receive them at any time during the first day. You can review them with the kids during the Apply It! section of the lesson, if you have time, or they can be stamped as the kids arrive at VBS. These are available in packs of 10.

- Junior/Primary ESV (1230910)
- Junior/Primary KJV (1231370)

Bookmarks: These are available in packs of 10 and can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the day.

- Gospel (1230760)—Day 1
- The Lord Is My Shepherd (1230770)—Day 5 or any day

Exploring God's Word: This little booklet encourages your students to continue discovering God's Word for weeks after VBS has finished. It features a daily question and answer found in the Scripture verse. You or the group guides can pass one of these to each student on the last day of class at dismissal. These are available in packs of 10.

- Booklets (1230750)

Decorating Decisions

A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories. So be creative and use the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations.



Key Decorating Elements

Classroom Set

To serve as a focal point for the teaching, the *Emerald Crossing* classroom set features an old stone bridge on a farm in the Irish countryside. The bridge is an essential part of the set and is used to display the daily “crossings.” Place it in front of a backdrop of rolling green hills under a blue sky, then decorate with clouds, rocks, flowers, a stream, sheep, and other animals. See the Resource Download for [clip art images](#). Add a barn or farmhouse in the background if desired.

For the rolling hills, paint each a different shade of green to make the backdrop more colorful. Dot the hills with small painted sheep.

For the bridge, there are a number of ways to paint faux stone or brick. One simple method is to paint the entire surface a solid color, then, after it has dried, use a large rectangle sponge, dipped in a contrasting color, to

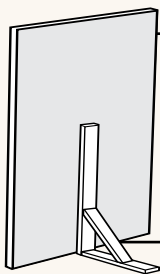
create a brick or block pattern. For example, if you want the mortar to be black, paint the surface black, then use a lighter gray for the stones or bricks.

A stream can run under the bridge. Use a plastic tablecloth that has a water motif or buy a blue metallic fringe curtain and place it under/up against the bridge.

For clouds, make them either 2D (painted on cardboard, cut out, and hung) or 3D. Dimensional clouds can be made by gluing Poly-fil to white rice balls or white pizza boxes and hanging them from the ceiling with fishing line.

Flowers can also be 2D (painted onto the set) or 3D. Make your own 3D flowers and cattails and place them around the set, or use fake flowers and place them in baskets here and there.

Fill out your set with animals such as sheep, a sheepdog, and chickens. Butterflies and birds can be flitting around as well.



Prop up your set, and any freestanding decorations, with wooden jacks made from 2 x 4, 2 x 3, or 2 x 2 boards. Smaller decorations will need smaller jacks and larger decorations will need larger ones. If necessary, jacks can be weighed down with bags of sand or road salt.

Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to making your own classroom set, a scene setter is available for purchase (1231260) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount the panels onto a rigid material using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples, and prop them up. Or you can attach them directly to a wall with mounting putty, Mavalus tape, or double-sided tape on top of painter's tape. Add a few freestanding animals, clouds, rocks or flowers to give it a little dimension.



Crossing Signs

Crossing Signs are mounted to the bridge, then changed each day according to the theme. See the daily lessons for more information. **Printable sign images** are provided in the Resource Download. You can reduce or enlarge the signs to fit your particular bridge. If you are purchasing the classroom scene setter, the crossing signs are included and just need to be cut out.

Resource Posters

Contained in the **Teacher Resource Kit** are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters. These are important visuals for the kids and should be displayed in an organized fashion on a wall (or walls) adjacent to your set. The memory verse posters can be stacked with Day 1 on top and Day 5 on the bottom so the whole psalm is

in order. Display your Map of Ireland Poster either on the wall or on a large easel—two posters need to be mounted together to make one big map.

Each poster has a tiny label at the bottom indicating which age group and day it belongs with.

Clip Art Images

See the Resource Download for numerous **clip art images**. Use an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the images onto roll paper, poster board, corrugated cardboard, or foam insulation sheets. Prop them up with wooden supports (jacks) or mount them to a wall.

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

1. Photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
2. Place roll paper or a rigid material against a wall.
3. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
4. Trace the image outlines onto the paper or rigid material.
5. Paint the image and cut it out.

Miscellaneous Ideas

- Place a green grass rug or a raised platform in front of your backdrop to create a stage effect.
- Kids love color, so make sure your classroom is colorful.
- Kids also love animals, so include some in your decorating. See the **clip art images** of sheep, cows, chickens, a border collie, and other animals. Or use large stuffed farm animals.
- Prop up a staff (1230580) somewhere on your set.
- A wheelbarrow, or smaller kid's wheelbarrow, can be off to the side.
- Think "farm"—Irish sheep farm, in particular—as you decorate.

Painting Cardboard Tips

- Add a thin (1/2-inch) black border to your painted props. This helps them stand out better and makes the colors appear more vibrant.
- Because corrugated cardboard tends to curl when only one side is painted, first apply a quick single coat of paint to the back.

Check out [Pinterest.com/AnswersVBS](https://www.pinterest.com/AnswersVBS) for colorful photos of decorations from our test churches!
 Visit [YouTube.com/AnswersVBS](https://www.youtube.com/AnswersVBS) for how-to decorating videos!



DAY 1

Lost to Found

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:1
1 Samuel 17:34–37

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

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

MEMORY VERSE

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

NAME OF GOD

Shepherd

LESSON FOCUS

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

ANIMAL PAL

Mia (My-a) the Connemara Sheep

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Sheep Farm in Donegal
- Teach It!
Part 1: This Way, That Way
Part 2: Gospel Presentation
Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Beat the Clock
~ Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

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

Devotion 1: The Lord Is My Shepherd

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

There's no doubt about it—our kids are anxious. Over 22% of children are in therapy, while 40% of high schoolers have experienced persistent hopelessness or sadness. They deal with household substance abuse, parental incarceration, neighborhood violence, and unmet basic needs. Social media, interpersonal relationship drama, and world events all contribute to instability among our youth. They don't know where to turn for comfort.

Moralistic, therapeutic deism is a dominant worldview among their parents. They believe in a god—a supreme being—who has no connection to the world he created, no personal involvement in their lives, and no demands on how they live. This worldview has an appearance of morality—the highest good is to be good to others—but no basis for saying one action is wrong and another is right. They ignore the biblical foundation for morality and instead impose their own idea of right and wrong; morality is based on “my truth” rather than absolute truth. And this worldview is therapeutic—the purpose for living is my own personal happiness; there is no higher purpose.

Without an anchor for their soul and the knowledge of a sovereign Savior who loves them and is working out all things for their good, it's no wonder our kids are lost. They're wandering on the wrong path of their own making, filled with worry and fear, depressed about their lack of happiness, and unsure of what the future holds for them.

This week, we are introducing kids to the gentle Good Shepherd through the life of David and Psalm 23. They will meet the God who created them in his image, with great care, for his glory, and the good of all of us. The God who loved the world so much that he gave his Son as a sacrifice for sin. The God who leads us on the right path, who offers comfort in every trial, who provides for all our needs, and in whom every promise is “yes” and “amen.”

Today, as you prepare to share with the children, first remind yourself of who Jesus is—is he *your* shepherd? Have you crossed from being a lost sheep to a beloved member of his fold? Does he know you (John 10:14)? Do

you run to the chief shepherd and overseer of your soul when you are anxious (1 Peter 2:25)? Is he the shepherd and rock on which you build your life (Genesis 49:24)? Do you know that he will lovingly carry you forever (Psalm 28:9)?

What amazing mercy that we can say, “The Lord is *my* shepherd.” That the Creator of the universe is *my* personal shepherd. Is he yours? May we pray that we live our lives in light of this Good Shepherd as the Puritans did.

Lord of all being,

There is one thing that deserves my greatest care,
that calls forth my ardent desires,

That is, that I may answer the great end for which
I am made—

to glorify thee who hast given me being,
and to do all the good I can for my fellow men;

Verily life is not worth having

if it be not improved for this noble purpose.

Yet, Lord, how little is this the thought of mankind!

Most men seem to live for themselves,

without much or any regard for thy glory,
or for the good of others;

They earnestly desire and eagerly pursue

the riches, honours, pleasures of this life,
as if they supposed that wealth, greatness,
merriment,

could make their immortal souls happy;

But, alas, what false delusive dreams are these!

And how miserable ere long will those be that sleep
in them,

for all our happiness consists in loving thee,
and being holy as thou art holy.

Help me to know continually

that there can be no true happiness,

no fulfilling of thy purpose for me,

apart from a life lived in and for the Son of thy love.

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 13.

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



- ◆ A shepherd's hook (1230580) makes a great prop for the teacher throughout the week.
- ◆ If co-teaching, decide daily which parts of the lesson each of you will be responsible for teaching. Both should plan to dress in costumes.
- ◆ Think of fun names for yourselves: Farmer Mac, Shepherdess Shannon, Sheep Herder O'Hara, Farmhand Finn, Lamb-lover Lucy, Caretaker Kelly.
- ◆ The Bible is listed just once daily in the supply list but is used throughout, so keep it handy and marked at the correct passages.
- ◆ Mounting putty (also known as sticky tack or poster putty) or tape is listed just once daily but will be used whenever you hang up posters. Hang them up as you talk or just hold them up while teaching and hang them up after class.

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

Introduce It!

Sheep Farm in Donegal (10 minutes)

Study your lessons each day and know them well but feel free to say things in your own way. An **EDITABLE VERSION** of each lesson is available to download, as well as a shortened (20 minutes) **ONE-PERSON LESSON**.

Prep: Prepare your set backdrop and costumes. Bookmark the Scripture passages in your Bible for the whole lesson. Use the blank paper to cover the Days 1–5 photos on the two posters that make up the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER**. Mount or hang the map posters so they look like one big map, or display the map on an easel. Cut apart the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS**. Cut apart the **DIFFERENT SHEEP POSTER** and hide the pictures of sheep around the room so they are just visible to the kids. Or, if you have a large group and room, hide them under chairs or pews before the kids arrive and have them look under their seats at the right time. Hide them again before each rotation.

Teacher 1: Hello from Ireland, lads and lasses! Or should I say “*dia duit*” (dee-uh-gwit), which means “hello” or “God be with you” in the Irish language. Have everyone say “*dia duit*” to each other. My name’s ____, and this is ____. We’re here to take you on a shepherd’s tour of the Emerald Isle. We’ll start right here at the Emerald Crossing bridge where we’ll be discovering what life is like when we live *our way* (hold up the “Lost” sign) versus *God’s way* (hold up the “Found” sign).

Teacher 2: What do you think of when you think of Ireland? Take a few responses and, depending on what they say, continue with the following. There are lots of green pastures, lots of farmhouses, and *lots* of sheep!

Teacher 1: Sheep are interesting creatures. We’ll be talking about sheep and shepherds all week long as we learn about Psalm 23 in God’s Word. Point to it in your Bible. Psalm 23 is one of the most-loved chapters in the whole Bible. It was written by a man named David, who was a shepherd before becoming a king. He wrote it about 3,000 years ago or about 1,000 years before Jesus came to earth.

Teacher 2: Okay, it’s time to begin our tour of Ireland. Let’s start at this sheep farm in the town of Donegal, which is here. Point to the farmhouse at Donegal on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** and uncover the Day 1 Sheep Farm photo. This is an area in Ireland with the most sheep and shepherds.

Teacher 1: Let’s pretend we’re in Donegal and have to find some lost sheep. Look around and see if you can find any pictures of sheep. Grab one (just one) and bring it to me. Do so.

Teacher 2: Once everyone’s settled, hold up the **DIFFERENT SHEEP PICTURES**, commenting on the variations. As you can see, sheep don’t look exactly alike, but they have some common characteristics. For instance, *sheep that live on farms sometimes stray away from the flock, getting lost from their shepherd*. The shepherd may have to go find them!

Teacher 1: A sheep can get lost from its shepherd, but how about you? Have you ever gotten lost? Ask for a show of hands. Share a brief story of a time you got lost.

Teacher 2: Sheep and people have some things in common, including being lost at times. That’s why God compares us to sheep in various places in the Bible. We’re going to check out Psalm 23 to hear more about crossing from being lost to being found (put up the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS** on the top two blocks of the bridge), our first Emerald Crossing. But before we do, we need a little background, so we’ll play This Way, That Way to get that info.

Teach It!

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

Prep: Print the **THIS WAY, THAT WAY SHEETS** to hold up during the activity.

Teacher 1: To play, let’s all line up in the middle of the room. Do so. Listen to the statement, then decide whether to go this way (point one way) or that way (point the other way). We’ll come back to the middle after each one.

Teacher 2: Okay, go this way (point one way) if you think the book of Psalms is in the *Old Testament*—the part of the Bible written before Jesus came to earth as a baby. Go that way (point the other way) if you think it's in the *New Testament*—the part written after Jesus came to earth. Pause as they move. Show the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

Teacher 1: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think the psalms were written as *letters* or go that way (point the other way) if you think they were written as *songs*. Pause as they move. They were written as songs for a group of people called the Israelites and were meant to be sung.

Teacher 2: Next question. King David, the writer of Psalm 23, was an important person in the Old Testament who lived around 1000 BC in the country of Israel. Go this way (point one way) if you think *David wrote all 150 psalms* in the book of Psalms. Go that way (point the other way) if you think *other people wrote some of them*. Pause as they move. David wrote many of the psalms but not all of them. He did write Psalm 23.

Teacher 1: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think David wrote Psalm 23 *when he was young* or go that way (point the other way) if you think David wrote it *toward the end of his life*. Pause as they move. He wrote it toward the end of his life. We'll see how he wrote from experiences he had lived through, such as being a shepherd.

Teacher 2: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think Psalm 23 is a picture of *us as sheep* or go that way (point the other way) if you think it's a picture of *God as a sheep*. Pause as they move. It's a picture of us as sheep and God as the shepherd.

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

Teacher 2: Did anyone get all those right? Okay, now we're ready to roll into Psalm 23.

Part 2: Gospel Presentation (15 minutes)

Prep: Put up the **DAYS 1–5 MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** so they are stacked with 1 on top and 5 at the bottom. Cover each word and picture on the **GOSPEL POSTER**. Copy the **IS THE LORD MY SHEPHERD? PATTERN** on white card stock and put each on a hard surface (e.g., a table, a clipboard, or a magazine with a binder clip). Gather the markers for each person. To speed things up, place the supplies at each person's place (under a chair), so they are ready before they arrive. Reset before each new rotation. Learn the motions for Psalm 23:1 from the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

Teacher 1: Let's stand and read Psalm 23 together. Do so, using all the **MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** as a reference. Now let's read just verse one, doing the following motions. Do so and have them sit back down.

Teacher 2: We know shepherds care for sheep, right? What do you think a good shepherd would do when he's caring for his sheep? Take responses. One thing shepherds would do is lie down at the gate of the sheep pen once all the sheep were in for the night so no animals or intruders could get them. Shepherds laid down their lives for the sheep. Shepherds would also search for sheep who had strayed, or gotten lost, and bring them back to the fold.

Teacher 1: Did you know the Bible calls Jesus our Good Shepherd? Read John 10:11. He laid down his life for us too, just as shepherds would do for their sheep. And he cares about every lost person, or "lost sheep," out there.

Teacher 2: When you say "lost person," do you mean a person who is actually wandering around lost somewhere, like in a store?

Teacher 1: I don't mean physically lost, but spiritually lost. A person is lost in a spiritual way if they aren't part of the Good Shepherd's flock. To be in his flock, I have to belong to Jesus and ask him to be *my* shepherd—like in our verse, the Lord is *my* shepherd. It doesn't say the Lord is *a* shepherd. It says he is *my* shepherd. This is personal for

◆ If your room is small, have the kids stand and just turn to the left or right instead of moving across the room.



- ◆ Days 1–5 Memory Verse Posters
 - ◆ Gospel Poster
 - ◆ Clockmaker Poster
 - ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
 - ★ Is the Lord My Shepherd? Pattern, 1 per person
 - Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
 - White card stock, 1 sheet per person
 - Hard surface per person (see Prep)
 - Markers, several colors or 1 pack of various colors per person
 - Optional: Clock parts
 - Optional: Gospel bookmarks, 1 per person
- ◆ Show a picture of a shepherd lying at the entrance of a sheep pen.

✦ If time, briefly share, in an age-appropriate way, when the Lord became your shepherd.



each one of us. God takes a personal interest in you and wants to be your shepherd, caring for you.

Teacher 2: Oh, okay. Let's pass out/get out our supplies, then we can hear more!

Pass out the supplies or have students get them out if the supplies are already at each person's spot.

Teacher 1: What does it say at the top of your sheet? *Pause for responses.* Right. Is the Lord *my* shepherd? Did you know that's the most important question you could ever ask yourself? Let's take some time to look into it.

Teacher 2: First, while we're talking, quietly draw the earth in space 1. *Uncover the earth on the GOSPEL POSTER.*

Teacher 1: Before time began or the universe came to be, God existed. He has always existed. But then, at the beginning of time, God created a very good world. You're coloring earth right now to represent the good world God made. He made green plants, blue waters, the sky, birds, fish, animals, and the first two people, Adam and Eve. We learn about this in the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis. *Show Genesis.*

Teacher 2: Now quietly draw a piece of fruit in space 2 while we're talking. *Uncover the fruit on the GOSPEL POSTER.*

Teacher 1: God gave the first man, Adam, a command to obey and God lovingly warned him that the punishment for not obeying would be death. But instead of obeying God, Adam and Eve disobeyed and ate fruit from the tree they weren't supposed to eat from. Disobeying God's commands is called sin. Adam's disobedience changed the very good world into a place that now has not only good, but also sad and bad things.

Teacher 2: Can you think of a good thing in our world? *Take a couple of quick responses.* A sad thing? *Take a couple of quick responses.* A bad thing? *Take a couple of quick responses.* They all exist now, and that goes back to the sin of the first man and woman.

Teacher 1: Sadly, their sin separated them from our holy God, who is without sin and can't allow sin in his presence. God didn't leave them without hope, though. He promised to send someone to rescue them from their sin (*Genesis 3:15*).

Teacher 2: Now quietly draw a manger in space 3 while we're talking. *Uncover baby Jesus in the manger on the GOSPEL POSTER.*

Teacher 1: About 4,000 years after God created everything and sin came into the world, the most amazing thing happened. God fulfilled his promise to Adam and Eve and sent Jesus, his Son, to earth as a baby! It talks about this right here in the Bible. *Point to Luke 1-2.* He knew we were like lost sheep needing a shepherd, and he came to rescue us.

Teacher 2: Now some see it differently because they aren't basing their thoughts on the Bible. They believe God *was* the Creator of the world, as the Bible tells us, but they look at it kind of like this clock. *Show the CLOCKMAKER POSTER and (optional) clock parts.* Talk about how you need this and that to make it run. They say God is like a clockmaker who made all these parts.

Teacher 1: But once the clockmaker made the clock, he just let it sit on the windowsill to work on its own. That would be like God making the universe (which he did), but then stepping back and letting it run itself without his involvement. Of course, the Bible tells us a very different view. We see throughout its pages that God is a personal God who cares about us. We see that vividly in Psalm 23 where he describes himself as a good shepherd. A good shepherd is involved in his sheep's lives. He's not distant. He loves and cares for them, just as Jesus loves and cares for *you*.

Teacher 2: Take a second and look at your hair or your friend's hair. *Pause.* Did you know God loves and cares for you so much that he knows how many hairs are on your head right this second? And he knows if you're going to lose one in the next hour!

Teacher 1: God created each person in his image. You are fearfully and wonderfully made with great care and purpose. No one is a mistake. We're all here for a reason—to glorify God (give God all the attention and credit) and to care for others. The Good

Shepherd really, really cares about you! He cares about you so much, he came to earth to rescue you!

Teacher 2: *Uncover the grown Jesus on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Now draw a man (or heart) in space 4. As we mentioned, Jesus came as a baby, but then he grew up and lived a perfect, pure life without any sin—not even one time did he do anything sinfully wrong. He was all good, and did all things right, including doing miracles, teaching people, and sharing his love.

Teacher 1: Now draw a cross in space 5 as we talk. *Uncover the cross on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Jesus is perfect in every way—perfect in love, perfect in care, perfect in goodness as the Good Shepherd. But when he was in his 30s, Jesus began telling people that he is God. Some men hated Jesus for this and decided to put him to death. They hung him on a cross and left him to die a horribly painful death.

Teacher 2: Draw a sheep in space 6. *Uncover the lost sheep on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Jesus allowed them to do this to him because he didn't want any of his sheep—and that means you—to stay lost. When Jesus was on earth, he told a parable (a story with a deeper meaning) about a shepherd who left 99 sheep to go find the one that was lost. *Read Luke 15:3–7.* Did you know the lost sheep in that parable represents you if you aren't in his flock yet?

Teacher 1: *Read Isaiah 53:6.* All of us *like sheep* have gone astray, our own way. Each of us does what we want, just like that lost sheep in the parable. Whether you realize it or not, if you don't have Jesus as your shepherd, you're lost in your sin. But Jesus *wants* you to be in his flock. He *wants* to be your shepherd. That's why he gave his life for you. He didn't die for sins *he* committed—he is perfect and without sin. Instead, he died to pay for our sins. God had said that the punishment for sin is death. Jesus was taking that punishment for us when he died.

Teacher 2: But here's the amazing part. Jesus died, but he didn't stay dead! Let's quietly draw a tomb with the stone rolled away in space 7. *Uncover the tomb on the GOSPEL POSTER.*

Teacher 1: After Jesus died, he was put in a tomb which was sealed and guarded. He couldn't get out—or so the bad guys thought! But Jesus is God. He came back to life, rose from the dead, and burst out of that tomb! This showed that Jesus had paid the death penalty for sin, and God accepted his sacrifice. Now Jesus lives in heaven where he's preparing a place for all who call on him as their Good Shepherd. And remember—Jesus doesn't want us to be lost like sheep without a shepherd (*Matthew 9:36*).

Teacher 2: *Uncover the word "Admit" on the GOSPEL POSTER.* You may be wondering how you can become part of the Good Shepherd's flock. Well, write this down by the "A"—Admit.

Teacher 1: God wants us to admit we sin, just like Adam and Eve did. Our sin may not be eating fruit we aren't supposed to eat, but we sin every day when we say or do or think things that don't please God. For instance, God is truth. Can you think of a time you told a lie? God is kind. Can you think of a time you weren't kind? God is caring. Can you think of a time you thought a mean thought about someone? Those are sins. You need to admit to God that you sin, and then you need to repent. That means wanting to turn from your sin and telling God you're sorry for it (*Romans 3:23; Mark 1:15*).

Teacher 2: *Uncover the word "Believe" on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Next, write this down by the "B"—Believe.

Teacher 1: Do you believe Jesus really is the Son of God, the Good Shepherd? Do you believe he really came, lived, died on a cross to take the punishment you deserve for your sin, and then came back to life? (*Romans 10:9–10*)

Teacher 2: *Uncover the words "Forever Receive" on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Okay, let's write down these last two words by the "F" and "R"—Forever Receive.

Teacher 1: Do you want to become a child of God and have the Lord as your shepherd? Being a child of God doesn't mean life will always be easy. Sometimes you can experience hard times. But you have the Good Shepherd with you always—even during those hard times. When you become a child of God and admit, believe, and forever receive, God promises to give the gift of eternal life to you (*John 3:16*). He gives you a

meaningful life while you live here on earth. Then, when you die, you'll be with God forever.

Teacher 2: As we said, this is the most important question you can ever ask yourself—is the Lord *my* shepherd? If you'd like to talk to someone more about this, then you can go with _____. The rest of us are going to stay here and play a game.

Give children an opportunity to leave for salvation counseling with a pastor or qualified leader. This should be in a visible, safe place—not a room with just one adult with the children.

Teacher 1: If anyone is interested in talking to someone more about this but didn't go just now, make sure you tell your parent, leader, or me today. If passing out the gospel bookmarks, hold it up and say: You'll be receiving a gospel bookmark when you leave at the end of the day that's a reminder of this. But right now, let's meet our animal pal and play a game. Give the gospel bookmarks to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.

Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game (5–10 minutes)

Hold up the DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER. Let's take a look at our Animal Pal Poster to remember what we talked about today.

- Our animal pal is what kind of animal? A sheep.
- In today's Bible passage, who do sheep represent? People; us.
- The sheep's name is Mia (My-a). Mia is a popular name in Ireland and means "mine." What does that name have to do with what we talked about today? Take answers. God wants me to be able to say that the Lord is mine. He is *my* shepherd.
- How can we cross from being lost to found—from not belonging to the Shepherd to being one of his flock? Take answers. Review the admit/believe/forever receive teaching.

Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home. It goes faster passing them out without names.

Play either game listed below as time allows. Option 1 takes just a minute or two, so it's good for a short and quick review. Option 2, which uses the map as a game board, takes a little longer but is a fun game. Both games will use the same review questions.

Option 1: Beat the Clock

Directions: Set a timer for 60 seconds. On "go," ask a question and have everyone shout out an answer at the same time. As soon as you hear someone say the correct answer, acknowledge and repeat it and move to the next question. The goal is to get all 10 questions answered correctly before the 60 seconds are up. Remind kids to be quiet when you read the next question, or you will have to repeat it, which takes longer. You can play just for fun, or you can give everyone a small prize if they beat the clock, such as a sticker (available in the Resource Catalog) or a small, individually wrapped candy. To save time, give the prizes to the group guides, who can pass them out later.

Review Questions

1. Today's Bible verse says, "The LORD is _____." My shepherd (Psalm 23:1).
2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? Sheep.
3. What is the sheep's name, and what does it have to do with our lesson? Mia (My-a)—the Lord is *my* shepherd.
4. What is something you learned about sheep today?
5. Who wrote Psalm 23? David.
6. Was David ever a shepherd? Yes.
7. Did David write Psalm 23 when he was a young shepherd or later in life? Later in life.
8. God made the world. Does he just sit back and watch it run on its own, or is he involved? He actively sustains his creation and is working all things for our good and his glory.

◆ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: Timer (cell phone works)
- Option 2: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die



9. How can you become part of God's flock? In other words, a Christian? Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus.
10. Can you say that the Lord is your shepherd?

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

Directions: Divide into pairs and give each pair an **EMERALD CROSSING MAP** (which is also a game board) and two different game pieces (e.g., small candies, paper circles, coins, mini sheep and mini cow figurines). Determine who goes first in each pair. Read the first review question. Player 1 quietly tells his partner what he thinks the answer is. The teacher shares the answer, then rolls the die. Player 1 moves his game piece that number of spaces if he got the answer right. Then do the same thing with Player 2. Continue going back and forth as time allows. Make up more questions if needed. Whoever is farthest at the end of the time wins that day's round. Be sure to collect the maps before kids leave.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Junior Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good stuff! Have the group guides check with the kids tomorrow to see how they did on them, and consider giving contest bonus points to those who complete them for their hard work.

Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add to your list accordingly.

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse

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

Discuss what this verse means—particularly the "I shall not want" part since we already talked about "the Lord is my shepherd" part. If he is your shepherd, you shall not want. You will have everything important that you could ever want—salvation, God's love, God's goodness, etc. You may not have everything you ever wished for—millions of dollars, the exact house or job you want, certain abilities—but that's not what's most important. Having the Lord as your shepherd is what's truly important.

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference.

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids.

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

If you have time, say tomorrow's verses together several times and try the challenge again.

Part 2: Go and Do

1. Make a poster showing sheep and a shepherd. Place yourself (one of the "sheep") where you think you belong—either with the flock and shepherd or lost and on your own.
2. Ask someone if the Lord is *their* shepherd.
3. Tell someone something you learned today about sheep.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?

✦ You can also give each pair their own die and let them roll if they get it right.

✦ Don't move to the next question until everyone is quiet. If need be, talking students may have to move back a space.

✦ The front page of each day's student guide is a review of today's lesson. The back page matches this section in the teacher guide.

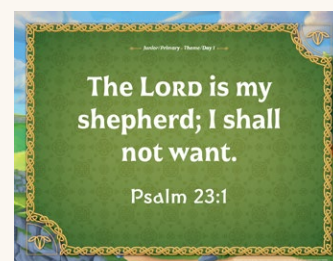
◆ Theme/Day 1 Memory Verse Poster

◆ Optional: Day 2 Memory Verse Poster

★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player

□ Optional: Memory verse music and player

□ Optional: Student Guides and supplies





DAY 2

Wrong Path to Right Path

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:2–3
1 Samuel 17

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

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

MEMORY VERSE

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

NAME OF GOD

Leader

LESSON FOCUS

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

ANIMAL PAL

Guide the Border Collie

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Green Pastures and Still Waters in County Galway
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Goliath
Part 2: Bible Boxes
Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Beat the Clock
~ Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

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

Devotion 2: The Lord Is My Leader

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

The algorithms on TikTok and other social media channels bombard our kids with doubts about the existence of God and the reliability of his Word. They learn in school that the universe came into existence on its own and that they are products of evolutionary processes acting over millions of years. They are asking, “Does God really exist?” It’s a question that has crossed the mind of every person at some point. Before we answer that question, let’s ask another question: How can we even know to question the surety of God’s existence?

Here’s the answer: Apart from the perfect, truthful, unchanging, eternal God of the Bible, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3) and from whom comes knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 9:10), we cannot know anything. Think about it. If there is no god—no ultimate standard of truth and knowledge—and we are simply the product of random processes operating on chemicals over time, then the thoughts in our brains are nothing more than the product of random chemical interactions. How could we *know* anything? The one true God of the Bible has created each person in his image and given us the ability to think rationally, to question thoughtfully, to know truth fully. And he has revealed himself to all people so that everyone is without excuse (Romans 1:18–21). We can know the one true God exists because we have the ability to know in the first place. And we can praise him that he freely gives wisdom to those who ask for it (James 1:5).

Since God exists, we can also know that his Word is true and trustworthy. Over 3,000 times, the authors of the Bible claimed to be speaking or writing the words of God, and they reference the godly authority of other writers (Daniel 9:2; 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Peter 1:21, 3:15–16). While on earth, Jesus referred to the Old Testament scriptures as truth and from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 19:4; Mark 12:36; Luke 11:49–51; John 5:46, 17:17). And God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Since the Bible is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), we can trust that God has given us accurate historical accounts and that he will lead us on righteous paths when we obey the guidelines he has set for his creation

through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can joyfully cross from the wrong path to the right path when we become his children through repentance and faith in Jesus and willingly submit to the way he wants us to live. We can anchor our morality in the Word of the Good Shepherd who wants only good for us.

Today, as we encourage our children to look to the Lord and to follow his righteous paths, let’s think about the behaviors and activities we may participate in that aren’t on the right path. Do you gossip in the neighborhood chat? Tell white lies on social media? Envy the lives of those on Instagram? Do you anger quickly? Are you impatient with your children? Christ is calling us to the path of righteousness (Colossians 3:5–10). Are you engaging with his Word and desiring for him to conform you to his image through it? May we pray this with the Puritans:

O God of truth,
I thank thee for the holy Scriptures,
their precepts, promises, directions, light.
In them may I learn more of Christ,
be enabled to retain his truth
and have grace to follow it.
Help me to lift up the gates of my soul that he
may come in
and show me himself when I search the Scriptures,
for I have no lines to fathom its depths,
no wings to soar to its heights.
By his aid may I be enabled to explore all its truths,
love them with all my heart,
embrace them with all my power,
engraft them into my life. . . .
From it show me how my words have often been
unfaithful to thee,
injurious to my fellow-men,
empty of grace, full of folly,
dishonouring to my calling.
Then write thy own words upon my heart and
inscribe them on my lips;
So shall all glory be to thee in my reading of
thy Word!

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 190.

followed him. How about you? Do you want to spend time building your relationship with God? Spending time with God through reading his Word and praying helps us learn to love him, trust him, and obey him. Let's see how David lived his young life in light of his relationship with God as we act out the account of David and Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17.

Teacher 2: Everyone will be a part of this retelling of 1 Samuel 17, but specifically choose two students to play David and Goliath. Don't choose particularly large or small children for the parts to emphasize their sizes. Choose kids who will "ham it up" in a good way. Divide the class in half and have each group stand or sit on opposite sides of the room. David and Goliath can each wait with their side.

Teacher 1: All of you on Goliath's side are part of a people group called the Philistines. Can you hiss at the people across the way? *Do so.* Yeah, they weren't necessarily nice folks. All of you gathered on the other side were part of a group called the Israelites—people who lived in Israel. These were God's chosen people. Listen as I read and do as we direct you. Here we go. *Read 1 Samuel 17:3.*

Teacher 2: Everyone, glare at each other as you each stand on your mountain. *Do so.*

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:4.*

Teacher 2: Goliath, come on out. Let's see if you're six cubits and a span. *Show the mark on the wall that shows 9 feet, 9 inches tall and have him stand under it.* Nope! Nobody's that tall nowadays. Goliath was a giant of a man! We'll just imagine our Goliath to be that tall.

Teacher 1: By the way, the Bible does talk about real giants. And if the Bible says there were giants, then there were. Goliath was the most famous one, but we hear of others such as Og, king of Bashan, who had an iron bedstead that was over 13 feet long and 6 feet wide (*Deuteronomy 3:11*). If you stood that bed up, it would be about twice as tall as a tall man. There was another man talked about in 2 Samuel 21:20 who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot who came from giants.

Teacher 2: We also hear about giants who made the Israelites feel like they were just grasshoppers by comparison (*Numbers 13:32–33*). They would have to have been really big to make someone feel that small. Okay, let's continue.

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:5–7.*

Teacher 2: As Teacher 1 reads, have Goliath put on the gear you brought for him.

Teacher 1: In a loud, dramatic voice, read or paraphrase 1 Samuel 17:8–9 and 11. You may want Goliath to repeat a little of this after you.

Teacher 2: Act like you're really afraid, Israelites. *Do so.*

Teacher 1: Now there was a man named Jesse who had three sons in the battle and another son named David—the same David who wrote Psalm 23 as a shepherd.

Teacher 2: Instruct David to come out.

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:23–24.*

Teacher 2: Instruct Goliath to come out and throw out the challenge again. "Choose a man to come and fight me!" Have the Israelites look afraid.

Teacher 1: *Read or paraphrase 1 Samuel 17:32–39.*

Teacher 2: You may want to have student David repeat part of what David in the Bible said. Quickly put armor on David (or just hold it up to him) while Teacher 1 is reading verses 38–39, then take it back off.

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:40–42.*

Teacher 2: Have David and Goliath approach each other while Goliath "disdains" David, or looks down on him, thinking he's a nobody.

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:43.*

Teacher 2: Have Goliath repeat this line after you. Have his army cheer.

Teacher 1: *Read or paraphrase 1 Samuel 17:45–47.*

◆ Have a quiet signal you practice with them ahead of time that you can use if necessary.



◆ Gospel Opportunity

◆ Bible Boxes Poster

- ★ Box Lid Instructions 1-3
- ★ Box 1 Puzzle Pieces, laminated
- ★ Box 3 Dig Papers, laminated
- ★ Bible Box Leader Scripts
- Three boxes/bins with lids
- Crinkle shred paper
- Kinetic sand
- 1 red quarter
- Optional: Two plastic tablecloths
- Wipes for clean-up
- Blank paper to cover the Bible Boxes Poster

◆ A test church did this as a boy vs. girl contest up front while the rest of the kids cheered on their team. This required preparing two of each box, one for the boys and one for the girls, but it was a lot of fun.

Teacher 2: Have David repeat part of this after you, particularly the last line. Have his army cheer.

Teacher 1: Now listen to this! Read 1 Samuel 17:48-49. Hold up the DAVID AND GOLIATH POSTER.

Teacher 2: David and Goliath, act this out.

Teacher 1: Read 1 Samuel 17:50-51.

Teacher 2: Have David and Goliath act this part out, and have Goliath's army "flee" by running in place. Then have the Israelites cheer. Have everyone sit back down.

Teacher 1: Isn't it cool to see how strong David's relationship was with the Lord? He had spent lots of time studying God's Word *before* this confrontation with Goliath ever happened. He didn't wait until he got into battle to figure out who God is but had already been spending time with God and relying on his leading. This is an important lesson for us too!

Teacher 2: We need to rely on God to lead and guide us. Yesterday, we talked about how we can become part of his flock. Does anyone remember? [Have a quick review of the gospel here.](#)

Teacher 1: Once we're part of God's flock, how can we have a strong and growing relationship with God, as the poster says? [Take answers.](#)

Teacher 2: One of the most important ways is to love, obey, and be led by God's Word. When we read the Bible, that's God speaking to us because those are his very words. It's the most trustworthy book on the planet. It's the way we go from being on the wrong path, making bad decisions, to the right path, where God's Word helps us know wise decisions to make. Let's look into that a little more.

Part 2: Bible Boxes (15 minutes)

Prep: Prepare each Bible box/bin. The boxes can be different sizes, but should be at least the size of shoeboxes for Box 2 and Box 3. (The test churches used 4.25-gallon clear bins.) They should all have lids. Print, cut out, and attach the **BOX LID INSTRUCTIONS** to the inside lid of each box. For Box 1, print on card stock, laminate, and cut apart the **BOX 1 PUZZLE PIECES**. Put them in the box. For Box 2, paint/color a quarter red. Fill the box with crinkle shred paper and hide the quarter in it. For Box 3, partially fill the box with kinetic sand. Print on card stock, laminate, and cut apart the **BOX 3 DIG PAPERS**, then hide them in the box. Optional: put plastic tablecloths underneath Boxes 2 and 3. Print copies of the three **BIBLE BOX LEADER SCRIPTS** for each leader, one per group.

This section is important and can be done in one of two ways. One way is to divide the kids into three groups and have them rotate around to three stations, spending just four minutes at each spot. The advantage of this is the kids get to do each activity themselves. The other way is to do this as a class demo, which takes less time but is less hands-on.

Teacher 1: Would you all agree that the Bible is the most trustworthy, unique book of all time? Pause. Well, let's watch some demonstrations (or travel around to some stations) to see some of the reasons we can *know* the Bible is trustworthy and true.

Teacher 2: Adjust your directions based on whether you are doing stations or up-front demos. If stations, divide kids into three groups with a leader in each and tell them to read the directions on the inside of the box lid, then do as it says. If doing demos, gather the kids around each box, or call up one or two volunteers to demonstrate each box.

Bible Box 1—Uniqueness of the Bible

Directions: Take out the puzzle pieces and work together to complete the puzzle.

Leader (after they've finished the puzzle—use the puzzle as a reference): One reason we know the Bible comes from God and is trustworthy to lead us is because it fits together like a puzzle even though it was written by over 40 people. These men wrote the words God inspired, or guided, them to write. They lived over a period of 1,500 years, spoke different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), and lived on three different continents (Asia, Europe, and Africa). Imagine if you wrote a chapter for a book, and 39 other people who have never met you or talked to you wrote the other parts of it—some of whom

aren't going to write their chapters until over 1,500 years from now! No normal book would make any sense if it were written like that, but the Bible is in complete unity and goes together perfectly because it comes from God.

Take the puzzle apart and leave it as you found it. Move to the next station.

Bible Box 2—Fulfilled Prophecies

Directions: Dig through the box and find the red quarter.

Leader (after they've found the quarter): One reason we know the Bible comes from God and is trustworthy is because the promises made about events that would happen in the future (prophecy)—written hundreds or thousands of years earlier—actually happened. Some are yet to be fulfilled, but they will happen exactly as promised. No other book or person can always be right when predicting the future, only the Bible. If you take just the prophecies about Jesus coming as the Messiah, for instance, you'll find that the chances of those prophecies happening just as predicted are the same as taking this quarter or a silver dollar, painting it red, then covering the entire state of Texas three feet deep in quarters (or silver dollars) and burying this red one among all of them. If you were blindfolded and could only grab one coin, do you think you'd have a good chance of finding it on your first try? *Pause for responses.* No way! And there are many, many more prophecies that have been fulfilled besides the ones about Jesus being the Messiah.

Bury the red quarter in the box and leave it as you found it. Move to the next station.

Bible Box 3—History Confirmations

Directions: Like archaeologists, brush away the sand in the box. Pull out four papers and give them to your leader:

Leader (after the papers are found—read the following bullet points from them): One reason we know the Bible comes from God and is trustworthy to lead us is because people, places, and things mentioned in the Bible are often found. When they're found, their description matches what the Bible says from all those years ago.

- The Bible tells of a place called Jericho where the city walls fell down supernaturally after the Israelites walked around them seven days. Archaeologists believe there's good evidence the walls did indeed collapse. They found a heap of bricks right where the walls would have been. Many other real Bible places have been found as well.
- When archaeologists dug around a town called Tel Dan in Israel, they found a stone monument called a stele. A piece from it had the words "House of David" written into it. This refers to kings who were descendants of David, and it confirms that King David was a real person just as the Bible says.
- Archaeologists found the name of Gideon, one of the most famous judges mentioned in the Bible, on a small pottery jar. Many other names of Bible people have been found as well.
- The fulfillment of prophecies (promises about the future) that spoke against cities like Nineveh and Babylon are confirmed by archaeological evidence.

Bury the papers and leave it as you found it.

Bible Box Wrap-up

Teacher 1: Show the **BIBLE BOXES POSTER** for a quick summary and then use it as you go through this next section. Uncover each one as you go. Now, let's wrap up with a few more Bible basics. We're going to make a statement, and you give us a thumbs-up if you think it's true or a thumbs-down if you think it's false.

Teacher 2: The Bible was destroyed a long time ago, but it's been rewritten. *False.* It's indestructible. People have *tried* to destroy it, burn it, ban it, and outlaw it, but this will never work, because God will never let that happen. [Matthew 24:35](#)

Teacher 1: The Bible is trustworthy because God wrote it, and it's impossible for God to lie. *True.* The Bible itself says it's true. [John 17:17](#)

✦ Have them first imagine the quarter buried three feet deep in your classroom, then in your church, then in your town, then in your state, then in the big state of Texas.



Teacher 2: People’s lives are changed through the Bible, and people have even been willing to die for the gospel message. **True.**

Teacher 1: The Bible has true scientific statements. **True.** Bible verses having to do with science were written hundreds or thousands of years before scientists discovered they were true. Here are just a couple of examples.

- Job 26:7 talks about the earth hanging on nothing. Recent photos from space have shown that the earth floats in space—it isn’t supported by any other object.
- Psalm 8:8 talks about the paths of the seas. People have discovered there are paths (ocean currents) in the seas.
- We could go on and on with examples such as there being countless stars—Jeremiah 33:22; life being in the blood—Leviticus 17:11; laws of hygiene and quarantine in Leviticus, and so forth.

Teacher 2: Last one. **Read John 10:27.** Jesus said his sheep hear his voice. Anyone who belongs to the Good Shepherd knows God’s Word is true. **True.** It’s God’s voice speaking to me from the pages of the Bible. The God of the universe is talking to me! How incredible is that? I should never take it for granted, but should read it, study it, and talk to God about it. He’ll lead and guide me through his Word so I won’t be on the wrong path (what the world says to do) but will be on the right path (God’s path).

Teacher 1: 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us God’s Word is good for teaching us (telling us what’s right), for reproof (telling us what’s wrong), for correction (telling us how to get right), and for training in righteousness (telling us how to live right). All of those help us stay on the right path.

Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game (5–10 minutes)

Share the [DAY 2 ANIMAL PAL POSTER](#) to summarize the teaching of the day.

Today’s animal pal is a border collie.

- What is a border collie’s job on a sheep farm? Take responses—he leads/guides the sheep.
- His name is Guide. What does that name have to do with what we talked about today? Take responses—the Lord leads and guides us to still waters and on paths of righteousness—living right.
- What’s something you learned today about how God leads us as we cross from the wrong path to the right path? Take answers. Help them understand they must first become a Christian to be on the right path.

Allow time to do this important next paragraph. **Let’s brainstorm some “wrong paths” we can be on and how God’s Word can lead and guide us, changing our heart attitude and giving us a love for God and a desire to obey his Word.** Make sure they realize the foremost wrong path is living apart from God. That can lead to bad choices in life such as disobeying authorities, struggling with identity, lying, bullying, using unedifying speech, etc. You may want to give them an example or two to get them started. People who look “good” can still be on the wrong path if they have not accepted Christ. Being on God’s path starts with being a Christian, which should grow into a love for God and a desire to obey him and follow his instructions in the Bible.

Pass out the maps and add today’s sticker. Be sure to collect the maps before kids leave.

Play either game listed below as time allows. Option 1 takes just a minute or two, so it’s good for a short and quick review. Option 2, which uses the map as a game board, takes a little longer but is a fun game.

Option 1: Beat the Clock

See Day 1 for directions.

Review Questions

1. Today’s Bible verses say, “He makes me ____.” He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake (Psalm 23:2–3).

◆ Day 2 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: Timer
- Option 2: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die



2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? [Border collie](#).
3. What is the border collie's name, and what does it have to do with our lesson?
Guide—Jesus is our guide through life through his Word.
4. What is something you learned about sheep today?
5. Who did David fight and defeat? [Goliath](#).
6. How do we know David had a strong relationship with God and was on the right path even when he was young? He knew who God is when he faced Goliath and was able to fight the giant in the strength of the Lord.
7. What book is our trustworthy guide to lead us? [The Bible](#).
8. What's something we learned from our Bible boxes that confirms the Bible is trustworthy? [Fulfilled prophecy, archaeological finds, uniqueness, etc.](#)
9. What's an example of walking on the wrong path?
10. Can you say you're personally on the right path? Remember, the right path only comes through becoming a child of God and desiring to follow his words in the Bible.

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

See Day 1 for directions.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Junior Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good stuff! Have the group guides check with the kids tomorrow to see how they did on them and consider giving contest bonus points to those who complete them for their hard work.

Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add to your list accordingly.

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verses

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

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 2 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference.

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids.

Tomorrow's Verse: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

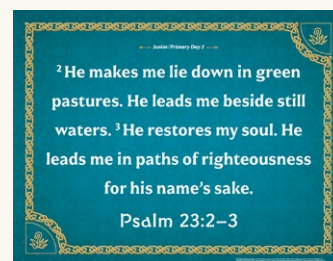
Try the challenge again, this time with tomorrow's verse.

Part 2: Go and Do

1. Draw a picture with two paths—one being the wrong path, and one being the right path. How can a person be on the wrong path? How can a person be on the right path?
2. Pray and ask God to help you walk on the right path, being led by his Word. Ask him to help you always love the Bible, learn the Bible, and obey the Bible.
3. Tell someone something you learned today regarding how trustworthy the Bible is.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Which path am I on?

- ◆ Day 2 Memory Verse Poster
- ◆ Optional: Day 3 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies





DAY 3

Fearful to Peaceful

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:4
1 Samuel 19–23

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Why do we even have hard times?

MEMORY VERSE

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

NAME OF GOD

Comforter

LESSON FOCUS

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

ANIMAL PAL

Shadow the Raven

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Black Valley in County Kerry
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Saul
Part 2: Flock to the Rock Game
Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Beat the Clock
~ Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

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

Devotion 3: The Lord Is My Comforter

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

After a frustrating day, a friend asked, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” Yet we know that no one is good—no, not one—except the Good Shepherd, who defines goodness.

As the infinitely good God, the Creator fashioned a world that manifested his goodness according to his pleasure and for his glory. He established rules for his creation to follow. The standard to which he holds his creation is himself: absolute goodness. With one bite of fruit, Adam fell short of that standard. With every act of disobedience, we too fall short.

Because God is absolutely pure and holy, untouched by sin, he cannot partake in sin nor approve of it in others. He established a penalty for falling short of his standard: death. The goodness and holiness of God demands that he judge sin. As the righteous judge, he had no choice but to carry out the punishment that he had set for breaking his rules. He placed a curse on his beloved creation. All of creation now groans under the weight of that curse. He imposed a sentence from which we have no means of escaping on our own. We can’t get away from our punishment for sin, which is death, eternal separation from our Creator.

When a murderer is given a sentence for his crime, do we blame the judge who sentenced him? The answer to the age-old question “Why?” lies not at the feet of the Creator but in the bite of a fruit by man.

When we walk through the valley brought on by the curse, we can know that the same God who cursed his creation also provided a way of escape from the curse—Jesus Christ. Jesus took on flesh so that he could live the obedient life Adam didn’t live while experiencing every temptation we experience. Because he knows what it means to be human (for Jesus walked through the valley

of the shadow of death many times with those around him), he can offer the comfort we need when we go through our own valleys. Knowing that Jesus is sovereign over all and that nothing happens apart from his good decrees for us, we can cross from living in fear to walking in the peace that only he can give.

As you share the Lord as comforter with our children, be careful to emphasize that the mess we find ourselves in is not the fault of our good and loving Creator. This will help children answer the “why” question when they encounter a tragedy or simply have a bad day. In general, these are results of living in a cursed world, which is the deserved punishment for sin. We need to also continually point them toward the great gift that the Creator has for us (salvation through Jesus Christ) and the comfort he provides through his Word.

Read Psalm 89:14 and think about the words of this Puritan prayer.

Thou Maker and Sustainer of all things,
Day and night are thine,
heaven and earth declare thy glory;
But I, a creature of thy power and bounty, have
sinned against thee
by resisting the dictates of conscience,
the demands of thy law,
the calls of thy gospel;
yet I live under the dispensation of a given hope.
Deliver me from worldly dispositions,
for I am born from above and bound for glory.
May I view and long after holiness
as the beauty and dignity of the soul.

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 139.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ★ Fearful/Peaceful Crossing Signs
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape



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

- ◆ David and Saul Poster
- ◆ Why Do Bad Things Happen? Poster
- Blank paper to cover David and Saul Poster
- Optional props: Pool noodle, large foam board/cardboard frame, and safe obstacle such as a large box to act as a mountain

Introduce It!

Black Valley in County Kerry (5 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all Bible passages used in today's lesson. Learn the motions for verse 4. Move the Day 1 and Day 2 Crossing Signs farther down the bridge, leaving the top two blocks open for today's signs. Cut apart the **FEARFUL/PEACEFUL CROSSING SIGNS**.

Teacher 1: Welcome back, lads and lasses. Let's see if we can remember what we've learned about sheep so far. Sheep can wander away from their shepherd and get ____. Lost, right! And do farm sheep benefit from a shepherd's guidance? Yes, they are helped by a good leader guiding them. And sheep prefer to stand by or drink what kind of water? Yep, calm, still water.

Teacher 2: Did you also know that *sheep are fearful creatures*? They're timid and can get frightened easily. Maybe it's because they have fabulous hearing, which makes them jittery. They also have some trouble with their sight, such as poor depth perception, which might add even more to their jitters. If one sheep starts to run, they tend to all follow.

Teacher 1: Sometimes a sheep gets frightened because it's a cast sheep. This means it ends up on its back and can't get upright. A sheep may lie down in a little dip in the ground and roll over, but it accidentally keeps going and ends up on its back with its legs in the air. It may panic and start to paw, which can make it even worse. In some cases, sheep in this position can die within hours if the shepherd doesn't come and help them get on their feet. You may want to have students (who aren't wearing dresses or other loose clothing) act this out.

Teacher 2: It's true that sheep can be frightened and benefit from the comfort of their shepherd, but as we remember how this psalm compares *us* to *sheep*, would you agree people are often frightened too? What are some things kids (you) get scared of? Take a few responses.

Teacher 1: We're going to find some encouraging helps to move us from being fearful to peaceful. Put up the **FEARFUL/PEACEFUL CROSSING SIGNS**. Peace comes from having a relationship with God and walking closely with him as we're led through his Word and prayer. Today, we'll travel to a place called the Black Valley. It's right here on our map. Show the Black Valley on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** (near Kerry where the black rocks are) and uncover the Day 3 Black Valley photo. Sometimes shepherds had to move their sheep through some dangerous, dark valleys that would be full of shadows. Those shadows could make the sheep balk and not want to move.

Teacher 2: That reminds me of today's verse. Let's say the first three verses of Psalm 23 together with motions, and then we'll say verse 4, which talks about fear and valleys. Refer to the memory verse posters.

Teach It!

Part 1: David and Saul (5–10 minutes)

Prep: Use the paper to cover the three sections of the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER** so you can take one off at a time. If using props, you may want to cut the center from a large piece of foam board or corrugated cardboard to make a window frame someone can climb through.

Teacher 1: So, talking about fear . . . how many of you would be afraid if you had a madman chasing around after you? This is what happened to David at one point in his life. He may have written verse 4 as he remembered that time.

Teacher 2: Okay, so more about the madman. There was this king named Saul. He was the first king of Israel, but he didn't have a heart for God. Saul was fearful, afraid of what people would do to him. One of those people was David. Saul thought David was out to take his throne, and he got it in his mind to kill David. Now, David hadn't done anything to Saul or his kingdom. In fact, he'd been a blessing to Saul. But Saul chased David around the countryside—through mountains and valleys and all over the place—for about 10 years, trying to kill him!

Teacher 1: We're going to act out just three of the ways Saul tried to get David, and you can try to guess what he did. These are all recorded in this section of the Bible, 1 Samuel 19–23. Point to it.

The two teachers can quickly act out each of the following three scenes, or you can have kids volunteer. Whisper the instructions to them so they can act it out. One person will be Saul and one David. You may want to use props, such as a pool noodle for a spear, foam board or corrugated cardboard for a window frame, and a safe obstacle, like a large box to act as the mountain. After each scene, have them guess how Saul tried to kill David.

- Act out Saul trying to pin David to the wall with a spear. Have the kids guess how they think Saul was trying to hurt David. Uncover the first picture on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. Read or summarize 1 Samuel 19:9–10.
- Act out Saul watching and waiting for David, then David escaping through a window. Have them guess what happened, then uncover the second picture on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. Read or summarize 1 Samuel 19:11–12.
- Act out Saul chasing David around a mountain and getting called away. Have them guess what happened, then uncover the third picture on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. Read or summarize 1 Samuel 23:24–28.
- Discuss briefly how you can see why David wrote verse 4 of Psalm 23 after all that.

Teacher 2: But why do bad things even happen to people, like David and us? Does anybody have a guess why there are bad guys and killings and sickness and divorce? Why is fear a part of our lives? *Take responses.*

Teacher 1: Show the **WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN? POSTER**. The answer to this question started back in the garden of Eden, like we talked about the other day. God made a perfect world and lovingly warned Adam not to eat from one tree. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and something huge happened. Sin came into the world, and the world was now “broken.” Remember, sin is disobeying God. Before this time, everything was perfect—no earthquakes, no wars, no diseases, no arguing, no fear, no lack of food, no getting in trouble, no homelessness—just all good. God is good and whatever he does is good, so his creation was very good.

Teacher 2: But God placed a curse on his creation after Adam sinned, and now bad and hard stuff happens to all of us. Sometimes bad stuff happens because of our sinful actions. For example, if we steal something and get in trouble, or we don't clean our room when we're told so we can't go to our friend's house.

Teacher 1: Sometimes bad or hard things happen to us as a result of the broken world we live in and not because of something sinful we directly did, such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and sicknesses.

Teacher 2: Sometimes bad and sad things happen because of others' sin. Parents get divorced because they can't get along. The kids didn't cause it—but they are affected by it. Or maybe someone's dad has a boss who does something against the law and his company is shut down, causing the dad to lose his job and have money problems. When a person sins, it doesn't just impact that person, it affects others too.

Teacher 1: That's what happened here with David and Saul. David was affected by Saul's sinful choices. Although David wasn't trying to pick a fight with Saul or take over Saul's kingdom, he had to deal with Saul's sinful behavior, which could have caused him fear and anxiety.

Teacher 2: It would have been scary being chased around by a madman for 10 years. Of course, *you* aren't being chased around by a madman, but think of something that worries you. *Pause.* What do you do when you're scared or anxious? *Take responses.*

Teacher 1: God's Word has answers to help you deal with hard things in life, like fear, worry, and anxiety. Let's play a game and talk more about it.



- ★ [Philippians 4:6, 7, and 8 Verse Sheets](#)
- ★ [Flock to the Rock Cards](#), 1 paper-clipped set per person
- ★ [Flock to the Rock Game Boards](#), 1 per person
- White card stock
- Dice, 1 per person or every 2 people
- Writing utensil or baggies of 30 mini marshmallows, 1 baggie per person
- Optional: Rod (can be a walking stick) and staff (can be a cane)
- ✦ A fast trick: Count out 30 mini marshmallows, place them in a paper cup and cut it down so they are right at the top. Use that cup as a scoop for the rest of the mini marshmallow baggies instead of counting them out.

✦ Gospel Opportunity

Part 2: Flock to the Rock Game (20 minutes)

Prep: Print the **FLOCK TO THE ROCK CARDS** on white card stock, cut them apart, and paper clip a black one and white one together. Print on white card stock and cut the **FLOCK TO THE ROCK GAME BOARDS** as well. Make the baggies of mini marshmallows if doing so. See Teaching Tip in the sidebar. To save time, put all supplies needed for each person under the chairs so they are ready when you get to this part of the lesson. Have the kids place them back under the chairs when done (except for the mini marshmallows—put out new mini marshmallows before each rotation and make sure nobody is allergic to them).

Teacher 2: We're going to play Flock to the Rock. You'll play with a partner and take turns.

We'll read a question and the first player will hold up the black sheep if they think it's true or the white sheep if they think it's false. If they get it right, they'll roll the die and X out that many circles on their game board (or place that many mini marshmallows on the circles). The player who gets to the rock first wins. Let's get in pairs and decide who goes first, then we'll begin. If using mini marshmallows, wait until the end of the game to eat them as a reward for good listening and following directions. The mini marshmallows were a big hit with the test churches.

Read the accompanying comments to each question before moving to the next one. Expect them to be quiet while you're commenting or they may have to go back a space or two. Move along at a good clip through this game.

Game Questions

1. True or false: Every person has times when they feel anxious. **True.** Even Christians do. In our fallen, sinful world, it happens. It's one of those hard things everyone has to deal with sometimes. I'm sure you've felt worried before.
2. True or false: Sheep find comfort in the shepherd's presence. **True.** To find comfort, you need to belong to the Shepherd. So first thing you need to ask yourself is: Is the Lord *my* shepherd? You're not going to experience his peace and comfort if you don't belong to him.
3. True or false: Jesus didn't talk about anxiety when he was on earth. **False.** He talked about it a lot. He understood we're like fearful sheep and would feel these emotions. He also knows the closer we are to him, the better. We will always have to wrestle with worry to some extent, but a close walk with God can make a difference.
4. True or false: Jesus said he would take away all our problems. **False.** He didn't promise to make them all go away and he's not saying they don't matter, but he did promise to be with us through them. Many verses promise this, such as Psalm 46:1-2 that reminds us God is an ever-present help in times of trouble; Isaiah 41:10, which says not to fear because God will strengthen you and help you; and John 16:33, which says you can have peace even though you will have trouble in this world. Also, remember what Psalm 23:2-3 says. Those verses are very comforting. Following the Good Shepherd doesn't mean we won't have problems. But when we experience tough situations, God will be with us (Matthew 28:20).
5. [Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:6 VERSE SHEET.](#) Read [Philippians 4:6](#) together then ask: True or false: God says to be anxious about the big stuff in life. **False.** Do not be anxious about anything. He's encouraging us to not be anxious because even though it's a normal emotion, he wants us to trust him and not be anxious. God is bigger than our problems. He is sovereign (in control); has all power (omnipotent); knows everything (omniscient); is everywhere all at once (omnipresent); is faithful and worthy of our trust; and more.
6. [Read Philippians 4:6](#) again, then ask: True or false: The first thing this verse mentions to do when we're anxious is to pray. **True.** Prayer is key! Don't worry, just pray! Talk to God about what's making you anxious. And talk to him about the fact that you are worried and anxious. Be honest with God about your feelings and concerns. David certainly was. So tell God your fears—whatever they are—and ask for his help. 1 Peter 5:7 tells you to cast your burdens—your worries—on him, because he cares for you.

7. True or false: One way I can pray is to pray God’s Word. **True.** It’s great to pray Bible verses. Pray verses that speak to your situation. [Read Psalm 56:3.](#) Also, pray verses that speak to who God is—his character. We need to constantly remind ourselves of our great God. “Lord, I know that you are in control of my life. I know you know all things and nothing makes you afraid. I know you are good and only do good to me. I know you care for me and are always with me.”
8. True or false: According to this verse, one thing to focus on is your problems. **False.** You should focus on thanksgiving—giving thanks and praising God. It makes a big difference what you focus on. Think about the Good Shepherd and what makes him good. Is he there for you? Yes—thank him. Does he care? Yes—thank him. Continually remember that your Good Shepherd is with you and is deeply involved in your life. Nothing takes him by surprise. He’s in control (sovereign). He made you with great care and purpose.
9. [Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:7 VERSE SHEET.](#) [Read Philippians 4:7 together then ask:](#) True or false: An outcome of praying to God and thanking him is peace. **True.** Peace can guard your mind just like a shepherd guards the sheep pen to keep the sheep safe. In Bible times, the shepherd would physically sleep in front of the door of the pen so no animals could get in. That’s how serious of a guard he was. So remember that God is with us through good times or hard times and that he’s working all things out for his glory and our good.
10. [Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET.](#) [Read Philippians 4:8 together.](#) [Alert the kids to count how many things God tells us to think about.](#) True or false: This verse lists seven things to think about. **False.** It lists eight. The Bible teaches us to renew our minds to overcome anxiety. That means we need to fill our minds with good stuff, like this list. For instance, let’s take the first one—true. What’s something true about God we can think on? [Take examples.](#) [You can go through the other seven words if you have time.](#)
11. True or false: Thoughts about God are the greatest thoughts you can have. **True.** Fix your thoughts on God, on Jesus, and on the Holy Spirit. And think on God’s character.
 - Stop thinking about the stuff that makes you anxious and start thinking about God and good things, like things you’re thankful for and how you’ve seen God’s mercies (loving-kindness) today.
 - Instead of focusing on what worries you, focus on how God is in control of everything and how he’s always good and loving and kind.
 - When you have an anxious thought, take it captive—which means you say, “I’m anxious right now but instead of focusing on that, I’m going to remember who God is.”
 - It also helps to think of someone else you can pray for or help. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be a help to others.
 - You may also need to change behavior patterns—are there social media channels you shouldn’t be watching? Are there movies or shows or games that fill your mind with fear? Are there books or songs that give you anxiety?
 - Talk to a trusted adult if you are having worrisome thoughts you can’t get under control, or if there is someone in your life who is treating you badly.
12. True or false: God says his rod and his staff will comfort me. **True.**
 - [Demonstrate the following with a rod.](#) The rod was used to count the sheep and could also be thrown near an animal enemy like a wolf to cause it to run off.
 - [Demonstrate the following with a staff.](#) The staff had a hook on it and was used to bring back a sheep that was heading toward danger or to guide a sheep by gently tapping its side if it was getting off the right path.
 - Both the rod and the staff show God’s loving care and protection of us. They are a comforting picture!
13. True or false: Once I get over being anxious about something, that feeling will never come back. **False.** Feelings can pop up again because we live in a sin-filled world, but remember that God is still there as our gentle, kind, loving Shepherd and he can help

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

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Today's Verse: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

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

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids.

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

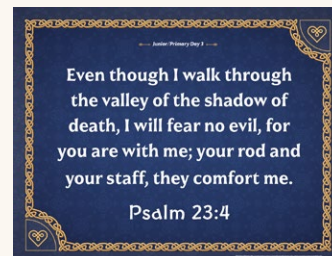
Try the challenge again using tomorrow's verse.

Part 2: Go and Do

1. Make a picture of Psalm 23:4 and tell someone how the shepherd's rod and staff are a picture of how God cares for and protects us.
2. Pray and ask God to help you focus on him and others, including who God is and things you are thankful for, when you start to feel anxious and concerned about something. Study the Bible to find one or two qualities of God every day, such as he is near or he is a comforter.
3. Memorize Philippians 4:6-8. Then make a sign or put up your craft sign that says: "Don't worry. Just pray." Keep it where you can see it.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Do I remember to talk to God when I'm worried?

- ◆ Day 3 Memory Verse Poster
- ◆ Optional: Day 4 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies





DAY 4

Grumbling to Grateful

BIBLE PASSAGES

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

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

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

MEMORY VERSE

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

NAME OF GOD

Provider

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.

ANIMAL PAL

Pesky the Woolly Aphid

Today’s Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Enemy Territory in Dublin
- Teach It!
Part 1: Grumbling to Grateful
Part 2: “Good Luck” or Good God?
Part 3: Good God Riddles
Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Beat the Clock
~ Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

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

Devotion 4: The Lord Is My Provider

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

“‘Good luck’ with that!” “I’ve had a bit of ‘bad luck’ lately.” We often say this in an offhand way, but if we aren’t careful with our words, we can inadvertently teach kids a sort of syncretism—I believe in God but I also believe in luck. Yet the two are mutually exclusive. God is sovereign, and nothing happens to us apart from his good plans for us. He is the one who prepares the table for us and overflows our cups. There is no room for inanimate luck to somehow drive our lives.

We may not kiss the Blarney Stone, but how often do we engage in activities that counter our trust in God and his provision for us? Ever read a horoscope? Checked the tarot cards? Hung a rabbit’s foot on the rearview mirror? Knocked on wood to keep bad circumstances away? Used crystals to promote good energy? Thanked “Mother Nature” for a good weather forecast? Asked for good vibes or good thoughts? Sent positivity into the universe? Hidden in a closet on Friday the 13th? Used Phil’s shadow on Groundhog Day to form your opinions on the advent of spring?

In his letter to the people of Colossae, Paul demonstrated the supremacy of Jesus in all things. As you read Colossians 1:15–20, think about what the acknowledgment of luck does to the sufficiency of our Creator and Savior.

David knew from reading about the life of his ancestor Abraham that the Lord provided what he needed (Genesis 22:1–14). On Mount Moriah, God had provided the ram for Abraham to sacrifice in place of Isaac. Later, David’s son Solomon would build the temple on Mount Moriah, providing a stable place for people to meet with God. And still later, near Mount Moriah, the descendant of Abraham and David who had been promised to both,

Jesus Christ, was sacrificed on the cross—the ultimate provision by the king of the universe.

When we are tempted to grumble about our circumstances, a form of idol worship (“I know better than God what is good for me!”), or praise luck instead of the provision of our God, let’s remember who God is and how he has provided in the past, provides in the present, and will continue to provide in the future.

May this Puritan prayer tune our hearts to sing our thankfulness to Jehovah Jireh, our provider, alone.

I bless thee for the soul thou hast created,
 for adorning it, sanctifying it, though it is fixed in barren soil;
 for the body thou hast given me,
 for preserving its strength and vigour,
 for providing senses to enjoy delights,
 for the ease and freedom of my limbs,
 for hands, eyes, ears that do thy bidding;
 for thy royal bounty providing my daily support,
 for a full table and overflowing cup,
 for appetite, taste, sweetness,
 for social joys of relatives and friends,
 for ability to serve others,
 for a heart that feels sorrows and necessities,
 for a mind to care for my fellow-men,
 for opportunities of spreading happiness around,
 for loved ones in the joys of heaven,
 for my own expectation of seeing thee clearly.
 I love thee above the powers of language to express,
 for what thou art to thy creatures.
 Increase my love, O my God, through time and eternity.

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
 (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 15.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ★ Grumbling/Grateful Crossing Signs
- ★ Viking Pictures
- ★ Animal Enemies Pictures
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape

Introduce It!

Enemy Territory in Dublin (5 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all the Bible passages used in today's lesson. Learn the motions to verse 5. Move the Days 1, 2, and 3 Crossing Signs down. Cut apart the GRUMBLING/GRATEFUL CROSSING SIGNS.

Teacher 1: Nice to see you again, lads and lasses! Are you enjoying your tour of the Emerald Isle? We're moving into enemy territory today in a city called Dublin.

Teacher 2: Show Dublin with the Viking boat in the water on the MAP OF IRELAND POSTER and uncover the Day 4 Enemy Territory photo. Have you ever heard of the Vikings? Show the VIKING PICTURES. They were one of Ireland's first enemies, landing in this city of Dublin. The Vikings were cruel people who attacked the Irish people and took over. You can still tour Viking spots if you visit Dublin, Ireland.

Teacher 1: You really don't want to be defenseless against your enemies, right? They'll win the battle if you don't know how to defend, or protect, yourself.

Teacher 2: This reminds me of sheep, though. We learned that sheep can sometimes stray or get ____. Pause for responses. Right—lost. And they benefit from a leader guiding them. And they like water that is ____. Pause for responses. Correct—calm or still. And they get easily ____. Pause for responses. Yes—scared. Well, today, we learn that *sheep are not very good at protecting themselves*. In fact, they're somewhat helpless and vulnerable to other animals. Show the ANIMAL ENEMIES PICTURES throughout the next part. In this sin-cursed world, some animals use their claws or fangs, others have poison or bad smells, and others can count on camouflage or moving fast. But sheep don't really have much of a way to defend themselves. They aren't fast. They can't outrun their predators. They aren't venomous or camouflaged. So instead, they might dash around in a panic and kick at their enemies, or they may just huddle together.

Teacher 1: The best protection farm sheep have is their shepherd's protection. He comforts and cares for his sheep, even in the midst of their enemies, like foxes, wolves—or bugs, like nose bot flies. They'll crawl on the sheep's faces and drive them crazy!

Teacher 2: That reminds me of the next part of Psalm 23. Let's stand and say verses 1–4 with motions, and then we'll try verse 5 about enemies and God's goodness. Do so.

Teacher 1: Even though David had enemies, he still had an attitude of gratitude. Rather than complain and grumble, he was usually grateful—whether it was during a good time or a tough time. Put up the GRUMBLING/GRATEFUL CROSSING SIGNS at the top of the bridge. Let's hear more!

Teach It!

Part 1: Grumbling to Grateful (15 minutes)

Prep: Use the paper to cover each picture on the DAVID AS KING POSTER. Cut the pipe cleaners in half and put 12 half pieces, in random colors, into baggies (one baggie per child). Cut the corrugated cardboard (can be from boxes) into 9 x 3-inch pieces and score them at the 1½-inch mark on both the left and right sides. Do not bend them down—the students will do this and use it as their "table." Alternately, the kids could sit around a table during the lesson.

Pass out a scored corrugated cardboard piece, a baggie of pipe cleaners, and a hard surface like a clipboard to each person (or place supplies under the chairs ahead of time). If the kids are sitting around a table, you may want to just give them the pipe cleaners. If so, adjust the following script accordingly.

Teacher 1: Today's verse starts by saying God is preparing what? Pause for responses. Right, a table. Who was there at the table? Take responses. Yes, David's enemies. As we chat more about this, the first thing we're going to do is make a table out of our cardboard. Get out your cardboard and fold it on the two sides where the cuts are to make the table legs. Demonstrate.

- ◆ David as King Poster
- ★ Philippians 4:8 Verse Sheet
- Blank paper to cover David as King Poster
- Corrugated cardboard, one 9 x 3-in. piece per person
- Scoring tool for cardboard
- Pipe cleaners (any colors), 6 per person, cut in half and in baggies, 1 baggie per person
- Hard surface (like a clipboard), 1 per person

◆ The test church kids really enjoyed the cardboard tables. Each one also had a 9 x 12-inch piece of corrugated cardboard to put it on that acted like the floor under the table.

Teacher 2: Now while we're talking, you can quietly use your pipe cleaners to fill your table with some good foods, a bottle of oil, and a cup. We'll check them out in a little bit. Don't talk. Just listen while you're working.

Teacher 1: Recite the first line of Psalm 23:5 then say: Sheep had animal enemies, but the shepherd was on the lookout for them. He would prepare the sheep's good table—their pastures—by checking the area and making sure their enemies, like wolves and foxes, weren't there and that it was a good place to feed.

Teacher 2: David had enemies, but he also acknowledged God's goodness to him in the midst of them. Remember—he wrote this psalm out of his own experiences.

Teacher 1: One of David's enemies was Saul. He chased David around and tried to kill him for 10 years. After Saul died, David became king of Israel. Later, David showed great kindness to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth, by inviting him to sit at his overflowing table. Read 2 Samuel 9:3–7 and uncover the first picture on the DAVID AS KING POSTER. David showed kindness to Mephibosheth even though his grandfather Saul had been David's enemy and had tried to kill him. This is a great example to us to show kindness to others, too.

Teacher 2: So David had an enemy named Saul. Do you know we have an enemy too, named Satan (the devil)? He's a real enemy, but his power is limited to what God allows. He can only do so much, whereas God has *all* power. And God, the Good Shepherd, is looking out for each of his sheep. He's our protector and provider. If we belong to him, we don't have to worry. We can sit at the table in peace, knowing he's caring for us.

Teacher 1: Recite the next line of Psalm 23:5 (anointing head with oil), then say: People back in Bible times anointed their guests' heads with oil when they arrived at their homes as a special honor. That meant they would pour oil over the person's head.

Teacher 2: Also, when someone was to become a king, his head would be anointed with oil. This happened to King David in 1 Samuel 16. Read 1 Samuel 16:11–13 and uncover the second picture on the DAVID AS KING POSTER. When David wrote these words, he was probably remembering when his head was anointed before he became a king.

Teacher 1: Shepherds also anointed the sheep's heads with oil to keep the bugs (sheep's enemies) from bothering them. Remember the nose bot fly? These flies got up in a sheep's nose and drove it crazy. A shepherd would take a sheep in his arms and put oil mixed with other things all over its head—even inside its nose. This protected the sheep from flies and other bug enemies. Isn't that a great picture of a shepherd's kindness and goodness? It's a reminder that God is protecting us and caring for us.

Teacher 2: Recite the last line of Psalm 23:5 (my cup overflows), then say: Shepherds would perhaps have to fill a bucket from the well for their sheep to drink from when the sheep were thirsty. As David wrote this, he probably remembered doing this as a shepherd. Uncover the last picture on the DAVID AS KING POSTER. And he would've also known that as a king, he sat at a table overflowing with good things. He was so grateful to God.

Teacher 1: David had a lot of hard things happen to him in his life, and he had a lot of enemies. But overall, he still had an attitude of gratitude toward God. He focused on God and all the good things God blessed him with instead of being negative and complaining. When we complain, it's like we're telling God we know better than he does or that we don't like who he is, or we aren't content with what he's given us. David had learned to focus on the overflowing cup of the goodness of God.

Teacher 2: God also fills each of his children's lives ("cups") with good things. And he doesn't just fill them part way—he fills them to overflowing. They're running over. This is a picture of God being so good and kind to us. In fact, every single good thing in our lives is from God. Let's stop for a minute and share some good things in our lives, remembering they're all from God. Do so, reminding them that if they are a Christian, they have the most important good thing—by far—eternal life with God.

Teacher 1: Keep in mind that God can only do good. In the beginning, God created a good world because he is good, and whatever he does is good. But our sin messed up his original good world. Yet God continues to show his goodness to us even in the midst

✦ Expect the kids to not talk while they are making their creations. They will show each other their creations at the end but should not talk while you are talking.



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

✦ Gospel Opportunity

of this sinful world. So as we think on all the blessings of God, we should be thankful, grateful people.

Teacher 2: We often tend to complain and grumble about things, but God wants us to get off the complain train and have an attitude of gratitude instead.

Teacher 1: Let's repeat this phrase: "God is good all the time." *Do so.* "All the time, God is good." *Do so.*

Teacher 2: I'm going to say something, and I want you to repeat, "God is good." Here we go. When it's sunny, ____. When it rains, ____. When I have fun with friends, ____. When I'm lonely and without a friend, ____. When I get new clothes, ____. When I wear used clothes, ____. When I win my game, ____. When I lose my game, ____. *Continue with other phrases if time allows.*

Teacher 1: So we may not have a lot of stuff in life or things don't always go how we want, but if we have God, we have his love, his care, his kindness, his hope, and his promise of eternal life. That is good!

Teacher 2: It's all about what we focus on. Let's talk about a special verse that tells us what we should focus on.

Teacher 1: Show the [PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET](#). Read [Philippians 4:8](#) together and briefly [review/discuss](#) it. Now that we've talked about the verses, let's show our overflowing tables we've made. *Do so.*

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

Teacher 2: We've been talking about how everything good comes from our good God. But here's a question: Do you think "good luck" can be a reason we have good things? *Take responses.*

Teacher 1: In Ireland and throughout the world, there's a lot of belief about luck and wishes. Have you heard about any of these? *Show the "GOOD LUCK" OR GOOD GOD? POSTER and discuss.*

- Kiss the Blarney Stone—at Blarney Castle, people bend over backwards (literally) and stretch way down to kiss a stone that's supposed to give them the "good luck" of receiving the "gift of gab."
- "May the luck of the Irish be with you"—some use this saying to wish people "good luck."
- Four-leaf clovers—if you find one of these, it's supposed to bring you "good luck."
- Horseshoes—hang one up, and this charm is said to protect you from "bad luck"—as long as it's pointing the right way!
- Leprechauns and fairies—these mythical creatures are said to bring both good fortunes and "bad luck" on people.
- Wishing wells—if you toss a coin in and make a wish, supposedly the spirits in the well grant the wish.
- Pennies—finding a penny face up is thought to bring "good luck" that day.
- Wishbone—when two people each grab a side of a wishbone and pull, whoever gets the bigger side is supposed to have their wish granted.

Teacher 2: Do you think any of these things really do bring you "good luck"? No! We already talked about the true source of all things good, and who is that? *Pause.* Right, God! God is not a magical, make-believe character. He's a real being who truly exists, and he truly is the giver of all good things. *Read James 1:17.*

Teacher 1: Although it can be fun—just for fun—to put money in a wishing well or find a four-leaf clover or pull on a wishbone, these have absolutely nothing to do with luck. In fact, there's no such thing as luck. God is in control of everything. Nothing happens by chance. Can you think of something you could say instead of "good luck"? *Take responses.* And remember to thank our good Creator, God, from whom all good things come.

◆ "Good Luck" or Good God? Poster



Part 3: Good God Riddles (5 minutes)

Prep: Either gather the items and put them in a bag or cut up the **GOOD GOD RIDDLES POSTER** and cover the bottom words on each. Put those pictures in the bag to pull out at the appropriate time.

Teacher 2: Like Philippians 4:8 encourages us, let's practice thinking on good things about God. Here are just a few in the endless ocean of ideas. We'll show you a clue, and you have to guess what it has to do with God.

Clues

1. Show a pile of coins or the picture. Say: **God doesn't** _____. (Change—Malachi 3:6)
2. Show a KIND bar or the picture. Say: **God is** _____. (Kind—1 Corinthians 13:4)
3. Show a gift box or the picture. Say: **God is the giver of good** _____. (Gifts—James 1:17)
4. Show a stuffed owl or the picture. Say: **God is** _____. (Wise—Romans 11:33)
5. Point to your ear or show the picture. Say: **God is right** _____. (Here—Isaiah 41:10)
6. Show a ruler or the picture. Say: **God is the** ____ over all. (Ruler—Psalm 103:19)

Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game (5–10 minutes)

Share the **DAY 4 ANIMAL PAL POSTER** to summarize the teaching of the day.

Today's animal pal is a bug called a woolly aphid.

- What other animal pal does this fluffy bug remind you of? *Take responses*—a sheep.
- The woolly aphid's name is Pesky. What does that have to do with what we're talking about today? *Take responses*. Pesky pests can be like annoying enemies, but even when we've got hard things going on, we can have an attitude of gratitude for God's goodness.
- What's one way we can cross from grumbling to grateful? *Take responses*.

Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Be sure to collect the maps before kids leave.

Play either game listed below as time allows.

Option 1: Beat the Clock

See Day 1 for directions.

Review Questions

1. Today's Bible verse says, "You prepare a table ____." You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows (Psalm 23:5).
2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? Woolly aphid.
3. What is the woolly aphid's name, and what does it have to do with our lesson? Pesky—when we are bothered by circumstances, we can turn to God and be grateful for who he is and what he's done for us.
4. What is something you learned about sheep today?
5. Did David show kindness to his enemy's grandson? *Yes.* How? He invited King Saul's grandson to sit at his table.
6. Before David became king, what part of his body was anointed with oil? His head.
7. What word in Psalm 23:5 describes the cup of God's goodness? *Overflows.*
8. What's something that's considered "lucky"?
9. Is there "good luck," or are all good things from a good God? *God is the giver of all good gifts!*
10. What's something good right now you can thank God for?

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

See Day 1 for directions. Make up more questions if needed.

◆ Good God Riddles Poster

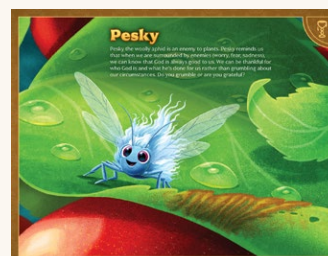
- Bag (not see-through)
- Optional for poster: Blank paper to cover the bottom words of each picture
- Optional: Pile of coins, KIND bar, gift box, stuffed animal owl, 12-inch ruler

◆ One test church bought a big ears headband online for the teacher to put on for the fifth clue. The kids loved it.



◆ Day 4 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: Timer
- Option 2: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die



Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Junior Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. If you send them home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good stuff! Have the group guides check with the kids tomorrow to see how they did on them and consider giving contest bonus points to the groups for their hard work.

Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add to your list accordingly

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse

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

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

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids.

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

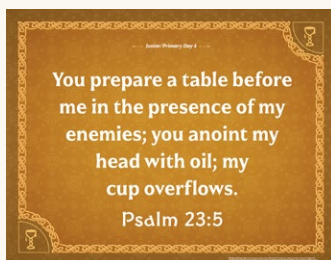
Try the challenge again with tomorrow's verse.

Part 2: Go and Do

1. When you're sitting around your dinner table each day, take time to go around and share good things you experienced that day.
2. Talk to a trusted Christian adult about "good luck" or our good God. Brainstorm things you can say to people instead of "good luck."
3. Talk to God and thank him for his cup of overflowing goodness.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: What does God tell me to think about in Philippians 4:8?

- ◆ Day 4 Memory Verse Poster
- ◆ Optional: Day 5 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies





DAY 5

Shaky to Sure

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:6
1 Chronicles 22

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

What should rainbows remind us of?

MEMORY VERSE

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

NAME OF GOD

Promise Keeper

LESSON FOCUS

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

ANIMAL PAL

Shirley the Highland Cow

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Higher Lands in County Antrim
- Teach It!
Part 1: Build It!
Part 2: Emerald Crossing Review Game
Part 3: Animal Pal
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

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

Devotion 5: The Lord Is My Promise Keeper

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

If you are hosting your VBS in June, you are likely inundated with rainbows—those formed after the spring rains or those featured in storefronts and in parades. The former are a reminder that God is a promise keeper. After the flood that was sent in judgment on the wickedness of mankind, God gave the beautiful rainbow as a sign of his promise to never flood the earth again. The latter come from those who shake their fists at their holy Creator, determined to live their lives on their own terms, building their faith on the shaky ground of man-made morality.

Our kids are caught up in the undercurrents of this new morality—they have friends who are “out,” friends who are furries, friends who are whatever they choose to be. Once they become emotionally involved, it’s more difficult to say with certainty, “Thus says the Lord.” For example, a friend said, “But what about Steve, who is like an uncle to my kids? How can I tell him his lifestyle is wrong when he’s so fun to be around?” This is part of that moralistic, therapeutic deism worldview—if there is a god, he wants people to be happy in whatever they do and can’t lay claim to their lives.

Yet the *real* rainbow shows us there is a personal God—the one who created us in his image—who has defined right from wrong. Anyone who rebels in *any* way is under his wrath (Proverbs 6:16–19) and needs to repent of sin and trust in Jesus for salvation. In the days of Noah, God showed his wrath on sin and his provision of salvation from judgment through the ark. And he showed—through the rainbow—his mercy for those who walk in newness of life. For us, this personal God has given his personal revelation through his Word and provided his personal salvation through the Word, Jesus Christ. These promises, found in the Bible, provide a sure foundation on which we can stand and proclaim with boldness the need for all to repent, receive salvation, and walk the right path with their gentle Good Shepherd.

Today, as you share with the children, evaluate your own foundation. Are you tossed to and fro by every

“new” idea? Does your position on right and wrong change based on your involvement with others? Or do you stand firm on the unchanging Word of God, evaluating each teaching in light of what Scripture says, then sharing the true gospel with those around you who need to hear it?

May we pray with the Puritans that the Lord, our promise keeper, would continually remind us that his Word is sure and we can trust it. We look forward to the fulfillment of all his promises in that future time when his children will surely have a place in his courts forever.

Glorious Jehovah, my covenant God,
All thy promises in Christ Jesus are yea and amen,
and all shall be fulfilled.

Thou hast spoken them, and they shall be done,
commanded, and they shall come to pass.

Yet I have often doubted them,
have lived at times as if there were no God.

Lord, forgive me that death in life,
when I have found something apart from thee,
when I have been content with ephemeral
things. . . .

Help me to leave my concerns in thy hands,
for thou hast power over evil,
and bringest from it an infinite progression of good,
until thy purposes are fulfilled. . . .

Grant me a distinct advance in the divine life;
May I reach a higher platform,
leave the mists of doubt and fear in the valley,
and climb to hill-tops of eternal security in Christ
by simply believing that he cannot lie,
or turn from his purpose.

Grant me the confidence I ought to have in him
who is worthy to be praised, and who is blessed for
evermore.

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 132.

Introduce It!

Higher Lands in County Antrim (8 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark all Bible passages used in today's lesson. Learn the motions to verse 6. Move the Days 1–4 Crossing Signs down. Cut apart the SHAKY/SURE CROSSING SIGNS.

Teacher 1: Well, here we are, lads and lasses, at our last day in the Emerald Isle! It's been quite a grand week, hasn't it? We need to end on a high note, so let's head to higher lands in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Show it on the MAP OF IRELAND POSTER and uncover the Day 5 Slemish Mountain photo. We're using a mountain to represent our higher lands, or heaven. This particular mountain in Northern Ireland is called Slemish Mountain and was thought to be where Ireland's most famous shepherd lived. Anyone know who that shepherd might be? Take responses—St. Patrick.

Teacher 2: Of course, David was the famous shepherd who wrote Psalm 23, but St. Patrick (Patrick) was also a shepherd for a while—although he didn't start out as a shepherd. And he didn't start out with the name Patrick.

- St. Patrick was born in Britain to Christian parents and was given the first name Maewyn.
- As a boy, he heard the truth about God, but didn't believe it himself.
- When he was 16, he was captured by pirates and taken by ship to Ireland where he was sold as a slave.
- For the next six years in the Irish countryside, he was a shepherd to his master's sheep. It was during those lonely times he began praying to God.
- He claimed he was told in a vision (like a dream) that a ship was ready to take him home, so he escaped and hiked 200 miles to the coast, where he did indeed board a ship and eventually returned home.
- Back in Britain, Maewyn claimed to have another vision in which he heard the people of Ireland calling him back.
- He studied and became a bishop, changed his name to Patrick, and headed back to Ireland. Show the ST. PATRICK PICTURE.
- Now he was a free man, and he used his next 30 years to tell the people of Ireland about God. It is said that 120,000 people became believers and over 300 churches were built through his work.
- He died on March 17, 461, the day we celebrate St. Patrick's Day.
- Although most St. Patrick's Day symbols have nothing to do with St. Patrick himself, one item he did use was the shamrock (clover). He used the three lobes to teach about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But we can't really explain the Trinity using anything in creation; we accept that God is three-in-one because that's what the Bible teaches. Using the clover to illustrate the Trinity is not a perfect analogy, and we don't suggest using it.

Teacher 1: So both David and Patrick were shepherds and would have known a lot about sheep. We've already discovered that sheep can stray, or get l___ (lost) from their shepherds, and they benefit from lots of guidance. Sheep can get s___ (scared) of many things, and they're not great at de___ (defending) themselves. But one last thing we'll talk about today is that *sheep are loyal*. They form deep bonds with their shepherd. In fact, they even know their shepherd's specific voice.

Teacher 2: Sometimes sheep from different flocks are all together in a large sheep pen at one time. They'll ignore every other shepherd who calls, but when they hear *their* shepherd's voice, those sheep trot right over to him. They know their own shepherd's voice and follow him wherever he goes. Sheep are loyal to their shepherd because he's shown them love and care. Jesus even talked about this as a picture of us and the Lord. Read John 10:4–5 and 14–15.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ★ Shaky/Sure Crossing Signs
- ★ St. Patrick Picture
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape



- ◆ One test church found a short clip on YouTube of strangers calling the sheep (which didn't move) and then the shepherd calling them (they came). It was a powerful visual illustration and one you may want to consider using here.

◆ David Gets Supplies Poster

- 2 identical sets of building supplies, such as stacking cups, pool noodles, boxes, play cardboard bricks, other large, safe building supplies (see Prep)
- Timer (cell phone)



◆ Rainbows Poster

★ Lamentation 3:22-23 Verse Sheet

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person or pair
- Game pieces, 1 per person (see Teaching Tip below)
- 1 die (may want a bigger one) or 1 per pair

◆ Possible game pieces can be mini sheep and mini Highland cow figurines (available in bulk on Amazon), bingo chips, or small squares of colored construction paper.

◆ Let them know you shouldn't be able to hear them, especially when you are talking. If they are too loud, you may want to roll and have them go back a space or two on their game board.

◆ Gospel Opportunity

◆ You may want to share a personal example of a mercy you have noticed today or yesterday.

Teacher 1: Just like the sheep follow the shepherd, the last part of Psalm 23 reminds us that something will follow us as well. Let's stand and say the first five verses together with motions, and then we'll try verse 6. *Do so.* The last part of Psalm 23 has to do with us going to heaven, or the house of the Lord. The higher lands we're visiting today will remind us of heaven.

Teacher 2: Do you see the word "shall" in verse 6? It says we who are believers "shall dwell in the house of the LORD." And if God says it, that settles it, because he's a promise keeper. We can trust every word the Bible says—it's a sure foundation. *Put up the SHAKY/SURE CROSSING SIGNS.*

Teach It!

Part 1: Build It! (10 minutes)

Prep: Place all the building supplies in two identical piles. Put 90 seconds on a timer.

Divide into a girl team and a boy team. Depending on how many students you have, all the students can participate, or have 2-3 per team, with the rest of the students cheering on their team. Give each an identical set of supplies. Start the timer and see which can build the highest structure. If it falls over before time, they must build it back up. Then say:

Teacher 1: We just tried to build the tallest structure with our building supplies. King David gathered building supplies because he wanted to build a house for the Lord—a temple. He loved God and wanted to show his thankfulness by building a magnificent house to put the ark of the covenant in. The ark of the covenant was a special box that represented God's presence with his people. But God told David he wouldn't be the one building the house because of all the wars he had been in. Instead, his son Solomon would build it.

Teacher 2: Show the **DAVID GETS SUPPLIES POSTER**. Read or paraphrase 1 Chronicles 22:1-10. Even though David wasn't going to build the house of the Lord, he could get everything ready. He gathered the supplies that were needed.

Teacher 1: When you hear Psalm 23:6, think on David's experience of wanting to build a house for the Lord. He was that sure of his relationship with God.

Part 2: Emerald Crossing Review Game (15-20 minutes)

Prep: Depending on your space, you may want to put the game boards and game pieces under chairs ahead of time. Reset after each rotation.

Directions: Divide into pairs, each with a map/game board and two different game pieces (and possibly a die). Determine who goes first. Read the first question. The first person quietly tells his partner what he thinks the answer is. The teacher shares the answer and the accompanying comments, then rolls the die. (The teacher may roll it up front and call out what it is, or Player 1 can roll it if each pair has a die.) Player 1 then moves that many if he got the answer right. Now do the same thing with Player 2. Continue going back and forth as time allows, moving along at a quick pace. Try to get through at least the first 12 questions. Whoever is farthest at the end of the time wins. If using KJV, adapt the questions as needed.

1. Verse 6 starts with the word "surely." Does the word "surely" represent something that is shaky—something we can't trust—or sure? *Sure.* God is a promise keeper; what he says will surely happen. So if he says, "(You) shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever;" then you shall!
2. What are two things that shall follow me all the days of my life if I am part of God's family, his flock? Surely ____ . *Goodness and mercy.* We've talked about God's goodness. His mercy means his loving-kindness to you; his undeserved kindness; his loyal love; he doesn't give us what we deserve. For instance, we don't really deserve to go to heaven, because we're sinful and disobey God. But God shows us mercy and lets us go if we truly admit, believe, and forever receive. *Review the gospel if time.*
3. True or false: The Bible tells us, that for those who are part of God's flock (his family), God's mercies are new every morning. *True.* Read the **LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 SHEET**

together. This tells us his mercies are new every morning. Be on the lookout each day for them. When you go to bed each night, try to think of at least one example of God's goodness and/or mercy you noticed that day.

4. What word comes after mercy? *Shall*. It's not "might" or "maybe," but shall. David was sure of this. He wrote, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalm 23:6). They will be my daily traveling companions through life.
5. True or false: The word "follow" means "to pursue with great energy." *True*. God will be pursuing me every day of my life. He will never give up on me, go away from me, or get tired of me. Nothing will separate me from God. *Read Romans 8:38–39.*
6. What is the next phrase that uses the word "shall" (ESV) or "will" (KJV)? "*And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever*" (Psalm 23:6). Again, there's a certainty there. Are you sure you are God's child? Is he your Shepherd? That's how you can know you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. If you have questions or doubts about it, please talk to someone.
7. What does the house of the Lord refer to? *Heaven*. We're using the higher lands of Ireland to remind us of heaven.
8. How many times does verse 6 use "surely" or "shall"? *Three (ESV) or two (KJV).*
9. Does God always keep his promises, like what he says in verse 6? *Yes*. God is a promise keeper. If God says it in his Word, it is for sure. If God's Word says it, that settles it.
10. What promise did he make to Noah that had a rainbow involved? *He would never flood the whole earth again*. God has kept that promise. He has never flooded the entire world again. There have been local floods here and there but not another global flood (Genesis 6–9).
11. When we see a rainbow, what should it remind us of? *God is a promise keeper*. The rainbow is a reminder that his Word is sure, not shaky. He keeps his promises.
12. Yes or No: People associate rainbows with Ireland. *Yes*. *Show RAINBOWS POSTER*. Ireland does have more rainbows—real rainbows—in the sky than many countries because it rains more in Ireland. It's never ho-hum when you see a rainbow in the sky, is it? Rainbows are so amazing and are from God to remind us of God. Those found in the sky, which are often depicted in photos or drawings, are true rainbows. On the other hand, rainbows are not magical things pointing to pots of gold. They're not symbols of "good luck." They're also not symbols of rebelling against God. Some people show flags or signs of rainbows, which signal their rebellion against God and his good ways found in the Bible. Those are not what rainbows are meant to be about. True rainbows are meant to be reminders of God and his sure promises.
13. What can we think about to help us not be anxious? *Answers will vary*. *Remind them of the principles found in Philippians 4:6–8.*
14. Do good things happen to us because of "good luck"? *No*. Everything is under God's control. There's no such thing as "good luck." All good things are from our good God.
15. What's a good quality of God we can think about? *Answers will vary*. *These could include his kindness, goodness, love, gentleness, or comfort*. He also tells us in Philippians 4:8 to think on whatever is true, pure, excellent, worthy of praise, to name a few.
16. The most important thing in life is to have the Lord as your shepherd. How can you become part of his flock? *Admit, believe, forever receive*. Admit you're a sinner, believe in Jesus Christ, and forever receive him as your Lord and Savior.

✦ Gospel Opportunity



◆ Day 5 Animal Pal Poster

□ Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person

Part 3: Animal Pal (5 minutes)

Share the *DAY 5 ANIMAL PAL POSTER* to summarize today's teaching.

Today's animal pal is a Highland cow.

- What do the higher lands at Slemish Mountain remind us of? *Take responses—heaven.*
- Our Highland cow is named Shirley. What does her name have to do with Psalm 23:6? *Take responses—God promises us that surely goodness and mercy will follow us and we*



shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Goodness and mercy will be our traveling companions every day of our lives.

- What's something you learned this week at VBS? Take responses.
- What's an action point you can go and do? Take responses.

Pass out the maps and have everyone put on today's sticker. Take them home today. Since you already played a review game, you won't need to play one now.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the Junior Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add to your list accordingly.

Note: You may want to show them the *Exploring God's Word* booklets or bookmarks that are available if you plan to give these out.

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse

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

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

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids.

Remind the kids to keep memorizing God's Word. They can start with Lamentations 3:22–23 and Philippians 4:6–8.

Part 2: Go and Do

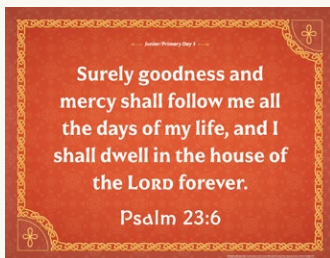
1. Lamentations 3:22–23 tells us God's mercies never come to an end and are new every morning. Memorize those verses and remember—every single time you experience goodness and mercy, it's from God.
2. Put a copy of Psalm 23 (the whole thing) in your bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen and say it out loud every day.
3. Talk to God and thank him for being a promise keeper. When you see a rainbow in the sky, let it be a reminder of that.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com/emeraldkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself these questions: What has God taught me this week at VBS? Am I sure that he is my shepherd and that I shall live with him forever?

◆ Day 5 Memory Verse Poster

★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player

- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies
- Optional: *Exploring God's Word* booklets and/or bookmarks



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.)
- » Attend a church that teaches that the Bible is God's true Word.
- » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
- » 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.



Supply List

Every Day

- Map of Ireland Poster
- Memory Verse Posters
- Animal Pal Posters
- Psalm 23 Hand Motions
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape for posters
- Blank paper to cover photos on map
- Optional: Large easel for map
- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Optional: Player for verse hand motions
- Option 1 Review Game: Timer (cell phone works)
- Option 2 Review Game: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die
- Optional: Memory verse music and player

Day 1

- Different Sheep Poster
- David as Shepherd Poster
- Gospel Poster
- Clockmaker Poster
- Lost/Found Crossing Signs
- Optional: This Way, That Way Sheets
- Is the Lord My Shepherd? Pattern, 1 per person
- Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
- White card stock, 1 sheet per person
- Hard surface per person—table, clipboard, magazine with a binder clip
- Markers, several colors or 1 pack of various colors per person
- Optional: Clock parts

Day 2

- David and Goliath Poster
- Bible Boxes Poster

- Wrong Path/Right Path Crossing Signs
- Box Lid Instructions 1–3
- Box 1 Puzzle Pieces, laminated
- Box 3 Dig Papers, laminated
- Bible Box Leader Scripts
- Irish jig music and device for audio or video
- Measuring tape
- Optional: Simple armor/toy swords/pool noodles
- Three boxes/bins with lids
- Crinkle shred paper
- Kinetic sand
- 1 red quarter
- Optional: Two plastic tablecloths
- Wipes for clean-up
- Blank paper to cover Bible Boxes Poster

Day 3

- David and Saul Poster
- Why Do Bad Things Happen? Poster
- Fearful/Peaceful Crossing Signs
- Philippians 4:6, 7, and 8 Verse Sheets
- Flock to the Rock Cards, 1 paper-clipped set per person
- Flock to the Rock Game Boards, 1 per person
- Blank paper to cover David and Saul Poster
- Optional props: Pool noodle, large foam board/cardboard frame, and safe obstacle such as a large box to act as a mountain
- White card stock
- Dice, 1 per person or every 2 people
- Writing utensils OR baggies of 30 mini marshmallows, 1 baggie per person
- Optional: Rod (can be a walking stick) and staff (can be a cane)

Day 4

- David as King Poster
- “Good Luck” or Good God? Poster
- Good God Riddles Poster
- Grumbling/Grateful Crossing Signs
- Viking Pictures
- Animal Enemies Pictures
- Philippians 4:8 Verse Sheet
- Blank paper to cover David as King Poster
- Corrugated cardboard, one 9 x 3-in. piece per person
- Scoring tool for cardboard
- Pipe cleaners (any colors), 6 per person, cut in half and in baggies, 1 baggie per person
- Hard surface per person
- Bag (not see-through)
- Optional for Good God Riddles Poster: Blank paper to cover bottom words
- Optional: Pile of coins, KIND bar, gift box, stuffed toy owl, 12-inch ruler

Day 5

- David Gets Supplies Poster
- Rainbows Poster
- Shaky/Sure Crossing Signs
- St. Patrick Picture
- Lamentations 3:22–23 Verse Sheet
- 2 identical sets of building supplies such as stacking cups, pool noodles, boxes, play cardboard bricks, other large, safe building supplies
- Timer (cell phone works)
- Game pieces, 1 per person
- 1 die (may want a large one), or 1 per pair

Student Extras

- Optional: Student Guides and supplies
- Optional: *Exploring God's Word* booklets
- Optional: Bookmarks

Available in the Teacher Resource Kit
 Download from AnswersVBS.com/emeraldresources

