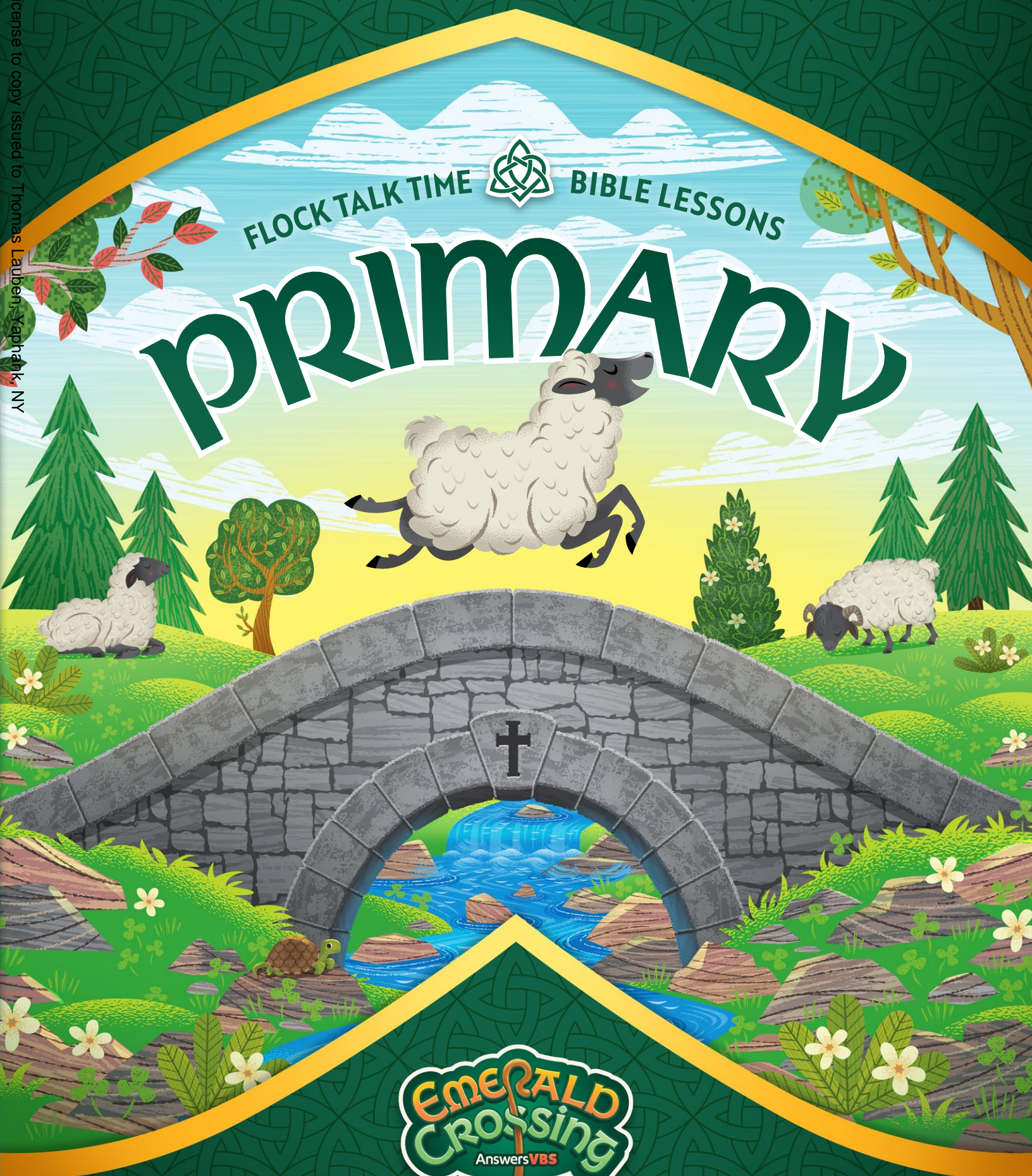


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FLOCK TALK TIME  BIBLE LESSONS

primary



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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Primary Teacher Guide

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Project Coordinator: Stacia McKeever
 Writers: Randy and Barb Witt
 Assistant: Amy Quinn
 Content Editors: Roger Patterson, Dr. Georgia Purdom
 Editors: Linda Moore, Gretchen Doolittle
 Interior Design: Diane King
 Cover Design: Jon Seest
 Photographer: Susie Jarvis
 Illustrator: Paul Agner

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For more information, write:
 Answers in Genesis
 PO Box 510, Hebron, KY 41048
 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 general characteristics of children and then specific characteristics of Primaries (ages 6–9 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 Primaries

Physical Characteristics

Primaries love games and competitions, but it can be hard for them to lose. They are continuing to grow and improve in hand-eye coordination and fine and gross motor skills. They need to have opportunities for movement.

Takeaways for Us

- Use games to teach! Primaries love any kind of games, whether active or learning games.
- Help them learn to take turns and to be good winners and good losers. Both winning and losing well are important in God's sight.
- Use boy vs. girl competitions to get them revved up! As long as you keep it light and fun, they will enjoy these times.

Emotional/Social Characteristics

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl/boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the group and want adult/teacher approval.

Takeaways for Us

- Give Primaries plenty of opportunities to work in groups or with partners.
- Use humor with Primaries. The sillier, the better!
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete in their thinking, rather than being able to understand abstract or symbolic thinking. They're learning to read. They need active learning. They're gaining a growing attention span. They understand the consequences of their actions. They can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

Takeaways for Us

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. "Becoming a child of God" or "being in God's family" are more concrete ways to express the same concept as kids will understand what it means to be in a family.
- Activities can stretch for a longer time, but it's still good to vary them. Keep Primaries involved in being active as much as possible.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking them to read out loud. Try asking for volunteers.
- Small print can be a challenge, so use larger print when possible.
- Encourage memorization.
- Use visuals.
- Show interest in each child, letting them know you care.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully. Explain Bible words and concepts.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help 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.

The 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 from 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). Both are available with the Music Leader Download, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. They feature the full verses. 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).

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.

- Primary ESV (1230720)
- Primary KJV (1231330)

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 “crossing.” 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

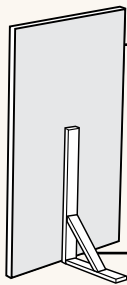
create a brick or block pattern. For example, if you want the mortar to be black, paint the surface black, then use a lighter gray for the stones or bricks.

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.

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!



Prop up your set and any freestanding decorations with wooden jacks made from 2 x 4-in., 2 x 3-in., or 2 x 2-in. 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 also provided. 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.

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 out.

Clip Art Images

Numerous [clip art images](#) are available. 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.

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 Resource Download for clip art images of sheep, cows, chickens, a border collie, and other animals. Or use large stuffed farm animals.
- Prop a staff up somewhere on your set.
- A wheelbarrow can be off to the side (or a smaller, kid's wheelbarrow).
- 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.

Puppet Stage

Because puppets are used daily in the Primary classrooms, you will need a puppet stage. Use one of the rolling hills on the set for this purpose and have the puppet appear from behind the hill. Or paint a separate hill that can be propped with a jack and placed just off to the left or right of your set that is specifically for the puppet. Alternately, you can make a puppet stage out of a large cardboard box or a trifold display board. Cut out a rectangular hole in the box or display board, cover the hole with fabric, and then paint or decorate the outside.



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: Puppet Pal—Lost to Found
Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Animal Pal Moves
~ 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 map (see Prep)
- Optional: Large easel for map



- ◆ A shepherd's hook (1230580) makes a great prop for the teacher throughout the week.
- ◆ Be familiar with the lesson, but don't memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference.
- ◆ 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 to the correct passages ahead of time.
- ◆ 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.

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 posters so they look like one big map. Or place the mounted map posters on a large easel. Cut apart the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS**. 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 (boys) and lasses (girls)! Or should I say “dia duit” (deeh-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 Ireland. We’ll start right here at the Emerald Crossing bridge where we’ll be discovering what life is like when we live *our* way (hold up the “Lost” sign) versus *God’s* way (hold up the “Found” sign).

Teacher 2: Do you know where Ireland is? Take responses. Show the map. In Ireland, it’s so beautiful! There are lots of green pastures, farms, and sheep.

Teacher 1: Sheep are interesting creatures. We’ll be talking about sheep and shepherds all week long as we learn from Psalm 23 in the Bible. Point to it in your Bible. Who knows what a shepherd does? Take responses. A person who cares for sheep. Psalm 23 was written by a man named King David, who was a shepherd himself early in his life before he became a king.

Teacher 2: Okay, it’s time to begin our journey. First, let’s fly to Ireland. Put out your arms and “fly” for a few seconds. Now that we’re here, put on some rain boots because it rains a lot in Ireland! Have everyone pretend to do so. We better put on our raincoats too. Pretend to do so. And let’s not forget our shepherd’s staff! Pretend to pick one up. Okay, now let’s start at this sheep farm in the town of Donegal, which is here. Show the farm drawing on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** and uncover the Day 1 Sheep Farm photo. Can you hear the sheep baaing? Do you feel the light rain coming down? Do you see a rainbow over there?

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

Teacher 2: Once everyone is settled, show the **DIFFERENT SHEEP PICTURES** as you say the following. Sheep can be black, white, or mixed. Some have horns and some don’t. Some look fluffy and some don’t. Some have long hair and some have short hair. They don’t all look alike. But sheep that live on farms have this in common—they sometimes wander 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 to see who has. 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 different places in the Bible. We’re going to check out Psalm 23 to hear more about going from being lost to being found, our first Emerald Crossing (put up the **LOST/FOUND SIGNS** at the top of the bridge), but before we do, we need a little background, so let’s 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 line up in the middle of the room. *Do so.* Now, listen to the statement and decide whether to go this way (point one way) or that way (point the other way). Here's the first one: There are 150 psalms in the Bible. (Quickly flip through the book of Psalms.) Go this way (point one way) if you think *King David wrote all of those.* 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, so you should have gone that way. He *did* write Psalm 23. Now, head back to the middle, and we'll ask the next question. *Do so.*

Teacher 2: 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 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 be able to see how he wrote from experiences he had lived through, like 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. I'm going to read a passage about David when he was a young shepherd. Listen, and then you'll go this way or that way. 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. Have them sit down then show the **DAVID AS SHEPHERD POSTER.** The job of a shepherd wasn't a wimpy job. It took a lot of strength, courage, and care.

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** with a piece of paper or sticky notes. Copy the **IS THE LORD MY SHEPHERD? PATTERN** on white card stock and put each on a hard surface (e.g., a table, a clipboard, or a magazine with a binder clip). Gather the markers for each person. To speed things up, place the supplies at each person's place (under a chair) if possible so it's 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 start by reading Psalm 23 together. *Do so, using all the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS as a reference.* Now, let's read just verse one, doing the hand motions. *Do so then have them sit back down.*

Teacher 2: We know shepherds care for sheep, right? What kinds of things 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 robbers could get them. Shepherds laid down their lives for the sheep. Shepherds would also search for sheep that had strayed, or gotten lost, and bring them back to the fold.

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

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

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

✦ If your room is small, have the kids just stand and turn to the left or right.

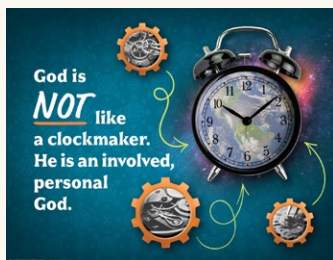


- ◆ Days 1–5 Memory Verse Posters
- ◆ Gospel Poster
- ◆ Clockmaker Poster
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- ★ **Is the Lord My Shepherd? Pattern**, 1 per person

- White card stock, 1 sheet per person
- Hard surface per person (see Prep)
- Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
- Markers, several colors or 1 pack of various colors per person
- Optional: Clock parts

✦ Show a picture of a shepherd lying at the entrance of a sheep pen.

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



Teacher 1: No, 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 each one of us. God takes a personal interest in *you* and wants to be *your* shepherd, caring for you.

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

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

Teacher 1: Do you know what it says at the top of your sheet? **Pause** for responses. Right—Is the Lord *my* shepherd? Did you know that 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 been. But then, at the beginning of *time*, God created a very good world. You're coloring earth right now to remind yourself of the very good world God made. He made green plants, blue waters, the sky, birds, fish, animals, and the first two people, Adam and Eve. We learn about this in the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis. **Show Genesis.**

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

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

Teacher 2: Can you think of a good thing in our world? **Take a couple quick responses.** A sad thing? **Take a couple quick responses.** A bad thing? **Take a couple quick responses.** They all exist now, and that goes back to the sin of the first man and woman. Okay, now quietly draw a manger, a small animal feeding trough, 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. Jesus himself, God's Son, came to earth as a baby! It talks about this right here in the Bible. **Point to Luke 1–2.** Jesus 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 or help. Of course, the Bible tells us a very different view. We see throughout its pages that God is a personal God who cares about us. We learn about that in Psalm 23 where he describes himself as a good shepherd. A good shepherd is involved in his sheep's lives. He's not distant, ignoring them. 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, he even 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: Now, draw a man (or heart) in space 4. [Uncover the grown Jesus on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). As we mentioned, Jesus came as a baby, but then he grew up and lived a perfect, pure life without any sin.

Teacher 1: He never did anything sinfully wrong—not even one time. He was all good and did all things right, including doing miracles, teaching people, and sharing his love. Jesus was perfect in every way.

Teacher 2: Now, draw a cross in space 5. [Uncover the cross on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Even though Jesus was perfect in every way—perfect in love, perfect in care, perfect in goodness as the Good Shepherd—when he was in his 30s, some bad men who hated Jesus decided to put him to death. They hung him on a cross and left him to die a horribly painful death.

Teacher 1: Jesus allowed them to do this to him because he didn't want any of his sheep—and that means you—to stay lost. Draw a sheep in space 6. [Uncover the sheep on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Isaiah 53:6 says we are all like sheep that have gone astray, doing what we want instead of what God wants. Whether you realize it or not, if you don't have Jesus as your shepherd, you're lost in your sin. But Jesus wants you to be in his flock.

Teacher 2: [Uncover the tomb on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Draw a tomb with the stone rolled away in space 7. After Jesus died, he was put in a tomb, which was sealed and guarded so he couldn't get out—or so the bad guys thought! But Jesus is God, and he came back to life, rose from the dead, and burst out of that tomb! Jesus didn't stay dead! [Move behind the puppet stage while Teacher 1 wraps up this section.](#)

Teacher 1: 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](#)). Let's put away our supplies then talk to our puppet pal, Paddy, a little more about this.

Part 3: Puppet Pal—Lost to Found (5 minutes or less)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference.

Each day, the puppet pal will teach part of the lesson or reinforce what the kids just heard. It's always a favorite, so try to include it even if you have to cut something else.

Decide which of you will be the puppet and figure out when you need to leave the previous teaching so you will be positioned in time for the start of the puppet pal time.

If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist someone (a group guide or other volunteer) ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a suitcase with the lid flipped up or just stand and work the puppet. (It's fine if your lips move. No need to be a ventriloquist.)

You can use either a boy or a girl puppet. Its name is Paddy (for Patrick or Patricia). Use a consistent voice for the puppet all week. Speak clearly and exaggerate words and expressions. For instance, draw out certain words for emphasis or make an exaggerated action for things like groaning, turning its head, or sneezing. Use your free hand to do things with the puppet's hands or arms. For example, if the puppet is "thinking," put the puppet's hand on its chin. When the puppet is talking, make sure the mouth is open. (This is the opposite of what people often do!) In other words, the mouth should be open on most syllables. You don't have to open very wide, which will help you move the mouth faster and more naturally.

Your puppet should come out from behind a hill. (See [Decorating Decisions](#).) When the puppet is entering, hold your arm back and down and have the puppet take three steps up, getting higher each time, until the puppet is out and visible. When exiting, turn the puppet toward you and take three steps down until out of sight.

Teacher: Can you help me call for Paddy? Here we go. Do so.

Puppet: Come up.

Teacher: Hi there, Paddy.

◆ Gospel Poster

★ Day 1 Puppet Script
(2 copies)

- Boy or girl puppet and puppet stage
- Clipboard
- Optional: Gospel bookmarks, 1 per person

◆ The puppet can be dressed in a small VBS T-shirt or farm-hand-type shirt. To make a small VBS T-shirt, photocopy, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the logo and tape it to a baby-sized T-shirt.

◆ If you want to get snazzy, use a quick musical introduction and exit when it's time for the puppet to come and go.

Puppet: *Wave.* Top o' the mornin' (evenin') to ya!

Teacher: What have you been up to today?

Puppet: Well, I've been out in the fields trying to find a sheep that got separated from me.

Teacher: Oh no! That's too baa-d!

Puppet: I know. I had a whole pasture full of sheep, and I had to leave them to go look for the one that strayed away.

Teacher: Did you find him?

Puppet: I sure did. He was down in the valley near the Emerald Crossing bridge.

Teacher: He'd still be lost if you hadn't found him.

Puppet: That's for sure.

Teacher: You know, that reminds me of a story Jesus told about a lost sheep.

Puppet: Oh yeah?

Teacher: Yeah. Right here (*point to Luke 15:3-7*), it says there were 100 sheep, and then 1 wandered off. The shepherd left the 99 and went to find the lost 1.

Puppet: I hope he found him.

Teacher: He did. Just like you found your sheep, the shepherd found his lost sheep.

Puppet: Then what happened?

Teacher: Everyone was so happy. It was a celebration. Let's do a happy dance! *Do so with the kids and have the puppet do a silly dance too.*

Puppet: I'm so glad they found him!

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

Puppet: How do we follow Jesus?

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

Puppet: Then what?

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

Puppet: Admit and believe. Anything else?

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

Puppet: I hope every person here believes in Jesus and wants to be his child!

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

Puppet: I hope they can say yes!

Teacher: I hope so too! Well, bye for now, Paddy. See you tomorrow!

You may want to give children an opportunity to leave for salvation counseling with a pastor or qualified leader. This should be in a visible, safe place—not a room with just one adult with the children. You also may want to pass out the gospel bookmarks or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.

Part 4: 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 the Bible, who can sheep be a picture of, or who do sheep represent? *People; us.*
- This 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 Good Shepherd to being one of his flock? *Take answers.*

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. Collect them after each day's use.

Play either game listed below as time allows. Animal Pal Moves takes a minute or two and no supplies, so it's good for a short and quick review. Option 2, which uses the map as a game board, takes longer but is a fun game.

Option 1: Animal Pal Moves

Directions: Have the kids baa like a sheep if the answer is yes and get on all fours like a sheep if it is no.

Review Questions

1. Does God compare us to bears? No—get on all fours. He compares us to sheep.
2. Is God the Good Shepherd? Yes—baa like a sheep.
3. In Jesus' story, did the shepherd leave the 99 sheep and find the 1 who was lost? Yes—baa.
4. Is it possible for us to go through life without ever doing anything wrong? No—get on all fours. We all disobey God. This is called sin when we don't obey God.
5. Is whining or grumbling an example of sin? Yes—baa.
6. Will God forgive our sin if we ask? Yes—baa. Review the gospel if time.

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 cow figurines available on Amazon). Determine who goes first in each pair. Read the first review question below. 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. Now, 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.

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)—is the Lord my shepherd?*
4. What is something you learned about sheep today? *Answers will vary.*

◆ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: No supplies
- Option 2: Game pieces (e.g., small candies, paper circles, coins, mini sheep and cow figurines), 1 per person, and 1 die



◆ 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.

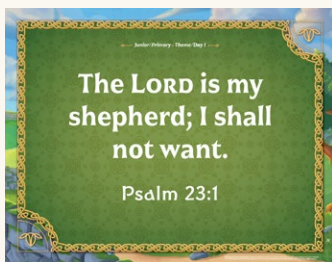
◆ Theme/Day 1 Memory Verse Posters

◆ Optional: Day 2 Memory Verse Poster

★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player

□ Optional: Memory verse music and player

□ Optional: Student Guides and supplies



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. Did he just sit back and watch it run on its own, or is he involved? He is actively involved in sustaining his creation and working all things for his glory and our good.
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? Encourage your students to silently think about the answer.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Primary 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 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, like millions of dollars, the exact house or job you want, or 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, then try the challenge.

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. Then, for fun if you have time, pretend you're a sheep and walk around on all fours as you say today's verse.

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 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?



DAY 2

Wrong Path to Right Path

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:2–3
1 Samuel 17

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

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

MEMORY VERSES

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

NAME OF GOD

Leader

LESSON FOCUS

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

ANIMAL PAL

Guide the Border Collie

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Green Pastures and Still Waters in County Galway
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Goliath
~ Option 1: Act It Out!
~ Option 2: Action Moves
Part 2: Puppet Pal—Bible Boxes
Part 3: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Animal Pal Moves
~ 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.

Introduce It!

Green Pastures and Still Waters in County Galway (5–7 minutes)

Prep: Bookmark the Bible passages that will be used today. Move the Day 1 Crossing Signs down one block on each side of the bridge. Every day, all signs will continue to be moved farther down, with the current day's on the top two blocks of the bridge. Cut apart the **WRONG PATH/RIGHT PATH CROSSING SIGNS**. Learn the motions to verses 2–3. Cue the Irish jig music (e.g., on a phone, a computer, or a video player).

Teacher 1: Welcome back, lads and lasses! Let's start off with a lively Irish jig. Many people in Ireland enjoy this fun dance. Play music or video loudly from your device and have the kids hop around or just watch/listen.

Teacher 2: Well, that was loud! But now, I'm going to count down while everyone gets completely still by the count of 1. Ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 . . . caaalmm. As soon as everyone is still, continue.

Teacher 1: I'm glad you're still, because today, we're traveling to a peaceful place in western Ireland where there are plenty of green pastures and calm, still waters. It's here in County Galway. Show the sheep, green pastures and still waters near Galway on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** and uncover the Day 2 Green Pastures photo. Ireland is known for its green pastures—they're actually all over the place. It rains more in Ireland than in many countries of the world, making it a beautiful, green country.

Teacher 2: With all those green pastures, it's a great place for sheep to graze. Does anybody remember what we learned about sheep yesterday? Sheep on farms sometimes stray from the flock or get ___. Pause for answers. Right—lost. But here's something else about sheep. Did you know *sheep are helped by a shepherd's guidance*? They can overgraze a pasture, eating the grass down to the bare dirt. So their shepherd leads them to new pastures. But sometimes sheep wander off on the wrong path. In fact, a while back, 1,500 sheep went on the wrong path in the country of Turkey and followed one sheep off a cliff! But a good shepherd leads his sheep on the right path so things like that won't happen.

Teacher 1: Also, *sheep like calm water*. They will choose calm water over rushing water, so a shepherd may lead them to calm, *still* waters. Shepherds sometimes even put stones in the water to build a calm little pool for sheep to drink from. It definitely is a good thing for sheep to follow their shepherd, who leads and guides them on the right path. Let's put up our crossing signs to remind us that we, like sheep, need the Lord to lead and guide us from the wrong path, full of bad choices, to the right path, God's way. Put up the **WRONG PATH/RIGHT PATH CROSSING SIGNS** on the top two blocks on the bridge. One way God leads us is through his words in the Bible.

Teacher 2: Let's stand and say Psalm 23:1 with our motions, and then we'll try verses 2 and 3. Refer to the memory verse posters. Well, I can't wait to hear more about God guiding us, so let's move on!

Teach It!

Part 1: David and Goliath (10–15 minutes)

Choose one of the following options to teach this portion on David and Goliath. Option 1 is the longer of the two.

Option 1: Act It Out!

Prep: Gather the props if using them—simple armor/toy weapons for Goliath to wear and David to try on (e.g., football helmets, toy swords, pool noodles). Measure and mark off 9 feet, 9 inches high on a visible wall, or as high as you can get it.

Teacher 1: Yesterday, we talked about David, who wrote Psalm 23 and was a shepherd when he was young. When you read about David in the Bible, you can see that God was leading and guiding him even when he was a young man. David obviously spent a lot of time with God, building his relationship and being led by him. David didn't have the

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ★ Wrong Path/Right Path Crossing Signs
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Irish jig music (audio or video) and player
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape for posters



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

- ◆ David and Goliath Poster
- Measuring tape
- Optional: Simple armor/toy swords/pool noodles

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

whole Bible available to him at that time like we do now, but he did have several of the early books of the Bible to read. By reading those, David got to know God and followed him. How about you? Do you want to get to know God better? Spending time with God through reading/listening to the Bible 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. We'll 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. Instead, 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 are 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 6 cubits and a span, which is over 9 feet tall. *Show the mark on the wall that shows 9 feet, 9 inches high 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 to have Goliath 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 was a shepherd and wrote Psalm 23.

Teacher 2: Instruct David to come out.

Teacher 1: *Read 1 Samuel 17:23–24.*

Teacher 2: Instruct Goliath to come out and throw down 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 say to David, “You think I’m a dog you can hit with a stick?” Have his army cheer.

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

Teacher 2: Have David say to Goliath, “The battle is the Lord’s!” 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 as 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 meeting with Goliath ever happened. David didn’t wait until he got into battle but had already been trusting God to lead and guide him. This is an important lesson for us too!

Teacher 2: We need to trust God to lead and guide us. Yesterday, we talked about how we can become part of his flock. 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 mentioned on the poster? 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 like God speaking to us because those are his very words.

Teacher 1: It’s the most trustworthy book on the planet. Hold it up. It shows us the way from being on the wrong path, making bad decisions, to the right path, learning wise decisions. Let’s stand and sing “The B-I-B-L-E,” and then we’ll talk a little bit more about the Bible with our friend Paddy.

Do so and have Teacher 2 get behind the puppet stage during the singing. Continue at the Part 2—Puppet Pal section.



◆ Gospel Opportunity

Option 2: Action Moves

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

Teacher 1: Now, remember we said King David wrote Psalm 23? He wrote it when he was older, but he would have remembered his younger days as a shepherd when he had to fight off enemies.

Teacher 2: Enemies like Goliath, a giant who stood over 9 feet tall! Let’s check out how tall that is on the wall. Do so.

Teacher 1: Let’s listen to the account of David fighting Goliath told right here in the Bible. Point to your open Bible at 1 Samuel 17. You’re going to see how David had a strong relationship with God. God led David throughout his life. It didn’t start right when he met Goliath. David had already been spending time with God long before this.

Teacher 2: Refer to the **DAVID AND GOLIATH MOTIONS POSTER**. While we tell you about this, be listening for these things: Every time we say, “David,” you should cheer. Every time we say, “Goliath,” make strongman muscles. Every time we say, “Fight,” make a sword motion. And when we say, “Sheep,” you should baa. Ready? Here we go!

Teacher 1: There were two groups of people—the Philistines, which included Goliath (do the strongman motion with them), and the Israelites, which included David (cheer).

Teacher 2: These two groups of people got in a fight (fight motion). Goliath’s people (strongman motion) were on one mountain, and David’s people (cheer) were on the other, with a valley in between.

Teacher 1: Goliath (strongman motion) shouted out a challenge. He told the Israelites to choose someone to fight him (fight motion). The two would battle it out, and whoever won would be the winner for their whole country. But the losing country would have to become their servants.

◆ David and Goliath Poster
◆ David and Goliath Motions Poster

□ Measuring tape





◆ Gospel Opportunity

- ◆ Bible Boxes Poster
- ★ Day 2 Puppet Script (2 copies)
- Boy or girl puppet
- Clipboard

Teacher 2: The problem was that Goliath (*strongman motion*) and his people didn't believe in or obey God. David (*cheer*) and his people were God's special people, and he loved and followed God. So when Goliath (*strongman motion*) threw down that challenge, he was really saying something like, "Who do you think you are? Do you really think your God can win over us? I challenge you to a fight (*fight motion*) to show *we* are greater than your God."

Teacher 1: Well, that scared the Israelites. Can you make a scared face? *Do so*. It's too bad they were afraid because they had God as their guide. But they were forgetting how great and mighty he is.

Teacher 2: But then . . . along came David (*cheer*). He'd been out caring for his sheep (*baa*). When he heard Goliath (*strongman motion*) shouting his challenge, David (*cheer*) said he would go to battle against him.

Teacher 1: He reminded everyone he had taken care of sheep (*baa*), and sometimes, he had to fight (*fight motion*) a bear or a lion to keep the sheep (*baa*) safe. So he knew God would be with him as he fought Goliath (*strongman motion*).

Teacher 2: And that's exactly what happened. Even though David (*cheer*) didn't have all the armor and fancy battle equipment on, he had something much more important. He had a relationship with the Lord. He had been spending time with God all that time he was out in the fields with his sheep (*baa*), and he knew he could count on God to lead him in this fight (*fight motion*).

Teacher 1: *Hold up the DAVID AND GOLIATH POSTER*. So with just a sling and five smooth stones, he beat that giant. His first shot hit Goliath (*strongman muscles*) on the forehead, and the giant fell down dead. Let's act out that sling move. *Do so*. Raise your arm up or to the side and move it in a circle then push your hand forward in front of you.

Teacher 2: David (*cheer*) trusted God to lead and guide him, and God did.

Teacher 1: We need to trust God to lead and guide us too. Yesterday, we talked about how to become part of his flock. Do you remember? *Take responses and do a quick review of the gospel*.

Teacher 2: Once we're part of his flock, we need God to lead and guide us. One main way he does that is through the words he's written in the Bible. *Hold it up*. Let's stand and sing "The B-I-B-L-E," and then we'll talk a little bit more about the Bible with our friend Paddy. *Move behind the puppet stage during the singing*.

Part 2: Puppet Pal—Bible Boxes (5 minutes)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference.

Teacher: Have the kids help you call for Paddy to come up.

Puppet: Stay hidden and say: Just a minute! Teacher looks behind the hill, wondering what's taking so long, and then Paddy arrives.

Teacher: Hey, what were you doing?

Puppet: Working on a puzzle.

Teacher: Fun! How many pieces?

Puppet: 40.

Teacher: That's a lot of pieces.

Puppet: Yeah, it is. It's gonna make a picture of the Bible when all the pieces are in place.

Teacher: You know, that's cool because the Bible's kind of like a puzzle.

Puppet: I know it's a special book—the most special in the world—but what do you mean it's kind of like a puzzle?

Teacher: Well, the Bible isn't like any other book ever written because it was written by God!

Puppet: God? He wrote a book?

Teacher: Yep. He wrote the Bible.

◆ Day 2 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: No supplies
- Option 2: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die



is true? I sure do! It's God's voice speaking to me from the pages of the Bible. The God of the universe is talking to me! How incredible is that?! I should never forget about it but should read it, study it, and talk to God about it. He'll lead and guide me through his Word so I won't be on the wrong path (what the world says to do) but will be on the right path (what God's Word says to do).

Puppet: Thank you for reminding me of how great the Bible is!

Teacher: You're welcome! And always remember to let God—through his Word—lead and guide you. Learn the Bible, love the Bible, and obey the Bible.

Puppet: For sure! I want to always treasure God's Word, the Bible! In fact, I'm going to go listen to it right now.

Teacher: That's awesome! Bye! *Have everyone wave goodbye.* And kids, I hope you listen when you hear the Bible too. It's God's special words that lead and guide you through life!

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 us beside 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 to the right path. Make sure they realize the first and foremost wrong path is to not be part of God's family. That can potentially lead to bad life choices, such as not obeying authorities, lying, bullying (being mean), using bad language, etc. You may want to give an example or two to get them started. (But people who look “good” can still be on the wrong path if they have not accepted Christ.) Being on God's path starts with being a Christian, which hopefully grows into a love for God and a desire to obey him and follow his instructions in the Bible.

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

Option 1: Animal Pal Moves

Directions: Have the kids bark like a dog if the answer is yes and run in place if it is no.

Review Questions

1. Does a border collie guide sheep? Yes—bark like a dog.
2. Did Goliath beat David? No—run in place. David beat Goliath!
3. Are there any mistakes in the Bible? No—run in place. It's a perfect book and a perfect guide through life.
4. Did God write the Bible? Yes—bark like a dog. He chose some men and helped them know what to write.
5. Is the Bible like a puzzle? Yes—bark like a dog. It was written over 1,500 years by 40 authors who didn't know each other, but it all goes together perfectly.
6. Do you want to learn more from the Bible? Yes—bark like a dog.

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

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

Review Questions

1. Today's Bible verse says, "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.
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 leader and guides us through life with his Word.
4. What is something you learned about sheep today? Sheep like calm waters. Sheep are helped by a shepherd's guidance.
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 relied on the Lord for victory.
7. What book is our trustworthy guide to lead us on the right path? Bible.
8. What's something we learned from our puppet, Paddy, that shows us the Bible is trustworthy? Unique, fulfilled prophecies, archaeological finds, etc.
9. What's an example of walking on the wrong path? Answers will vary.
10. Can you say you're personally on the right path? Encourage your students to silently think about the answer.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Primary 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 kids 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 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 then try the following challenge.

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. Then, if time, run like a border collie and say the verse.

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

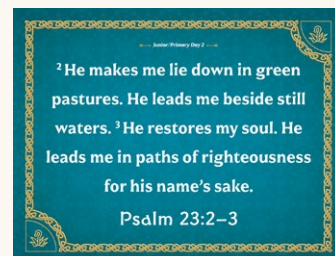
Try the challenge again, this time with tomorrow's verse.

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'm feeling anxious or afraid.

ANIMAL PAL

Shadow the Raven

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Black Valley in County Kerry
- Teach It!
Part 1: David and Saul
Part 2: Flock to the Rock Game
Part 3: Puppet Pal—Think on Such Things
Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Animal Pal Moves
~ 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, large box for a mountain, action figures
- Rod (can be a walking stick)
- Staff (can be a cane)

Introduce It!

Black Valley in County Kerry (5 minutes)

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

Teacher 1: Welcome back, lads and lasses. Let's see if we can remember some things about sheep we've learned. If you think it's true, stand up. If not, stay seated.

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

Teacher 2: Okay, let's find out some more about sheep. We'll tell you something, and then we'll all act it out. Ready? Here we go.

Teacher 1: *Sheep get scared.* They're timid and can get frightened easily. Maybe it's because they have fabulous hearing, which makes them jittery. If one sheep gets jittery and starts to run, they all panic and run. I'm going to start to run like a sheep, and you all follow me. *Do so, baaing as you go.*

Teacher 2: Sometimes a sheep gets scared because it's a cast sheep. This means it ends up on its back with its legs in the air, unable to get up. It may panic and start to paw, which can make it even worse. Sheep can sometimes die within hours if they're a cast sheep. Let's have someone act out being a cast sheep. You may want to have students (who aren't wearing dresses or other loose clothing) act this out.

Teacher 1: Sheep get scared and are comforted by their shepherd. But remember—we're like sheep too. We get scared too—don't we? What's something you think is scary? Take answers. See sidebar note.

Teacher 2: Put up the **FEARFUL/PEACEFUL CROSSING SIGNS**. We're going to talk about moving from being scared (fearful) to not being scared (peaceful). Peace comes from being part of God's family—his flock—and being led through his Word and prayer.

Teacher 1: We'll travel to a place today called the Black Valley. It's right here on our map. Show the black rocks near Kerry on the map and uncover the Day 3 Black Valley photo. Sometimes shepherds had to move their sheep through dangerous, scary valleys that were full of shadows. Those shadows could make the sheep balk (be afraid to move). We can think of this when we think of today's verse.

Teacher 2: 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. Reference the memory verse posters.

Teach It!

Part 1: David and Saul (10 minutes)

Prep: Use pieces of paper to cover the three sections of the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER** so you can take one off at a time. For the second picture on the poster (David escaping through a window), make a large "window frame" from foam board or cardboard, if using props.

Teacher 1: So, talking about fear . . . do you think you would be afraid if a bad guy was chasing you? That's what happened to David at one point in his life, so it makes sense that he wrote verse 4. He probably remembered that time.

Teacher 2: A bad guy named Saul started chasing David around, even though David had been nice to Saul. Right here in the Bible (point to your Bible opened to 1 Samuel 19:9-10), it tells of a time Saul tried to hurt David. Uncover picture 1 on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. Both David and Saul were sitting together in Saul's house, and David was peacefully playing an instrument called a lyre. Saul was holding a spear in his hand at the time.

Teacher 1: Let's pretend this pool noodle is Saul's spear. All of a sudden, Saul went kind of crazy and tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. I'm going to throw the spear at the wall. Pretend David is over there. Do you think the spear will hit David? Take answers, throw it at the wall, then continue. Or you may want one of the teachers to act like David and dodge the pool noodle. Alternately, one test church had kids act out this one and the others. David got away and escaped into the night. David hadn't done anything wrong, but Saul went after him.

Teacher 2: Another time David had to be let down from a window to escape Saul (1 Samuel 19:11–13). Uncover picture 2 on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. If using props, act out one teacher climbing through the "window" (foam board or cardboard window) to escape.

Teacher 1: And still another time, Saul chased David around a mountain. Uncover picture 3 on the **DAVID AND SAUL POSTER**. David was on one side and Saul was on the other, with the mountain and valley in between (1 Samuel 23:24–28). Saul was hurrying around the side of the mountain, trying to catch David while David and his army were running around the other side, trying to get away from Saul. You may want to show this with action figures, or the two teachers can quickly act this out themselves, using the large box as the mountain.

Teacher 2: Just as Saul and his army were closing in on David, a messenger came to Saul and told him he had to hurry back home to take care of an emergency. So Saul quit chasing David and went back home. Whew! David was safe!

Teacher 1: With all these chases, I can see why David wrote Psalm 23:4 about going through the valley of the shadow of death. Don't you think it would have been scary having a bad guy named Saul trying to hurt you? But David remembered to rely on God. He wrote, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you [God] are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Teacher 2: Do you know what a rod and staff are? Here's what a shepherd's rod looks like. Hold up a rod.

Teacher 1: Shepherds used their rods to protect the sheep from their enemies, like wolves or foxes. I need someone to come up and pretend to be a sheep. I'll be the shepherd holding my rod, and Teacher 2 will pretend to be the wolf who is trying to hurt the sheep. Teacher 1 uses the rod to stop the wolf by either carefully throwing it near the wolf or swatting it with the rod, causing the wolf to run off.

Teacher 2: Another use of the rod is to count the sheep to make sure they're all there. Let's count all of you. Gently tap each child on the arm with the rod while you count.

Teacher 1: Here's what a staff looks like. Hold up a staff. A shepherd would use a staff to guide a sheep that was getting off the right path. Show how a staff would be used to guide a sheep (Teacher 2) by gently placing it on someone's side as he moves along.

Teacher 2: And the hook part of the staff was used to bring back a sheep that was heading toward danger. Show how the hook part could be used to pull back a wandering sheep using Teacher 2 as the sheep.

Teacher 1: So the rod and staff were used to protect the sheep and help them not get lost and scared. Sheep felt comforted by the shepherd using them.

Teacher 2: Reference the **WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN? POSTER** throughout the next paragraphs. But why do bad things like this even happen to people like David and us? Does anybody have a guess why bad and sad things happen—like bad guys and sickness and wars and divorce? Take responses.

Teacher 1: The answer to this question started back in the garden of Eden, like we talked about the other day. God created a perfect world and lovingly warned Adam not to eat the fruit from one tree, but Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and something huge happened. The world became "broken" in a sense because of sin coming into the world. Remember, sin is disobeying God. Before this time, everything was perfect—no earthquakes, no wars, no diseases, no arguing, no fear, no hunger, no people who were homeless, no getting in trouble—just all good things. God is good and whatever he does is good, so his creation was very good.



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 because of the broken world we live in and not because of something sinful we directly did. Things like earthquakes, tornadoes, and sickness are all part of a broken world.

Teacher 2: Some bad and sad things happen because of others' sin. Some parents get divorced because they can't get along. The kids didn't cause it—but they are affected by it. Or maybe someone's dad has a boss who does something against the law so his company is shut down, causing this 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 was not trying to pick a fight with Saul or take over Saul's kingdom, he had to deal with bad stuff because of Saul. This probably caused David to be anxious and fearful.

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 something is making you scared or anxious? *Take responses.*

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

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

Prep: Print on white card stock the **FLOCK TO THE ROCK CARDS**, 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** and put them on a hard surface. Make baggies of mini marshmallows if using them. (See sidebar Teaching Tip.) 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 with them (except for the mini marshmallows, if using those. Put out new mini marshmallows before each rotation and check to make sure nobody is allergic to them.)

Pass out the supplies or have the kids get them out.

Teacher 2: Our game is called Flock to the Rock. We'll read a question. Hold up the black sheep card if you think it's true or the white sheep if you think it's false. If you get it right, you roll your die and X out that many circles on your game board (or place that many mini marshmallows on the circles). The player(s) who gets to the rock first wins. 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 at the test churches.

Share the true or false answer and the accompanying comments before moving to the next question. Have them X out or put on the mini marshmallows after they've listened to the answer and comments. Expect them to be quiet while you're commenting or they may have to go back a space or two.

Game Questions

1. True or false: Every person has times when they feel worried or 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 at times.
2. True or false: Sheep find comfort in the shepherd's presence. **True.** To find comfort, you need to belong to the Good Shepherd, Jesus. So first thing you need to ask yourself is: Is the Lord *my* shepherd? You're not going to experience his peace and comfort if you aren't part of God's family.
3. True or false: Jesus said he would take away all our problems. **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. Following the Good Shepherd doesn't mean we'll

- ★ **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
- Hard surface for each person (e.g., table, clipboard, magazine with a binder clip)
- ◆ 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

never have problems. It just means we'll have God with us (Isaiah 41:10). Remember how we said our world is now cursed and problems will happen? We need Jesus to help us through them!

4. Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:6 VERSE SHEET. Read Philippians 4:6 together. True or false: God says to be anxious about the big stuff in life. **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 worry. God is bigger than our problems. He is in control, has all power, knows everything, is everywhere all at once, is faithful, and is worthy of our trust.
5. Read Philippians 4:6 again. 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!
6. True or false: Prayer is talking to God. **True.** Talk to God about what's making you anxious. And talk to him about the fact that you are worried. 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 throw your worries on him because he cares for you.
7. True or false: Another thing this verse says 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's taking him by surprise. He's in control.
8. Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:7 VERSE SHEET. Read Philippians 4:7 together. True or false: A result 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, he 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. We should remember that God, the Good Shepherd, is with us through good times or hard times and that he's working all things out—good or bad—for his glory and our good.
9. Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET. Read Philippians 4:8 together, alerting the kids to count how many things God tells us to think about. True or false: This verse lists seven things to think about. **False.** It lists eight. Read them together. The Bible teaches us to renew our minds to overcome worry and fear. That means we need to fill our minds with good stuff, like this list. For instance, let's take the first one—true. What's something true about God we can think on? *Take examples.*
10. True or false: Thoughts about God are the greatest thoughts you can have. **True.** Fix your thoughts on God.
 - Think on God's character—what he's like.
 - Stop thinking about the stuff that makes you anxious and start thinking about God and good things, like things you're thankful for.
 - 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.
 - It also helps to think of someone else you can pray for or help.
 - Think about how you could change behavior patterns—are there TV shows you shouldn't be watching? Are there movies that fill your mind with fear? Are there books that give you anxiety? Games that make you fearful?
 - If you're having trouble with being worried or scared, or if someone is treating you badly, talk to a trusted grown-up.

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

Part 3: Puppet Pal—Think on Such Things (5 minutes)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference.

Teacher: Kids, let's talk a little more about this with Paddy. Help me call for him. **Do so.**

Puppet: Yell, "Eeek!" and come up shaking and hopping around.

- ★ Philippians 4:8 Verse Sheet
- ★ Day 3 Puppet Script (2 copies)
- Boy or girl puppet
- Clipboard

Teacher: What happened?!

Puppet: A huge spider just ran up my leg!

Teacher: Yikes! That's scary.

Puppet: Yeah, it is. But that's nothing compared to some of the other things I'm scared of.

Teacher: Like what?

Puppet: Oh, I get scared and worry about the dark and bad guys and monsters under the bed and being separated from my parents and bad storms and having to get up on stage all by myself. You know, stuff like that.

Teacher: I understand that. We all feel scared sometimes, just like David did when Saul was chasing him. But did you know God talks to us in the Bible about what to do when we're scared?

Puppet: Really?

Teacher: Yep! The kids and I were just talking about what Philippians 4:6–8 tells us to do when we feel scared or worried.

Puppet: What's it say?

Teacher: Instead of being anxious, talk to God and thank him for his goodness. Then tell him what you're scared about.

Puppet: So I shouldn't focus on worrying, but instead, I should pray to God?

Teacher: Right! Don't worry . . . just pray.

Puppet: What else does the Bible say?

Teacher: God will help us go from being fearful to peaceful. He can help us have peace when we trust in him.

Puppet: I need to talk to God more and let him know what worries me.

Teacher: Yes, talk to God first. And we also need to think about God more.

Puppet: How does that help?

Teacher: Show the [PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET](#). The Bible says to think about things that are true and lovely and good. Instead of thinking over and over about scary stuff, think about how good and kind and loving God is.

Puppet: So I shouldn't be thinking about monsters under my bed when I'm in the dark?

Teacher: When scary thoughts pop into your head, start thinking about how great God is and about all the things you can thank him (praise him) for.

Puppet: Can you give me an example?

Teacher: Let's say you get in bed and it's dark and you start to get scared.

Puppet: *Shudder*. Ooo . . . creepy.

Teacher: So start talking to God! Tell him some good things you're thankful for, like the yummy food you ate today and the hugs you got and the fun you had and anything else good you can think of. You could even quote Psalm 23!

Puppet: Today I had pizza—yum!—*and* I had fun running around in the yard with my dog.

Teacher: Terrific! Think about those good things and thank God for them! And think about the Good Shepherd himself. He's right there with you in that dark bedroom. In fact, he's always with you, wherever you are.

Puppet: That's comforting. I'm not ever really by myself.

Teacher: God's always with you. So remember—don't worry . . . just pray. And think on good things *and* on the Good Shepherd. And one other thing: It helps to think of others, too, and how we can help them and pray for them.

Puppet: I will. I'm going to go think of lots of good things I can thank God for today.

Teacher: That's fantastic! And if you get anxious tomorrow, think about God and good things again. And do it again the next day . . . and the next . . . and the next. Always go to God for help. Well, we'll see you tomorrow. Let's say bye to Paddy, everyone. *Do so.*

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

Share the **DAY 3 ANIMAL PAL POSTER** to summarize the teaching of the day.

Today's animal pal is a raven.

- What color is he and what place in Ireland does that color remind you of? *Take responses—black; the Black Valley.*
- His name is Shadow. Why do you think he's named Shadow? *Take responses. The verse mentions walking through the valley of the shadow of death. That can mean more than just death. It can mean any hard times.*
- When you're going through tough times, what are some things we talked about that can help us cross from being fearful to peaceful? *Take responses.*

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

Option 1: Animal Pal Moves

Directions: Have the kids flap their wings like a raven if the answer is yes and caw if it is no.

Review Questions

1. Do sheep get scared easily? *Yes—flap your wings.*
2. Do people get scared sometimes too? *Yes—flap your wings.*
3. Should we keep thinking and thinking about something that scares us? *No—caw.*
4. Should we forget about God when we're afraid? *No—caw.*
5. Should we pray to God when we're afraid? *Yes—flap your wings.*
6. Should we thank God and think about his goodness? *Yes—flap your wings.*

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

See Day 1 for directions.

Review Questions

1. Today's Bible verse says, "Even though I ____." 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.
2. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? *Raven. What is its name and what does it have to do with our lesson? Shadow—when we go through hard times, God is with us.*
3. What is something you learned about sheep today? *Sheep get scared.*
4. Who was chasing David, trying to kill him? *King Saul.*
5. There are many things we can worry about. What's one? *Dark, storms, spiders, etc.*
6. What's something Philippians 4:6–8 tells us to do to fight fear and worry? *Pray, think on good things, etc.*
7. What's an example of a way we can *stop* thinking about what scares us and *start* thinking about God?
8. What is one of the eight things God tells us to think on? *True, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence, and things worthy of praise.*
9. Who is someone you can pray for? *Answers will vary.*
10. How many times can we ask God for help when we're scared? *Lots! Every time you get anxious, turn to God for help.*

◆ Day 3 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: No supplies
- 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 Primary 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 kids 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: 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 then try the following challenge.

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. If time, flap your wings like a raven while saying the verse.

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

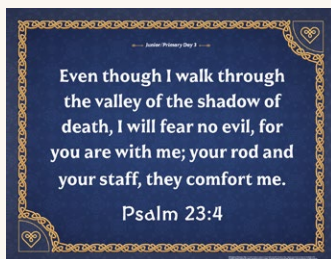
1. Make a picture of Psalm 23:4 and tell someone how the shepherd's rod and staff are a picture of how God cares for and protects us.
2. Pray and ask God to help you focus on him and others, including who God is and things you are thankful for, when you start to feel worried about something. Study the 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 even if surrounded by enemies.

ANIMAL PAL

Pesky the Woolly Aphid

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Enemy Territory in Dublin
- Teach It!
Part 1: Prepare a Table
~ Option 1: With Play Dough
~ Option 2: With Pipe Cleaners
Part 2: Good God Riddles
Part 3: Puppet Pal—God's Goodness
Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Animal Pal Moves
~ 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.

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 town called Dublin.

Teacher 2: On the map, show the city of Dublin with the Viking ship in the water and uncover the Day 4 Enemy Territory photo. Have you ever heard of the Vikings? They were one of Ireland's first enemies, landing in this city of Dublin. Show the VIKING PICTURES. The Vikings were cruel people who attacked the Irish people and took over. You 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 sometimes stray, or get _____. Pause for responses. Right—lost. And it's helpful for a leader to guide them. And they like still, calm _____. Pause for responses. Correct—water. And they get easily scared? 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 as you mention them. Some animals have claws or fangs, others have poison or bad odors, and others can count on camouflage or moving fast. But sheep don't really have much of a way to defend themselves. They aren't fast. They can't outrun their predators. They aren't poisonous 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 SIGNS at the top of the bridge. Let's hear more!

Teach It!

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

Choose one of the following options to teach this portion on David as king.

Option 1: With Play Dough

Prep: Cover the three sections of the DAVID AS KING POSTER so they can be removed as noted below. Buy or make the play dough (see recipe on the next page) and form it into balls about the size of ping-pong balls. Make a third brown, a third yellow, and a third red. Store in airtight containers. Laminate a KING'S TABLE PATTERN for each person if possible.

Teacher 2: By the time David wrote Psalm 23, he was a king. Let's pretend to put on a king's crown. Do so.

Teacher 1: Kings had big fancy tables full of food, didn't they? So when David wrote this, he may have been thinking how good God was to him and about the big tables of food he had and how he could invite people to eat with him.

Teacher 2: Let's pretend we're sitting around a king's table with lots of fancy food. We're going to pass out supplies as we sit at our table. If possible, sit around a table for this. Pass out the KING'S TABLE PATTERN. Otherwise, give each child a hard surface, such as a

- ◆ 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



- ◆ David as King Poster
- ★ King's Table Pattern, 1 per person, laminated if possible
- Blank paper to cover David as King Poster
- 3 balls of play dough per person, 1 brown, 1 yellow, 1 red (stored in airtight containers)
- Wipes to wipe hands after using play dough
- Hard surface (e.g., table, clipboard, or magazine with a binder clip per person)

PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

- 2 c. flour
- ½ c. salt
- 2 c. warm water
- 4 tsp. cream of tartar
- 2 tbsp. oil
- Brown, yellow, and red food coloring

Combine the first five ingredients in a saucepan. Stir over low to medium heat until the dough is formed and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan and knead until smooth, kneading in the food coloring by dividing the dough into thirds and making ⅓ brown, ⅓ yellow, and ⅓ red. After it has cooled, store in an airtight container.



◆ David as King Poster

★ Philippians 4:8 Verse Sheet

- Blank paper to cover David as King Poster
- Corrugated cardboard pieces, one 9 x 3-in. piece per person
- Scoring tool for corrugated cardboard
- Pipe cleaners (any colors), 6 per person, cut in half and in baggies, 1 baggie per person
- Hard surface per person

clipboard with the pattern on it. Pass out the first of the three colors of play dough balls. The first one is brown for bread. When noted, pass out the second one (yellow for oil) and the third one (red for the overflowing cup). Passing supplies out goes faster if everything is organized ahead of time and ready to go.

Teacher 1: Okay, let's look at our "tables." What does that look like right here? Point to the picture of the bread. Right, bread. Using your brown play dough, make a loaf of bread and put it on the drawing of the bread while we talk.

Teacher 2: Psalm 23 says, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." David had a king's table of food, and he even shared it with his enemy's grandson. Uncover the first section of the **DAVID AS KING POSTER**. Remember how Saul chased David around? Well, after Saul died, David became king. Later, David invited Saul's grandson to come and eat with him at the overflowing table. Read 2 Samuel 9:3–7. Even though Saul had been his enemy, David showed kindness. This reminds us that God shows kindness to us, and we, in turn, should show kindness to others.

Teacher 1: Now, what do you think that next thing is on your table? Point to the oil flask and take responses. It's a container of oil. Pass out the second ball of play dough (yellow) and have the kids make the oil in the container while you continue.

Teacher 2: Uncover the second section of the **DAVID AS KING POSTER**. Back when David lived, it was the custom to anoint, or pour oil, on the head of the man who would become the next king. David was anointed this way before he became king. Read 1 Samuel 16:11–13.

Teacher 1: But shepherds also used oil to help their sheep. Remember the nose bot fly? These flies got up in a sheep's nose and drove the sheep crazy. So a shepherd would take oil mixed with other things and rub it all over the sheep's head and even put it up the sheep's nose so the flies wouldn't bother the sheep. Isn't that a great picture of the shepherd's kindness and goodness?

Teacher 2: God is our Good Shepherd, so when our verse says he anoints our head with oil, it pictures him being kind and good to us. So . . . the table prepared for us shows his goodness, and so does the oil.

Teacher 1: Okay, what's the last thing on your table? Yes, it's a cup. Pass out the third ball of play dough. Make it look like the cup is overflowing (spilling over the sides) while we talk. Psalm 23 says, "My cup overflows."

Teacher 2: Uncover the third section of the **DAVID AS KING POSTER**. Sometimes, a shepherd would fill a large bucket from a well to overflowing so the sheep would have plenty of water to drink. This is a picture of our Good Shepherd caring for us not just a little but a lot—to overflowing! And David would've remembered that as a king, he sat at a table overflowing with good things. He was so grateful to God.

Teacher 1: Did you know every good thing you have is from God? Here's a question: Did you sleep in a bed last night? Pause. Beds and food and a place to live are good gifts from God. Did anyone smile at you or laugh with you this week? Pause. Those good gifts are from God. Do you have clothes on? Pause. Having clothes to cover you is also a good gift. Can you think of somebody who loves you? Take responses. Did you know love is from God? We wouldn't have love from *people* if God himself wasn't love. And the best good gift of all is Jesus coming and being our Savior so we can be part of his family. All of these show God's goodness to overflowing. Continue with Part 2: Good God Riddles.

Option 2: With Pipe Cleaners

Prep: Cut the pipe cleaners in half and bag up 12 half pieces per person in random colors. Cut corrugated cardboard into 9 x 3-inch pieces and score them at the 1½-inch mark on both the left and right sides. Do not bend these down. The students will do this when directed and use it as their "table." Alternately, the kids could sit around a table during the lesson.

Pass out a scored corrugated cardboard piece and a baggie of pipe cleaners to each person or place them 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: The verse starts by saying God is preparing what? *Pause for responses.* Right, a table. Who was there at the table? *Pause for responses.* Yes, David's enemies. 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 to make the table legs. *Demonstrate.*

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 would have animal enemies, like coyotes and foxes, but their shepherd would prepare a good table (their pastures) by checking the area to make sure no enemies were there and by making sure it was a good place to feed.

Teacher 2: David had enemies too, but he also enjoyed 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 had chased David around and tried to kill him for 10 years. After Saul died, David became king. Later, David showed great kindness to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth, by inviting him to sit at his overflowing table. *Read 2 Samuel 9:3–7 and uncover the first section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER.* David showed kindness to this man even though his grandfather, Saul, had been David's enemy and had tried to kill him. This is a good reminder for 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 gives him. He can only do so much. But God has *all* power. And God, the Good Shepherd, is looking out for each of his sheep. He's our protector and provider. If we belong to him, we don't have to worry. We can sit at the table in peace, knowing that God is caring for us.

Teacher 1: *Recite the next section 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 David in 1 Samuel. *Read 1 Samuel 16:11–13 and uncover the second section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER.* So when David wrote these words, he was probably remembering when his head was anointed with oil before he became a king.

Teacher 1: Shepherds also anointed the sheep's heads with oil to keep the bugs from bothering them. A shepherd would take a sheep in his arms and put oil mixed with other things all over its head—even inside its nose. This protected the sheep from flies and other bug enemies. It's a reminder that God is protecting us and caring for us.

Teacher 2: *Recite the last line of Psalm 23:5 then say:* Shepherds would sometimes fill a bucket with water from a well to overflowing for their thirsty sheep. As David wrote this, he probably remembered doing this as a shepherd. *Uncover the third section of the DAVID AS KING POSTER to show the overflowing cup picture.* David would've also remembered how, as a king, he sat at a table overflowing with good things. He was so grateful (thankful) to God.

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 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 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, so good and so, so kind to us. Let's stop for a minute and share some good things in our lives, remembering they're all from God. *Do so.*

Teacher 1: Keep in mind that God can only do *good* things. In the beginning, God created a good world because he is good and whatever he does is good. But our sin messed up his original good world. Yet God keeps showing us his goodness even in this sinful world. So as we think on all the blessings of God, we should be thankful, grateful people.

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



✦ 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

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 saying: "God is good all the time. All the time, God is good." Do so. Remind them that the greatest good thing God gives us is the gift of being part of his flock.

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 don't get new 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 the most important things—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 to focus on. Show the PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET. Read Philippians 4:8 and briefly review/discuss it.

Teacher 1: Now let's show our overflowing tables we've made. Do so.

Teacher 2: Make your way behind the puppet stage while Teacher 1 continues with the next section.

Part 2: Good God Riddles (5 minutes)

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

Teacher 1: Let's practice thinking on good things about God. Here are just a few in the endless list of ideas. I'll show you a clue, and you have to guess what it has to do with God.

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 3: Puppet Pal—God's Goodness (5 minutes)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference. Tape the cup to the puppet's hand.

Teacher: Boys and girls, help me call for Paddy. Do so.

Puppet: Come up with an empty cup that supposedly had popcorn in it. Be mumbling and grumbling about it all falling out.

Teacher: Whoa! Whoa! What's going on here? What are you grumbling about?

Puppet: Well, I wanted some popcorn. I wanted *a lot* of popcorn. So I filled my cup to overflowing.

Teacher: How high was it? Like this? *Puppet indicates even more.* This? *Keep getting higher.* Well, that sure was overflowing! But you know, that reminds me of Psalm 23.

Puppet: Say *incredulously*. Psalm 23 talks about *popcorn*?

Teacher: No, it talks about our cup overflowing.

Puppet: Why would it say that?

Teacher: Because it's showing that God not only provides good things for us, but he gives us an *overflowing* amount of goodness.

◆ Good God Riddles Poster

- Bag (not see-through)
- Optional: Blank paper to cover bottom words on each picture of poster
- 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 wear for the fifth clue. The kids loved it.

◆ "Good Luck" or Good God? Poster

★ Day 4 Puppet Script

- (2 copies)
- Boy or girl puppet
- Clipboard
- Small empty cup and tape

Puppet: But don't people go through hard times sometimes? It doesn't feel good then.

Teacher: This verse doesn't mean we never have a hard time. In fact, if we live on this planet, we *will* have hard times once in a while.

Puppet: Then how does that work?

Teacher: Well, even when we go through hard times or have enemies or hard people in our life, God is still God, and God is still good. As long as we're his children, we have *God*. That's the best *good thing* we can ever have!

Puppet: You mean it's like that prayer that says: God is great, God is good, Let us thank him for our food?

Teacher: Yes. *God is great*, and *God is good*. And *God is kind*. And *God is gentle*. And *God is caring*. And . . .

Puppet: You could probably go on forever with those.

Teacher: I could because God is everything good. And he shares his goodness with us. Sometimes it's in wonderful things he gives us, like food and a bed and a pet. And besides those good things, anyone who's part of God's family has the Lord himself for his very own.

Puppet: Being a child of God seems like the best gift God gives us.

Teacher: It is! [Review the gospel here if time.](#)

Puppet: But what about this question: Is it always God who gives us good things, or is it sometimes because of "good luck"?

Teacher: It's always God. There's no such thing as "good luck"!

Puppet: But what about pots of gold at the end of rainbows? And lucky horseshoes? And wishing wells?

Teacher: There are lots of things people do to try to get "good luck." Show the "GOOD LUCK" OR GOOD GOD? POSTER and mention all or some of the following. People may kiss the Blarney Stone in Ireland or try to find a four-leaf clover or a penny facing up in hopes of having "good luck." They may hang up a horseshoe to keep from having "bad luck." They may throw a penny in a wishing well, thinking the spirits in the well will grant them the wish. They may look for pretend creatures like leprechauns and fairies to bring them both "good" and "bad luck." Two people may each grab a side of a wishbone and pull. Whoever gets the bigger side is supposed to get their wish granted. We can enjoy these and have fun with them, but we have to remember something important: They're *just pretend*! If we find a four-leaf clover or make a wish when we throw a penny in the wishing well—we're *not going to get "good luck."* God is in control of everything, and *he* is the giver of all good things.

Puppet: Are you sure that none of these bring "good luck"?

Teacher: I'm sure they don't! We already talked about who gives all good things, and it's who, kids? *Pause.* Right, God! God is not a magical, make-believe character. He's a real being who really exists. Remember: God is in control of everything. Nothing happens by chance, or luck. So remember the next time you're tempted to say "good luck!" to someone, there's no such thing. We should instead thank our good Creator, God, for all good things.

Puppet: Good to know! Good to know! But even with all those good gifts God gives us, it's still so easy to grumble about stuff, like when my popcorn spilled.

Teacher: You can either be on the complain train or have an attitude of gratitude (thankfulness). It's all in what you think about. God tells us to think about whatever is lovely and good and beautiful and true, not about stuff that's frustrating or annoying.

Puppet: It sure is easy to think about what bugs me, though.

Teacher: It is. But try to start thinking about the good things of *God* rather than the frustrating things of *life*.

Puppet: Gotcha! I will start thinking more about God.

✦ Gospel Opportunity



◆ Day 4 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: No supplies
- Option 2: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die



Teacher: Well, it's time to move on, so maybe you can go make yourself some more popcorn.

Puppet: I think I'll do that. And I'll thank God for it too.

Teacher: Sounds good, Paddy. See you tomorrow. Let's say bye, everyone. Do so.

◆ **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 bug us and can be like annoying enemies, but even when we've got hard things going on, we can have an attitude of gratitude for God's goodness.
- What's one way we can cross from grumbling to grateful? Take responses.

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

Option 1: Animal Pal Moves

Directions: Have the kids fly around like a woolly aphid if the answer is yes and buzz if it is no.

Review Questions

1. Did David have lots of food on his king's table? Yes—fly around.
2. Did David invite his enemy's grandson, Mephibosheth, to join him? Yes—fly around.
3. Do sheep like flies going up their noses? No—buzz.
4. Did shepherds anoint sheep's heads with oil, meaning put oil on their heads? Yes—fly around.
5. Is God so good it's like our cup is overflowing with goodness? Yes—fly around.
6. Should we whine and complain? No—buzz. Complaining is like telling God you don't like who he is and you're not content with what he's given you.
7. Should we be grateful instead of grumbling and complaining? Yes—fly around.
8. Is there such a thing as "good luck"? No—buzz.

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

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.
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 the lesson? Pesky—when we are bothered by circumstances, we can remember God and his goodness to us and be grateful rather than complaining.
4. What is something you learned about sheep today? Sheep are not good at protecting themselves.
5. Did David show kindness to his enemy's grandson? Yes. How? He invited King Saul's grandson to eat at his table.
6. Before David became king, what part of his body was anointed with oil? Head.
7. What word in Psalm 23:5 describes the cup of God's goodness? Overflows.
8. What's something that's considered "lucky"? Pot of gold, wishbones, kissing the Blarney Stone, finding a four-leaf clover, finding a penny facing up, etc.

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? Answers will vary.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Primary 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 then try the following challenge.

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. If time, try saying them again while flying around like a woolly aphid.

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, 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!

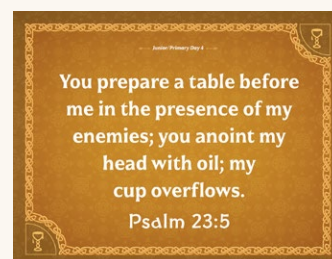
Ask yourself this question: What does God tell me to think about in Philippians 4:8?

- ◆ 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 companions 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: Puppet Pal—Promise Keeper
Part 4: 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 (7 minutes)

- ◆ 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



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

Teacher 1: Well, here we are, lads and lasses, at our last spot in the Emerald Isle! It's been quite a grand week, hasn't it? We need to end on a high note, so let's get up and climb to higher lands in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Do so, then have them sit down. Show the higher lands on the MAP OF IRELAND 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. This 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 shepherd, and they benefit from lots of guidance. Sheep can get sc___ (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.

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

◆ 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 that you may want to use here.

motions, and then we'll try verse 6. Refer to the memory verse posters. The last part of Psalm 23 has to do with us going to heaven, or the house of the Lord. The higher lands will remind us of heaven today.

Teacher 2: Do you see the word *shall* in verse 6? How many times? Pause for responses. Right, two. It doesn't say goodness and mercy *might* follow us. It says they *shall* follow us. It doesn't say *maybe* we'll dwell in the house of the Lord. It says we *shall*. We're not on a shaky foundation. It's a sure thing for any child of God. Put up the SHAKY/SURE CROSSING SIGNS. Let's hear more!

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 2: 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, called 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 it because of all the wars he had been in. Instead, his son Solomon would build it.

Teacher 1: 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 did get it ready. He gathered the supplies that were needed.

Teacher 2: When you hear or say Psalm 23:6, think about David's experience—how much he wanted to build a house for the Lord. He was that sure of his relationship with God.

Part 2: Emerald Crossing Review Game (15 minutes)

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

Directions: Divide into pairs, each with a map/game board and two different game pieces. Determine who goes first. Read the first question. The first person quietly tells their partner what he thinks the answer is. The teacher shares the answer and accompanying comments, then rolls the die (the teacher rolls it up front and calls out what it is), and Player 1 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, keeping up a quick pace. Try to get through at least the first 10. Whoever is farthest at the end of the time wins. If using KJV, adapt the questions as needed.

1. Verse 6 has the words *surely* and *shall*. Does the word *surely* mean something that is shaky 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 it says shall follow me all the days of my life? *Surely* ____. *Goodness and mercy*. We've talked about God's goodness. His mercy means loving-kindness; his undeserved kindness. God is being kind and not giving us what we deserve. For instance, we don't really deserve to go to heaven because we're sinful and disobey God. But God shows us mercy and lets us go if we truly admit, believe, and forever receive him. Review the gospel here if time.
3. True or false: The Bible tells us that for those who are part of God's family, his mercies are new every morning. *True*. Show the LAMENTATIONS 3:22–23 VERSE SHEET. Read Lamentations 3:22–23 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.

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

◆ David Gets Supplies Poster

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



◆ Rainbows Poster

★ Lamentations 3:22–23 Verse Sheet

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

◆ 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 the game board.

◆ Gospel Opportunity

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

✦ Gospel Opportunity



4. What word comes after mercy? *Shall*. It's not "might" or "maybe." It's shall. David was sure of this. "*Surely* goodness and mercy *shall* follow me all the days of my life." 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*. Again, there's a certainty there. Are you sure you are God's child? Is he your shepherd? That's how you can know you will dwell, or live, in the house of the Lord forever. If you have questions or doubts about it, please talk to someone.
7. What does the house of the Lord mean? *Heaven*. We're using the higher lands of Ireland to remind us of heaven.
8. 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.
9. What promise did God make to Noah that had a rainbow involved? *He would never flood the whole world again*. God has kept that promise. He has never flooded the whole world again. There have been floods here or there since then but not covering the entire world (Genesis 6-9). God is a promise keeper!
10. Yes or No: People associate rainbows with Ireland. *Yes*. [Show RAINBOWS POSTER](#). (Note: A bit of this is shared again in the puppet script, so share as much or as little of this paragraph as you want at this time.) 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 shown in photos or drawings, are true rainbows. On the other hand, rainbows are *not* magical things pointing to pots of gold, and they're *not* symbols of "good luck." They're also *not* symbols of rebelling against God. Some people use flags or signs showing rainbows to 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.
11. What is something we can think about to help us not be anxious? *Answers will vary*. [Remind them of the principles found in Philippians 4:6-8](#).
12. Do good things come about 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.
13. What's a good quality of God we can think about? *Answers will vary but 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, and worthy of praise—to name a few.
14. 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.

Part 3: Puppet Pal—Promise Keeper (5 minutes)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference. Tape a block to the puppet's hand.

Teacher: Have everyone help you call for Paddy.

Puppet: Come up with a block taped to your hand.

Teacher: Looks like you've got a building block there.

Puppet: Yeah, I was just gathering my blocks to see if I had enough to build a house.

Teacher: That sounds like King David.

Puppet: You mean the guy who wrote Psalm 23?

Teacher: Yep, the same one.

- ◆ David Gets Supplies Poster
- ◆ Rainbows Poster
- ★ Day 5 Puppet Script (2 copies)
- ☐ Boy or girl puppet
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Building block and tape

Puppet: Did he want to build a house out of blocks?

Teacher: Actually, he wanted to build a real house—a house for the Lord. It was going to be a really special place for God and his people.

Puppet: Like a church?

Teacher: Kind of. It was called a temple. *Show the DAVID GETS SUPPLIES POSTER.* David wanted to build this special place for God, but God let him just gather all the supplies. His son Solomon would actually build it.

Puppet: Is that what happened?

Teacher: Yep! David got everything ready, and Solomon built God’s house. So when David was writing Psalm 23:6, he was probably thinking about that.

Puppet: After the goodness and mercy part, it does say, “I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Teacher: Right! After Solomon built it, there was a house of the Lord here on earth, the temple. But something that’s cool is . . . there’s even *another* house of the Lord.

Puppet: Where is it?

Teacher: It’s in heaven. When the psalm talks about dwelling in the house of the Lord forever, it means I’ll live in heaven with God forever—if I’m in God’s family.

Puppet: Wow! Is that for sure?

Teacher: It’s for sure. God said it, so that settles it because God is a promise keeper. He even put a big rainbow in the sky to remind us that he keeps his promises!

Puppet: When was that?

Teacher: Do you remember hearing about Noah building a big ship called an ark?

Puppet: Yes! Then God sent a huge flood all over the earth.

Teacher: Correct. Well, after the flood, God promised Noah he would never send another global flood again.

Puppet: Did he keep that promise?

Teacher: Yes. God keeps every promise. He never sent another global flood that covered the whole world. The rainbow reminds us of that.

Puppet: Rainbows also remind us that there are pots of gold at the end of them.

Teacher: Hold on a second. Where’d you get that idea?

Puppet: I see pictures of rainbows with pots of gold all the time.

Teacher: *Show the RAINBOWS POSTER.* There are real rainbows in the sky, but sometimes people use rainbows in ways that have nothing to do with God. Rainbows with pots of gold aren’t for real.

Puppet: They aren’t?

Teacher: Nope, the pictures you see of rainbows with pots of gold are just pretend, even if they’re fun to look at. But what’s more, sometimes people use rainbows in ways that are against God’s design for rainbows.

Puppet: Well, I’m glad the ones in the sky are God’s! They’re so beautiful!

Teacher: They sure are. When you see a rainbow in the sky, let it remind you that God is a promise keeper, and you really *will* live with him someday if you are his child!

Puppet: Admit, believe, forever receive. That’s how we’re part of the Good Shepherd’s flock, God’s family. Well, I need to be off, so thanks for all the great talks. It’s been an amazing week at *Emerald Crossing!*

Teacher: It sure has. Take care. Let’s wave goodbye to Paddy, everyone. *Do so.*



◆ Day 5 Animal Pal Poster

- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person



Part 4: 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? Heaven.
- Our Highland cow is named Shirley. What does her name have to do with Psalm 23:6? God promises us that *surely* goodness and mercy will follow us, and *surely* we shall live 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.

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!

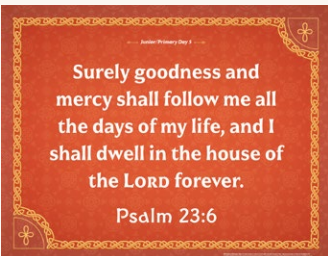
In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the Primary Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and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

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

◆ 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



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 then try the following challenge.

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. Try the whole psalm all together.

Remind the kids that they should 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, they are 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. Use your craft from today or make your own.
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 he is my shepherd and that I shall live with him forever?

Leading a Child to Christ

AnswersVBS presents many opportunities to share the gospel, and every teacher should be ready to explain how to be saved, whether it's one-on-one or with a small group. Use the following steps as a guide to explain salvation, ask questions, read Scripture, and pray with and for students.

Pray. Salvation is God's work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone, but we can ask God to prepare a child's heart to receive the truth.

Explain. Prepare a clear presentation of the gospel. Avoid abstract phrases like "asking Jesus into your heart" and instead use clear biblical language, such as "becoming a child of God." You may want to use the following three key words to share how to receive eternal life:

- » **Admit** you have sinned (disobeyed God's commands). Ask God to forgive you of your sins. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23).
- » **Believe** Jesus, God's Son, died in your place and rose again, paying the penalty for your sins (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10).
- » **Receive** the gift of eternal life by telling God you want to be his child (John 1:12).

Ask. To encourage discussion and to gauge understanding, ask open-ended questions, such as the following:

- » What is sin?
- » Can you think of specific sins you have done?
- » Are you bothered by your sin?
- » Who is Jesus?
- » Why did Jesus have to die?
- » Why did Jesus rise from the dead?
- » When you receive the gift of eternal life, is there anything else you have to do? Emphasize that salvation is not based on what we do but is a gift from God through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Respond. When children demonstrate a basic understanding of salvation, encourage them to talk with their parents about what it means to become a child of God (if parents are believers). If they come from a non-Christian home, encourage them to express belief in Jesus through prayer, confessing sin and asking Jesus to save them.

Some children may not be ready to make a decision. For children who have previously made a decision, they may need reassurance or want to confess sin.

- » Read Romans 10:9-10 and John 10:28-29 with those who need assurance, encouraging them to trust in God's promises.
- » For those wanting to confess sin, read 1 John 1:9 and remind them that God forgives when they repent (turn from sin).

Celebrate. Rejoice together! Read Luke 15:10.

Grow. Explain that children of God receive the Holy Spirit, who helps them understand and obey the Bible. Share practical ways for them to grow in faith and follow Jesus:

- » Read the Bible and obey what it says. (Provide a Bible.)
- » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
- » Attend a church that teaches that the Bible is God's true Word.
- » Tell others about Jesus.

As you faithfully teach and guide children in the gospel, trust God to work in their hearts. Continue to pray for them and encourage them as they grow in their understanding of what it means to follow Christ.



Supply List

Every Day

- Map of Ireland Poster
- Memory Verse Posters
- Animal Pal Posters
- Psalm 23 Hand Motions
- Puppet Scripts, 2 copies daily
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape for posters
- Optional: Large easel for map
- Blank paper to cover map
- Player for verse hand motions
- Boy or girl puppet and puppet stage
- Clipboard
- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1 Review Game: No supplies
- Option 2 Review Game: Game pieces, 1 per person, and 1 die
- Optional: Memory verse music and device to play it on

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
- White card stock, 1 sheet per person
- Hard surface per person—table, clipboard, magazine with a binder clip
- Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
- Markers, several colors or 1 pack of various colors per person
- Optional: Clock parts

Day 2

- David and Goliath Poster

- Option 2 only: David and Goliath Motions Poster
- Bible Boxes Poster
- Wrong Path/Right Path Crossing Signs
- Irish jig music and device for audio or video
- Options 1 and 2: Measuring tape
- Optional for Option 1 only: Simple armor/toy swords/pool noodles

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, a large box for a mountain, action figures
- Rod (can be a walking stick)
- Staff (can be a cane)
- White card stock
- Dice, 1 per person or every 2 people
- Writing utensils OR baggies of 30 mini marshmallows, 1 baggie per person
- Hard surface for each person

Day 4

- David as King Poster
- Good God Riddles Poster
- "Good Luck" or Good God? Poster
- Grumbling/Grateful Crossing Signs
- Viking Pictures
- Animal Enemies Pictures
- King's Table Pattern, 1 per person, laminated if possible
- Philipians 4:8 Verse Sheet

- Blank paper to cover David as King Poster
- Hard surface per person for both options
- Option 1: 3 balls of play dough per person, 1 brown, 1 yellow, and 1 red (in airtight containers)
- Option 1: Wipes to wipe hands after using play dough
- Option 2: Corrugated cardboard pieces, one 9 x 3-inch piece per person, and one scoring tool for corrugated cardboard
- Option 2: Pipe cleaners (any colors), 6 per person, cut in half and in baggies, 1 baggie 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 animal owl, 12-inch ruler
- Small empty cup and tape

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 a multitude of stacking cups, pool noodles, boxes, play cardboard bricks, and other large, safe building supplies
- Timer (cell phone works)
- Game pieces, 1 per person
- 1 die for the teacher (may want a large one)
- Building block and tape

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

