


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

The Good Shepherd

David the shepherd king, from Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 7; paraphrase of Psalm 23

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

Copyright © 2011 by Sally Lloyd-Jones (text) and Jago (illustrations). All rights reserved. The original purchaser of this product shall have the right to make unlimited paper copies to facilitate the use of this curriculum by the original purchaser, provided such copies are not resold or distributed to the general public. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other — except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” were written and developed from material by Timothy Keller and Redeemer Presbyterian Church and are used by special permission.

Some of the activity ideas in the curriculum were contributed by Juliet Lloyd-Jones and are used by special permission.

All Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, *New International Version*®, *NIV*®.
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main points of the previous stories: “We have been learning about King David. David had a heart like God’s heart. God sent David to rescue his people from the giant Goliath. And we learned that David knew that it is not strength that saves you, but it is God that saves you. We also memorized some words that David wrote.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Psalm 16:8 — ‘I keep my eyes always on the LORD. I will not be shaken.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “The verse we just recited comes from the book of Psalms in the Bible. Who knows what a psalm is? Yes, it is a song or a prayer to God. David wrote many psalms. So David is a songwriter and he is a king and he can fight giants. David is also a shepherd, someone who takes care of sheep.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and learn about sheep.

Materials: None.

1. Say: “Jump up if you have ever seen a real sheep. Thank you, sit down. Do you know about sheep? Do you know that of all farm animals, sheep need the most care. Sheep must have a shepherd and must be told what to do and where to go; otherwise they wander off and get lost. Also sheep are helpless. They cannot fight — they can only run — so they are easily caught by their enemies. Wolves are their enemies.”

2. Announce that you are going to play a game. Explain that you are a shepherd and ask for a volunteer (or two, depending on the size of your group) to be the wolf. Say: “All the rest of you are sheep.”

3. Ask the sheep to line up against the wall at one end of the room. Ask the wolf to stand in the center of the room. You need to stand on the opposite side of the room from the sheep.

4. Explain the game: As the shepherd you will call out, “Sheep, sheep come home!” The sheep must crawl across the room, trying to get past the wolf to get home. The wolf will try to tag as many sheep as possible as they crawl past. Remind the wolf to tag and not tackle the sheep. Say: “If the wolf catches you, you are out and have to sit down. Ready?”

5. Call out, “Sheep, sheep come home!” and allow the sheep to crawl to your side of the room. Ask the ones who get caught by the wolf to sit down by the wall. Move to the other side of the room and repeat. Allow the children who are sitting down to call out, “Sheep, sheep come home!” with you.

6. Repeat until all the sheep are caught.

7. If you have time, you may like to play again, allowing a child to be shepherd and with a different wolf.

8. At the end of the activity, ask everyone to sit back down in the circle and say: “Sheep are so helpless that they are easily caught by wolves. The job of the shepherd is to protect the sheep. Sheep need the shepherd to stay alive. So David had a hard and important job as a shepherd, but he was also a king. I wonder if that was hard. Let’s find out in today’s story.”

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 130–135 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 2.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

The search for a true king absorbs much of the history of God's people. As they continually fall away from submission to the rule of God, they become slaves to their own desires or to other nations that oppress and enslave them. Both the successes and the failures of all Israel's leaders point to the need for a true king.

Eventually the tension between the brokenness and depth of sin and the power of the liberator-king becomes overwhelming: Moses leads the exodus out of the land of bondage, but fails to obey God at the rock in the wilderness; David slays Goliath, but sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. No human leader measures up, and the kingly qualifications described in Isaiah and the Psalms are so matchless that only the coming of the Lord himself can fulfill them. The question is: How can any king be powerful enough to liberate us from slavery and bondage this great? The answer: Only one who is God himself.

King David, who is described as a "man after God's own heart," was guilty of murder, adultery, false witness, theft, and coveting. He had broken half the Ten Commandments in one awful enterprise. But in Psalm 51 David takes full responsibility for his actions. In verse 3 he says: "I know my transgressions." In verse 4 he admits that his sin is primarily against God. "Against you, you only have I sinned." This is striking and even shocking. Think of how he had wronged Uriah and Bathsheba and had even made Joab an accomplice in evil. Moreover, he betrayed the trust of his people as their king, abusing his power. Yet David says his sin is against "God only."

David is saying that his sin against God is so much more fundamental and serious that it is, in a sense, the only sin. Without this sin, the others would not have happened. David could only commit adultery if either he made himself his own god—assuming he was wiser than the God who made the laws—or made Bathsheba into an idol more important than God. Or he could have done both at the same time. In any case, David had to sin against God first, putting something else in God's place.

Other than the king motif and the search for a true king, another theme runs through these stories—that of the shepherd. David was a shepherd. Jesus is the King, but he is also described as the Good Shepherd. Why? Sheep are particularly non-self-sufficient creatures. They are utterly dependent on the shepherd for absolutely every area of their lives. In short, shepherding is comprehensive. The shepherd serves as protector, physician, provider, leader, and owner. But a shepherd also lays down his life for his sheep to protect them from thieves or wild animals. That is why Jesus, when he was going to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, said in John 10:14–15, "I am the good shepherd ... I lay down my life for the sheep."

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand that Jesus is the true Shepherd King.

Materials: 15 large cards each with a sentence of Psalm 23 written/printed on it (see table below); crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, ask: “Who is the end of the story talking about — who is the Good Shepherd? Say it together. Correct, it is Jesus. There is a psalm that David wrote that tells us all about why Jesus is called the Good Shepherd. We heard the psalm in the story and we’re going to recite it together.”
2. Put the cards upside down but in the correct order in the center of the circle. Ask the children in turn to go to the center, collect a card, return to their seat, and then hold up the card for all to see. Everyone together should read aloud what is written on each card when it is collected.
3. Once all the cards have been collected and you have read the psalm aloud together once, say that you are going to read the psalm again but this time you are going to pause in between some cards to ask questions. Remind everyone to hold their card so that everyone can see it. Ask the questions in the following table after the appropriate card is read.

CARD	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS
The LORD is my shepherd.	David is a shepherd; he looks after sheep. But here he says that someone else is his shepherd. Who is it? Everyone answer together. Yes, the Lord God is his shepherd. Let’s read the next card.
I lack nothing.	Raise your hand if you think this means that God gives us everything we want. Raise your hand if this means that God gives us everything we need. You are right, hands down. Like sheep get everything they need from the shepherd, God gives us everything we need too. Let’s read the next card.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,	And the next card.
he leads me beside quiet waters,	What do sheep need to eat and drink to stay alive? Stand up if you think they need grass from green pastures and water. Good, sit down. This means that God gives us, his sheep, green pastures and water. God takes care of us, like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. Let’s read the next card.
he refreshes my soul.	And the next card.
He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.	And the next card.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,	Sometimes sheep end up in a dark valley. How do you think they feel? Raise your hand if you think sheep are scared in the dark. Yes, they are. Raise your other hand if you like being in the dark. Thank you, hands down. Let’s read the next card.

CARD	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS
I will fear no evil,	And the next card.
for you are with me;	Even when we are in a dark valley, we do not need to be scared. Why? Stand up if you think we do not need to be scared because we can be brave. Stand up if you think we do not need to be scared because God is with us. Good, sit down. Let's read the next card.
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.	What does a shepherd use a rod and staff for? Is it to guide and protect the sheep or to scatter and lose the sheep? Call out the correct answer. Guide and protect or scatter and lose? Correct, so just like with sheep, God guides and protects us. Let's read the next card.
You prepare a table before me	And the next card.
in the presence of my enemies.	And the next card.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.	And the next card.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,	What is it that follows us ALL the days of our lives? Say it together. Good, let's read the next card.
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.	What is "the house of the LORD"? Anyone know? Yes, sometimes we call it heaven, or the new creation. It's an amazing new world, where God's people will be with God forever.

4. Say: "Isn't that a beautiful psalm that David wrote! The Lord loves us and takes care of us and protects us in the way a shepherd does his sheep. And one day all God's people will live with God forever in a perfect new world."

5. Say: "Let's see how well you know this psalm."

6. Collect the cards and then hand them out to the seated children in a random order. Together read the psalm aloud, even though it is now more difficult since the cards are no longer in the correct order.

7. Ask the children to trade places in the circle so that the cards are again in the right order. But, only two children can trade places at any one time. Ask them to raise their hand if they want to trade.

8. Once they are in the correct order, read the psalm aloud together one last time.

9. Put the cards away and give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "You can see David in the picture and he is singing his psalm. But there is a word missing. Write in the word. What is it? Yes, shepherd."

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles of 12-15 children, each with a teacher and a set of cards. This means that each child will have a card and each teacher can then help their circle understand the psalm.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “The Lord is David’s Shepherd and he is our Shepherd. The Lord loves us and takes care of us in the way a shepherd loves and takes care of his sheep; we need to obey the Lord, like sheep obey their shepherd.”

Say: “Sometimes a shepherd has to rescue and save his sheep like the Lord saves and rescues us. We are like sheep, and that is why Jesus is called the Good Shepherd.”

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God for being the best Shepherd there could ever be. Thank him for looking after you and the children the way a shepherd looks after his sheep. Thank him that, as the Shepherd King, Jesus laid down his life for his sheep.

Ask a few of the children to use Psalm 23 to pray, saying thank-you to Jesus for being the Good Shepherd.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

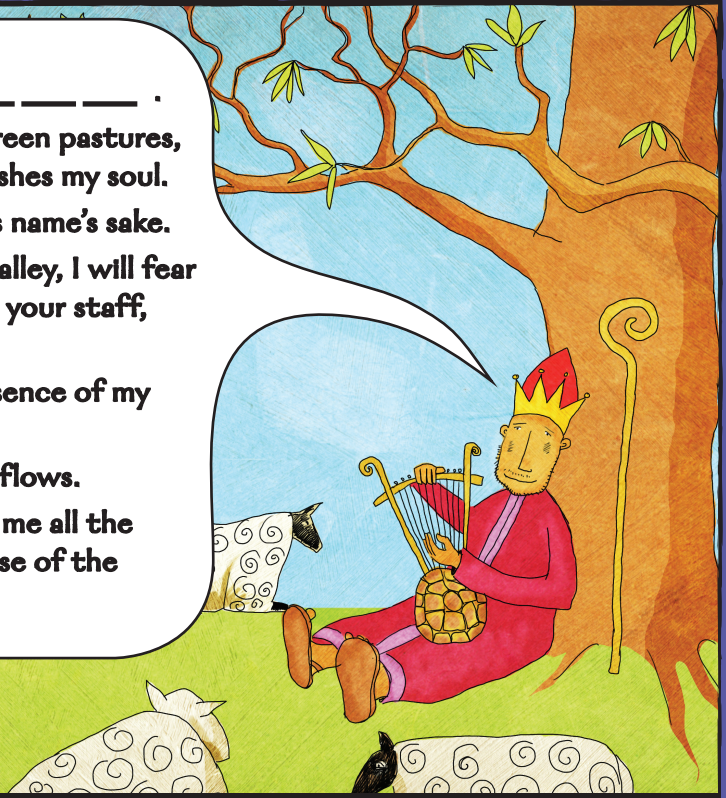
☉ Introduce the verse: “Remember the verse we recited at the start is also from another one of David’s psalms.”

☉ Announce the verse: “So, your verse to practice at home is Psalm 16:8 — ‘I keep my eyes always on the LORD. I will not be shaken.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.

The LORD is my _____ .
 I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
 He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear
 no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my
 enemies.
 You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the
 days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the
 LORD forever.



Jesus in the Story

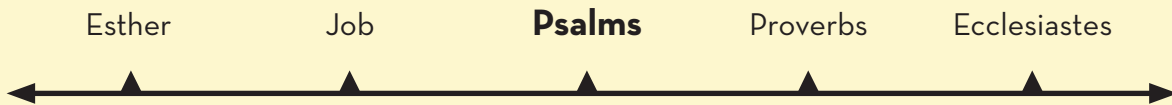


What did you discover about
 Jesus from this story?

Jesus

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

I keep my eyes always on the LORD. I will not be shaken.
 (Psalm 16:8)



Notes for parents: From Psalm 23 we learned that we, like sheep, need someone to take care of us and rescue us. Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Psalms, using the diagram above.