

General Church Education



# Our Shepherd

Psalm 23

## Lesson 1

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

# Our Shepherd

## Psalm 23

### Ideas for Parents & Teachers

This year's theme is that the Lord is our Shepherd. As children become more independent they need a picture of a wise and loving Leader who will always take care of them, and in whom they can put their complete trust as sheep completely trust their shepherd. They need to know that He is watching over them at all times, even if they do not always follow His leadership. In their innocent state young children want to be good and obedient but, like sheep, they can be led astray by others or by their desire to test their expanding world and the authority of others. Consequently, this concept of the Lord as a Shepherd to both the obedient and the straying sheep is a recurring theme throughout the year.

### Ideas for Children

- The Lord is like a shepherd—leading, guiding, and protecting us from evil.
- We need to be like sheep and follow Him.
- The Lord is always with us, and He provides everything we need.
- He leads us toward heaven by means of His Word.

### From the Writings

“Behold, the Lord God...will pasture His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs into His arm, He will carry them in His bosom” (Isaiah 40:10-11). These verses refer to the Lord. Those who are governed by love to Him and who possess the good of innocence are meant by “lambs.” These people are joined to the Lord through love, and love is spiritual togetherness. See *Arcana Coelestia* 10132

Charity joins people with the Lord and causes the Lord to be present with them and know them. The Lord knows all people everywhere; but He knows none in the way a father does his children except those who are governed by the good of love and charity. This explains why the Lord says of those who are governed by good, whom He calls His own sheep, “I am the good Shepherd; and I know those who are My own, and am known by those who are My own. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:14, 27). See *Arcana Coelestia* 6806

In the Word “hearing” means much more than hearing with the ear. It also means receiving things in the memory and learning them, receiving them in the understanding and believing them, and receiving them in obedience and doing them. See *Arcana Coelestia* 9311

## Our Shepherd

Do you like to sing? Did you know there is a whole book of songs in the Word? It is called the book of Psalms. These songs were originally written in the Hebrew language and were sung by the Israelites when they worshiped in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

Many of these psalms or songs were written by King David. David played the harp and used to sing when he was a shepherd boy tending his father's flocks of sheep around Bethlehem. King David said that the Lord told him what to say when he wrote the Psalms, and that is why these songs are so special to us today.

### The Shepherd Psalm

The 23rd Psalm tells us that the Lord is our shepherd. What kinds of things does a shepherd do? (Takes care of sheep, feeds them, keeps them safe from harm, stays with them.)

The Lord takes care of each one of us just as a shepherd watches over his sheep. As we read this psalm, let's think about how the Lord takes care of each one of us.

#### Read Psalm 23:1-6.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." The Lord takes good care of everyone. We do not have to worry because we will not "want" or lack good things. Sometimes we may feel that we do not have something we want, but the Lord knows what we really need. He knows best how to guide us to true happiness.

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters." Sheep need fresh grass and clean water. That is their food. A shepherd leads the sheep to good grass and water so they will have good nourishment or food for their bodies and not be hungry. Because we are the Lord's sheep, He leads all of us to every good and true thing that we need to nourish or feed both our bodies and our minds.



“He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” You know the game “Follow the Leader.” If we follow the Lord, He will lead us in His righteous ways. Righteousness means doing things that are fair, just and wise. These good and righteous ways of living keep us safe and happy.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” Think of a time when you were scared. Did you feel alone or helpless? Everyone feels like that sometimes. At times like this it helps to remember that the Lord is our Shepherd. He is always with us, in happy times and sad times. As soon as we think of Him or a verse from His Word, like the Lord’s Prayer or this psalm, we will find that we are not so afraid.



“For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” Do you know what a rod or staff is? Have you seen a picture of a shepherd with a shepherd’s rod or crook? It is a long stick with a curved end. (There is one in the grass beside David in the picture on page 2.) A rod makes a good walking stick and shepherds do a lot of walking, leading their flocks around. If one of the sheep wanders off the path or gets stuck in a bad place, the shepherd’s crook can be used to hook around the sheep and guide it back to safety. Can you think of something from the Lord that helps us when we feel lost or afraid?

(The Lord’s Word tells us what to do and brings us comfort. The Word guides our lives and rescues us when we need help. That is why it is important to read the stories from the Word and learn some of the verses.)

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.” The Lord is constantly taking care of each person. So when evil spirits

try to get us into trouble or make us feel bad, the Lord is still feeding us and guiding us. It is as if He were preparing a table of good things for us.

To “anoint” means to put oil on as a sign that someone is honored or very special. The Lord’s love is something precious and wonderful to us, like soothing oil. He fills our minds with right ideas, like a cup overflowing.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” The Lord wants everyone to come into His house—which is heaven—and live with Him forever. Mercy means forgiving us when we are sorry for the wrong things we have done.

### **Following Our Shepherd**

The Lord is good and kind and understands us. Remember that you are His lamb and always try to do what He tells you in His Word. Follow Him and let Him take care of you as a lamb follows and trusts its shepherd. Surely, you will be led safely along the path of life to heavenly happiness.



### **Discussion Questions**

- Who is the Shepherd that loves and takes care of everyone? (The Lord.)
- Think about a time when you have felt alone or afraid. When you feel afraid, what can you do to help you feel better? (Remember a verse from the Word or that the Lord is always with you.)
- How do you think the Lord can be with everyone at the same time? (Answers may include that the Lord is infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing, and loves everyone equally.)

# Activity Overview | Our Shepherd

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

The Lord is my Shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He leads me in paths of righteousness, For His name's sake.

Yea, 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.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

## Songs

### *The Good Shepherd*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-good-shepherd/>

### The Lord Is My Shepherd

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-lord-is-my-shepherd-2/>

## Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Sheepfold collage
- Activity 2 | Lamb mobile
- Picture to color

## Activity 1 | Sheepfold Collage

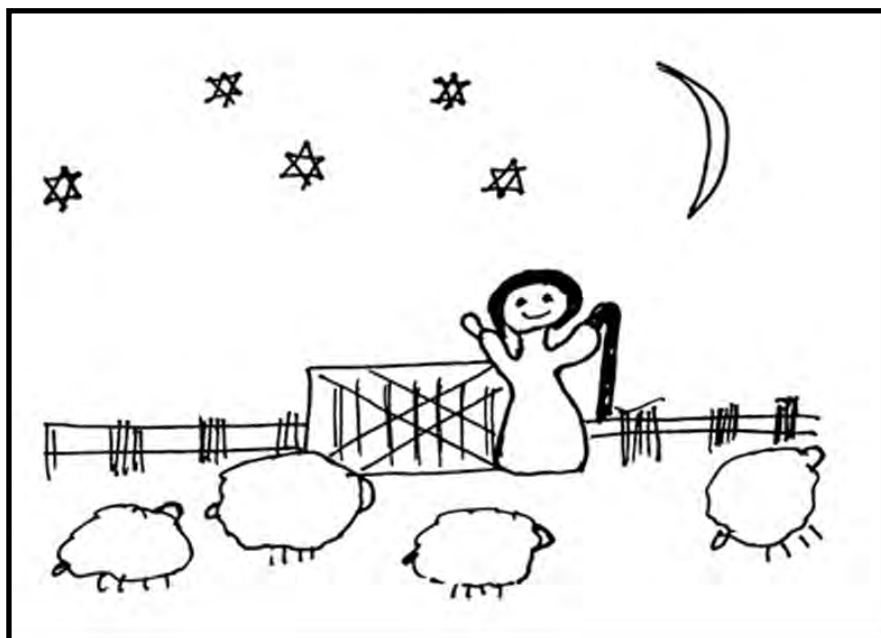
The sheepfold is a protected place for sheep to gather at night. A shepherd counts the sheep when they enter the sheepfold to make sure that all the sheep are safe within. Make a picture of the Lord standing at the door of the sheepfold as His sheep come in.

### Materials needed

- one sheet of heavier weight blue paper, such as construction paper
- small piece of brown paper for the door of the sheepfold
- cotton balls for sheep
- crayons or markers for drawing and coloring details
- glue for the cotton sheep and the door

### Directions

1. Draw the fence or wall of the sheepfold, leaving space for the door.
2. Cut a door (or gate) out of brown paper to fit the opening.
3. Glue the door to the paper along one side so that the door will open and close (as if on a hinge).
4. Draw a picture of the Lord as the Good Shepherd standing by the door.
5. Glue cotton balls to the paper to make the sheep, then use crayons or markers to add their heads, tails, and feet.

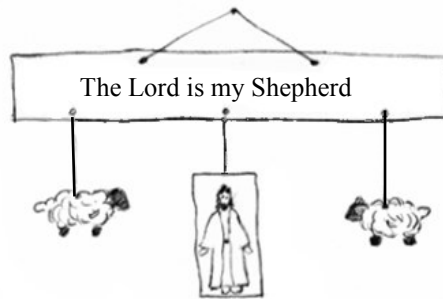


## Activity 2 | Lamb Mobile

Create a mobile of the Lord with his sheep.

### Materials needed

- 3” x 16” (7.5 x 40 cm) strip of poster board (blue works well). Punch 2 holes in the top and 3 holes in the bottom.
- 3” x 6” (7.5 x 15 cm) white lightweight cardboard for the Lord
- 2 – 3” x 4” (7.5 x 12.5 cm) pieces lightweight cardboard for sheep
- pencil
- red marker
- black marker
- gold or silver glitter
- scissors
- glue
- 4 large cotton balls
- 4 pieces of yarn
- single hole punch



### Directions

1. Write “The LORD is my Shepherd” on the blue poster board. Use red marker for “LORD” and black marker for the other words.
2. Draw 2 sheep on white paper using the pencil.
3. Cut out the sheep.
4. Color the face and feet of the sheep using the black marker.
5. Glue one cotton ball to each side of the lambs. Gently pull apart the cotton balls to make them more “fluffy.”
6. Draw the Lord on the larger card using colored pencils or crayons. Put glitter on the other side and let dry.
7. Punch hole in top of each lamb and the Lord piece.
8. Tie one end of yarn through hole on each lamb and the Lord. Tie the other end to a hole in piece of paper.
9. Tie last string to top of paper for hanging.



