

4<sup>th</sup> week of July  
"My Shepherd"  
Psalm 23

Your Story

How has God guided you through your life? How has God given you peace? Talk about your memories of Psalm 23.

My Story and the Bible Story

Read Psalm 23. From the *NIV*: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Most of the time, I associate this Psalm with funerals. I don't like to read this Psalm because it brings to mind sadness and pain. And yet, this Psalm is all about peace. It is also about being treasured. Read it again with your family. David says things like "I shall not be in want" (aka I will have everything I need), "he leads me," "he restores my soul," and "my cup overflows." David was a shepherd so he knew what it was like to lead and care for sheep. Without the sheep, there would be no money for the shepherd, so a good shepherd treated sheep like a treasured possession. He cared for the sheep, finding them food and water and places to rest. A good shepherd made sure that even when other animals attacked, the sheep had no reason to be afraid, because he was there. He kept the sheep safe and he showed them the way.

It makes sense, then, that David would compare God to a shepherd. God shows us the right way to go. He provides for us. He restores our souls. God gives us peace. And even when bad things happen, God is right there beside us. We have no need to fear because the God who created the universe is there with us. Our cups overflow from the love that God gives us.

We did an experiment during VBS to show how God's love and comfort overflows. We made bubbles using dish detergent, hot water, and dry ice. During this experiment, we talked about things that make us afraid or sad. We put drops of food coloring in the water to represent those things. By the time we had talked about those things that made us afraid or sad, the water was an ugly brown color. Our hearts get like that too. But then God's love came along in the form of the dry ice and something amazing happened. The container began

overflowing with white bubbles. The water was still brown, but God's love and comfort overflowed.

In this Psalm, David doesn't say that God will take us away from the valley of the shadow of death. There will be times when we still have to walk through hard things. God doesn't always change our situation. But as David says, we have no need to fear during those hard times, because God is right there with us, reminding us of His love and comforting our hearts. God is our Shepherd and if we allow Him, He will lead us through this life, through the good times, and the bad, and our lives will overflow with His goodness and His love.

### Discussion

- Ask your children about ways that God has comforted them when they have been afraid or sad.
- Talk about how God's peace feels when situations are hard. Ask your children if they have ever felt God's peace. Did it help them feel better? Did it change the way they saw a situation?

### Prayer

Thank God for His peace and His comfort. Ask Him to walk beside you and talk to Him about situations you and your family are facing. Give those situations to Him.