

Lesson 1

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

John 10:1–18

The LORD is
my shepherd;
I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

Advance Preparation

Copy the Bible Verse Code Sheet, the Bible Code Poster, and the Clue List (*Leader CD*; one for each Shepherd's Pack). Clues are (1) a Bible book of poems or songs; (2) a book of the Bible with 150 chapters; (3) the book in the center of the Bible; (4) written by a king who was once a shepherd; (5) found between Chapter 22 and Chapter 24; (6) the Good Shepherd Psalm. Since the Rotations will reuse the Clue Lists, you will need as many as you have Shepherd's Packs.

Gather materials: Shepherd's Pack (*VBS Tote Bag*, knapsack, or brown paper bag) for each Team with a Bible, Bible Code Sheet, Clue List; *Leader CD*; *Bible Memory Verse Poster*.

Practice the Bible Memory song (check out the video on the *Leader CD*) so you can lead it confidently. A *Passalong CD & DVD* will play the video on a DVD player.

Bible Code (Teams)

Welcome Teams and direct them to sit with their Leaders on the Team Spots.

SAY: Welcome to Green Pastures Bible Challenge. Each lesson, we will gather together to learn, sing, and remember God's Word in this "green pasture."

SAY: There's a Shepherd's Pack on your Team Spot. Team Leaders, get out the Bible and the Clue List. Show yours as a sample.

SAY: The Bible is made up of sixty-six books! At Green Pastures Bible Challenge, we are going to learn five Bible verses from the same chapter in the Bible! Your first challenge is to find that chapter, using the Team Bible and the clues your Team Leader will give one at a time. Your Team will try to figure out the book of the Bible and the chapter of this book using the clues. When your Team has found the chapter, everybody on the Team should open their sheep ears. Demonstrate hands behind your head with pointer and middle fingers on each hand extended; wiggle fingers forward. **SAY:** The Team Leader will then call out, "Baaa, baaa, baaa. Our Team is ready."

Allow time for each group to complete the task, and

watch and listen for the signals that they need help or have completed the challenge.

When all the Teams have found Psalm 23, **SAY:** Yes, our Bible memory verses this week come from Psalm 23, which is also called the Good Shepherd Psalm.

Display the Bible Verse Code Poster with "the code" Psalm 23:1 on it. Ask the Team Leader to find the Bible Verse Code Sheet in the Shepherd's Packs. Ask them to turn it to the side that matches the Bible Code on the Poster.

Point to the word *Psalm* and **SAY:** We use a code to find verses in the Bible. This word is "Psalm," and it is the book of the Bible we were looking for. This number, 23, tells which chapter to look for. Chapter numbers are usually big, bold numbers in the Bible. This number after the colon, 1, tells which verse to look for. In the Bible, verse numbers are usually tiny numbers, almost hidden between the words. Today's code is Psalm 23:1. You've found Psalm 23 already; now ask someone on your Team to read verse 1.

Allow time for the Teams to read the verse.

SAY: Now, flip over your Bible Code Sheet and look at the words on the other side. Would the person who read the verse bring your Bible Code Sheet forward? Let's see if we can put the words of Psalm 23:1 in order and hang them on our Bible Verse Clothesline!

Help the students hang the words in the correct order on the Bible Verse Clothesline. Then have the group read the verse together.

Sing and Learn (Large Group)

No Voice like the Shepherd's Voice

SAY: When we gather 'round at our *Barnyard Roundup* sites this week, we will listen to the site leaders' voices and follow the directions they give us. You've done a great job listening to my voice to find the Bible Code and Psalm 23:1!

SAY: When sheep are gathered in a sheep pen, they listen to their shepherd's voice. The shepherd calls the sheep out by name, and they follow him. The sheep only follow the voice of their own shepherd—



even if there is more than one flock in the sheep pen!

SAY: Remember what Psalm 23:1 says? It says, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” That means that as our Good Shepherd, Jesus cares for us and provides everything we need. Like sheep listen to their shepherd’s voice and follow their shepherd, we listen to Jesus’ voice in His Word, the Bible, and we follow Him.

SAY: Listen and follow me as we learn the words and actions to this verse.

When we say “the Lord,” make the shape of an *L* with your finger and thumb at your left shoulder, then move the *L* across your body to your right hip.

For “shepherd,” cross your arms over your chest with your hands near your shoulders.

For “not want,” put both hands out palms up. Put up one finger for “Verse 1.”

Now play Track 1, “Psalm 23:1,” and demonstrate. Have the kids join you the second time. (Check out the *Bible Memory Song Videos* on the *Leader CD* to watch the actions. A *Passalong CD & DVD* will play the video for the Teams on a DVD player.) Sing the song together once more for additional practice.

Bible Memory Verse Poster Point

Point to today’s *Bible Memory Verse Poster* and **SAY:** The sheep in this photo look content, don’t they? They don’t worry about food, water, shelter, medicine, or even wild animals coming to hurt them. Sheep need shepherds because they aren’t very good at finding good food or water. They aren’t good at finding a safe place from storms. And have you ever seen a

sheep’s teeth or hooves? They have no way to protect themselves from predators, such as wolves, lions, or bears.

SAY: Do you see the shepherd? His job is to guide the sheep to cool, tasty grass and fresh water. He is ready to help them when needed and to protect them from enemies. Thanks to the shepherd, the sheep are cared for well.

SAY: Thanks to Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we are well cared for also, and Jesus provides for all our needs. Our Good Shepherd loves us so much that He died for our sins and rose again so we could have life with Him, now and forever.

Sharing the Caring Shepherd

SAY: Today, we learned that Jesus is our caring shepherd who loves us, His sheep, very much. However, there are many people even in our own community who haven’t yet heard of Jesus and His love for them. How could you show that Jesus is their caring shepherd too? Let children suggest ideas.

Then, **SAY:** We can invite others to gather with us this week for Barnyard Roundup Vacation Bible School. Think of someone you could invite. Pray for God to bless your invitation; and then ask your friend to come along and gather with us as we learn more about our caring shepherd, Jesus.

LEADER: GATHER ’ROUND! (Point up and circle hand.) **JESUS CARES! TEAMS:** (Point up.) **JESUS CARES,** (Circle hand.) **NOW AND FOREVER!**

Extra time? Play and sing Track 6, “I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever” (*Leader CD*). It’s the entire text of Psalm 23!