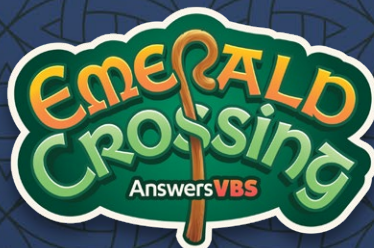


FLOCK TALK TIME  BIBLE LESSONS

pre-PRIMARY



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 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 <i>my</i> 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’m feeling anxious or afraid.	Like David, I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.	Like David, I can 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 me 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	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	
Exploration Stations	Discovery Center	Sheep Memory Game	Can “Ewe” Guess the Smell?	Ewe-nique Eyesight	Shaving Cream Shearing	Feely Meely
	Wet Sensory Table	Sheep Washing	Still Water	Take Away the Shadows	Filled to Overflowing	Rainbows
	Dry Sensory Table	Lost Sheep	Play Paths	Highs and Lows	Bugs, Bugs, Bugs	Higher Lands
	Dramatic Play	Fitzpatrick’s Farm	Fitzpatrick’s Farm	Fitzpatrick’s Farm	Fitzpatrick’s Farm	Fitzpatrick’s Farm
	Coloring Corner	Psalm 23:1	Psalm 23:2	Psalm 23:4	Psalm 23:5	Psalm 23:6
Celtic Corner Science	Sticky Sheep	Growing Green Pastures	Shadows and Light	Oil and Water Mix-Up	Making Rainbows	
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 You Prepare a Table Place Mat	Psalm 23 Sensory Book Rainbow Promise Crown	
Green Meadow Games	Sheep, Sheep, Shepherd Lost Sheep Hunt	Border Collie Tag David and Goliath	Shepherd’s Staff Tag Irish Folk Dances	Shoo Fly! King David, May I?	Earthquake! Mad Cow	
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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Pre-Primary Teacher Guide

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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! 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 Pre-Primary Teaching Tips

1. Pray and study God's Word. That is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of opening his Word and sharing it daily with the children, so be well prepared. "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](https://www.answersvbs.com). Begin to pray and plan now, then 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 room size and number of children expected.
6. Modify the Exploration Stations as your situation warrants. Use as suggested or incorporate one or more ideas into the lesson time to do with the whole group together.
7. Ask group guides to help man the Exploration Stations each day. Post the directions and teaching tie-ins at each station every day as easy references for your helpers.
8. A puppet is used daily at some point during the lesson. It may also be used to welcome the children, sing a song, or review a memory verse. The puppet can come up from a puppet area if there are two of you to do the puppet skit. If working alone, the puppet can come up from behind a suitcase with the lid flipped up.
9. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
10. 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. 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.
11. Think safety. Read the [Child Safety Precautions](#) file for more information.
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. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills in the heart of each child.
14. Call the children by name as you interact with them. Name tags help with this.
15. 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. Be aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.
16. 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.
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 generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and complete their take-home Student Guides.
19. Use brown lunch bags labeled with the child's name to send everything home each day.
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 Pre-Primaries (ages 4–6).

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 Pre-Primaries

Physical Characteristics

Pre-Primaries are active and more confident in physical activities like jumping, hopping on one foot, and walking backward. They love to be moving. They're improving in hand-eye coordination. They're rapidly growing and may need rest after active play.

Takeaways for Us

Pre-Primaries like to play hard so keep them moving with short, simple games and activities. They may need to sit and rest for a brief time afterward.

Emotional/Social Characteristics

Pre-Primaries are less fearful than Toddlers but still often exhibit common fears, such as fear of dogs and the dark. They can have emotional extremes and are testing others to see who can be controlled. They want to please adults

and want praise. They will often mimic adults' behaviors. They like imaginative play. Pre-Primaries can handle small tasks and levels of responsibility.

Takeaways for Us

- Let them be helpers. Give them simple jobs to do and have them help pick up things and straighten the room at the end of the lesson. Let them know they've done a good job.
- Give them opportunities to dress up and play imaginatively.
- Be consistent in discipline. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no."
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways. Little eyes are watching and will want to imitate you!

Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Pre-Primaries talk a lot and ask a lot of questions, including questions about God. They understand that sin is disobeying God's commands. They need a lot of guidance in tasks but can also follow a simple series of directions. They have an attention span of approximately five minutes. They enjoy doing new things and hearing stories and songs. They're not always able to tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They're developing attitudes toward right and wrong and can do basic memory work.

Takeaways for Us

- In downtime, give them time to ask questions. Be ready to patiently answer. But while you are teaching, be careful you don't get so wrapped up in letting them talk that the lesson doesn't happen!
- Vary activities often. The longer an activity goes, the wigglier the children become!
- When engaged in pretend activities, name them as such (e.g., "Let's pretend to be explorers!"). At the same time, point out often that God's Word is not pretend but true.
- Repetition of songs and stories works well, and Pre-Primaries enjoy it.
- Sing the memory verse songs with them. They will be able to learn at least parts of the verses by the end of the week.
- Use visuals.
- Teach them about sin and asking God for forgiveness.
- Show interest in each child, letting them know you care.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Flock Talk Time

As we open God's Word in our Flock Talk Time, we will mine the depths of Psalm 23.

The lesson time is written as a 35–40 minute period, divided into two segments: Exploration Stations (15–20 minutes) and Lesson Time (15–20 minutes). You can either keep your group together for the stations and lesson time or divide the group in two, with each half switching places after 15–20 minutes.

If Exploration Stations aren't possible, simply choose one or more of the station activities to incorporate into your lesson time as a group activity, rather than having a separate area for them.

Exploration Station Time

There are five stations to choose from: Discovery Center, Wet Sensory Table, Dry Sensory Table, Dramatic Play, and Coloring Corner. These stations can be in the same room as the lesson time or in an adjoining room. If both the stations and the lesson time are in the same room, set them up in opposite ends of the room.

When the children enter the stations area, you may want to have them first sit while you briefly explain each station and teaching tie-in. Then the children may rotate in small groups through each station every few minutes, or they may independently move from one to another, which is what our test churches do. It's good to photocopy the directions and teaching tie-ins for each station and leave them at the appropriate stations for group guides to reinforce. The children don't need to do every station each day. Send the coloring page home daily, colored or uncolored.

See the Exploration Stations supply list on the back cover for a list of the supplies needed each day. Post the **signs** with each station's name.

For the sensory tables, use small wading pools or large, clear, under-the-bed storage containers. Place them on a

plastic tarp or tablecloth to catch spills. Partially fill one with water for the wet station. Partially fill the other with kinetic sand or play sand (not regular sand) as listed for the dry station.

Check the Decorating Decisions section for more specifics on setting up the Dramatic Play area to look like the inside of an old Irish farmhouse kitchen and the Coloring Corner to look like a sheep pen.

Lesson Time

The lesson time is divided into three sections:

Introduce It! (5 minutes or less): This is a time to begin the lesson in an interesting way.

Teach It! (10–15 minutes): This deepens the lesson, with costumed teachers sharing the Bible account and apologetics information.

Apply It! (Remaining class time): This is the memory verse review and practical application time.

Ideas are given within the lessons to adapt the activities to your time period. There are many possibilities. 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 format also works if teaching alone. If team teaching, decide ahead of time who will teach what. If teaching alone, either find someone to help with the daily puppet script or work the puppet yourself, using a suitcase with the lid flipped up. Have the puppet appear from behind the lid. Shortened (20 minute), **one-person lessons** (without Exploration Stations or a puppet) are available to download.

Check the Decorating Decisions section for specifics on decorating the lesson room.

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. (Pre-Prima-ries and Toddlers are taught condensed versions of these

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). Songs are also available to stream—see AnswersVBS.com/streaming.

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.

Sample Schedule

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.

Time	Group One	Group Two	Group Three
9:00–9:15	Emerald Isle Assembly—Opening (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 (Everyone together)		

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: during lesson time, during snack time (a good time to review!), or at the end of the day (a good time to pass out bookmarks, Student Guides, and other items that need to make it home safely).

Simple Songs: The songs referenced throughout this guide that are for Pre-Primaries and Toddlers may be streamed on your personal device from AnswersVBS.com/streaming. They are also available on a separate Simple Songs for Kids CD (1231410). You may want to purchase a CD for each child.

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.

- Pre-Primary ESV (1230730)
- Pre-Primary KJV (1231340)

Emerald Isle Water Board Book: These fun, interactive board books feature the daily memory verses and animal pals. Kids can use the included water pen to color the pages and reveal beautiful images! Check with your VBS director to find out when 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 group guides can go over them during snack time. These are available in packs of 10.

- Pre-Primary/Toddler ESV (1230900)
- Pre-Primary/Toddler KJV (1231380)

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)

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

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 theme. 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. [Clip art images](#) are available. Add a farmhouse or barn 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.

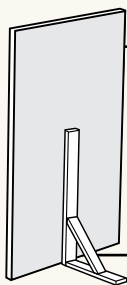
For a stream, buy a plastic tablecloth with a water motif and place it under/up against the bridge. Or purchase a blue metallic fringe curtain for your stream.

For clouds, make 2D versions by painting them on cardboard, cutting them out, and hanging them from fishing line. For 3D clouds, glue Poly-fil to white rice balls or white pizza boxes and hang from fishing line.

Add 2D or 3D flowers and cattails. Paint them for a 2D effect and attach to the set, or put fake flowers in baskets. Include some butterflies and birds 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). 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 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. You can reduce or enlarge the signs to fit your particular bridge. If 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 should be stacked with Day 1 on top and Day 5 on the bottom so the whole psalm can be easily read in order. The Map of Ireland Poster (a teaching poster) should be mounted and hung on the wall. It consists of two posters that need to be put together to make one big map.

Each poster has a label at the bottom indicating which age group and day it is used with.

Clip Art Images

Use a laptop connected to a projector or an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the **clip art 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.

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

1. If not using a laptop and projector, then 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, if necessary, and cut out.

Other Tips and Miscellaneous Ideas

- Think “farm” in your decorating—in particular, “Irish sheep farm.”
- Place a green grass rug or raised platform in front of your backdrop to create a stage.
- Prop up a staff (1230580) against the set.
- Place a kid's wheelbarrow off to the side.
- Place a few buckets and crates around.
- Kids love color, so make sure your classroom is colorful.
- Kids also love animals, so include some in your decorating. **Clip art images** of sheep, cows, chickens, a border collie, and other farm animals are available. Or use large stuffed farm animals.

Tips for Painting Cardboard

- Add a thin (½-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 Pre-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 is propped by a jack and placed off to the side 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.

Exploration Stations

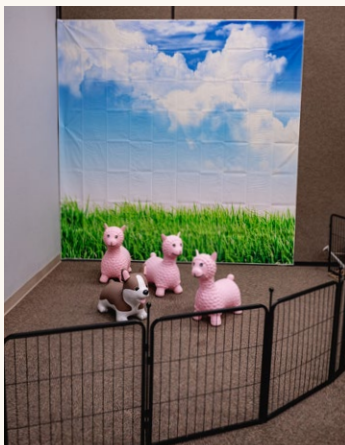
Pre-Primary classes enjoy Exploration Stations, which include a Discovery Center, two sensory tables, a Dramatic Play area, and a Coloring Corner. Further information about these stations can be found in the lessons, but check out the following for details on how to make the Dramatic Play area and Coloring Corner.

Fitzpatrick's Farm Dramatic Play Area



The Dramatic Play area is a favorite and should resemble the inside of an old Irish farmhouse kitchen. Designate a corner of the room and decide how large of an area to decorate. Next, cover the walls with white or light tan plastic tablecloths or roll paper; or use rustic wood board or cobblestone wall scene setters or tablecloths purchased online. Make an old stove or fireplace from a large box or borrow/buy a wooden kitchen set or a vintage-looking plastic play kitchen. Make windows from light blue poster board (as if it's the sky) with plastic tablecloth "curtains." Put a child's wooden table and chairs in the center. Add baskets, a play broom, tin pails, a basket or crate with dress-up clothes, play food, play pots and pans, play plates and cups, a dog bed and stuffed animal dog, and other such items, keeping in mind that everything needs to be safe.

Coloring Corner



Set up an area to resemble a sheep pen the kids can sit in as they color their memory verse pages. Possible ideas include the following: using boxes as a fence border; buying hay bale cube boxes online and using them as a border; using cardboard play bricks that are rustic looking, such as Mondo Bloxx Timber Pack; or borrowing/buying a

child's wooden playpen or a dog playpen or configurable dog gate. (Check sites that sell good used items for these.

Make sure they are safe for children and sturdy.) Add in some inflatable bouncer/hopper sheep and other farm animals. (One test church bought inflatable farm hopper llamas that looked like sheep.) Or add in nice-sized stuffed farm animals—sheep in particular.

Next, add a backdrop that is a grassy field. Plastic tablecloths with a grass motif can be used, or buy a simple sky/field backdrop online. Put crayons in tin pails and coloring sheets in rectangular baskets.

Additional Exploration Station Ideas

Each day's instructions have suggested stations, but here are some extra ideas if you would like to add more.

- ☐ **Reading Nook**—Make a cozy nook and place a variety of children's books in a woven basket. Include children's picture Bibles, accurate books about King David, Psalm 23, rainbows, shepherds, God's attributes, sheep, farm animals, etc.
- ☐ **Farm Animals**—Borrow or buy stuffed or plastic farm animals you might see on an Irish farm (sheep, for sure!) and free play with them.
- ☐ **Farm Puzzles**—Gather some farm-themed puzzles and set them out for fun play.
- ☐ **Texture Trays**—Provide various textures on which and in which the kids can trace words or pictures of key Bible concepts they learn about. Possible textures include shaving cream or hair gel in zippered baggies sealed with duct tape, burlap, trays of salt, thick fleece, magic slates, or chalkboard and chalk. Supervise carefully and make sure they know not to put their hands in their mouths.
- ☐ **Play Dough**—Play dough is always a favorite, so you may want to feature a station with it all week, adding thematic supplies that have to do with the day's teaching, such as using only white and black and sheep cookie cutters on Day 1 to make sheep; using only green and blue on Day 2 for green pastures and still waters; making rods and staffs on Day 3; making play food to go on the "table" God prepares for us on Day 4; and making the letters "G" for *goodness* and "M" for *mercy* on Day 5. Add in thematic cookie cutters each day.

Play Dough Recipe:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 c. flour | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tbsp. oil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ½ c. salt | <input type="checkbox"/> Food coloring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 c. warm water | <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: glitter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 tsp. cream of tartar | |

Combine the first five ingredients in a saucepan. Mix in several drops of food coloring. Stir over low to medium heat until the dough is formed and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan and knead until smooth. Add some glitter if desired. After it has cooled, store in an airtight container.



DAY 1

Lost to Found

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:1
1 Samuel 17:34–37

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can be a child of God and have the Lord as *my* shepherd.

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

ANIMAL PAL

Mia (My-a) the Connemara Sheep

TODAY'S EXPLORATION STATIONS

Discovery Center: Sheep Memory Game
Wet Sensory Table: Sheep Washing
Dry Sensory Table: Lost Sheep
Dramatic Play: Fitzpatrick's Farm
Coloring Corner: Psalm 23:1

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce it!
Sheep Farm in Donegal
- Teach it!
Part 1: Gospel Presentation
Part 2: Puppet Pal—Lost to Found
Part 3: Animal Pal Review
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do
Song 1: "Mary Had a Little Lamb"
Song 2: "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Sheep Gone"

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 several times 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.

Exploration Stations

See page 12 for setup and decorating instructions for each station, as well as ideas for additional stations.

Discovery Center: Sheep Memory Game

MATERIALS

- ☐ Memory Game Sheep Cards
- ☐ White card stock

PREP

Print two of each **MEMORY GAME SHEEP CARDS** onto white card stock and cut apart.

DIRECTIONS

First, share the teaching tie-in. Show the different sheep on the cards, then shuffle the cards and place them face down. The children will take turns flipping over two cards, trying to get matches.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Show the **MEMORY GAME SHEEP CARDS**. Sheep don't all look alike, do they? God could have made just one type of sheep, but look at some of the varieties. There are black sheep, white sheep, speckled sheep, long-haired sheep, short-haired sheep, some with horns, some without horns, and many others. What an amazing and creative God he is!

Wet Sensory Table: Sheep Washing

For wet and dry sensory tables use an under-the-bed storage container, small wading pool, or "official" sensory table.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Sensory table with tarp/plastic tablecloth underneath
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Waterproof play sheep—at least 6
- ☐ Waterproof play person or people (shepherd or shepherds)
- ☐ Small scrub brushes (e.g., nail brushes)
- ☐ Soap or "tearless" shampoo

PREP

Partially fill the sensory table with water. Add the items.

DIRECTIONS

Share the teaching tie-in, then have students use the shepherd to pretend to wash the sheep.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Look at our shepherd here. Shepherds take care of sheep. Did you know one thing shepherds do to take care of sheep is give them a bath? This helps get bugs and dirt off of them. Good shepherds take care of their sheep in many ways, just like God takes care of us.

Dry Sensory Table: Lost Sheep

MATERIALS

- ☐ Sensory table with tarp/plastic tablecloth underneath
- ☐ Kinetic sand (preferred) or play sand (not regular sand), found at hardware stores
- ☐ Baby wipes if using play sand—all week
- ☐ Lots of play sheep—either cotton balls or pom-poms to represent sheep, laminated sheep pictures, or rubber toy sheep (should all be the same except one in a different color)
- ☐ Tongs, spoons, sand toys for digging

PREP

Put the kinetic sand or play sand in the table to be used all week. Make or gather the sheep, making sure they are all the same except one.

DIRECTIONS

Share the teaching tie-in, then have students dig through the sand to find the lost sheep (the different one).

TEACHING TIE-IN

Sheep are one of the most talked about animals in the Bible. One account tells of a time when there were 100 sheep, and one got lost ([Luke 15:4–7](#)). The shepherd left the rest of the sheep and went to find the one lost sheep. He found it and brought it back. He was so happy! This is how God feels about each one of us when we decide we want to be one of his children (his sheep).

Dramatic Play: Fitzpatrick's Farm

MATERIALS

Choose from any of the following, depending on your situation. These will be used all week.

- ☐ Decorating supplies (see Decorating Decisions)—inside a farmhouse kitchen
- ☐ Dress-up supplies in a basket or crate—modern-day Irish farmer/shepherd clothes such as rain boots, flannel shirts, raincoats, overalls, fisherman-type vests
- ☐ Stuffed farm animals—particularly sheep (or use white balloons with faces drawn on them for "sheep")
- ☐ Props you'd find in a farmhouse kitchen such as play food, play cooking utensils and pots and pans, play plates and dishes, tin pails, woven baskets, play broom, play dog bed and stuffed animal dog, etc.

PREP

Make or gather all materials. You may want to put out only part of the supplies today and add new ones each day.

Fisherman-type vests can be made from bolts of felt (from the fabric store) or more inexpensively, from large brown grocery sacks. Ask your local grocery store to donate the sacks. Cut a neckhole in the "bottom" of the

sack and armholes on the sides. Cut down the middle front from the neckhole to the top of the sack. Make sure to not cut the back of the sack.

DIRECTIONS

Share the teaching tie-in, then have kids dress up and pretend to be farmers/shepherds at an Irish sheep farm.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Did you know there are lots of sheep farms in Ireland? A farmer who raises sheep is sometimes called a shepherd. What are some things a shepherd might do to take care of his sheep? [Take responses](#). In Psalm 23 in the Bible, God shows us he is like the shepherd and we are like the sheep. God is gentle and takes good care of us.

Coloring Corner: Psalm 23:1

MATERIALS

- ☐ [Day 1 Memory Verse Coloring Sheet](#)
- ☐ Decorating supplies for the Coloring Corner (see Decorating Decisions)—inside a sheep pen
- ☐ Markers or crayons in a woven basket or tin pail

- ☐ Optional: glue sticks and additional decorative, textured materials to add to the sheets

PREP

Print the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE COLORING SHEET**, 1 per person. Make or gather the decorating supplies and set up the Coloring Corner. This will be used all week. Gather additional decorative materials to glue onto the coloring sheets, such as cotton balls, feathers, stickers, etc.

DIRECTIONS

Have the children color the sheet, then add decorative materials, if desired.

TEACHING TIE-IN

[Practice saying the memory verse on the sheet. Discuss its meaning.](#)

Introduce It!

Sheep Farm in Donegal (5 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 all the Scripture verses used in today's lesson. Cut apart the **DIFFERENT SHEEP POSTER** and hide the pictures so they are partly visible. Remember to hide them again after each rotation. Cover the Days 1–5 pictures on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** and hang them so they look like one big map. Hang the five **MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** going down the wall so Day 1 is on top and Day 5 is on the bottom. Cut apart the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS**. Learn the Psalm 23:1 hand motions.

Teacher 1: Hello from Ireland, lads (boys) and lasses (girls)! Or should I say “*dia duit*” (*dee-uh-gwit*), which means “hello” in the Irish language. Have everyone say “*dia duit*” to each other. My name’s ___, and this is ___. We’re going to take you on a shepherd’s tour of the Emerald Isle (a nickname for Ireland), starting right here at the Emerald Crossing bridge.

Teacher 2: Do you know where Ireland is? Take responses. Point to the **MAP OF IRELAND**. In Ireland, there are lots of green pastures (fields), farms, and sheep.

Teacher 1: What does a sheep say? Pause for “*baa*.” Yes, “*baa*.” We’ll be talking about sheep a lot this week as we learn from Psalm 23, which is right here in the Bible. Show. It has a lot to say about sheep and shepherds—the people who care for sheep. Show the **DAVID AS SHEPHERD POSTER**. It was written by a man named King David who was a shepherd himself early on in his life.

Teacher 2: So let’s begin our journey. First, let’s fly to Ireland. Jog in place for a few seconds and then put out your arms and “fly.” Now, let’s put on some rain boots because it rains a lot in Ireland! Pretend to do so. We better put on our raincoats too. Pretend to do so. Put your hood up. Pretend to do so. And let’s not forget our shepherd’s staff! Pretend to pick one up.

Teacher 1: Okay, now it’s time to go. Let’s start at this sheep farm in the town of Donegal, which is here. Show the farmhouse on the map and uncover the Day 1 Sheep Farm picture. Can you hear the sheep baaing? Do you feel the light rain coming down? Do you see a rainbow over there?

Teacher 2: Sometimes sheep get separated from their shepherds, so let’s pretend we have to find some lost sheep on this farm. Look around and see if you can find any sheep pictures. You can each pick up one and bring it back to me. Do so.

Teacher 1: Once they’re settled again, show the **DIFFERENT SHEEP PICTURES** as you’re saying the following. Sheep can be black, white, or mixed. Some have horns and some don’t. Some have long hair and some have short hair. Some are fluffy and some aren’t. They can be big or small. They don’t all look alike. But they all have this in common—they can stray, or get lost, from their shepherd. Have you ever gotten lost? Pause for quick responses.

Teacher 2: Sheep and people have a lot in common, including being lost at times. That’s why God compares us to sheep in many places in the Bible. We’re going to check out Psalm 23 to hear more about going from lost to found. Put up the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS** on the top blocks of the bridge. Now let’s practice today’s verse with hand motions. Stand up. Here we go. Do so.

Teach It!

Part 1: Gospel Presentation (10 minutes)

Prep: Practice drawing a simplified version of the seven pictures on the **GOSPEL POSTER**. Cover each picture and word on the **GOSPEL POSTER** with a piece of paper or sticky notes.

Teacher 1: Now let’s pretend we’re in a sheep pen and you’re the sheep and I’m the shepherd. Do so.

Teacher 2: Did you know shepherds protect sheep from animals that try to attack them? Let’s pretend a coyote is coming to get a sheep, and the shepherd fights him off. Act this out with the kids being the sheep, Teacher 2 being the coyote, and Teacher 1 as the shepherd.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Different Sheep Poster
- ◆ David as Shepherd Poster
- ◆ Days 1–5 Memory Verse Posters

- ★ Lost/Found Crossing Signs
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- ☐ Mounting putty or tape for posters
- ☐ Blank paper to cover photos on map (see Prep)



- ◆ 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, Shepherd Sean, Farmhand Finn, Lamb-Lover Lucy, Caretaker Kelly, Sheep Herder O'Hara.

- ◆ 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 hold them up while teaching and hang them up after class.

- ◆ Gospel Poster

- ☐ Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
- ☐ Dry-erase board or white poster board
- ☐ Markers or dry-erase markers in various colors

✦ Make an area to simulate a sheep pen if desired. See Coloring Corner on page 12 for ideas.



Teacher 1: Did you also know that the shepherd would lie down at the gate of the sheep pen so nobody could get in to hurt the sheep? Let's act that out. *Do so.*

Teacher 2: The shepherd would actually lay down his life for the sheep. This is a picture of what Jesus does for us. The Bible calls Jesus our Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his "sheep"—all of us. That means he died for us.

Teacher 1: You see, we were in danger but didn't even know it. Thankfully, the Good Shepherd came to rescue us. Let's hear more as ___ draws some pictures.

Teacher 2: Draw a simple tree on a dry-erase board or poster board. Ask the kids to guess what you are drawing. Then uncover the tree on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: Back at the beginning of time, God made a beautiful garden full of trees and bushes and flowers. He filled it with animals and the first two people, Adam and Eve. It was a perfect place. So to review, I said Adam and who? *Pause for responses.* Right, Eve.

Teacher 2: Draw a simple snake and have them guess what you are drawing. Then uncover the snake on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: God gave the first man a loving command—he could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Do you think he obeyed God? *Pause for responses.* No. A sneaky snake came along, who was the devil. Let's wiggle our hands like a snake. *Do so.* He tempted Eve to eat the fruit, and she and Adam did.

Teacher 2: Now sin came into the world. Sin is when we don't obey God. Adam and Eve didn't obey God. And guess what—ever since then, every person sins and doesn't obey God perfectly. God says to be kind. Have you ever been unkind? *Pause for responses.* That's sin. God says to tell the truth. Have you ever told a lie? *Pause for responses.* That's sin. God says to be thankful. Have you ever whined or been grumpy or rude? *Pause for responses.* That's sin.

Teacher 1: God said the punishment for sin is death and being apart from God. Let's say, "Oh no!" *Do so.* That's the worst news ever! But wait. There's good news too!

Teacher 2: Draw a simple drawing of a baby in a manger and have them guess who it is. Then uncover baby Jesus on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: God knew we needed to be rescued from our sin. Just one sin separates us from God because he is holy and perfect and wants us to be the same. So he sent his only Son, Jesus, to earth. He came as a little baby—the only perfect baby who has ever been born. We sin, but Jesus never sinned! Let's rock our baby. *Do so.*

Teacher 2: Draw a man to represent Jesus and have them guess who it is. Then uncover grown-up Jesus on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: Jesus grew into a man—the only perfect person who has ever lived. He did lots of amazing things, like healing people, making storms stop, and raising people from the dead. Let's say, "Wow!" *Do so.*

Teacher 2: Draw a cross and have them guess what it is. Then uncover the cross on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: Jesus lived a perfect life and never did anything wrong. But some bad people killed Jesus by putting him on a cross. Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for the wrong things we've done so we wouldn't have to. Let's quietly pretend to cry. *Do so.*

Teacher 2: Draw the tomb with the stone rolled away and have them guess what it is. Then uncover the tomb on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: Here's amazing news. Jesus didn't stay dead! They killed him, but because he's God, he brought himself back to life! Let's jump up and down and shout, "Hooray!" *Do so.*

Teacher 2: Draw a gift and have them guess what it is. Then uncover the gift on the **GOSPEL POSTER**.

Teacher 1: Jesus did all this because he loves you. He loves you so much, he laid down his life. That means he died for you. He wants you to be one of his sheep, one of his children. That's the best gift you can ever receive—the gift of being in God's family. Let's call our puppet pal, Paddy, and talk a little more about this.

Sing a song to give one teacher time to get behind the puppet stage and to allow kids to move a little before the puppet show. Songs are at the end of each day's lesson.

Part 2: 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.

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 lost sheep.

Teacher: Oh no! That's 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 wandered off.

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 Bible lesson that talks 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, making the puppet go crazy.

Puppet: I'm so glad they found him!

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

Puppet: How do we follow Jesus?

Teacher: Remember how we said everyone sins (Romans 3:23)? Everyone does wrong things—everyone. Uncover the word *Admit* on the GOSPEL POSTER. God wants you to admit

◆ Gospel Poster

★ Day 1 Puppet Script
(2 copies)

□ Boy or girl puppet and
puppet stage

□ Clipboard

✦ The puppet can be dressed in a small VBS T-shirt or farm-hand type shirt. To make a small VBS T-shirt, print, 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.



✦ You may want to have counselors ready to talk more with interested students about salvation in a safe place.

◆ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

□ Emerald Crossing Maps,
1 per person



✦ Gospel Opportunity

✦ The front page of each day's Student Guide is an overview of today's lesson. The back page matches this section.

you do wrong things—admit you're a sinner. You need to tell him you don't obey all the time and you're sorry for 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 everyone 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.

Puppet: Admit, believe, forever receive!

Teacher: Yep! Well, bye for now, Paddy. See you tomorrow!

Part 3: Animal Pal Review (5 minutes or less)

Summarize the lesson, using the **DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER** and the questions below.

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.
- Do sheep wander, or get lost, from their shepherd? Yes.
- Can people get lost too? Yes. We need the Good Shepherd, Jesus.
- The sheep's name is Mia (My-a). Mia is a popular name in Ireland. It means "mine." The Lord is *my* shepherd. Can you say the Lord is mine—he's your shepherd? Take answers.

Continue reviewing with the following questions and have the kids "baa" like a sheep if the answer is yes and get on all fours like a sheep if it is no.

1. Does God compare us to bears in Psalm 23? No—get on all fours. He compares us to sheep.
2. Is God the Good Shepherd? Yes—"baa."
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.

Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Since the maps are all the same, it's best to not put names on them until the last day when kids can take them home. It goes much faster passing them out without names.

Apply It!

In the remaining time, complete one or more of the following ideas in class. You won't have time to do them all, but these ideas are also on the back of the Pre-Primary Student Guides. Send the Student Guides home each day as a fun review and also encourage the kids to do the practical ideas in the Go and Do section that apply today's lesson to real life. They're important!

Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add them to your supply 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

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.

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do the motions 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 Verse: He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. Psalm 23:2

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

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. With someone's help, check AnswersVBS.com for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?

Song 1: Mary Had a Little Lamb—Psalm 23 Version

Explain that Jesus' mother is named Mary and Jesus is called the Lamb of God in the Bible.

VERSE 1:

Mary had a little lamb (Clap)
Little lamb, little lamb (Clap)
Mary had a little lamb (Clap)
His name was Jesus Christ (Clap)

VERSE 2:

He was born in Bethlehem (Rock a baby)
Bethlehem, Bethlehem (Rock a baby)

He was born in Bethlehem (Rock a baby)
Just as the Bible said (Rock a baby)

VERSE 3:

He came to save sinners like me (Turn around)
Sinners like me, sinners like me
(Turn right and left)
He came to save sinners like me (Turn around)
I can become his child (Turn right and left)

Song 2: Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Sheep Gone?

VERSE 1

Oh where, oh where has my little sheep gone?
(Put your hand above your eyes and "search")
Oh where, oh where can he be? (Repeat)
Of the hundred sheep, one has wandered off.
(Use two fingers to make a sheep wandering off)
Oh where, oh where can he be?
(Repeat first motion)

VERSE 2

Oh where, oh where has my little sheep gone?
(Repeat first motion of verse 1)
Oh where, oh where can he be? (Repeat)
I will go to look for my little lost sheep. (March)
Oh where, oh where can he be?
(Repeat first motion)

VERSE 3

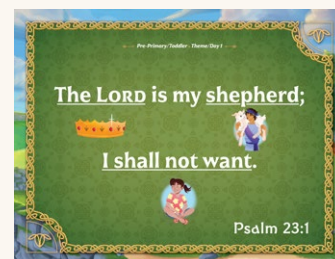
I've found my sheep. I will bring him home.
(Smile and put "sheep" around your neck)
How happy, happy I'll be. (Smile as you bob your head to each side)
Let's rejoice, be glad, the lost sheep is found.
(Jump up and down)
How happy, happy we'll be.
(Bob your head from side to side)

Repeat Verse 1

- ◆ Theme Verse/Day 1 Memory Verse Poster
- ◆ Optional: Day 2 Memory Verse Poster

★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player

- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies



- ★ "Mary Had a Little Lamb" song
- ★ "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Sheep Gone" song

- Stream the songs or use the Simple Songs for Kids CD (1231410)
- Device to play songs

◆ As you introduce new songs this week, if there are some the kids really like, feel free to just keep singing those instead of adding more.