

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: I can follow God.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
FOLLOW GOD: Kids follow “God” in a game.	SUPPLIES: Lyrics and score of “Be a Sheep,” CD or MP3 player (optional)	SUPPLIES: Tape (rope or plastic cones), Stuck to God Maze (page 47), and Stuck to God Sheep (page 48), white copy paper, card stock, kid-safe scissors, markers, large paper clips, magnets
STUCK TO GOD: Kids make and navigate a maze with magnetic sheep.		
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God is always with us.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
SIMPLY SHEEP: Kids play a tabletop game with straws and cotton-ball sheep.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Straws, cotton balls, tables and chairs, rope, (tape or plastic cones)
VALLEY OF SHADOWS: Kids navigate through a human obstacle course.		
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Big or small, we can ALL follow God!	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
FOLLOW ME: Kids pair up for a mirror-the-action game.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: None
FLEXIBLE FOLLOWERS: Kids both follow and lead in a human-obstacle-course game.		



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation’s story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: I can follow God.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksundayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Lord Is My Shepherd Storytelling

Set Up: Become familiar with the song, “I Just Wanna Be a Sheep,” if you don’t already know it. Listen to the song at the website of Bryan Howard, the song writer. Set up CD or MP3 player if using one.

Activity Instructions

Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! Our story today is called The Lord Is My Shepherd, and it’s a special story because at the end there is a song in it. Let’s read it!

Pass out Spark Story Bibles, and assist kids in finding The Lord Is My Shepherd on page 160. Read pages 160-161 aloud to the kids. **Look at these sheep, they look so happy! Why do you think they are so happy?** (*They know David will take care of them, they know they are safe, they know their shepherd is watching over them.*) **Here’s the rest of the story.** Read pages 162-163 aloud. **Did you notice the David’s song at the end of the story?** Pause. **Let’s read that again.** Read page 163 aloud again. **David knew that God loved him and was always with him. How do you know that God loves you and is always with you?** Accept all answers. **Sheep follow their shepherds, and shepherds keep their flock safe. God is like our shepherd and will keep us safe.**

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

CD or MP3 player (optional)

I wish we knew the tune to David's song so we could sing it, but we don't. I do have another song we can sing, though, that will help us remember the story.

Sing "I Just Wanna Be a Sheep," using a recording and CD or MP3 player if you wish.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Follow God

Set Up: Locate or clear a large open area where kids can run. Mark three lines on the ground using tape, rope, or cones, one in the center of the area and one on each end.

Activity Instructions

We're going to play a game where we follow "God." I will be our first pretend "God" to start off. Stand at one end of the center line you created. **I have divided our space into three parts, please stand on the center line facing me.** Point to one of the end lines and say, **That line is our north line, and** point to the other end line, **and this line is our south line. When I say "north," run to the north line. When I say "south," run to the south line, and when I say "center," run to the center line. The last person to the line each time will come over and help me give directions. We'll play until there is only one kid left, and that person will be our next "God" to give you directions. Does everyone understand?** Play the game. After kids get the hang of it, make it more difficult by saying "north" or "south" but pointing to the opposite line. Play as long as kids are engaged or until you run out of time.

Wow, you played hard! Come over and have a seat for a minute. Wait until all kids are seated around you. **You did a great job of following "God." Was it easy or hard to do?** Allow all answers. **Following God can be hard at times. God is always with us, showing us the way.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Tape, rope, or plastic cones

Stuck to God

Set Up: Make copies of Stuck to God Maze on white paper and of Stuck to God Sheep on card stock. Cut out the sheep, one per kid. Set out markers (rather than crayons, as crayons will make it difficult for magnets to work) on tables where kids can easily access them.

Activity Instructions

We have a maze today! Pass out Stuck to God Mazes to kids. I see some happy things on our maze, what about you? Accept answers. **Do you see some things that could be scary? (wolf, mountains) Whom do you see at the end of the maze? (David) First, let's color our mazes to make them more interesting.** Allow time for kids to color their mazes. **I have a special sheep for each of you.** Pass out sheep, paper clips, and magnets. **We can help the sheep follow the maze to David with our paper clips and magnets.** Demonstrate putting a paper clip on the sheep,

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Stuck to God Maze (page 47), 1 copy per kid
Stuck to God Sheep (page 48), 1 copy per kid
White copy paper
Card stock
Kid-safe scissors, 1 per kid
Markers
Large paper clips, 1 per kid
Magnets, 1 per kid

placing the sheep at the beginning of the maze, and moving the sheep by placing the magnet under the maze. Allow time for kids to run the sheep through the maze a few times. **Just like our sheep follow David, we can follow God!**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

You all did a great job following in our games today. Please stand up and line up behind me, and we'll close with a following prayer.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Walk around the room, weaving in and out of furniture or just walking in an "S" while you pray:

Dear God,

We are your sheep. Thank you for leading us and always being there for us. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: God is always with us.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksondayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Lord Is My Shepherd Storytelling

Today's story is in Psalms, and I have a trick for you to find it. The book of Psalms is about in the middle of the Bible. Hold your closed Bible with both hands, and with your fingers, find where you think the middle pages are. Give kids a moment to do this. **Now open your Bible. Are you in the book of Psalms?** Give kids time to find the book of Psalms, then instruct them to find Psalm 23 on page 596. Invite a volunteer to read Psalm 23 out loud.

Has anyone heard this psalm before? Where? Accept answers to this and the following questions. **This psalm is frequently read at funerals and memorial services. Why do think that is? Some people think of the darkest valley in verse 4 as death. But there are other dark valleys, or hard times, in our lives, too. Can anyone think of a hard time that you, or a friend, or even the world, has faced?** Answers will vary, but may include parents divorcing, moving, natural disasters, war, etc. **Let's look at the last verse, verse 6, again.** Read verse 6 out loud. **This is the good news—that God is always with us, through good times and bad!**

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Simply Sheep

Set Up: Arrange chairs around rectangular tables, so they are directly across from one another.

Activity Instructions

We're going to play a partner game. Divide kids into pairs, and ask them to sit opposite their partner at the table(s). Give each kid a straw, and give kids on one side of the table(s) a cotton ball. **The kids on this side of the table** (point to one side of the room) **will try to blow cotton-ball sheep off the table. The kids on the other side of the table** (point to the other side of the room) **will pretend to be God and try to keep the cotton-ball sheep safe and on the table. Ready?** Give kids a few minutes to play, then have them switch roles.

Was it easy to keep the cotton ball on the table, or did anything make it difficult?

(difficult when partner blew it away from me) **Let's make it a bit more complicated!**

Pass out a few more cotton balls to the kids who already have one. **Now you are really like our shepherd, God, because you have lots of sheep to care for!** Give kids a few minutes to play, then have them switch roles and play for a few more minutes. **You kids did a great job trying to keep the sheep safe! You were always watching for them and working hard to try to keep the cotton-ball sheep safe, just like God is always with us and watching out for us!**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Straws
Cotton balls
Tables and chairs

Valley of Shadows

Set Up: Locate or clear a large area, so kids have room to move around. Mark start and finish lines with rope, tape, or plastic cones.

Activity Instructions

We're going to number off into two groups for the next game. [Name], **will you start by saying "one"?** Once kids have numbered off, have one group line up at the end of the room and the other group scatter in the open space between the start and finish lines. **The goal for those of you on the starting line is to run to the other side without being tagged. The rest of you will be shadows in our "valley," the open space, and will try to tag the other kids. If you are tagged, you will join the shadows. The shadows will only be able to move in the way I tell them. For example, I might tell the shadows to hop on one foot or to sit down and wave their arms wildly. Any questions?** Begin the game, using the suggestions below for shadow movements or make up your own.

Shadow movements:

Hop on one foot

Sit down and wave your arms wildly

Crawl like a baby

Slither like a snake

Jump like a bunny

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Rope, tape, or plastic cones

Walk backwards
Gallop
Sit down and scoot

When only one person remains untagged, play again, allowing the untagged person to call out the shadow movements.

That was fun to watch! It seemed to me that the types of movements the shadows were making made a difference in how easy it was to get across the valley. That's a lot like the valley of shadows in our lives—some are easier to get through than others. But no matter what, God is always with us!

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

I'm glad you were here at Bible Skills and Games today! I had fun, and I hope you did, too! Let's close with a popcorn prayer, where you'll have a chance to add the name of someone you would like God to be with.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Dear God,
Help us remember that you are always watching over us and with us all the time. We especially pray that you will be with invite kids to take turns saying the names of people they would like to pray for. **Help these people know that you are always watching over them and are with them all the time, too.**
Amen.

Workshop Focus: Big or small, we can ALL follow God!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Lord Is My Shepherd Storytelling

Welcome to Bible Skills and Games. I'm glad you're here! Today we're going to learn about the Twenty-Third Psalm. It's about a very special shepherd. Pass out Spark Story Bibles to the younger kids and Spark Bibles to the older kids. Assist them in finding Psalm 23 on page 160 of the Spark Story Bible, and page 596 of the Spark Bible.

Invite an older kid to read aloud Psalm 23 from his or her Spark Bible. **Hmm, this is kind of tricky to understand, isn't it? Let's read it from the Spark Story Bible.** Read pages 160-162 in the Spark Story Bible out loud. **Now we are to the part that we read in the Spark Bible. I'd like to have you repeat each line after me.** Read page 163, allowing time for kids to echo each line after you. Give older kids time to place their stickers, with younger kids helping them.

It really helped me to understand Psalm 23 to read it from the Spark Story Bible, what about you? Accept answers. **Who can tell me what they think Psalm 23 is about?** Accept answers, guiding discussion to include that God is our shepherd. **That's right, God is our shepherd, and we are God's sheep! Sheep follow their shepherds, and we are to follow God. Big or small, we are all invited to follow God! So we're going to play some following games today.**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Follow Me

For this game we need to be in pairs, with each pair having a younger kid and an older kid. Once kids are paired up ask them to stand facing each other, making sure there is enough room between pairs for kids to move. **The oldest kid in each pair is going to be a mirror. Yes, a mirror! Now what does a mirror do?** Accept answers. **A mirror reflects only what you do when you're looking into it. So if you are a mirror, you will do whatever your partner is doing, following each action and facial expression as closely as you can. For example, if your partner smiles, the mirror smiles. If the partner jumps, the mirror jumps. The goal is for both kids in a pair to be doing the same thing at the same time. I'll give you a hint—the more slowly you move, the easier it will be for your mirror! Let's see how closely our mirrors can follow!** Play the game, encouraging kids' efforts and assisting kids who need ideas for actions to do. After a few minutes switch roles, so the younger kids get to follow the actions of the older kids. Remind the older kids to keep their actions simple if needed. Play as long as time allows and kids are interested. When done, ask kids to sit down where they are and say, **Wow, that was pretty funny to watch! Was it fun to do? Which was more fun, doing the actions or being the mirror? I saw some great teamwork, too! What did your partner do that helped you be more successful at following his or her actions?** Accept answers. **Following God is like that, too. We don't always know what to expect, but we do know that God is always with us and will show us the way. Big or small, we can all follow God! We follow God when we pray and help others. We follow God when we read the Bible and sing in church. We follow God when we invite our friends to Sunday School.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Flexible Followers

Set Up: Locate or clear a large area so kids have room to move around.

Activity Instructions

Divide kids up into groups of no less than four and have them line up in a row.

I am going to say a pose, and the first person in each line will strike that pose. Then the next person in each line will figure out a way to get in front of the first person and then get into the same pose. For example, if I told the first person in line to hunch down on all fours, the next person might leapfrog over them. The people in the line next to you may be doing a different thing, but you need to follow what the people in *your* line are doing. Once everyone in the line has gotten over/around/through the first person, that person will go to the end of their line, and we'll do it again so everyone gets a chance. Start the game, using the suggested poses below or making up your own.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Suggested poses:
hunch down on floor
stand with legs spread apart
lie down on floor perpendicular to the line of kids
sit down with crossed legs
stand with arms out
bend over and make a bridge with your hands on the floor

It was interesting to see the different ways you came up with to get through the game. Were some easier than others? Accept answers. **This game reminds me of what it's like to follow God. There are different ways to do it, and sometimes it's easier than other times. But no matter how big or small we are, we can all follow God!**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

You all did a great job of following today! Before we go, let's say a following prayer. Do I have a volunteer to help me? Chose a reader to lead the prayer, allowing him or her to read the prayer from the Leader Guide. **[Name] is going to read our prayer today, please repeat each line after him/her.**

Spark Resources
Family Pages

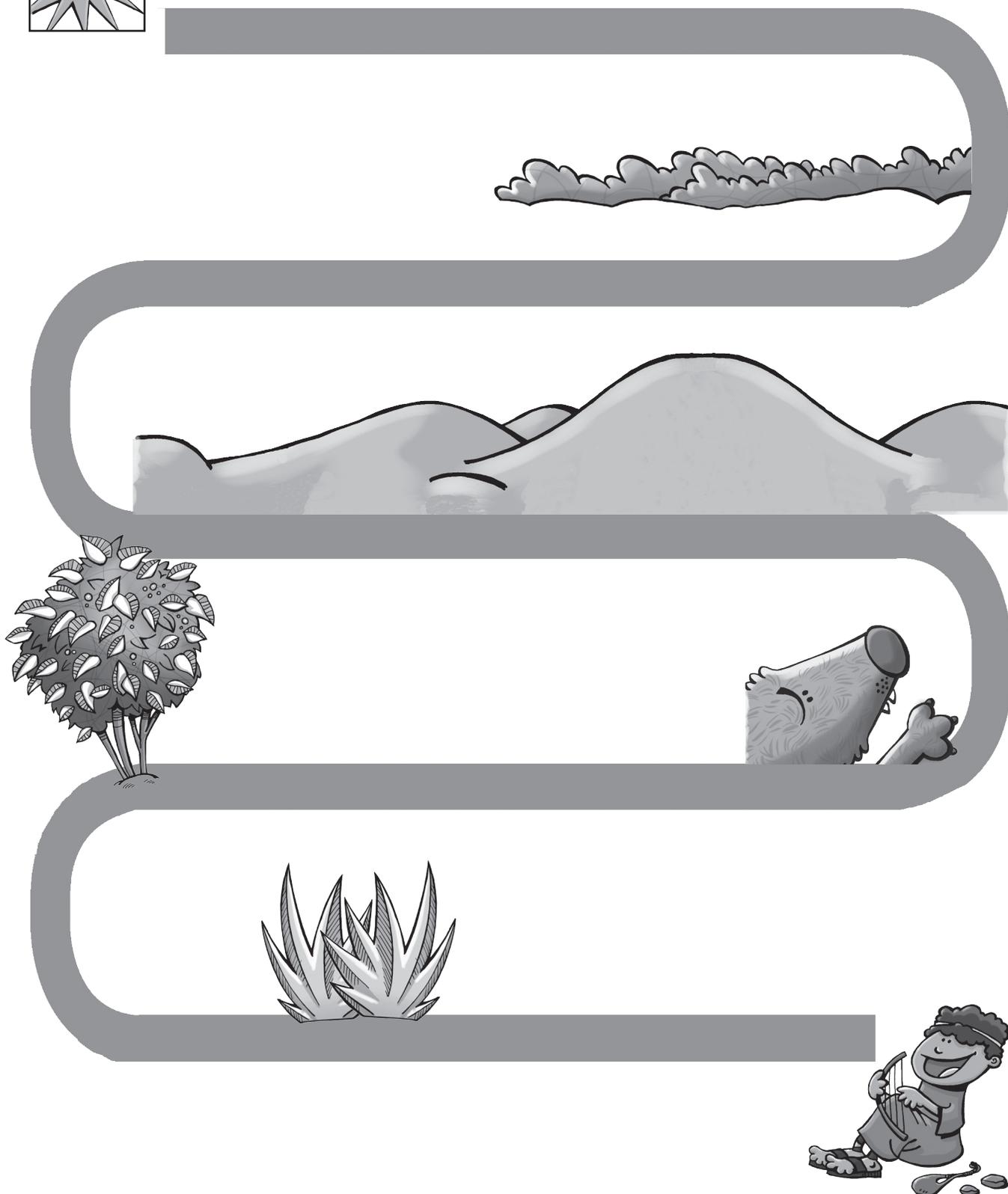
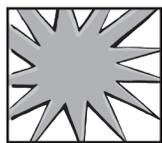


Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Dear God,	(echo)
Whether we are big.	(echo)
Whether we are small,	(echo)
We can all	(echo)
Follow you!	(echo)
Amen.	(echo)

Stuck to God Maze



Stuck to God Sheep

