

Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

## Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
<b>Lower Elementary</b>		
<b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> God holds our hands as we walk through life.	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None
<b>SHEEP SNACK:</b> Kids trace their hands and create a fluffy, popcorn-sheep snack.	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> None	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> Microwave popcorn, pretzel sticks, soap, water, towels, paper plates, markers, microwave, large bowl
<b>Upper Elementary</b>		
<b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> God sticks with us through good and bad times.	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles
<b>STICK TOGETHER CRUNCH:</b> Kids make a crunchy snack mix that sticks together like God sticks with us.	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> Masking tape, pens, paper, markers	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> Pretzel sticks, corn checkerboard cereal, round oat cereal, crispy rice cereal, white chocolate chips, soap, water, towels, baking trays, wax paper, dry measuring cups, large mixing bowl, microwaveable bowl, microwave, spatula, spoons, freezer, napkins
<b>All Kids</b>		
<b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> God cares for us, even when we feel baaaaad.	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	<b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None
<b>FLOCK BLOCKS:</b> Kids turn angel-food-cake blocks into a Twenty-Third Psalm flock of sheep.	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> Cotton balls	<b>SUPPLIES:</b> Coconut, green food coloring, blue food coloring, non-dairy whipped topping, angel food cake, softened butter, powdered sugar, vanilla extract, marshmallow cream, soap, water, towels, electrical outlet, mixer, large mixing bowl, large sealing plastic bag, measuring cups, measuring spoons, plates, spoons, toothpicks, napkins, cleaning supplies



Visit [www.sparksondayschool.org](http://www.sparksondayschool.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:** God holds our hands as we walk through life.

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](http://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

Welcome the kids with a handshake. **When do you hold an adult's or bigger kid's hand?** (*When I cross the street or feel afraid. When I'm in a busy or new place.*) **A bigger hand can help us know where to go or when to stop.**

Play an "attached" game of follow the leader. Lead the line to weave around chairs and in and out of the door to the classroom. **Let's play a game! Make a line behind me. Turn to face the door and hold hands with the friends on both sides of you. Follow the line!** End the game in a seated circle.

Distribute the Spark Story Bibles. Help the kids open to The Lord Is My Shepherd on pages 160-163. **Today's Bible story is about sheep and a shepherd that leads them. Let's read to see what the sheep are doing. Every time I say the word "sheep" in the story, you give a "baa."**

Read the story aloud, pausing when you read the word, "sheep," to allow for the kids' sound effects. **Who is our shepherd?** (*God*) **How does God take care of us?** (*gives us all we need, helps, leads, protects, comforts, and loves us*) **God gives us teachers and parents who can show us the way.**

**When we are holding hands, we feel safe and strong. God is a friend that holds our hand to help us feel safe. God is always with us, through our good and bad days. God holds our hands as we walk through life.**

Spark Resources  
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies  
None

# Activate Faith (25 minutes)

## Sheep Snack

Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

### Ingredients (serves 8):

- Microwave popcorn, 3 bags, 3.3 ounces (93.3 grams) each
- Pretzel sticks, 2 cups (220 grams)

Make sure the kids wash their hands with soap and water before you begin. **Wash your hands with soap before we start. As you scrub away the germs, sing a round of "Old McDonald." Use a sheep as one of the animals on the farm.**

Give each kid a plate and a marker. Help kids separate their thumbs from the rest of their fingers and then trace their hands on their plates. **Look at your hand! It fills the whole plate! We are going to turn your hand into a sheep like the ones in Psalm 23.**

Instruct the kids to turn the plates so that the traced fingers are pointing downward. **Your thumb is the face of the sheep. Use the markers to give the sheep eyes, a nose, and ears. Let's give our sheep smiling faces. They are smiling because they are happy under the care of David, their shepherd.**

Help the kids add hooves to the tips of the four fingers. **The sheep use their hooves to go all over the place. Move the plate to make the sheep move. The sheep in David's flock run in fields, bend down to eat grass, and drink water from a stream.**

Hide the plate behind your back. **If a sheep wandered away, the shepherd would go find it, put it over his shoulders, and carry it to safety.**

Growl at the plate sheep like a wild animal. **When a wild animal came after the sheep, the shepherd would protect it. The sheep in David's flock were safe and unafraid, because their shepherd was always with them.**

**In the psalm, David sings a song about God as a shepherd. Wherever we walk, God is with us. Where are some places we walk?** (*home, school, park, sidewalk, store*) Give each kid a chance to respond. Each time a kid gives an answer, lead the group to respond in unison, **"God walks with us!" God, our shepherd, protects and guides us.**

Lead the kids to rest their hands on the traced hands on their plates. **God holds our hands as we walk through life.**

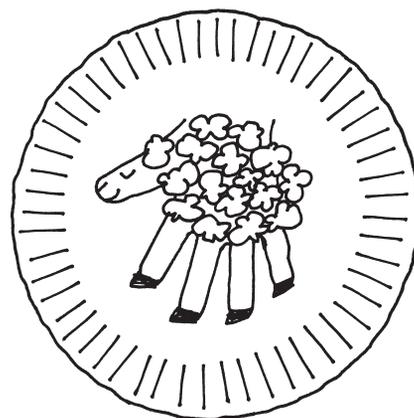
Pop popcorn in a microwave. As the popcorn pops, talk about hard days. **Hard times pop up in our lives. What kinds of things could happen to make a day feel bad?** (*miss the bus, feel sick, break a toy, fall down*) **God is with us, helping us through days that are bad and good.**

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Paper plates  
Markers  
Microwave  
Large bowl



Pour the popcorn into a large bowl. If a kernel or two flies out of the bowl, gather it up. **Don't wander too far, little sheep! Come back to the flock!**

Give kids a handful of popcorn to cover their sheep hand. **Use this popcorn to give your hand sheep some fluffy wool. Cover your handprint with the popcorn. God covers us with love and protection, just like a wool covers sheep.**

Give each kid a serving of pretzel sticks on their plates. **Use the pretzel sticks to spell out or draw some things that make you feel afraid or worried.** Allow time for the kids to share. **When you feel afraid or worried, remember that God is with you, holding your hand to bring you comfort.**

**Rearrange your pretzel sticks as the legs on your hand sheep. What else can you draw around your sheep with the pretzels?**

**God is like our shepherd. God guides and leads us. God protects and helps us. God loves us! God holds our hands as we walk through life.**

**Eat up your crunchy snack.** Allow the kids to refill their hand sheep until the leftovers are gone.

If time allows, clean up the cooking workshop area. **Let's clean up from our cooking adventure.**

## 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.

**God is our shepherd. God loves us and guides us. God is with us on good and bad days. God holds our hand as we walk through life.**

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
None

### Prayer Time

**At the end of each line of the closing prayer, baa like a sheep. Let's pray!**

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for helping us. (Baa!)**

**Thank you for loving us. (Baa!)**

**Thank you for holding us close. (Baa!)**

**Amen. (Baa!)**



**Workshop Focus:** God sticks with us through good and bad times.

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## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### The Lord Is My Shepherd Storytelling

**Set Up:** Prepare two pictures to use for this activity as described below.

#### Activity Instructions

As the kids arrive, give them two pieces of masking tape and a pen. **On one piece of tape, write words or draw pictures about a good time. On the other piece, record a tough time.**

Gather around two drawings: a sunny hill beside a lake and a storm over a dark valley. **Stick your happy tape on the sunny picture and your difficult time tape on the stormy picture.** Allow time to share stories. **Our good and bad times stick with us.** Point to the appropriate pictures. **Sometimes we feel relaxed and happy. Sometimes we feel afraid, worried, and sad. We may feel both at the same time! Life is filled with good and bad times.**

**In Psalm 23, a shepherd named David wrote about good and bad times. David compares God to a shepherd and God's people to sheep. Let's read!**

Distribute the Spark Bibles and Spark Bible Stickers. Help the kids find Psalm 23 on pages 596-597. **Open your Spark Bibles to the middle, and you may be in the book of Psalms.** Ask for volunteers to help read the story. **We will read about**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

Masking tape  
Pens  
Paper  
Markers

**sunny and stormy days. As you listen, point to the picture that best matches what is in the psalm. Add a Makes Me Feel Spark Bible Sticker to your Bible near this passage.**

**How is God like a shepherd?** (*caring, helps, leads us*) **God sticks with us through good and bad times.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Stick Together Crunch

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*Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

#### Ingredients (serves 10):

- Pretzel sticks, 2 cups (220 grams)
- Corn checkerboard cereal, 1 cup (110 grams)
- Round oat cereal, 1 cup (110 grams)
- Crispy rice cereal, 1 cup (110 grams)
- White chocolate chips, 2 cups (220 grams)

**Set Up:** Set out the ingredients and supplies near a microwave. Make room in a freezer for two trays of the snack.

#### Activity Instructions

Tell the kids to wash their hands with soap and water. **The first step in our cooking workshop is to wash our hands.**

Cover two baking trays with wax paper. **In Psalm 23, David tells us that God's love covers all parts of our lives. In good and bad times, God is with us.**

As you put together the recipe, lay out one of each ingredient, so you have a visual reminder of Psalm 23. Keep a Spark Bible open to Psalm 23 (pages 596-597) as you work your way through the recipe.

Hold up a pretzel stick. **Let this pretzel stick remind us of a shepherd's staff, the walking stick that shepherds use to take care of sheep.** Set one pretzel aside.

Lead the kids measure the pretzels and dump them into a large mixing bowl. **"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." This is another way of saying, God takes care of me and gives me all I need.**

Hold up a piece of corn checkerboard cereal. **This cereal reminds us of a little pillow.** Set one piece of checkerboard cereal aside.

Ask the kids to add the checkerboard cereal to the bowl. **"He makes me lie down in green pastures."**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

#### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Baking trays, 2  
Wax paper  
Dry measuring cups  
Large mixing bowl  
Microwaveable bowl  
Microwave  
Spatula  
Spoons  
Freezer  
Napkins

Hold up a circle of round oat cereal. **When we are drowning in our bad days, God throws a life preserver to us. God, the shepherd, stills the stormy waters of our life and restores our troubled souls.** Set a piece of the oat cereal aside.

Guide the kids to measure the oat cereal and add it to the bowl. **"He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul."**

Shape some of the crispy rice cereal into a path. **God, the shepherd, keeps us on the right path.** Set aside some of the crispy rice cereal.

Instruct the kids to add the crispy rice cereal to the bowl. **"He leads me in right paths for his name's sake."**

Hold up two chocolate chip mountains. **The darkest valley runs between these two chocolate chip mountains. Even in the face of evil, David sings that we should have no fear, because God is here.** Set two chocolate chip mountains aside.

Ask the kids to measure the white chocolate chips into a microwaveable bowl. **"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me."**

Pull another pretzel stick from the bowl. **David refers to the shepherd's rod and staff, tools used by a shepherd to keep the sheep together and out of danger. "Your rod and your staff—they comfort me."** Set aside the pretzel stick.

Melt the chips in a microwave for one minute, then stir the chocolate. If necessary, continue to melt the chocolate in 10-second intervals until the chocolate is a smooth sauce. Say verses one through four aloud as you touch each ingredient. **As the chocolate melts, let's review the first part of Psalm 23 with the snack ingredients.**

Lead the kids to pour the chocolate over the dry mixture. **God pours out his love for us by taking care of us like a shepherd cares for his sheep.**

Toss the dry mixture until it is evenly coated with the chocolate. Spoon heaping teaspoons of the coated mix onto the wax paper. Flash freeze the Stick Together Crunch in a freezer for five to seven minutes to cool and harden. **Just as the cereal and pretzels stick together, God sticks with us in good and bad times.**

As the crunchy snack hardens in the freezer, read verses five and six to finish reviewing Psalm 23. **Hear the rest of David's comforting words from Psalm 23. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long."** Ask kids about some tables they have set. Explain the concept of anointing.

Serve each kid a chunk of the Stick Together Crunch on a napkin. **Enjoy your snack!**

# Send (5 minutes)

## Wrap Up

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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.

**We have good and bad moments and days. God promises to be with us through all of it. God sticks with us through good and bad times.**

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



### Supplies

None

## Prayer Time

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Gather in a circle and invite the kids to link arms. **Let's stick together for a prayer.**

**Shepherd God,**

**Thank you for sticking with us through good and bad times. Guide and teach us.**

**Help us to feel your presence as we travel through life. You are a good shepherd,**

**God.**

**Amen.**

**Workshop Focus:** God cares for us, even when we feel baaaaad.

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## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### The Lord Is My Shepherd Storytelling

Welcome the kids to the workshop. Gather in a circle and give each kid a cotton ball. **This may look like just a cotton ball, but it is a little sheep. What do sheep do?** (*baa, eat grass, run, sleep*) As the kids offer ideas, invite them to use their cotton-ball sheep to “pantomime” the activity.

**Psalm 23 is about fluffy sheep and their shepherd. It is also about us and God. As we read, use your sheep as puppets to tell the story.**

Distribute the Spark Story Bibles and Spark Bibles. Help the kids find the story. **In the Spark Story Bible, turn to page 160, to The Lord Is My Shepherd. You will see Squiggles playing with some sheep when you get to the right spot. In the Spark Bible, the find Psalm 23, on page 596-597. Choose** volunteers to read the story aloud from both Bibles. Encourage the kids to follow along and look at the pictures as you read. Pause throughout the story to acknowledge the cotton-ball sheep activities.

Give the older kids Spark Bible Stickers. **Stick an I Read It Spark Bible Sticker in the margins of Psalm 23.**

**Spark Resources**  
Spark Story Bibles  
Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

**Supplies**  
Cotton balls

**What does David compare God to? (a shepherd) What image does David use to show the tough times? (dark valley, evil) God is with us all the time! Even when we feel baaaaad, God cares for us.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Flock Blocks

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*Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

#### Ingredients (serves 8):

- Coconut, 3 cups (330 grams)
- Green food coloring
- Blue food coloring
- Non-dairy whipped topping, 12 ounces (340 grams)
- Angel food cake

#### Marshmallow Frosting

- Softened butter, 1 cup (225 grams)
- Powdered sugar, 1 cup (110 grams)
- Vanilla extract, 1/4 teaspoon (1 ml)
- Marshmallow cream, 8 ounces (227 grams)

**Set Up:** Set out the butter to soften. Measure all of the ingredients for the marshmallow frosting into a mixing bowl ahead of time. You will actually mix it as a part of the activity. Make sure you set up the workspace near an electrical outlet for the mixer.

#### Activity Instructions

Make sure the kids wash their hands with soap and water before the activity begins. **We've been playing with sheep. We better wash our hands before we touch any food. Scrub those hooves, little sheep!**

**The author of Psalm 23 is David. David wrote many psalms, to sing praises to God. David was a shepherd. He knew a lot about sheep.**

Measure the coconut and green food coloring into a sealing plastic bag. Seal it tightly. Pass it around for several kids to shake the bag and dye the coconut into green grass. **David knew that sheep love to eat fresh grass.**

Give each kid a plate. Help the kids spoon a heaping tablespoon of coconut grass onto their plates. **David knew that the sheep liked to run and play in grassy fields. Sprinkle it around, so all of the sheep have a grassy field for grazing and playing.**

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Soap  
Water  
Towels  
Electrical outlet  
Mixer  
Large mixing bowl  
Large sealing plastic bag  
Measuring cups  
Measuring spoons  
Plates  
Spoons  
Toothpicks  
Napkins  
Cleaning supplies

Get help from the kids to dye a container of non-dairy whipped topping a light shade of blue. Let them drip in the food coloring and take turns stirring. Scoop one tablespoon of blue-tinted non-dairy whipped topping onto each kid's plate. **David knew that sheep liked to drink and splash in cool water.**

Have the kids tear an angel-food cake into small chunks and divide the chunks onto their plates. Each kid should have about six cake chunks. **David cared for many sheep at one time. Tear little pieces from this white cake to make a flock of fluffy, white sheep.**

Dip a cake-chunk sheep into the leftover non-dairy whipped topping. Rescue the sheep, and pull it out of the topping bowl with a toothpick. **Sometimes a sheep would wander off and get lost. David's job was to find it and help it feel better. David's flock trusted their shepherd; because they knew that even if they were in baaaaad trouble, David would be there to help. David was a good shepherd.**

**Aha! David had a thought one day. God is like a shepherd! God gives us great places to rest and sleep. God helps us feel comforted when we feel afraid and sad.**

Pull out the premeasured marshmallow-frosting ingredients in a mixing bowl. Mix it until it is smooth and fluffy, for about three minutes. **When storms whip up and when danger comes, God gives us strength.**

Pour a tablespoon of powdered sugar from the frosting recipe onto the table. Use your finger to draw a path in the dusty sugar. **God guides us on the paths of life and helps us do the right things.**

**Use a spoon to scoop some frosting on top of each cake piece. Look at your flock of fluffy sheep!**

**When we are happy, God is with us. When we are worried, God is with us. When we are afraid, God is with us. Even when we feel baaaaad, God cares for us.**

Give each kid a toothpick to use to eat the cake chunks. **Eat up your sweet Flock Blocks snack. It is sweet that God takes such good care of us!**

If time allows, clean the workshop area together. **After you are finished grazing, we can clean up this pasture!**

# Send (5 minutes)

## Wrap Up

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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.

**When danger comes, God is with us. When we get lost and feel afraid, God is with us. Even when we feel baaaaad, God cares for us.**

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



Spark Bibles

### Supplies

None

## Prayer Time

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**David sang many of the psalms he wrote for God. As our closing prayer, we are going to sing the words from Psalm 23 to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Little ones, please hum the tune to the song. Older kids, open your Spark Bibles to Psalm 23 and sing with joy to God! Help the kids find the psalm in their Spark Bibles again. Let's sing this psalm to God!**

The words won't exactly fit the tune, but let the kids belt it out and do their best. Encourage singing and praying with gusto!