

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
<p>Lower Elementary</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Sheep follow the shepherd.</p> <p>SHADOW SHEEP: Kids create shadow sheep puppets to retell the story.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Shadow Sheep (pages 81-82), small craft sticks, cotton balls, glue, scissors, large flip-chart sheets, masking tape, LCD projector or overhead projector, markers (blue, brown, and green)</p>
<p>Upper Elementary</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God gives me many good things.</p> <p>BEING SHEEP: Kids travel as sheep to different stations, where they experience the blessings of the Twenty-Third Psalm.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Being Sheep Script (pages 83-84), blankets, small paper cups, water, pitcher, crackers, small bowl, olive oil</p>
<p>All Kids</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God is my shepherd.</p> <p>FOLLOW THE LEADER: Small groups of kids develop dance choreography for the larger group to follow.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: CD players, Spark CDs or other lively, appropriate CDs</p>



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: Sheep follow the shepherd.

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

Welcome to Creative Drama! What do you know about sheep? Give kids time to respond. **I know that sheep like to follow. Sheep follow their shepherd. The shepherd leads them to quiet, still waters, away from danger, into pastures for food, sometimes into caves for sleeping and safe keeping. The shepherd leads the sheep and cares for the sheep.**

Let's hear a psalm that will tell us why it is good to be sheep, especially if God is our shepherd. Turn to The Lord Is My Shepherd on page 160 in your Spark Story Bibles. Read the story aloud.

Who is our shepherd? (God) What does our shepherd do for us? (*gives us places to rest and sleep, brings us to clear waters, helps us do what is right, protects us, gives us strength*)

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Shadow Sheep

Set Up: Cut out sheep shapes from page 81, one for each kid. Trace and cut them out of large paper. Cut out the pond, tree, and fence on page 82, one per class. Trace and cut them out of large paper.

Activity Instructions

Give each kid a sheep shape, a craft stick, cotton balls, and glue. Direct kids to glue the sheep shape onto a craft stick. Have kids glue cotton balls onto the sheep shape. When kids are finished with their sheep, have the class work together to color the water blue, the tree brown and green, and the fence brown. Use the masking tape to put up the water, tree, and fence on the wall in the place where the projector will project light.

We're going to retell our story using our shadow sheep puppets. Have two or three kids use their sheep puppets to demonstrate the story as you reread it from the Spark Story Bible. Kids hold their puppets in front of the projector, about halfway between the projector and wall so that shadows fall on the wall. Using the puppets, kids act out the story as it's retold. If you have a large group, retell the story as many times as it takes for all kids to use their sheep puppets.

Spark Resources

Supplies

Shadow Sheep (pages 81-82)
Pond, tree, and fence
templates on page 82
Small craft sticks
Cotton balls
Glue
Scissors
Large flip-chart sheets
Masking tape
LCD projector or overhead
projector
Blue, brown, and green
markers

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.

Now that God has given your sheep food, comfort, and protection, what does your sheep have to say? Is your sheep happy, joyful, excited, sleepy, or hungry? What does your sheep sound like? During our closing prayer, let your sheep respond with some baaaaaaas.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Invite kids to sit all over the classroom. Have them use their shadow sheep puppets to add a baaaaaaa when you raise your hand.

Loving Shepherd,

Thank you for the food. (baaaaaaaa)

Thank you for keeping us safe. (baaaaaaaa)

Thank you for green pastures and still waters. (baaaaaaaa)

For your gifts to us, we say thank you! (baaaaaaaa)

Amen.

Workshop Focus: God gives me many good things.

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

Welcome to Creative Drama! God gives us many good things. When we follow God, God showers us with many blessings. Let's read Psalm 23 and find out how God takes care of us. Have a kid read aloud Psalm 23 on pages 596-597 in the Spark Bible. **Put an I Read It Spark Bible Sticker next to the Psalm.**

Let's play a game that will help us practice being followers.

Have kids sit in a circle. Choose one kid to be the guesser, and seat that kid in the middle of the circle. Have the guesser close her eyes while you secretly choose another kid to be the leader. The guesser opens her eyes after the leader has been selected. The leader starts a motion and then changes the motion regularly. The rest of the kids follow, but they try not to let the guesser know who the leader is. The guesser gets three guesses to identify the leader.

I wonder what we learned about following and leading by playing this game. Leaders, what was it like to have everyone watching and following your motions? Followers, did you catch on quickly when the leader changed the motion? How did you try to fool the guesser? Give kids time to respond to each question. **God gives us many good things, like games that teach us about the ideas in Psalm 23.**

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Being Sheep

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

Set Up: Put the props around the room per script instructions: blankets in one area, small cups and water pitcher in another area, a table under which the sheep can hide and another table with the crackers and small bowl and olive oil. Make copies of the Being Sheep Script on pages 83-84.

Pour a little olive oil into a small bowl.

Activity Instructions

Today we're going to pretend to be sheep, like the sheep in Psalm 23. We're going to learn what it means to follow God. We're going to discover the blessings of being God's followers.

Pick kids to take turns reading the Being Sheep Script, as the rest of the class moves to each station.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Being Sheep Script (pages 83-84)

Blankets

Small paper cups

Water

Pitcher

Crackers

Small bowl

Olive oil

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.

What were some of the things the shepherd gave to the sheep in this psalm?

(rest, water, food, anointing, safety, a home) **God gives us many good things.**

What do you think God gives you when you follow? Do you believe God gives us everything we need? Why or why not? Give kids time to respond to each question.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Invite kids to sit in a circle for the closing prayer. **What's a blessing?** (a gift from God, like food, home, family, safety) **I will pause in this prayer and each of you can name a blessing from God.**

Holy Shepherd,

We thank you for the many blessings you give to us.

Each kid names a blessing and together the group responds, **Thanks be to God.**

Help us to follow you. Help us to appreciate all that we have.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: God is my shepherd.

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

Have you ever seen a shepherd with sheep? Who is the leader and who are the followers? (*The shepherd leads, the sheep follow.*)

Turn to The Lord Is My Shepherd on page 160 in your Spark Story Bibles or Psalm 23 in your Spark Bibles on page 596. Read the story aloud. **If you have a Spark Bible, put a red Spark Bible Sticker next to the Psalm after you read it.**

Let's play follow the leader to see how it feels to lead and to follow. Choose one person to be the leader. Have them walk around the room with all others following. They may use an unusual walk, march, or crawl, and the others will do the same. For added fun, allow them to lead all through the church or meeting space. Choose several leaders throughout the game.

What did it feel like to lead? What did it feel like to follow? If God were playing the game, would you rather lead or follow God? Why? Give kids time to respond to each question.

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Follow the Leader

It can feel good to be a leader, and it can feel good to be a follower. Today we'll make up two-minute dances and then teach them to the rest of the class. We will all have the chance to be leaders and followers. You can use music for your dance. When you make up a dance for the rest of us, think of yourself as a shepherd. Your goal is for us to follow you. Make your dance clear, but creative, so we can do it, too. Show us where to go with the music. Show us some moves, and we'll follow you, like sheep follow a shepherd!

Break the kids into groups of three to four. Give the groups 10 minutes to choreograph simple dances that they will teach the rest of the class. Provide each group with a CD player and a Spark music CD or other appropriate, lively music. Consider using alternate spaces if your room is too small. Give each group five minutes to teach their dance to the rest of the class. Adjust the time and group sizes according to the size of your class.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

CD players, 1 per group
Spark CDs or other lively, appropriate CDs, 1 per group

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.

How did your group work together to create a dance? Did the other kids follow your steps? Was it easy to learn the dances? Give kids time to respond. **It can feel good to let ourselves learn something new and put ourselves in the hands of a leader. God is happy to lead us and is happy when we follow.**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Invite kids to sit in a circle for the closing prayer. **At the end of the prayer I will point to each small group, and you will say "God is our shepherd."**

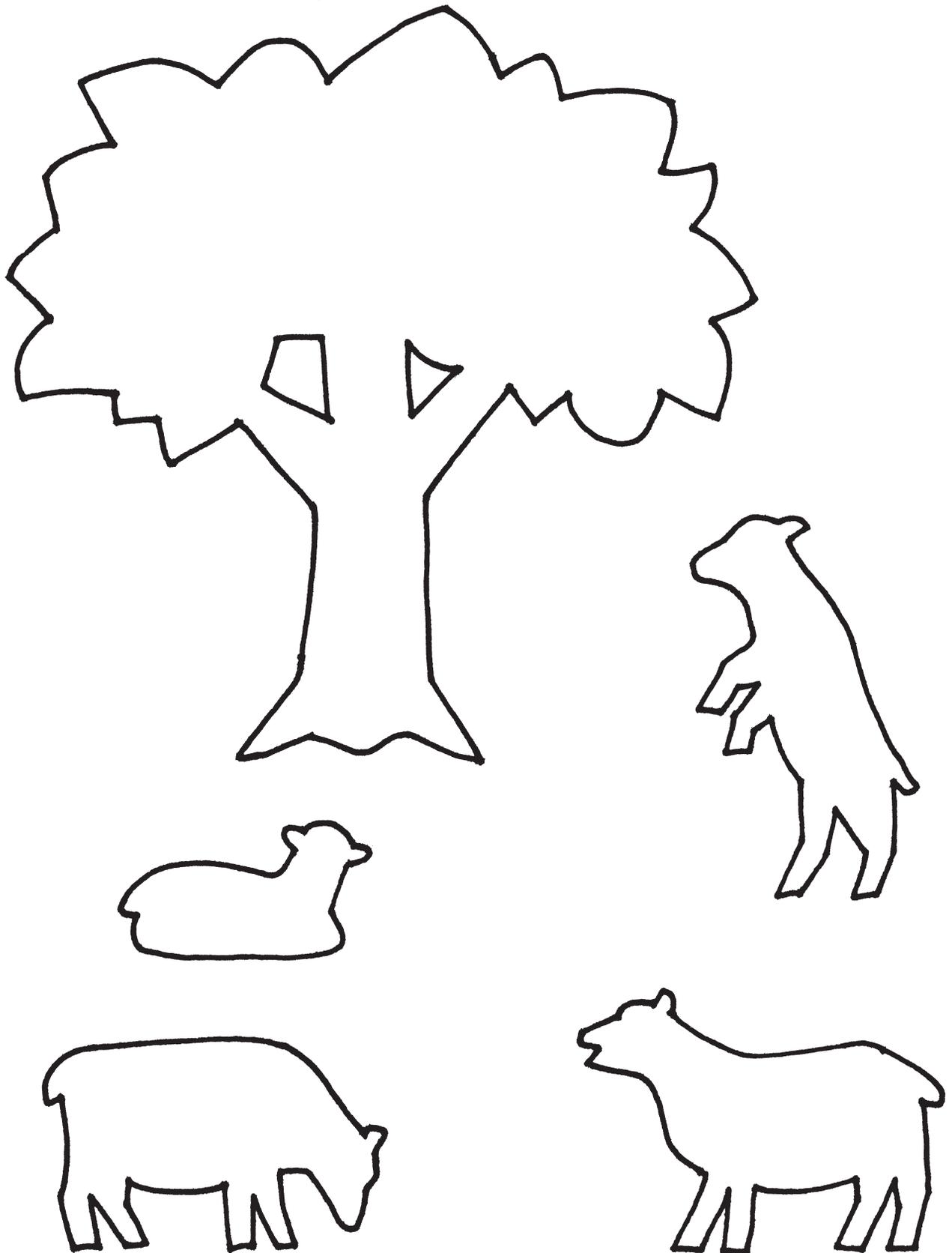
Leading Shepherd,

We thank you for leading us well, for providing food and water, for giving us shelter and love, and for being with us when we are alone.

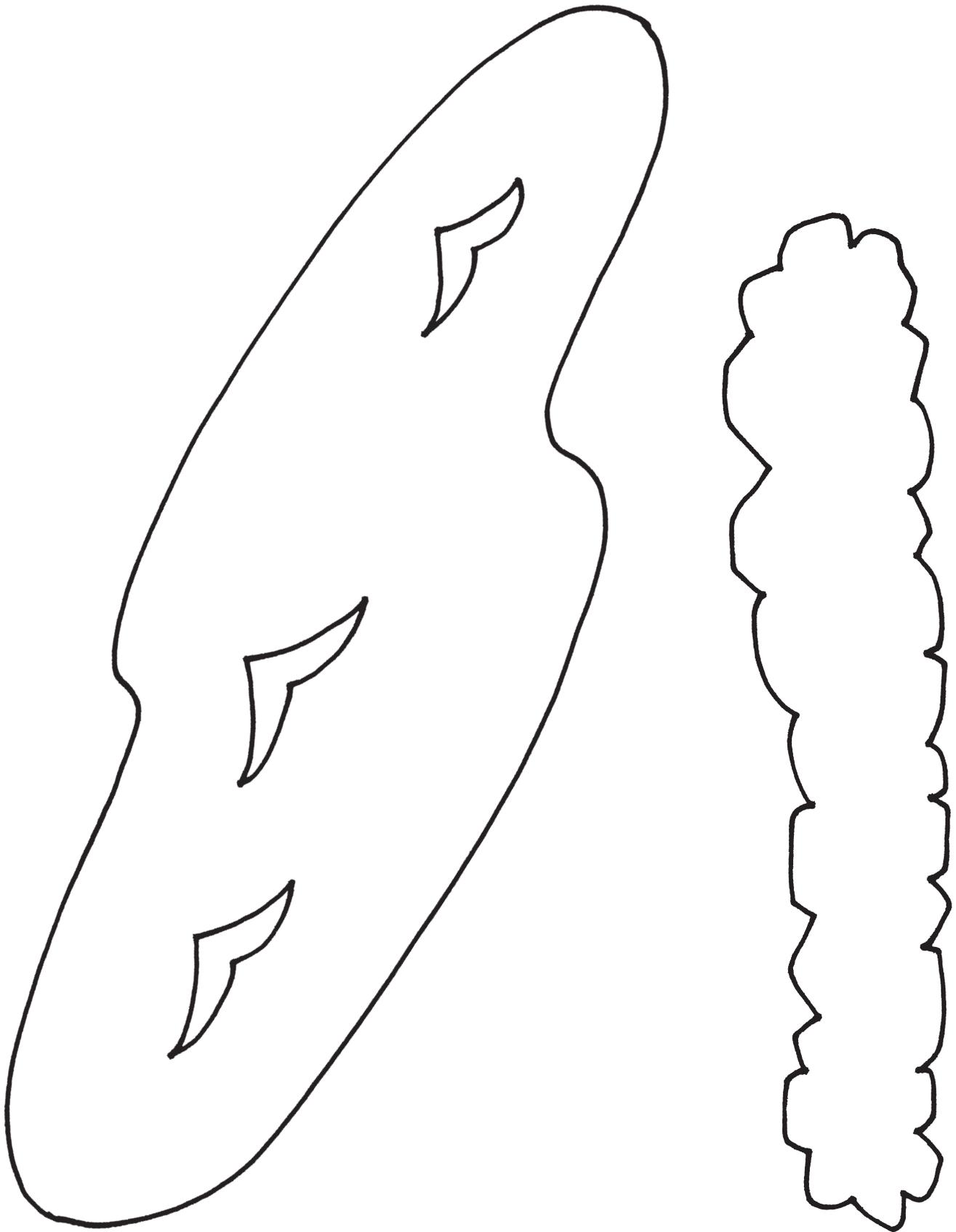
Each small group repeats this line in turn at the end: **God is our shepherd.**

Amen.

Shadow Sheep



Shadow Sheep



Being Sheep Script

Kids move as a group to the pile of blankets on the floor. Have kids lie down on the blankets.

***The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;***

Ah, green pastures. We sheep love to sleep in soft, green pastures. For us, lying in green pastures is like a human lying in a big pile of warm, soft, fuzzy blankets. When we follow the shepherd, we will not be in need of anything. We will have a warm, safe place to sleep.

Kids move as sheep to the cups of water. Pour each kid a drink of water and imagine with kids how a sheep might drink.

***He leads me beside still waters;
He restores my soul.***

I am terrified of moving waters. Rivers, streams, and creeks all move. If I step in, I might fall in. If I fall in, I might drown. No, I will only drink beside still waters—a lake, a puddle, a pond. When I am following the shepherd, I won't be thirsty. The shepherd will make sure I always have plenty to drink and that I'll be safe when I getting my water.

Kids move as sheep underneath a table.

***He leads me in right paths
For his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
For you are with me;
Your rod and your staff—
They comfort me.***

Following the shepherd doesn't mean I won't face danger. I'm a sheep. I like to wander off. I'm not too smart about that. I have an incredible knack for wandering off the path and finding danger. But when I do, the shepherd is nearby with a rod and staff. Those weapons can fend off any wolf or lion. It gives me strength and courage to know that my shepherd will protect me.

Kids move as sheep to stand around the table. Give kids a snack. Talk to kids about what sheep eat in the wild. Make a cross on each kids forehead with olive oil.

***You prepare a table before me
In the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup overflows.***

Even though I'm just a dumb, wandering sheep, my shepherd treats me like an honored guest at a party. My shepherd sets a table for me, even when there's danger all around me. My shepherd makes sure I have plenty to eat, so I can be strong and brave. My shepherd anoints my head with oil. Only kings and special chosen people have their heads anointed with oil. It's a symbol of power, and, yet, my shepherd chooses me. When I follow my shepherd, I will never run out of blessings!

Kids move as sheep to a circle in the center of the room.

***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.***

Sheep live in the caves, not in the shepherd's house. But my shepherd invites me into the house, and gives me all the blessings of an honored guest. What a blessed sheep I am!