

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Welcome to the story of The Lord Is My Shepherd! As the caring leader of your small group of kids, you are an important part of their Spark experience. You also support the other Rotation leaders by being a consistent and friendly presence with your group. Use these Small Group Builders, Conversation Sparks, and Transition Tips to generate conversation and build relationships with your kids. Have fun as you grow in faith together!

Small Group Builders

Try these tips to build relationships, trust, and friendship with your small group of kids when you have a few minutes at the beginning of Sunday school or between activities.

- **Lull-a-Bye**

Did you ever hear or sing a lullaby? David sang the Twenty-Third Psalm to sheep to lull them and put them to sleep. Take turns naming all the lullabies you can remember from when you were little, then sing a favorite or two together. Remember David and his sheep as you sing.

- **Who Do You Trust?**

The sheep trusted David. David trusted the Lord. It's important to trust those who take care of us, and it's important to prove that others can trust us to care for them. Take turns sharing the names of the people you truly trust to care for you and others. What helps you know you can trust these people? How are they like shepherds watching over sheep?

- **Wish, Want, Need**

The Twenty-Third Psalm talks about God giving us what we need. Sometimes, it's easy to get confused when we think about the things we need and the things we want. Invite each person in the group to share something they want and something they need. Which one does God promise to help with?

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Why did David write this song?
- How do you take care of the people in your family?
- How does God protect us?
- How does God comfort us?
- Why do you think David put his thoughts into a song?
- What does "makes me lie down in green pastures" mean to you?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Asleep, Awake Jump**

As you move to your next activity, pretend you are asleep. Then jump up like you are awake. Are you crabby when you are awoken in the morning? Keep jumping as you sleep and awake to your next activity.

- **Walk in the Dark**

The Twenty-Third Psalm says that, even when we walk in the dark, God protects us. Pretend you are walking in the dark. Close your eyes, and put your hands out in front of you. Try to find your way to the next activity without seeing where you're going. Be careful not to run into a wall or the person in front of you! Shepherds should act as "God" and steer kids away from obstacles.

- **Leading in Love**

David took care of the sheep because he was their leader. Celebrate David and today's Bible story by playing a game of follow the leader on the way to your next activity. Stand in a line, and invite the first person to do an action that shows love (like drawing a heart in the air or covering your heart with both hands). Once the leader does their action and everyone follows, the leader can skip to the end of the line and become a follower. Have fun following and leading each other all the way to your next location.

- **Path Finders**

Sheep trust their shepherds to lead them to good and safe paths. Try searching out some good paths as a group while you move toward your next activity. Stay away from crowded and scary hallways, and look for hallways with good things in them instead. Is there a hallway with a drinking fountain where your herd can get a drink? How about a hallway with a window where you can all see the sunshine? Find a path that is safe, like the path David found for his sheep.

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- **Water Ways**

David was a shepherd who took care of his sheep. One of a shepherd's jobs is to help his sheep find good places to get a drink. Still waters are nice and relaxing, while quick-moving waters might be dangerous or too scary for a herd. As a group, think about the different places that water is found in the world and in your community. If you had a herd of sheep, where would you take them to get a drink of cool water?

- **Anointing One Another**

David was anointed as the future king to show that God chose him. God chooses each of us, too! We are all chosen to care for one another and share God's love for the world. Talk about the significance of anointing to show that we, too, are chosen. Use vegetable oil and make a cross on each other's forehead, saying, "You are God's chosen."

- **The Darkest**

In Psalm 23, David talks about walking through the darkest valley. David may have meant actual places where there wasn't much light, but he also may have been thinking about tough times in life. Take a moment to think silently about tough moments that you've had in your life. Invite anyone who's willing to share with the group the dark time and how they felt God's presence. Say a quick prayer asking for God's light to guide you whenever you're in a dark valley.

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Why did David call the Lord "my shepherd"?
- How is your soul restored by God?
- Think about your enemies. How would it feel to have dinner with your enemies?
- A rod and a staff were basic tools for a shepherd. List the basic tools of life today. Why are they basic?
- What do you think "the house of the LORD" looks like?
- Name some "right paths" or good choices that people make. Why does God lead us there?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Hill Climbing**

As you move to your next activity, pretend you have staffs like a group of shepherds. Imagine you are climbing a huge hill with your sheep. Put the staff out in front and pull yourself up the hill. There are a lot of hills to climb, so say some encouraging words to each other as you go.

- **Favorite Song**

David wrote a song to tell everyone that God cares for them. What's your favorite song? On the way to your next activity, take turns singing your favorite songs—loudly! Be sure to sing your praises to God, too!

- **Full Cup Balanced**

As you head to your next location, pretend you have a full cup of water that's running over with God's love. Walk carefully and balance your cup as you walk. Don't spill any water!

- **Long Life**

Psalm 23 promises that God will love each of us our whole life long. As you walk, work together to brainstorm all of the big events in your life in which you will have God's love. When you're born, when you're done with school, when you're married. . . . Don't forget to feel God's love when you get to your next activity!

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- **Shepherd, Teacher, or What?**

David had a very special job—he was a shepherd. God knows that the job of a shepherd is important, but so are all the other jobs people have. What job would you like to have when you grow up? Share your ideas with your group.

- **Splash and Play**

God wants us to splash and play in cool, clear waters. Share stories about playing in the water at water parks, lakes, the ocean, or sprinklers. How do you feel when you splash and play in nice, cold water?

- **Enemy Banquet**

In the Twenty-Third Psalm, David gives thanks for all of the food that God provides. David imagines that God has prepared a huge meal for everyone in the world—even the people we don't get along with. Imagine you are hosting a dinner for your friends and for people you may not like very much. What would you serve to everyone? Don't forget dessert!

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- How is your life overflowing with goodness?
- Why did David compare God to a shepherd?
- I wonder what David feared. What do you think he feared?
- How does God's forgiveness follow us?
- Why is it important to care for each other?
- Where and how do you find rest?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Giant LOVE**

Take giant steps to show how much love God gives us. Each big step will mean more and more love to us and from us to God.

- **Days of My Life**

God loves you all the days of your life. As you relocate, jump to the days of the week—one jump for Monday and another for Tuesday. . . . When you run out of days of the week, start on months.

- **Harp Dancing**

David played the harp as he sang to the sheep. Strum a pretend harp, and dance as you move to the next activity. Use your whole body to strum the harp and dance your way along.

- **Water Falling**

Is it possible that the stream of water in Psalm 23 had a waterfall? On your way to the next location, pretend to be a waterfall. You could be individual trickles of water that form one big line of crashing water, or you could each be your own waterfall and slosh all that water as you move along. Let's hear that water falling!