

Rhythms of Grace • Psalm 23 Year 2

Theme: The Lord is my Shepherd

Scripture: Psalm 23

Date: _____

Location: _____

Volunteer Roles:

Facilitator _____

Storyteller _____

Celebrant _____

Center Leader _____

Guide _____

Items Needed for this Session

Gathering: Items that shepherds might use: stuffed lambs (if you cannot find enough make outline using cardboard), sticks for fire, cloaks, one large crook for leader, headscarf

Storytelling: Jesus doll, Bible, large green piece of felt (will be used in Jan. also), water table with water, altar crate and altar cloth, a side room (or area) to walk to and back.

Response Activities:

Sheep's Wool- a large sheep outline on craft paper or foam board, extra-large cotton balls, glue

Water Table - water table, smooth rocks, cups

Anointing- baby dolls, mirror, lotion

Tell the Story- wooden sheep, shepherd, water in dish, green felt piece (piece used in story telling)

Regathering: *Jesu, Jesu*, Shepherd finds the sheep game (Hide and Seek but using the words “shepherd” for “It” and others are sheep), elements for the Eucharistic table (see Eucharist-Book 1)

Eucharist: altar table and elements (pita bread/rice crackers, juice, chalice, paten, purificator, corporal, altar cloth), Eucharistic Prayer (see Book 1 p. 100), *Gather our Hearts* song lyrics (see Book 1 p. 99)

Dismissal: *Jesus Loves Me* song lyrics (see Book 1 p.99)

Session Plan • Psalm 23

Gathering: Participants will dress up as shepherds and find a sheep to care for. With firewood/sticks create a fire pit near the storytelling area.

Story Telling: see supplies needed, storytelling, Bible and Jesus Doll

Response Activities:

Sheep's Wool- participants glue large balls of cotton on the outline of the sheep to create its wool.

Water Table – participants will pick up the stones from the water and place in the cups. Once done, return the stones to the water. Talk about the stones; what they look like, how they feel, what could be done with the stones.

Anointing-depending on the participant's comfort level anoint a baby doll or oneself on the forehead. Talk about the anointing that shepherds did to heal their sheep and how we anoint each other to heal and bless.

Retelling the story – participants will tell the psalm using the wooden sheep, green pasture, rocks, water, and shepherd. This retelling can be verbal or participants can move the figures as the leader retells the story.

Regathering: Group plays Shepherd Finds the Sheep Game (Hide and Seek but using the names “Shepherd” and “sheep”) Singing *Jesu, Jesu*, leader gives participants an Eucharist element and participant brings it to the Celebrant then sit back down in the circle around the Eucharistic table

Eucharist: Sing: Gather our Hearts

Gather our hearts, oh God.
Gather our thoughts, oh God.
Bring us together around you.

Celebration of the Eucharist

Dismissal: All sing and sign *Jesus Loves Me*,
Celebrant provides a blessing:
Celebrant: “*Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord.*”
Participant: “*Thanks be to God!*”

Story Telling • Psalm 23 • Dec. Yr. 2

*See the psalm for directions
Each participant as shepherds with their sheep*

Our story today is from the Bible (*show Bible*), our book that tells the stories of God and God's people, of Jesus (*show Jesus doll*), God's Son, and of how much God loves us. (*place hands over heart*). Many, many years ago, before Jesus was born, God's people were nomads. That means they moved from place to place and lived in very large tents. They would sit around their fire at night and sing songs. These songs were taught to their children and their children's children. Eventually the music was lost but the words were written down.

This special kind of song is called a psalm. There are 150 psalms in our Bible. Many of these psalms were written by one of the famous people in the Bible, David. Our Psalm, #23, describes God as a shepherd.

Now before we hear this psalm we have to know a little about shepherds in the time of David (remember David was a shepherd as a young boy). Shepherds lived in the outdoors with their sheep, protecting them from wolves and other wild animals that might harm them. They took their sheep to the green pastures to eat the grass and led them to the quiet waters to drink. Shepherds had long sticks called staffs with hooks on the end. With these they could keep dangerous animals away and bring back a wandering sheep. They always had a pouch of oil with them which they would use on their sheep if they were cut or hurt as sheep once hurt do not heal well.

Let's pretend that you are all shepherds with your own sheep. As I tell the psalm Listen for what to do next.

Psalm 23 • Dec. Yr 2

Leader gives explanation and instructions on movement to participants. See instructions in parenthesis.

If possible use a second person to read psalm and then storyteller explains and gives instructions.

LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, *(This means the Lord is like a shepherd who takes care of all our needs. Let's move our sheep to green felt/grass and lay them down and pretend they are eating)*

he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

(God shows me the life giving water and he helps me rest. Let's now move our sheep to the water table pretending to drink)

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

(God shows me the way to live a full life. Let's lead our sheep on a journey. Walk to another room or area with sheep)

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

(Even though I might be in a dark and scary place I know God is with me and will show me the way. Lead the participants, inviting them to hold on to the shepherd in front of them moving through the room and back to the storytelling area)

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

(Even when I don't feel safe you are with me. Form a circle around the altar crate and drape it with the altar cloth)

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

(God's love cares for us. Let's sit in the circle and pretend to put some ointment on a cut on their sheep)

Surely your goodness and love will follow me

all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. *(God loves us and will always be with us. Let's show God's love for our sheep. Let's hold and hug them.)*

David in his song is telling us how much God loves us and if we let him God will take care of us throughout our lives.

Repeat the psalm

Amen.

(After an appropriate pause, the Storyteller goes on to explain the activities of the day)