

Use Week of:

Unit 11 • Session 6

David's Psalm

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Psalm 23

STORY POINT:

David wrote a psalm to praise God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 145:13

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 140

TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 142

APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 148



Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

The Book of Psalms contains 150 psalms—poems, songs, and prayers—from a time in Israel’s history spanning from Moses (about the 1400s BC) to Israel’s exile to Babylon (about the 500s BC). Nearly half of the psalms are attributed to King David.

David wrote Psalm 23, one of the most well-known psalms in the Bible. David’s background as a shepherd equipped him to use the imagery of a sheep and shepherd to describe the Lord’s guidance and care for His people. When Samuel went to Jesse to anoint one of his sons, David was with the sheep. (1 Sam. 16:19) David’s experience protecting his father’s sheep gave him confidence in the Lord’s ability to deliver. (1 Sam. 17:37)

David compared God’s love, protection, and guidance for His people to that provided by a shepherd for his sheep. A shepherd leads his sheep to pastures where they can find food. He watches over his sheep to protect them from danger. He cares for them, lifting a fallen sheep from a pit and ensuring not one is lost.

This was David’s experience of the Lord. He provided for David’s needs. He led him to places of peace and rest. He guided him on the right paths. The Lord was with David, and He is with us.

Point kids to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Jesus had compassion on the crowds who were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36). Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Jesus laid down His life to save people from sin. He assured His disciples that when He returns, He will gather His sheep from among the nations and welcome them into His kingdom. (Matt. 25:32-34) Because of Jesus, we have hope because one day we will live with God forever.

The BIBLE Story

David's Psalm

Psalm 23

In Bible times, people wrote songs called psalms to praise God. **David loved God with all his heart, and he wrote many of the psalms in the Bible.** Before David was a king, he was a shepherd. He fought off lions and bears to protect the sheep. When David thought about God, he realized that God is like a shepherd. **This is a psalm that David wrote about God:**

**"The LORD is my shepherd.
I have everything I need.
He lets me rest in green**

pastures;

**He leads me beside quiet
waters.**

**He gives me strength, and
He leads me along the
right paths**

for His name's sake.

**Even when I go through
the darkest valley,**

**I do not fear danger,
for You are with me;**

Your rod and Your staff

comfort me.

"You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

**Only goodness and faithful love will be with me
all the days of my life,**



and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.”

Christ Connection: David compared God’s love, protection, and guidance for His people to that provided by a shepherd for his sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He laid down His life to save people from sin. Because of Jesus, we have hope that one day we will live with God forever.

**Bible
Storytelling Tips**

- **Use sound effects:** As you tell the story, play calming sound effects of gentle wind or a quiet stream.
- **Pause for effect:** Use pauses and silence between paragraphs to capture kids’ attention.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: David's Psalm

BIBLE PASSAGE: Psalm 23

STORY POINT: David wrote a psalm to praise God.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:13

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share the names of their top three favorite songs. Explain to kids that we can find the words to some songs in the Bible.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Shepherd Word Puzzle" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Shepherd Word Puzzle" on the activity page. Guide kids to count the blanks and fill in the puzzle with words from the lists provided. Kids can work off the word given to figure out the rest of the words.

SAY • All of these words appear together in the Bible—in Psalm 23. Today we will learn more about this special chapter from God's Word.

LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils or crayons
- dry erase board or large piece of paper
- marker

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Person poems

Write the following template and example on a dry erase board or large piece of paper:

Line 1: person's name

Line 2: two adjectives describing the person

Line 3: three verbs describing the person's actions

Line 4: a four-word phrase telling about the person

Line 5: the person's name or nickname

Distribute paper and pencils. Instruct kids to think of a person they know well. Guide kids to use the poem template to write a poem about their chosen person. Allow volunteers to share their completed poems.

SAY • You wrote a poem about a person you know well!

Today we are going to read a poem from the Bible that David wrote about someone he knew well.

Sample poem:

- (1) Henry
- (2) friendly, silly
- (3) cooking, reading,
running
- (4) loves to play
games
- (5) Hank

OPTION 2: Sheep roundup

Form teams of four to six players. Guide one player from each team to stand about eight feet away from her team and hold the bowl on top of her head. Give the rest of the players three “sheep” (marshmallows) each. When you say go, players should try to toss the marshmallows into the “sheep pen” (bowl) on their teammate’s head. Players may retrieve dropped marshmallows and try again.

The first team to land all of its “sheep” in the “sheep pen” wins. Play additional rounds as time allows.

SAY • If sheep are left on their own, they’re in danger of being attacked by predators, getting lost, or getting injured. Sheep need a shepherd! David spent many years of his life as a shepherd. Today we will read how David described God as our shepherd.

- Allergy Alert
- jumbo marshmallows
- large plastic bowls

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: David's Psalm

BIBLE PASSAGE: Psalm 23

STORY POINT: David wrote a psalm to praise God.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:13

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· instrument
· Bible

[Leader enters wearing a colorful outfit and a vest decorated with music notes. He or she carries an instrument of some kind. A Bible is on a table or stool nearby. Leader stands before the kids and plays (or attempts to play) a short tune.]

LEADER • Hello, and welcome back to Mel's Music Shop!

I'm [your name], general manager. I love music! I may not be the best at it, but sometimes it's a great way to express myself when words just aren't enough.

One thing I've discovered as I've been learning with you about the life of David is that David's life was full of music! He played music for King Saul, and David wrote many of the psalms we find in the Bible. Does anyone know what a psalm is? *[Allow kids to respond.]* A psalm is a special song of praise for God.

[Pick up the Bible.] Today I want to tell you about a special psalm David wrote: Psalm 23.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's first review what God was doing through the life of David. When God's people—the nation of Israel—asked for a king, God chose Saul to be Israel's first king. But Saul disobeyed God.

Because of Saul's disobedience, God rejected him as Israel's first king and chose David to be king. Through David's family, God brought forth the last King—Jesus. Jesus is the perfect King who brings peace and salvation to the world. Say our big picture question and answer with me: ***How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. -Giant Timeline

LEADER • David was a young shepherd boy when **God chose David to be king instead of Saul**. David did not become king right away. He served King Saul and won many battles for Israel. King Saul was jealous and wanted to kill David. When David had a chance to kill Saul, **David showed mercy even though Saul hated him**.

After Saul died, David became king and God made a covenant with David. **God promised that the Messiah would come from David's family**.

We saw how **David showed kindness to Jonathan's son**, Mephibosheth. The story we heard last time reminded us that David wasn't perfect. David sinned, but **David repented and God forgave him**.

We read David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51. The story we will hear today is called "David's Psalm." It's about a well-known psalm David wrote. Let's check it out.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Psalm 23. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "David's Psalm."

LEADER • Before David was a king, he was a shepherd.

David knew firsthand that a shepherd's job is to protect the sheep and take care of them. David realized that God is like a shepherd, and we are like sheep. God protects us and takes care of us. **David wrote a psalm to praise God.** Listen again to how David described God: "He lets me rest in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He gives me strength, and He leads me along the right paths."

Like a shepherd, God is with us even in hard times. A shepherd uses a rod to protect the sheep and a staff to lift them out of dangerous places. God guides us and protects us too. Sheep can trust their shepherd completely, and we can trust God completely.

Christ connection

LEADER • David compared God's love, protection, and guidance for His people to that provided by a shepherd for his sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He laid down His life to save people from sin. Because of Jesus, we have hope that one day we will live with God forever.

- Bibles
- "David's Psalm" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 147 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 11, Session 6” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about what they can do when they begin to doubt God in difficult times. Guide them to discuss how they can show God’s love to others who are going through a hard time.

• “Unit 11, Session 6”
questions from kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • When people go tell others that Jesus is the perfect King, God can change lives for the better. That is what happened when the Harrells, missionaries in Mozambique, told Adelina the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, to save her from her sin and to offer her eternal life! Adelina’s life changed dramatically. Watch this video to see how the gospel impacted her life.

• “Changed Life of
Adelina” missions
video

Show the “Changed Life of Adelina” missions video.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Psalm 145:13.

• Key Passage Poster
• “Your Kingdom” song

LEADER • The Lord is our King and our Shepherd! His kingdom will last forever and He loves us! He will protect us and take care of us.

Lead boys and girls in singing the “Your Kingdom” song.

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 28:9.

• “Crown Him With
Many Crowns” song

LEADER • Today—at this very moment!—Jesus is on His throne. He is reigning as our true King. *How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.* Let’s sing.

Sing together “Crown Him With Many Crowns.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, You are our Shepherd. We have everything we need. You let us rest in green pastures; You lead us beside still waters. You give us strength, and You lead us along the right paths for Your name’s sake. Even when we go through the darkest valley, we do not fear danger because You are with us. Your rod and Your staff comfort us. We are the sheep, and You are the Shepherd. Thank You for Your care and protection. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: David's Psalm

BIBLE PASSAGE: Psalm 23

STORY POINT: David wrote a psalm to praise God.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:13

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Psalm 145:13 Word Search" printable
- marker

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:13 together. Then distribute copies of the word search for kids to find the words of the key passage in your preferred translation. As they finish, guide them to turn over their word search and write the key passage on the back from memory.

SAY • Great job! We've been working on this key passage for several weeks. Have you memorized it? [*Allow volunteers to recite the key passage from memory.*] Jesus is the perfect King, and His kingdom will never end. ***How is Jesus the perfect King? Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of kings.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Psalm 23. Explain that the Book of Psalms is the second book of Poetry and Wisdom in the Old Testament. Remind kids that David wrote almost half of the psalms in the Bible.

SAY • **David wrote a psalm to praise God.** We aren't sure when David wrote Psalm 23, but we know he spent time as a shepherd when he was a young boy

in Bethlehem. [*Point to Bethlehem (14) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] David compared God's love, protection, and guidance for His people to that provided by a shepherd for his sheep.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 23:1-2. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. In what ways is God like a shepherd? *Lead kids to discuss some of the descriptions given in Psalm 23. Help them draw on their knowledge of shepherds and sheep as they recount God's protection and care of His people.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 10:11.)
2. Why do you think people sometimes wander from God? *Allow kids to share their own ideas. Consider why sheep wander from a shepherd (distracted, not paying attention, foolish, enticed by something, and so on).*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 9:36.)
3. How is Psalm 23 comforting to you? *Invite kids to share what words or phrases are most meaningful to them. Remind kids that when we trust in Jesus, we are His sheep and He is our Good Shepherd.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 1:3.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Guest speaker

Prepare for this activity by finding someone in the church willing to share how his or her life changed for the better when he or she learned Jesus is the perfect King.

Introduce the guest speaker and allow him to share his testimony. After your guest has shared, pray for him as a group, praising God for changing this person's life for the better. Dismiss the speaker.

Distribute a piece of paper and pencil to each kid. Invite

· paper
· pencils

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

LOW PREP

them to write down all the ways they can think of that God has worked for good in their own lives. Then give kids time to silently pray and praise God for the things they listed.

SAY • David wrote psalms thanking God for all the good things He had done for him. The gospel is good news! Telling others how God is working for good in our lives is one way to point them to Him.

OPTION 2: A wolf in sheep's clothing

Instruct the kids to sit with their heads down and their eyes closed. Walk around the room and discreetly tap one player on the head. That player is the “wolf.” Guide kids to raise their heads and open their eyes.

Instruct the players to each choose an animal—a cat, a sheep, or a chicken. Explain that you will name two animals. Any player who chose one of those animals must stand up and sit in a new seat. Each round, the wolf must also stand up and change seats. The object of the game is for kids to figure out who the wolf is.

After several rounds of naming animals, invite volunteers to guess the identity of the wolf. Play additional rounds if time allows.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

SAY • Wolves prey on animals like cats, chickens, and sheep. We heard in our Bible story today about how God is like a shepherd. **David wrote a psalm to praise God.** David compared God's love, protection, and guidance for His people to that provided by a shepherd for his sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He laid down His life to save people from sin.

Because of Jesus, we will live with God forever.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to help kids hear and follow His voice. Acknowledge our weakness as sheep and praise Jesus for His protection and comfort as our Good Shepherd.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Psalm 23" on the activity page. Kids should choose a verse from Psalm 23 and write it out. Encourage kids to underline words that are most important to them.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Psalm 23" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.