The Shepherd Who Wrote It

1 SAMUEL 17:32-37 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

The LORD is my shepherd: he does for me what David did for lambs.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 1): Psalm 23, The Lord Is My Shepherd. Its big idea: With the LORD as my Shepherd, every step is in his care.
- After this passage (day 3): Mark 6:30-34, Sheep Without a Shepherd. Its big idea: With the LORD as my shepherd, I lack nothing I truly need.

Open

Recall last time (Psalm 23): the whole psalm, read slowly. Today we take its first line apart. Read Psalm 23:1: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Ask: What does a shepherd actually do? Then let David answer from 1 Samuel 17. Big idea: The LORD is my shepherd: he does for me what David did for lambs. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. Who Is My Shepherd? (Psalm 23:1, about 10 min)

The one thing: The first line names who the Shepherd is and whose he is.

Ask: What is the difference between saying “God is a shepherd” and “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)?

2. What a Shepherd Does (1 Samuel 17:34-36, about 12 min)

The one thing: David's work in the field is the meaning of the word shepherd: going after the lamb.

Ask: What does David's description of his work show you about what “shepherd” means in Psalm 23:1?

3. The Shepherd Who Was Shepherded (1 Samuel 17:37, about 10 min)

The one thing: The boy who rescued lambs had been rescued; that is where Psalm 23:1 was learned.

Ask: Why do you think David could later write “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1) and mean it?

Close (never cut it)

Read 1 Samuel 17:37, then Psalm 23:1. The shepherd who rescued lambs is the one who wrote “The LORD is my shepherd.” Let the room say the first line together before you pray.

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, read v37 and Psalm 23:1 one after the other and go straight to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 1, 5, 4, 3, 2 (top to bottom) · Feelings: The soldiers of Israel worried, King Saul worried, A lamb caught by a lion worried, The lamb David rescued happy · Code: LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Act it out: One child is David, one is the lamb, and one is the lion who carries the lamb off. David goes after the lion and brings the lamb back to the flock. Then David tells “King Saul”: “The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will deliver me.” Then everyone says together: “The LORD is my shepherd.” (Psalm 23:1)

1. Who Is My Shepherd?

PSALM 23:1 · ABOUT 10 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- “The LORD” is God's covenant name, given to Moses.
- A shepherd (ro'eh) feeds, leads and guards a flock.
- “My” makes the line personal.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1)

“The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the LION and the bear, will deliver me.”

Discuss: What is the difference between saying “God is a shepherd” and “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)?

The first line names who the Shepherd is and whose he is.

MUST COVER

- Psalm 23:1: “The LORD” in capitals is the name God gave at the burning bush (Exodus 3:15).
- Psalm 23:1: a shepherd's job is feeding, leading and guarding; “my” says David is one of the sheep.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Kings in the ancient world called themselves shepherds; Hammurabi of Babylon did. David the king calls himself a sheep.

Illustration idea: A child who says “my dad” in a crowd, and everyone knows who will come running.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: “My” means he belongs to God.
- Listen for: It is personal, not general.

If it drifts: If the talk stays abstract, ask: what did David actually do for his sheep? Then turn to 1 Samuel 17.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The LORD is my shepherd: a name, a job, and a word that makes it mine.

Short on time? Drop the note on kings. Keep the name and the word “my.”

Bridge → David learned what a shepherd does in a field. Let him tell it.

2. What a Shepherd Does

1 SAMUEL 17:34-36 · ABOUT 12 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- David tended his father’s sheep.
- He went after lions and bears to rescue lambs.
- He calls Goliath one who “defied the armies of the living God.”

“Your servant has been TENDING his father’s sheep.”

“I went after it, struck it down, and DELIVERED the lamb from its mouth.”

Discuss: What does David's description of his work show you about what “shepherd” means in Psalm 23:1?

David's work in the field is the meaning of the word shepherd: going after the lamb.

MUST COVER

- v34-35: a shepherd who goes after one lamb, into a lion's mouth.
- v36: David sees Goliath's insult as aimed at “the living God.”

IF THERE'S TIME

- “Tending” in 17:34 is the same Hebrew root as “shepherd” in Psalm 23:1.
- “Fur” is literally “beard”: David seized the animal at the jaw.

Illustration idea: A nurse whose years of night shifts make her calm in an emergency.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: He was brave and responsible.
- Listen for: He cared about even one lamb.

If it drifts: If the talk moves to whether this really happened, point to how specific David is: lion, bear, fur, mouth. Then return to what it shows about God.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

A shepherd goes after the lamb, even into a lion's mouth.

Short on time? Drop the Hebrew notes. Keep the rescue in v35.

Bridge → Then David says who had been doing that for him.

3. The Shepherd Who Was Shepherded

1 SAMUEL 17:37 · ABOUT 10 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- David gives the LORD the credit for every rescue.
- The verb for rescuing the lamb is the verb for the LORD rescuing David.
- So David can say “The LORD is my shepherd.” (Psalm 23:1)

“The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will DELIVER me.”

“Go,” said Saul, “and may the LORD be WITH you.”

Discuss: Why do you think David could later write “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1) and mean it?

The boy who rescued lambs had been rescued; that is where Psalm 23:1 was learned.

MUST COVER

- v37: “delivered me… will deliver me,” the same verb as the lamb in v35.
- Put v37 beside Psalm 23:1: David did for his lambs what the LORD did for him.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Saul had lost that presence: “the LORD was with David but had departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 18:12).

Illustration idea: A family keeping a jar of notes about answered prayers to read in hard seasons.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: You remember that God came through before.
- Listen for: It's easier to trust someone with a track record.

If it drifts: If someone says God did not deliver them, take it seriously. Point out that David's trust rests on who God is as well as what he did.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The LORD did for David what David did for his lambs. That is what “my shepherd” means.

Short on time? Drop the note on Saul. Keep the two halves of v37.

Bridge → So hold David's sentence next to his psalm.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Start with the line. Say Psalm 23:1 together: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
2. Ask. Ask: What does a shepherd actually do?
3. Read it. Read 1 Samuel 17:32-37. David answers by telling what happened in the field.
4. The connection. Read v37 again: the LORD did for David what David did for his lambs.
5. Leave the question. Ask: What would it mean for you to say “my shepherd”? Leave it with them.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

“Why does David say “my” shepherd?”

Because the LORD had come after him personally, the way he went after one lamb.

“Were there really lions in Israel?”

Yes. The Bible mentions lions and bears there several times, and both lived there in David's time.

“What if God didn't rescue me before?”

That is an honest question. David's confidence also rests on God being “the living God,” not only on his own story.

“What does this have to do with Psalm 23?”

The shepherd boy who rescued lambs is the man who later wrote “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1).

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).
If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.
If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.
If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.
If you've taught for years: Don’t lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.
If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.
If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn’t serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).
If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?
If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Make it concrete

David's own words are vivid: lion, bear, fur, mouth.
If you're new: Let the class picture the rescue before you explain it.
If you've taught for years: Trace the verb “deliver” from the lamb (v35) to David (v37).

2. Admit what is hard

Some in the room will not feel rescued by God.
If you're new: Acknowledge that honestly in section 3.
If you've taught for years: Ground the answer in who God is as well as what he did.

3. Let the psalm frame the story

This is a study of Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 17 shows what its first line means.
If you're new: Open and close on Psalm 23:1.
If you've taught for years: Pair v37 with Psalm 23:1 and let the connection land without extra comment.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you’ll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: Who looks after you when something goes wrong?

- start in the text: Read Psalm 23:1 and ask what a shepherd actually does.
- use an object: Hold up a small stone and ask what it could do against a giant.

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: The LORD is my shepherd: he does for you what David did for his lambs.
- call back to the opening: Go back to the fears named at the start and read v37 over them.
- pray the text: Thank God by name for specific times he has delivered people in the room.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone says God did not rescue them from something painful.: Do not argue. Acknowledge it, and point to David's trust in “the living God,” then to the Shepherd who went through death himself.
- A child is frightened by the lion and bear.: Emphasise that David rescued the lamb and that God kept David safe.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: “Thanks. Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.” Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can’t answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: “Great question. Let’s catch it after class so we can finish the passage.”

READ THIS WEEK

- Psalm 23
- Genesis 48:15-16
- John 10:11-15

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/1samuel/17-32-37/lesson

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Key verse: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Psalm 23:1

THE BIG IDEA

The LORD is my shepherd: he does for me what David did for lambs.

1. WHO IS MY SHEPHERD? · PSALM 23:1

- “The LORD” is God's covenant name, given to Moses.
- A shepherd (ro'eh) feeds, leads and guards a flock.
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“The _____ is my shepherd; I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1)

“The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the _____ and the bear, will deliver me.”

Discuss: What is the difference between saying “God is a shepherd” and “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)?

2. WHAT A SHEPHERD DOES · 1 SAMUEL 17:34-36

- David tended his father’s sheep.
- He went after lions and bears to rescue lambs.
- He calls Goliath one who “defied the armies of the living God.”

“Your servant has been _____ his father’s sheep.”

“I went after it, struck it down, and _____ the lamb from its mouth.”

Discuss: What does David's description of his work show you about what “shepherd” means in Psalm 23:1?

3. THE SHEPHERD WHO WAS SHEPHERDED · 1 SAMUEL 17:37

- David gives the LORD the credit for every rescue.
- The verb for rescuing the lamb is the verb for the LORD rescuing David.
- So David can say “The LORD is my shepherd.” (Psalm 23:1)

“The LORD, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will _____ me.”

“Go,” said Saul, “and may the LORD be _____ you.”

Discuss: Why do you think David could later write “The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1) and mean it?

Read this week: Psalm 23 · Genesis 48:15-16 · John 10:11-15

For Kids: The Shepherd Who Wrote It

1 SAMUEL 17:32-37 · NAME: _____

Big idea: The LORD is my shepherd, and he takes care of me.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

☐ The army is afraid of Goliath.

☐ Saul says, “Go.”

☐ David tells about the lion and bear.

☐ Saul says David is too young.

☐ David says he will fight.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

The soldiers of Israel: happy · sad · worried

King Saul: happy · sad · worried

A lamb caught by a lion: happy · sad · worried

The lamb David rescued: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

O R O P N O G R P
D E L I V E R O O
L U O B O F F S C
O G Y C G U H P S
R D S K L A M B H
D H L I O N B G E
S H E P H E R D E
R N B E A R C O P
H F D A V I D H C

DAVID · SHEPHERD · LION · BEAR · LAMB · SHEEP · LORD · DELIVER

4. SECRET CODE

1=D 2=E 3=H 4=I 5=L 6=M 7=O 8=P 9=R 10=S 11=Y

___	___	___	___		___	___		___	___		___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5	**7**	**9**	**1**		**4**	**10**		**6**	**11**		**10**	**3**	**2**	**8**	**3**	**2**	**9**	**1**

5. DRAW IT!

Draw David rescuing a lamb from a lion or a bear.

6. MEMORY VERSE

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Psalm 23:1 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

The LORD is my shepherd, so _____. _____