Green Pastures, Quiet Waters

PSALM 23:2-3 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

The Shepherd gives rest, restores my soul, and leads me rightly.

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 3): Mark 6:30-34, Sheep Without a Shepherd. Its big idea: With the LORD as my shepherd, I lack nothing I truly need.
- After this passage (day 5): Mark 6:35-44, A Table in the Wilderness. Its big idea: The Shepherd makes his flock lie down, then feeds them full.

Open

Recall last time (Mark 6:30-34): Jesus saw the crowd like sheep without a shepherd and had compassion. Ask: Where do you go when you need real rest? Read Psalm 23:2-3. Big idea: The Shepherd gives rest, restores my soul, and leads me rightly. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. Rest He Gives (Psalm 23:2, about 13 min)

The one thing: Rest in this psalm is something the Shepherd brings about for his sheep.

Ask: Why might rest be something we have to be led into?

2. Restored and Guided (Psalm 23:3, about 17 min)

The one thing: The Shepherd's own faithfulness stands behind restoring and guiding his sheep.

Ask: What does it mean that God guides us “for the sake of His name”?

Close (never cut it)

Read Psalm 23:2-3 aloud slowly and ask the room to listen for who does every verb. Let it end on “for the sake of His name.”

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, read v3 twice and go to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 5, 1, 2, 3, 4 (top to bottom) · Feelings: Tired sheep sad, Sheep lying in green grass happy, Thirsty sheep worried, Sheep by quiet water happy · Code: HE RESTORES MY SOUL

Act it out: One child is the shepherd and the others are sheep. The shepherd leads them to a “field” to lie down, then to a “pool” to drink, then along a “path” (a line of chairs) to the other side of the room.

1. Rest He Gives

PSALM 23:2 · ABOUT 13 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 2

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- The Shepherd makes his sheep lie down.
- He finds green pasture and quiet water.
- The sheep's part is to be with him.

“He makes me lie DOWN in green pastures.”

“He leads me beside QUIET waters.”

Discuss: Why might rest be something we have to be led into?

Rest in this psalm is something the Shepherd brings about for his sheep.

MUST COVER

- v2: two matching lines, food then drink, lying down then being led.
- v2: “quiet waters” is literally “waters of rest” in Hebrew.

IF THERE'S TIME

- “Green” is fresh new grass, the word in Genesis 1:11 for the earth's first vegetation.

Illustration idea: A child who refuses to nap until a parent sits beside them and they fall asleep in minutes.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: We keep going until we drop.
- Listen for: We don't think we deserve rest.

If it drifts: If the talk becomes tips for sleep or time management, bring it back: the verb is His. He makes me lie down.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The Shepherd gives rest before he asks us to walk anywhere.

Short on time? Drop the note on Genesis. Keep the two lines of v2.

Bridge → Rest leads to restoration, and restoration to the road.

2. Restored and Guided

PSALM 23:3 · ABOUT 17 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 2

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- He restores the whole worn-out self.
- He guides on right paths.
- He does it for the sake of His name.

“He RESTORES my soul.”

“He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His NAME.”

Discuss: What does it mean that God guides us “for the sake of His name”?

The Shepherd's own faithfulness stands behind restoring and guiding his sheep.

MUST COVER

- v3: “restores” is the Hebrew word for turning back, used for returning to God (Psalm 51:12, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation”).
- v3: “for the sake of His name”: God's character is on the line (Exodus 34:6).

IF THERE'S TIME

- David spent years on wilderness paths fleeing Saul (1 Samuel 23:14); several psalm headings place him in caves (Psalms 57, 142).

Illustration idea: A guide on a mountain trail who will not leave anyone behind, because their reputation depends on getting everyone home.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: God keeps his promises.
- Listen for: It's about his glory, not ours.

If it drifts: If someone says God has not guided them, admit how hard that is. Point to the promise of right paths, not of seeing far ahead.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

He restores my soul and leads me rightly, for his name's sake.

Short on time? Drop the wilderness background. Keep restores and his name.

Bridge → So read both verses again, slowly.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

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

1. Start with tired. Ask: When did you last feel truly rested?
2. Read it. Read Psalm 23:2-3 together.
3. Count the verbs. Ask: who is doing the work in these lines? Every verb belongs to the Shepherd.
4. For his name. God guides and restores because of who he is.
5. Leave the question. Ask: What would it mean to let God lead you instead of doing it all yourself? Leave it with them.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

"Does this mean Christians never get exhausted?"

No. It means the Shepherd restores the exhausted; the psalm assumes we need it.

"What are "paths of righteousness"?"

Right paths: the good road, safe and in line with God's ways.

"Why "for His name"?"

His name is his character. He guides us because he is faithful.

"How does God guide people today?"

Through his word, prayer and the wisdom of others, usually one step at a time.

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. Let silence do its work

A passage about rest is best felt, not hurried.

If you're new: Pause after reading v2.

If you've taught for years: Build a full minute of quiet into the close.

2. Let the Bible do the talking

The verbs carry the message.

If you're new: Have the class find every verb.

If you've taught for years: Trace “restores” to Psalm 51:12 and Psalm 19:7.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

It assures; it gives no homework.

If you're new: End with the psalm, not a task.

If you've taught for years: Close on “for the sake of His name.”

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: Where do you go when you need real rest?

- start in the text: Read v2-3 and ask: who is doing all the work?
- use an object: Hold up a glass of still water and ask what makes it restful.

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: The Shepherd gives rest, restores your soul, and leads you rightly.
- allow quiet reflection: Read v2 and let the room rest in silence for a minute.
- pray the text: Pray v3 over the room: restore our souls and guide us, for your name's sake.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone is burned out or depressed and cannot rest.: Do not give tips. Read v3: restoring the soul is the Shepherd's work, and he does it for the worn out.
- Someone feels God has never guided them.: Acknowledge it. The psalm promises right paths, not seeing far ahead.
- 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 19:7-11
- Psalm 25:4-11
- Ezekiel 34:11-16

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/psalms/23-2-3/lesson

Green Pastures, Quiet Waters

PSALM 23:2-3 (BSB) · THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: “He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His name.” Psalm 23:3

THE BIG IDEA

The Shepherd gives rest, restores my soul, and leads me rightly.

1. REST HE GIVES · PSALM 23:2

- The Shepherd makes his sheep lie down.
- He finds green pasture and quiet water.
- The sheep's part is to be with him.

“He makes me lie _____ in green pastures.”

“He leads me beside _____ waters.”

Discuss: Why might rest be something we have to be led into?

2. RESTORED AND GUIDED · PSALM 23:3

- He restores the whole worn-out self.
- He guides on right paths.
- He does it for the sake of His name.

“He _____ my soul.”

“He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His _____.”

Discuss: What does it mean that God guides us “for the sake of His name”?

Read this week: Psalm 19:7-11 · Psalm 25:4-11 · Ezekiel 34:11-16

For Kids: Green Pastures, Quiet Waters

PSALM 23:2-3 · NAME: _____

Big idea: God gives me rest and shows me the way.

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

☐ He leads them on the right path.

☐ The shepherd finds green grass.

☐ The sheep lie down and rest.

☐ He leads them to quiet water.

☐ He makes them strong again.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

Tired sheep: happy · sad · worried

Sheep lying in green grass: happy · sad · worried

Thirsty sheep: happy · sad · worried

Sheep by quiet water: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

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

GREEN · PASTURES · QUIET · WATERS · SOUL · PATHS · NAME · LEADS

4. SECRET CODE

1=E 2=H 3=L 4=M 5=O 6=R 7=S 8=T 9=U 10=Y

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

5. DRAW IT!

Draw sheep lying in green grass beside quiet water.

6. MEMORY VERSE

“He restores my soul” Psalm 23:3 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

God gives me rest when _____. _____