A Table Before My Enemies

PSALM 23:5 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

The Shepherd is also the host who welcomes, protects and fills his guests.

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 8): Mark 8:27-31, Who Do You Say I Am?. Its big idea: The Shepherd walked through the valley of death first, and rose.
- After this passage (day 10): Mark 6:14-29, Herod's Table. Its big idea: Herod set his table for himself; the LORD prepares his table for you.

Open

Recall last time (Mark 8:27-31): Jesus is the Christ, and the Christ must suffer, die and rise again. Ask: What makes you feel truly welcome in someone’s home? Read Psalm 23:5. Big idea: The Shepherd is also the host who welcomes, protects and fills his guests. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. A Table Before My Enemies (Psalm 23:5a, about 15 min)

The one thing: God welcomes and protects his guest in full view of those who oppose him.

Ask: Why do you think the psalm leaves the enemies in the picture instead of removing them?

2. Oil and an Overflowing Cup (Psalm 23:5b, about 15 min)

The one thing: God gives his guests honor and more than they can hold.

Ask: What does it say about God that the psalm ends this verse with an overflowing cup?

Close (never cut it)

Read Psalm 23:5 aloud together, slowly. Then ask each person to name one way God has filled their cup, and thank him for it.

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, read the verse once more and go to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 2, 4, 1, 5, 3 (top to bottom) · Feelings: David with enemies nearby worried, David sitting at God’s table happy, David welcomed with oil happy, David with his cup running over happy · Code: MY CUP OVERFLOWS

Act it out: One child is the host who sets a small table for a guest, welcomes the guest by pretending to pour oil on their head, and pours water into a cup over a bowl until it runs over. A few children stand at a distance as the enemies, watching but not coming near.

1. A Table Before My Enemies

PSALM 23:5A · ABOUT 15 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 2

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- The picture changes from shepherd to host.
- God sets out a meal with care, as a host for a guest.
- The enemies are still there, watching, and cannot touch the guest.

“You prepare a TABLE before me.”

“In the PRESENCE of my enemies.”

Discuss: Why do you think the psalm leaves the enemies in the picture instead of removing them?

God welcomes and protects his guest in full view of those who oppose him.

MUST COVER

- “Prepare” means to lay out in order, the word for setting bread before the LORD (Exodus 40:23).
- A host in David’s world fed and protected those under his roof.

IF THERE'S TIME

- David himself seated Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, at his table “like one of the king’s own sons” (2 Samuel 9:11).
- When David fled from Absalom, friends brought food to him and his people in the wilderness (2 Samuel 17:27-29).

Illustration idea: A child eating dinner safely in the kitchen while a storm rattles the windows.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: Opposition does not stop God’s care.
- Listen for: Our safety depends on the host.

If it drifts: If it turns into naming specific people as enemies, bring it back to the host: the verse is about what God does.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

The enemies can watch; they cannot come to the table.

Short on time? Drop the Absalom story. Keep the Mephibosheth note.

Bridge → Then the host honors his guest.

2. Oil and an Overflowing Cup

PSALM 23:5B · ABOUT 15 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 2

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- A host refreshed an honored guest with oil on the head.
- The word for “anoint” here describes a host welcoming a guest.
- The cup does more than fill: it overflows.

“You ANOINT my head with oil.”

“My cup OVERFLOWS.”

Discuss: What does it say about God that the psalm ends this verse with an overflowing cup?

God gives his guests honor and more than they can hold.

MUST COVER

- Jesus expected a host to anoint a guest’s head (Luke 7:46).
- “Overflows” is literally “abundance,” used elsewhere only in Psalm 66:12.

IF THERE'S TIME

- This cup is a sign of God’s generosity; other cups in Mark (14:23-24 and 14:36) mean different things and come later.
- “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup” (Psalm 16:5).

Illustration idea: A grandparent who keeps refilling your glass before it is empty.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: God is generous.
- Listen for: We are honored guests.

If it drifts: If people start comparing what God has given them with others, return to “my cup”: each guest’s cup is filled by the same host.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

At God’s table, the cup runs over.

Short on time? Drop the Psalm 16 note. Keep Luke 7:46.

Bridge → Close by reading the whole verse together.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

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

1. Start with welcome. Ask: What makes you feel truly welcome in someone’s home?
2. Read it. Read Psalm 23:5 together.
3. The host. The shepherd becomes a host who sets a table, even with enemies watching.
4. The welcome. Oil on the head and an overflowing cup: honor and more than enough.
5. Leave the question. Ask: What would it mean to be God’s welcome guest? Leave it with them.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

“Why are the enemies still there?”

The psalm promises protection and welcome in the middle of opposition. It does not promise a life without enemies.

“Is this the anointing of a king?”

No. It is a different Hebrew word from the one used when Samuel anointed David. This is a host refreshing a guest.

“Is this the cup from the Last Supper?”

No. Here the cup is a sign of God’s generosity. The cup at the Last Supper is a different picture, which comes later in the plan.

“What does this mean for me?”

Whoever trusts the Shepherd is his welcome guest, kept safe at his table and given more than enough.

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

The verse is three physical pictures: a table, oil, a cup.

If you're new: Set a small table with a cup and a little bottle of olive oil.

If you've taught for years: Use Luke 7:46 and Genesis 18:4-5 for how hosts welcomed guests.

2. Let the Bible do the talking

Other psalms use the same picture.

If you're new: Read Psalm 36:7-8 beside Psalm 23:5.

If you've taught for years: Let the class hear refuge and feast together.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

The verse assures; it does not give a task.

If you're new: End in thanks, not a to-do list.

If you've taught for years: Close with the overflowing cup.

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: What makes you feel truly welcome in someone’s home?

- use an object: Fill a glass with water until it runs over into a bowl, and read “my cup overflows.”
- raise a problem: Could you enjoy a meal with someone who hates you standing at the window?

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: The Shepherd is also the host who welcomes, protects and fills his guests.
- call back to the opening: Return to what makes people feel welcome and read the verse over it.
- pray the text: Pray Psalm 23:5 back to God, thanking him for each part.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone is in a real conflict with a person who is harming them.: Do not minimize it. The psalm takes enemies seriously; if there is danger, help them get practical help and support.
- Someone feels their cup is empty right now.: Acknowledge it honestly. The psalm is a promise to hold on to; pray it with them rather than arguing them into feeling it.
- 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

- 2 Samuel 9:1-13
- Psalm 36:5-9
- Psalm 63:1-8

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/psalms/23-5/lesson

A Table Before My Enemies

PSALM 23:5 (BSB) · THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Psalm 23:5

THE BIG IDEA

The Shepherd is also the host who welcomes, protects and fills his guests.

1. A TABLE BEFORE MY ENEMIES · PSALM 23:5A

- The picture changes from shepherd to host.
- God sets out a meal with care, as a host for a guest.
- The enemies are still there, watching, and cannot touch the guest.

“You prepare a _____ before me.”

“In the _____ of my enemies.”

Discuss: Why do you think the psalm leaves the enemies in the picture instead of removing them?

2. OIL AND AN OVERFLOWING CUP · PSALM 23:5B

- A host refreshed an honored guest with oil on the head.
- The word for “anoint” here describes a host welcoming a guest.
- The cup does more than fill: it overflows.

“You _____ my head with oil.”

“My cup _____.”

Discuss: What does it say about God that the psalm ends this verse with an overflowing cup?

Read this week: 2 Samuel 9:1-13 · Psalm 36:5-9 · Psalm 63:1-8

For Kids: A Table Before My Enemies

PSALM 23:5 · NAME: _____

Big idea: God welcomes me and takes care of me.

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

☐ Unkind people can see it.

☐ God puts oil on David's head.

☐ God sets a table for David.

☐ God fills David's cup to overflowing.

☐ They cannot hurt David there.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

David with enemies nearby: happy · sad · worried

David sitting at God's table: happy · sad · worried

David welcomed with oil: happy · sad · worried

David with his cup running over: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

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

TABLE · OIL · CUP · HEAD · HOST · GUEST · SAFE · DAVID

4. SECRET CODE

1=C 2=E 3=F 4=L 5=M 6=O 7=P 8=R 9=S 10=U 11=V 12=W 13=Y

___	___		___	___	___		___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5	**13**		**1**	**10**	**7**		**6**	**11**	**2**	**8**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**12**	**9**

5. DRAW IT!

Draw a table with food, a little jar of oil, and a cup running over.

6. MEMORY VERSE

"You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." Psalm 23:5 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

God gives me _____. _____