Preschool–Grade 5

The Psalm 23 Shepherd's Staff

A staff with a picture for every verse · Psalm 23 · print page 2 for each child (and page 3 for the harder level)

What it looks like finished



Easy and medium



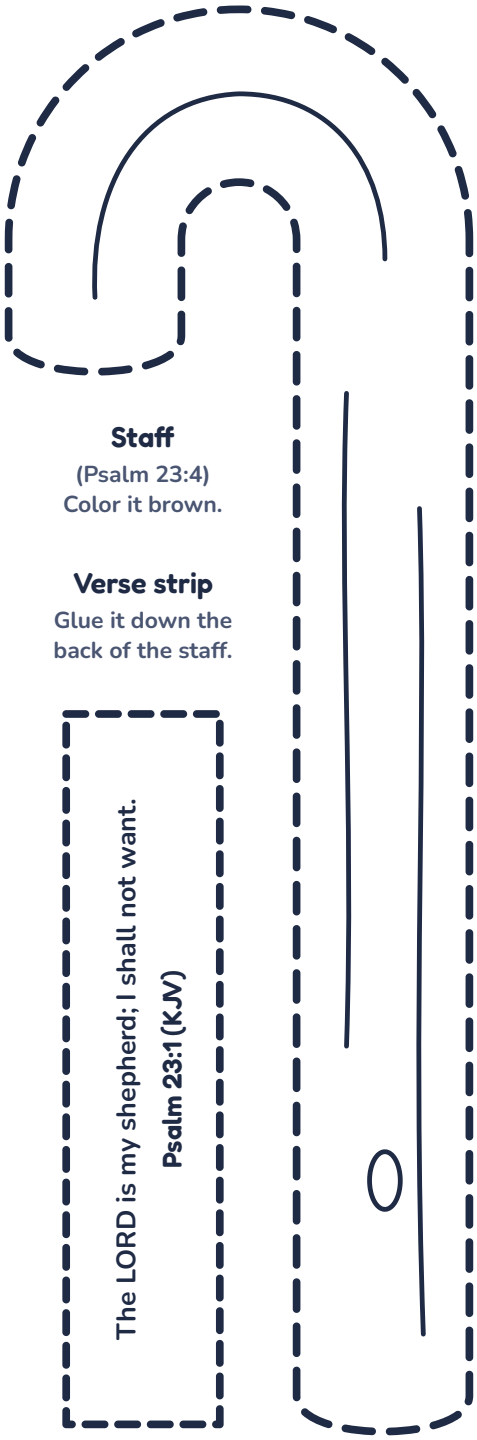
Harder

Medium (left): a brown paper shepherd's staff with a hook at the top, and six colored picture circles glued down it, sticking out right and left in turn: a sheep in green grass, green grass with blue still water, a tan path with a yellow sun, two gray hills with a brown rod and staff, a brown table with a yellow cup spilling blue drops and an orange oil jar, and a tan house with a red roof and a pink heart. Harder (right): the same staff with a brown rod glued behind it, crossing it near the bottom, and a white paper sheep with a black face hanging from the hook on yarn.

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Name: _____

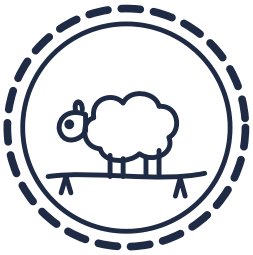
✂ Cut on the dashed lines



Staff
(Psalm 23:4)
Color it brown.

Verse strip
Glue it down the back of the staff.

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



1. I shall not want (Psalm 23:1)



2. Green pastures, still waters (23:2)



3. Paths of righteousness (23:3)



4. The valley, rod and staff (23:4)



5. A table, oil, my cup runneth over (23:5)



6. The house of the LORD (23:6)

Glue the circles down the staff

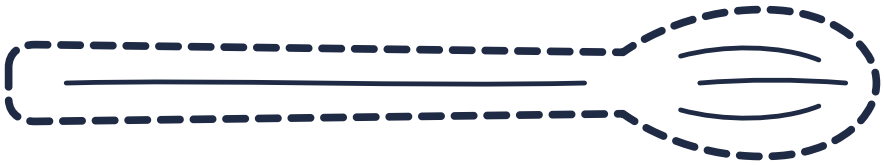
in order: number 1 at the top, just under the hook, sticking out on the right, number 2 on the left, and keep going, right and left, down to number 6.

wool: white · faces and legs: black · grass: green
water and drops: blue · path: tan · sun and cup: yellow
hills: gray · rod, staff, table and door: brown
oil jar: orange · house: tan · roof: red · heart: pink

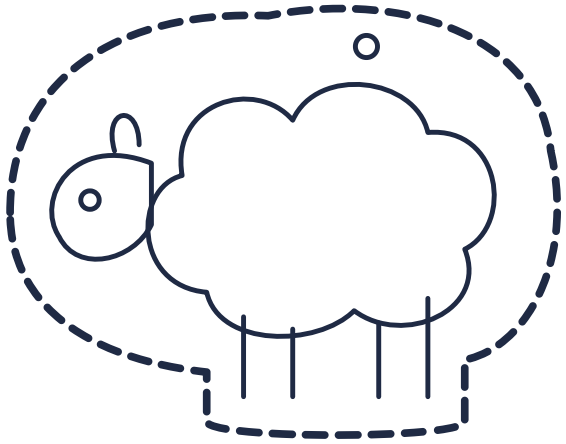
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Name: _____

✂ Harder level



Rod (Psalm 23:4)
Color it brown.
Glue it on the back of
the staff, near the bottom.



Sheep
Wool: leave it white.
Face, ear and legs: black. Leave the eye white.
Punch a hole at the small circle.
Write your name on the back.

"we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."
Psalm 100:3 (KJV)

How to add the rod and the sheep

1. Make the medium craft from page 2 first.
2. Color the rod brown. Color the sheep's face, ear and legs black, and leave its wool and its eye white.
3. Cut out the rod and the sheep on the dashed lines. Write your name on the back of the sheep: the LORD is MY shepherd.
4. Glue the rod on the back of the staff near the bottom, slanting, so it crosses the staff like an X. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).
5. Punch a hole at the small circle on the sheep. Tie one end of the yarn through the hole and the other end around the end of the hook, so the sheep hangs from the staff.
6. Say Psalm 23 from memory, pointing to each circle.

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For the teacher

See it finished: a photo of the finished craft is at vbshq.com/crafts/psalm-23-craft
Time: 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the level · **Ages:** 3 to 11, in three levels · **Cost:** under 50 cents a child for the easy and medium levels
You need: page 2 printed once per child (cardstock is sturdiest, so the staff stays stiff), brown, green, blue, tan, gray, yellow, orange, red, pink and black crayons or markers, scissors and glue sticks. For the harder level, also page 3 printed once per child, a hole punch and a 10-inch piece of yarn per child.
Before class: for preschoolers, cut out each child's staff, six circles and verse strip. Make one finished craft to show the kids.

Three ways to make it

- **Easy (preschool, ages 3–5), about 15 minutes, no scissors:** before class, cut out the pieces. Kids color the staff and the pictures, then glue the circles down the staff with your help, number 1 at the top. You glue the verse strip on the back. Read the psalm slowly and let them point to each picture.
- **Medium (grades K–2), about 20 minutes:** follow the steps below. Kids color, cut out the staff, the circles and the verse strip, glue the circles on in order and glue the verse strip on the back. This is the craft in the first photo.
- **Harder (grades 3–5), about 30 minutes:** make it like the medium level, then add the rod and the sheep from page 3. Kids glue the rod behind the staff, write their name on the back of the sheep, and hang it from the hook on yarn. They say Psalm 23 from memory before they take it home. This is the craft in the second photo.

Why there are no people: the template draws no people. The sheep in circle 1 and on page 3 stands for each child: "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:3). The staff and the rod are the shepherd's, and the shepherd is the LORD (Psalm 23:1).

Steps (medium level)

1. **Color:** color the staff brown. Color the circles: (1) the sheep's face and legs black, its wool white, the grass green; (2) the grass green and the still water blue; (3) the path tan, the grass green, the sun yellow; (4) the hills gray, the rod and staff brown; (5) the table brown, the cup yellow, the spilling drops blue, the oil jar orange; (6) the house tan, the roof red, the door brown, the heart pink.
2. **Cut:** cut out the staff, the six circles and the verse strip on the dashed lines.
3. **Glue the circles:** glue them down the staff in order, number 1 at the top just under the hook. Circle 1 sticks out on the right, circle 2 on the left, and so on, right and left, down to circle 6.
4. **Verse:** turn the staff over, glue the verse strip down the back and read it together.
5. **Read the psalm:** read Psalm 23 together, pointing to each circle from the top down as you read its verse.

Questions to ask while kids work

- Point to the staff. Who is my shepherd? *(The LORD, Psalm 23:1)* What does "I shall not want" mean? *(I will have everything I need)*
- Point to circle 2. Where does the shepherd lead his sheep? *(To green pastures, beside the still waters, 23:2)*
- Point to circle 4. Why was David not afraid in the dark valley? *(For thou art with me, 23:4)* What two things comfort the sheep? *(The rod and the staff, 23:4)*
- Point to circle 5. What does "my cup runneth over" mean? *(My cup is so full it spills: God gives more than enough, 23:5)*
- Point to circle 6. What two things shall follow me all the days of my life? *(Goodness and mercy, 23:6)*
- Who said, "I am the good shepherd"? *(Jesus, John 10:11)*
- Turn the staff over. Read Psalm 23:1 together.

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Tips

- **Old Bible words explained:** I shall not want = I will have everything I need; pastures = grassy fields; still waters = calm water; restoreth my soul = makes me new and strong again inside; paths of righteousness = the right way to live; the valley of the shadow of death = a very dark, scary place; rod = a short, strong stick to protect the sheep; staff = a long walking stick to guide them; anointest my head with oil = pours oil on my head, a welcome for a guest (Luke 7:46); my cup runneth over = my cup is so full it spills; mercy = kindness we don't deserve; dwell = live.
- **What the Bible says:** "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1), and Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). The Bible doesn't say what David's staff or rod looked like, so the hook, the shapes and the colors are ours. The six pictures follow the six verses in order to help kids remember the psalm.
- **Talk about the dark valley gently:** say "a very dark, scary place" and "God is with me." If a child brings up someone who is sick or has died, listen kindly and let the parents know.
- **Preschool:** do all the cutting ahead of time. Use glue sticks, not liquid glue. Hold up a finished craft so they can see the goal.
- **If the staff bends:** print page 2 on cardstock. It keeps the staff stiff, and the glued circles help too.
- **Teach the psalm first:** this craft goes with the free Lord Is My Shepherd lesson and the Psalm 23 word search at vbshq.com/bible-stories/psalm-23.

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