

Black History Month 2022	
CHILDREN'S Devotional Age 10-17 God is Our Shepherd By Captain Daniel Simmons	
Topic:	Restoration: Healing. Renewal. Refreshment.
Scripture:	Psalm 23
Synopsis:	To teach young people that God will provide rest and assurance in a difficult world.

Black History Month

Can anyone tell me what month it is? That's right!!! February. Can anyone tell me what we celebrate this month? (Help them get to the correct answer.) Correct!!!

This month is also known as Black History Month. Black History Month takes place every February to focus on the contributions and the many accomplishments of African Americans in all areas of society in the United States.

Many of the people who fought for civil rights benefited from the promises of Psalm 23. This Psalm is a prayer from David that really demonstrates God's faithfulness during hardships. I am certain that many of you have heard this Psalm. It may be one of the most popular Psalms of King David.

(Read Psalm 23 or have someone read Psalm 23)

Before King David was a king, he was a humble shepherd boy. His primary job was to care for sheep and protect them from wild animals that wanted to eat the sheep. What does sheep and shepherd have to do with our relationship with God? We will see how his prior job connects to Psalm 23. We are going to break down Psalm 23 section by section, but it won't take too long. My prayer is that by the end of it you will understand that when you place your trust in God, he can give you rest and assurance.

Green Pastures and Peaceful Streams

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23:1-3

As I mentioned, King David was a shepherd. When David was caring for his sheep, he had to lead them to food and safety because sheep are not very smart and don't know

how to get those things for themselves. He would lead them to green meadows where they can graze and to peaceful streams where they can drink (Psalm 23:1-2).

As God's children, we are a lot like sheep. We can't always provide for ourselves, so we are in need of God as the great shepherd to help and lead us. Like a shepherd knows every need of the sheep, so God knows all our needs. Although we don't always see how, God is making our paths clear, so all our needs are fulfilled. (You can cross reference this with Philippians 4:19)

Optional Question(s):

What are some of the ways God meets your needs throughout the day?
What are some of the ways that God meets your need for rest?

Valley of the Shadow of Death

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4.

Dark valleys are dangerous places for sheep to wander off. It wasn't unusual for a shepherd to leave all the other sheep in a safe place to go find the one. The one sheep that is lost is much more vulnerable to predators. Hardships, whether it be with friends, school, or unexpected tragedies, can make us feel like lost, lonely sheep. God can seem distant from our problems and us, which makes us susceptible to fear and despair. However, there is no need to worry. God, as our shepherd, will always guide his sheep, in times of fear and despair. When we place our trust in God (In our context Jesus) we can be confident in the assurance that He is always with us, leading the way.

Optional Question(s):

What are some of the dangers you see around you?
When you are in danger, who do you call for help?
How does God help us?

Prepares a Table in the Presence of My Enemies

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

God invites us as a guest to His very own table. What are some of your favorite foods? Mine is _____. There's nothing more exciting than a delicious feast of your favorite mouthwatering foods. A good meal always leaves us happy and well nourished. Even our sufferings cannot overcome the promises of God's love, provision, and protection, which leave us peaceful and satisfied. This verse indicates that God will always provide even when we are suffering. He gives us his promise. We can be

confident witnesses to other Christians who are suffering, reminding them of the assurance of God's compassionate character and His ultimate gift of generosity of His own Son Jesus.

Our words may not be enough. We must be physical examples of God's love to one another. This may mean praying with one another. We may need to provide a meal or give a small gift. We may need to just be there and be present. Never forget the power of relationship.

Optional Question(s):

How have you encouraged someone who is feeling down or discouraged?
When you're feeling discouraged, what do you do?
How does God encourage us?

Goodness and Mercy

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6

David closes Psalm 23 with a reflection of God's promise. David is confident that God will never leave him or forsake him, for he is confident in the compassionate character of God. Goodness and mercy are God's steadfast love, which is the assurance for Christians that God has indeed given His people an oversupply of grace. This psalm prepares the way to show the ultimate act of God's steadfast love, in giving his Son as the sacrificial lamb, who took away all our sins, enabling all wandering sheep (us) to live with God forever in heaven.

Prayer:

Please pray with me as we rest assured of God's continued peace and restoration.