



# 3. Psalm 23

**Age range:** Primary

**Theme:** We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. *This is part of our new series 'Songs from the heart'. You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. This assembly continues our exploration into some of the words of David from the Book of Psalms, starting with one of his most famous, Psalm 23. This is a reflective story version, which encourages a slower pace of assembly, and is very calming for everyone! The props that are suggested should help children to understand the words of the psalm better, but feel free to use your own ideas too. Some words remain the same as the words from the Bible, but others have been changed slightly to help children understand what David was saying. It's no accident that we are using questions to probe children's thinking throughout this series, as questions are very much at the heart of David's words in the Psalms!*



### How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school's values and the things that are a part of your school's unique vision. Today, we will use the words of Psalm 23 to think about how David's experience of being a shepherd helped him to understand God's care for him. You might be able to relate this to how your school vision and values help each person to feel safe in your school family.

### Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
- There are some 'Sheepish Facts' to start this assembly off. If you wanted to, you could print them out (p.3) and 'hide' them around your hall for an appointed 'shepherd' to find – with the help of the rest of the children!
- You will need to gather the following props to tell the story: 6 squares of felt in different colours: green, blue, brown, black, purple & white; a tree from your small-world resources; a piece of reflective blue card or material, shaped like a lake; a glass and a small jug of water; a compass, or piece of map; a torch; a plate of play food, piled high; a plastic glass and a saucer; a diary or calendar; small pieces of red, white & pink card, each cut into a heart shape. Put all the props into a large box ready for the story. Tell it slowly, leaving lots of space to help children to think. There is also a video version of this that you could use, but it's nowhere near as effective as doing it live!: [https://youtu.be/6Jaog2N\\_wj4](https://youtu.be/6Jaog2N_wj4)
- You will need some thought bubble-shaped paper, or paper with bubble outlines printed on them for the reflective activity this week.

### Gathering:

**Slides 1-3:** Use these new gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. The greeting comes with BSL signing; you can view the demos using links under the slide.



**Leader:** As we gather together,

**ALL: ...we bring our hearts.**

**Leader:** As we gather together,

**ALL: ...we share our thoughts.**

**Leader:** As community together,

**ALL: We serve one another.**

*Signs for greeting: click on links*

*Hearts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - heart](#) (or you could use your hands as shown in the image)*

*Thoughts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - thought](#)*

*Serve: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - serve](#) (or you could just open your hands in front of you)*

### Engaging:

- **Slide 4:** We're going to start our time together today, as we often do, with a bit of fun. (Either appoint 'shepherds' to round up the sheep cards before reading what's on the back of each, or use the **slides (5-10)** to reveal each fun fact). Then continue:



- **Slide 11:** Last time, we heard about the great Jewish king, King David. Before he was a king, he was a shepherd, and he knew everything there was to know about sheep. Like any shepherd, David was no stranger to danger, and as we heard last week, he'd had to rescue his sheep many a time from lions, wolves and bears....He loved his sheep, and they knew his voice. But as we also heard, David was also a great writer and he wrote many songs about God, whom he loved, songs that people now call the Psalms.....

Today, I'm going to share with you what David wrote in Psalm 23, the shepherd's psalm, which is his most famous.....

- **Slide 12: Psalm 23** use script on p.4-5
- As you may have worked out, David wasn't writing about sheep in Psalm 23 – he was writing about himself, and how it felt to know God's care for him. There were times in David's life when he wandered away from God, like a lost sheep, but David knew that because God was *his* shepherd, he would help him to find the right way to go. David's Psalm is also special to people who are Jews and people who are Christians, and will help them as they trust God to lead them in *their* lives, whatever happens.

### Slide 13: Responding (and words for worship):



We've been thinking today about sheep.....and shepherds.....how sheep are kept safe when they follow where their shepherd leads them....how the shepherd knows each sheep's voice.....and will search for them when they get lost.....

.....think about your own life for a few moments now.....

....I wonder who the people are in **your** life who you follow?....

.....the people you feel totally safe with.....

.....the people who are like your shepherd?.....

....think about those people now.....

....that's what David said that God is like, only **even more** trustworthy....

.....

**Slide 14:** Now I'm going to pray, using some of the words from David's psalm. If you agree with what I'm saying and would like to pray with me, then listen to the words carefully and join in with the 'amen' at the end.

### Slide 15: Prayer

Thank you, God, that you are like the very best shepherd – you give us everything we need.

You lead us along safe paths, and we don't need to be afraid because you are with us wherever we go.

Thank you, God, our shepherd.

### Slide 16: Amen

### Sending: Slide 17

**Leader:** As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead,

**All:** ....may we serve one another in our **thoughts** and **words** and **actions**.



**Signs for response: click on links**

Thoughts: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - thought \(signbsl.com\)](http://British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - thought (signbsl.com))

Words (use 3<sup>rd</sup> definition): [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - word \(signbsl.com\)](http://British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - word (signbsl.com))

Actions: [British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - action \(signbsl.com\)](http://British Sign Language BSL Video Dictionary - action (signbsl.com))

### To sing / listen to:

We're going to sing some more words that the shepherd-king David wrote, from another of his psalms, about God watching over us....join in as much as you can.... [God is watching](#) (BBC)

Or, [The Lord's My Shepherd](#) (trad. BBC)



### Ideas for classroom reflection: Big thoughts....

In his Psalms, David thought a lot of big thoughts about life and life's experiences.

What are you wondering about, your 'big questions'? Take a thought bubble and write or draw your thoughts. Talk about your ideas together – and perhaps make them into a big classroom

display that you can add to over time.



<p><b>A large number of sheep is called a flock, herd or mob! Sheep like to be part of a group – which is what makes them easy to move when they're together.</b></p>	<p><b>There are over 1 billion sheep in the world. About 34 million of them live in New Zealand – which is about seven sheep for every person living there!</b></p>	<p><b>Because of the position &amp; design of their eyes, sheep can see behind themselves without turning their heads. They also have rectangular pupils, like goats.</b></p>
<p><b>Sheep can make different 'baa-ing' sounds to tell other sheep how they are feeling – a mother sheep can recognise their lambs by their bleating when they wander off. They get easily stressed if there is danger nearby – or if they become separated from the flock.</b></p>	<p><b>Sheep have very good memories, and can recognise people they know as well as other sheep.</b></p>	<p><b>A person who looks after sheep is called a shepherd – and, as you might know, sheep need an awful lot of looking after so that they stay safe!</b></p>

# Psalm 23: a reflective story

## You will need:

6 squares of felt in different colours: green, blue, brown, black, purple & white	A tree from your small-world resources A piece of reflective blue card or material, shaped like a lake	A glass and a small jug of water
A compass, or small piece of map	A torch or battery tealight	A plate of play food, piled high
A plastic glass and a saucer	Your diary or calendar	Red, white & pink hearts

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

**[Spread out the green felt & place the tree]**

You bring my soul to a place of rest.....

....sweeter than the greenest meadows.....

*[place 'lake' shape on the felt]*

....more peaceful than the quietest lakes....

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

**[Spread out the blue felt]**

....you bring deep refreshment to my soul....

*[place glass and begin to fill it from the jug]*

....like cool, clear water on the hottest summer day.....

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

**[Spread out the brown felt]**

.....you lead me along safe paths.....

*[place compass or map on the felt]*

....you help me to find the right way to go.....

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

**[Spread out the black felt]**

.....even in the darkest times of my life, you will never leave me.....

your shepherd-presence makes me feel safe.....

*[turn on torch/tealight and place it on felt]*

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

***[Spread out the purple felt]***

.....the life you give is richer than a table laden for a feast....

*[place plate & food]*

.....or an overflowing wineglass.....

*[place wineglass next to food]*

.....You, God, are my shepherd.....

....you give me all that I need.....

***[Spread out the white felt, then open your diary  
and lay it on the felt]***

...every day of my life, your goodness

*[place a pink heart onto the open pages]*

....and love *[place a red heart onto the open pages]*....

.....and mercy *[place a white heart onto the open pages]* are with me.....

....and I will live with you forever.....

.....You, God, are my shepherd....

....you give me all that I need.





*David wrote about lots of big thoughts in his psalms. Psalm 23 explored David's big idea about God being like a shepherd.*



**I wonder what your big thoughts about life might be?**



**Talk together about the things you have wondered about – and maybe share some ideas about the possible answers!**



**Write or draw your big thought onto the paper and perhaps make a big classroom display which you can add to over time.**

