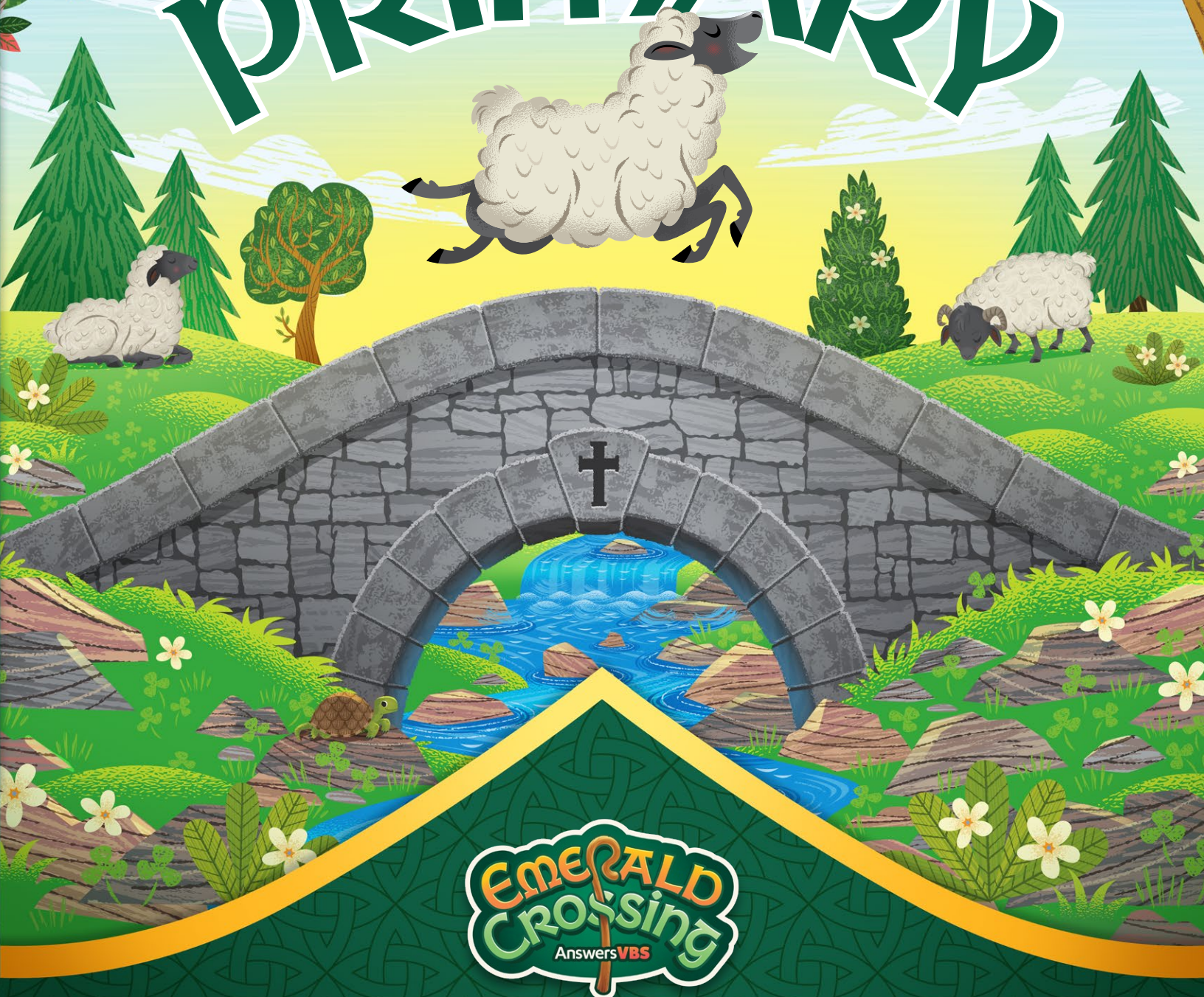


FLOCK TALK TIME  BIBLE LESSONS

primary



EMERALD
Crossing
Answers **VBS**

Course Overview

Theme Verse: Psalm 23:1

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Titles	Lost to Found	Wrong Path to Right Path	Fearful to Peaceful	Grumbling to Grateful	Shaky to Sure
Locations	Sheep Farm in Donegal	Green Pastures in County Galway	Black Valley in County Kerry	Enemy Territory in Dublin	Higher Lands in County Antrim
Bible Passages	Psalm 23:1 1 Samuel 17:34–37	Psalm 23:2–3 1 Samuel 17	Psalm 23:4 1 Samuel 19–23	Psalm 23:5 2 Samuel 9:3–7 1 Samuel 16:1–13	Psalm 23:6 1 Chronicles 22
Lesson Focus	Like David, I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.	Like David, I need the Lord to lead me on the right path through his Word.	Like David, I can turn to the Lord for comfort when I am anxious or afraid.	Like David, I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.	Like David, I need to be on the lookout for God’s goodness and mercy, my traveling companions through life.
Apologetics Content	Is the Lord a distant God? Did he create the universe and then just sit back and watch?	Is the Bible a trustworthy guide to lead us through life?	Why do we even have hard times?	Are good things because of “good luck” or a good God?	What should rainbows remind us of?
Memory Verses	Psalm 23:1	Psalm 23:2–3	Psalm 23:4	Psalm 23:5	Psalm 23:6
Names of God	Shepherd	Leader	Comforter	Provider	Promise Keeper
Animal Pals	Mia the Connemara Sheep	Guide the Border Collie	Shadow the Raven	Pesky the Woolly Aphid	Shirley the Highland Cow
Celtic Corner Crafts	Baa-loved Sheep Keepsake Ornament—Shepherd’s Staff	S.O.A.P. Bible Puffball Zipper Pull	“Don’t Worry, Just Pray” Magnet Night-Light in the Darkness	Thankube Gratitude Attitude Game	Psalm Scroll Highland Cow
Celtic Corner Science	Sink or Float Wet Woolly	Genetically You Sling Fling	Shadow Play Fear Not	Sticky Stuff Overflow Your Cup	Firm Foundations Real Rainbows
Green Meadow Games	Gaelic Football Lost Sheep Relay	Shamrock, Riverdance, Viking Strongman Challenges	Run, David, Run Walk Through the Valley	Raiders My Cup Overflows Relays	Psalm 23 Partner Obstacle Course Pot o’ Gold
Still Water Snacks	Cross Trail Mix Sweet Sheep	Scene 23:2 Border Collie Paw Print	Stuffed Staff Bird’s Nest	Piled-High Popcorn Full Float	Cow Patties Spud Circles
Cool Contests	Guess the Rainbow Skittles	Group Spirit Day	Dress-Up Day	Bible Challenge	Mission Money Mania



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Primary Teacher Guide

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Project Coordinator: Stacia McKeever

Writers: Randy and Barb Witt

Assistant: Amy Quinn

Content Editors: Roger Patterson, Dr. Georgia Purdom

Editors: Linda Moore, Gretchen Doolittle

Interior Design: Diane King

Cover Design: Jon Seest

Photographer: Susie Jarvis

Illustrator: Paul Agner

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For more information, write:

Answers in Genesis

PO Box 510, Hebron, KY 41048

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Handy Helps

Top o' the Morning to Ya!

It's early morning on the Emerald Isle. Gaze ahead as the sun rises on the cool, green pastures dotted with grazing sheep. Listen to the waves crash at the staggering Cliffs of Moher as their towering crags ascend majestically from the sea. Catch the earthy scent of sheep and cattle, fertile meadows, and dense forests. Step into a local restaurant and taste the rich flavors of a land known for its butter and potatoes. Run your hand over the soft wool of a pastured lamb or the rough, stony exterior of an age-old castle. Tune in as lively folk music entertains and delights all who listen.

From the lush meadows of its countryside to the cobblestone streets of its cities, there is something to delight the senses everywhere we turn in Ireland. So journey with us to *Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure Through Psalm 23*. Every stop along our path will teach us about the Good Shepherd and how he cares for his sheep. Like David discovered throughout his life, first as a shepherd and later as a king, we'll discover important truths such as:

- I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.
- I need the Lord to lead me on the right path through his Word.
- I can turn to the Lord for comfort when I'm feeling anxious or afraid.
- I can have an attitude of gratitude in every situation.
- I need to be on the lookout for God's goodness and mercy, my traveling companions through life.

Beauty and adventure await us each day at Emerald Crossing, where lads and lasses will gather at the **Emerald Isle Assembly**. This high-energy beginning includes wacky intros, lively songs, a Mission Moment, and prayer.

Then they're off to rotate through five fun sites:

Flock Talk Time, where Bible lessons are taught in creative, hands-on ways.

Celtic Corner Science and Crafts, where kids will create their own crafts and explore God's world through science activities.

Still Water Snacks, where kids enjoy scrumptious Irish fare.

Green Meadow Games, the rambunctious rec time where kids join in some lively competition.

Top o' the Morning Missions, Music, and Memory Verses, where kids sing songs, learn their memory verses, or go in-depth with the Mission Moment featuring Children's Hunger Fund.

Finally, everyone heads back to the **Emerald Isle Assembly** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. Lads and lasses will be introduced to an Irish sheep farmer named Grandpa Fitz, who runs Stillwater Farm. Through some challenges, some fun, and a few big surprises, Grandpa Fitz shows how the Lord has been his comforter and guide his whole life.

So pull on your work boots, grab your walking staff, and get ready for a grand ol' time at *Emerald Crossing*!

Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place? And why are we still at it by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-charts, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

Your Role

Your role as the teacher is outlined in the following pages and includes planning and preparing the daily lessons, enthusiastically engaging in teaching the lessons, and praying over all aspects of your job.

Read this guide carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! Get excited! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *Emerald Crossing* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaq.

Terms to Know

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here is a list of some of the most common terms you should know.

Lads and Lasses: Terms used when referring to children during VBS week.

Travel Groups: Groups of children (individual classes) named after animals that live in Ireland, such as Hedgehogs, Red Deer, Sheepdogs, and Irish Hares.

Group Guides: Group leaders who lead the travel groups from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required for this position.

Flock Talk Time: Bible and apologetics lesson time.

Shepherds: Teachers of the Flock Talk Time.

Celtic Corner Science and Crafts: Rotation site where crafts are made and science experiments are explored.

Still Water Snacks: Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

Green Meadow Games: Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

Top o' the Morning Missions, Music, and Memory

Verses: Rotation sites where kids can spend additional time learning songs, memory verses, and missions.

Good as Gold Memory Verse: Daily Bible verse to learn.

Animal Pals: Our friendly animal mascots that remind us of the main theme of each day.

Toddlers: 2–4-year-olds.


Pre-Primaries: 4–6-year-olds or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

Primaries: 6–9-year-olds or children who have completed grades 1–3.

Juniors: 9–12-year-olds or children who have completed grades 4–6.

For multiage K–6 travel groups, we recommend using the material for the Primaries.

Top 20 Teaching Tips for Teachers

1. Pray and study God's Word. This is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of sharing his Word, so be well prepared. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the resources downloaded from [AnswersVBS.com](https://www.answersvbs.com). Begin to pray and plan now and continue to pray during and after VBS.
3. In this guide:
 - » Teaching Tips are marked with a .
 - » Materials are listed next to each activity.
 - » The "teacher says" portion is bold.
4. You may want to assign the task of gathering supplies for all the teachers to one person or have the teachers divide up the supply list, with each being responsible for multiples of certain items. It's also helpful to get all the supplies ready in containers ahead of time rather than gathering them day-by-day the week of VBS.
5. See Decorating Decisions for a picture and description of the teaching set. Also, when setting up the room, you may want to clear away tables and chairs depending on the room size and number of children expected.
6. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
7. Dress as if you are a modern-day farmer/shepherd in rural Ireland. This can include a T-shirt and hat (see Resource Catalog), a vest or sturdy shirt over the T-shirt, jeans, and a staff. You may even want to include a rain jacket and rain boots or hiking boots, as it rains a lot in Ireland.
8. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. Some teachers enjoy making up a fun name, adopting an Irish accent, or adding something new to their "costume" each day, such as adding a small animal pal stuffie to various pockets in a vest. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
9. Call the children by name. Name tags help with this.
10. Make sure to keep eye contact as you share the lessons, helping each child sense your warmth and care.
11. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills: plant seeds, bring to salvation, or strengthen and grow those who are already believers.
12. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access. Show the importance of the Scriptures through your facial expressions and your actions.
13. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs.
14. Be aware of your church's safety protocols and appropriate touching policies.
15. Be all there. Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care.
16. When kids are sitting on the floor for drawing or writing activities, give them a firm surface (e.g., clipboards, old magazines, or books) to use underneath the papers. Cut corrugated cardboard or coroplast sheets into 9 x 12-inch pieces and add a binder clip for inexpensive clipboards.
17. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
18. Children like order. Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
19. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and their take-home student guides and other challenges. Some may even want to try the bonus memory passages.
20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Prepare to confidently lead them using the following strategies.

Attention-Getters

Call and Response—The teacher will teach the kids that when she says something, they should reply with something else. Practice the following ideas so they know your expectations for responding to them.

- **Teacher:** Where are my sheep?
Kids: Everybody sleep! (they sit still and close eyes)
- **Teacher:** Potato, pot-ah-to!
Kids: Tomato, tom-ah-to!
- **Teacher:** Shamrock!
Kids: Sham-roll!
- **Teacher:** Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo . . .
Kids: Violet!
- **Teacher:** Emerald!
Kids: Isle!
Teacher: Emerald!
Kids: Isle!
Teacher: Shh!

Rainstorm—Use your fingers, hands, legs, and feet to simulate rain that goes from very light to heavy and back to very light. Start with silence then rub hands together for the wind. Snap fingers for light rain then pat your legs for a heavier rain. Clap hands and add stomping feet for heaviest rain. Do in reverse to wind back down to no rain.

Rhythm Claps—The teacher claps a little rhythm and the kids clap the exact rhythm back. Vary the clapping patterns.

Countdown—Hold up five fingers and start to count down from five to one. By the count of one, they need to be completely quiet.

Soft Talk—Start talking about something important very softly or in a whisper. They will often get quiet to hear what you are saying. Or say, “If you can hear me, clap once.” Continue softly with other commands.

Flash the Lights—This is a good signal to listen up.

Lining Up to Walk Through the Building

If You—Say different categories for lining up in fun ways, such as the following:

- “If you’re wearing green today, line up. Now, if you’re wearing ___, line up.”
- “If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up.”
- “If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up.”
- “If your first name starts with A–L, line up. Now, if your first name starts with M–Z, line up.”

Proactive Tips

Be Prepared—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. Think through and organize your schedule, leaving no downtime. Keep things moving! This takes more effort on your part, but it’s worth it.

Active Participation—Keeping kids actively engaged in the lesson is perhaps the best thing you can do to keep the class from getting rowdy. The lessons are written to be creative, fun, and full of active participation. Play the games, act out the Bible accounts, and do the other ideas listed. Occupy kids’ minds and attention with good stuff!

Helpers—Involve the kids. Let them be helpers. Some kids just want to feel needed, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task, like helping others learn memory verses, passing out papers, or holding a poster for the teacher. Sometimes a simple task can keep them busy and make them feel important!

Use Humor—Kids of all ages love to laugh! Have fun together. If you see a situation is getting tense or a child is getting upset for some reason, try thinking of a way to lighten the mood with humor.

Calming Rowdiness

Don’t Yell—Kids may respond at first if someone yells, but they eventually dismiss it. Try some of these other ideas instead.

Separate Kids—Separate kids who misbehave around each other but encourage problem-solving when possible. “What are some things we could do to help you and ___ get along?”

Give Choices—Avoid power struggles by giving choices. If a child is resistant to doing something you’ve asked, try your command another way. “You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen or sit with ___ (leader’s name) at the back of the room.”

Praise in Public, Correct in Private—If someone does need correction, be careful not to embarrass him in front of his peers. If you need to talk to a child about a misbehavior, pull him aside while everyone else is busy. Kids will be less defensive if they don’t feel they have to “save face” in front of their peers and if they feel you really care and aren’t just coming down on them.

Know Church Policies—Know your church’s policy for severe behavior issues. Do you take the child to your VBS director? Do you alert the child’s parents? Do you involve other staff members? Be prepared.

Age-Level Characteristics

Kids are awesome! Each one is unique and is a special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, they also share some common characteristics. That doesn't mean every child always exhibits the following characteristics at the suggested age, but these guidelines can be a benchmark to use when looking at characteristics of children as a whole. Understanding how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see general characteristics of children and then specific characteristics of Primaries (ages 6–9 years).

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics.

- They are born sinners (Romans 3:23).
- God has given each a conscience, and they generally want good to win over evil.
- God has shown himself to all children through his creation, making it obvious to all that there is a Creator.
- Children enjoy active learning—moving around, seeing things, touching things, smelling and hearing things, and being involved.
- Children need to be loved, encouraged, and praised.
- Children are rapidly growing and changing.
- Children trust the adults who are responsible for them.
- Children can get discouraged with criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and God.

Characteristics of Primaries

Physical Characteristics

Primaries love games and competitions, but it can be hard for them to lose. They are continuing to grow and improve in hand-eye coordination and fine and gross motor skills. They need to have opportunities for movement.

Takeaways for Us

- Use games to teach! Primaries love any kind of games, whether active or learning games.
- Help them learn to take turns and to be good winners and good losers. Both winning and losing well are important in God's sight.
- Use boy vs. girl competitions to get them revved up! As long as you keep it light and fun, they will enjoy these times.

Emotional/Social Characteristics

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl/boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the group and want adult/teacher approval.

Takeaways for Us

- Give Primaries plenty of opportunities to work in groups or with partners.
- Use humor with Primaries. The sillier, the better!
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete in their thinking, rather than being able to understand abstract or symbolic thinking. They're learning to read. They need active learning. They're gaining a growing attention span. They understand the consequences of their actions. They can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

Takeaways for Us

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. "Becoming a child of God" or "being in God's family" are more concrete ways to express the same concept as kids will understand what it means to be in a family.
- Activities can stretch for a longer time, but it's still good to vary them. Keep Primaries involved in being active as much as possible.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking them to read out loud. Try asking for volunteers.
- Small print can be a challenge, so use larger print when possible.
- Encourage memorization.
- Use visuals.
- Show interest in each child, letting them know you care.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully. Explain Bible words and concepts.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Special Needs

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (1230530) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

Flock Talk Time

As we gather for Flock Talk Time, we will open God's Word and mine the depths of Psalm 23.

The Bible lesson time is written as a 35–40-minute period divided into three sections.

Introduce It! (5–10 minutes): Each day, kids will head to a new location in Ireland and hear a new characteristic of sheep as we see how God compares us to sheep in Psalm 23.

Teach It! (25–30 minutes): The Bible teaching and apologetics content is presented during this time in creative, appealing ways.

Apply It! (Remaining class time): This is the memory verse review and practical application time.

The lessons are jam-packed, so try to be organized and keep things moving. Ideas are written into each lesson to help you adapt if you have a longer or shorter lesson

time than 35–40 minutes. Because of the content-rich lessons, a little extra time is great if you can swing it! But if not, there are lots of options, so you may want to shorten or skip some activities.

The lesson format is written for a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two or the Teaching Assistant. The lesson format can also work if teaching alone. If you are team-teaching, decide ahead of time who will be responsible for what. If you are teaching alone, simply find someone (e.g., a staff person or teen volunteer) to help on any day you can use an extra set of hands. A shorter (20 minutes) **one-person script** is also available from the Resource Download.

Below is a sample schedule of a typical day at VBS. Check with your director for a copy of the schedule and room assignment for your VBS.

Sample Schedule

Time	Group One	Group Two	Group Three
9:00–9:15	Emerald Isle Assembly: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		
9:20–10:00	Flock Talk Time	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks
10:05–10:45	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks	Flock Talk Time	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts
10:50–11:30	Celtic Corner Science and Crafts	Green Meadow Games and Still Water Snacks	Flock Talk Time
11:35–Noon	Emerald Isle Assembly—Closing: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		

Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! The contemporary memory verse songs are produced by Seeds Kids Worship (ESV) and the traditional memory verse songs are produced by Majesty Music (KJV). Both are available with the Music Leader Download, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. They feature the full verses. If you

choose to use these songs, we suggest using them during the memory verse time in each lesson. The memory verse songs and the theme songs are together on one student CD. Student CDs in packs of 10 are available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (Contemporary—1230610; Traditional—1230620).

Student Extras

Check with your VBS director and choose one or more of these fun optional materials to give to your students so they can take home a review of the daily lesson content.

Also, decide with your director when it will work best to give out the various items: at the beginning of the day, during lesson time, during snack time (a good time to review), or at the end of the day (a good time to pass out Student Guides, bookmarks, and other items that need to make it home safely).

Emerald Crossing Maps: Use these maps with stickers as a fun, daily review of each day's stop in Ireland.

- Pack of 10 maps (1230780)

Student Guides: These daily, age-appropriate take-home papers feature a lesson review activity, the memory verse, and a suggested verse review game. The “Go and Do” section parallels the Apply It! part of the lesson. You can either go over these during class time or send them home with the students to be completed with a parent or caretaker. This is what our test churches do. If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good information. Give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day. Then have the guides check with the kids the following day to see how they did and make a big deal about their hard work. The Student Guides are available in packs of 10.

- Primary ESV (1230720)
- Primary KJV (1231330)

Travel Guides: These fun, interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, animal pals, stickers, and a place to stamp (1230930) for attendance. Check with your VBS director to find out when he or she would like to give these to the kids. They can receive them at any time during the first day. You can review them with the kids during the Apply It! section of the lesson, if you have time, or they can be stamped as the kids arrive at VBS. These are available in packs of 10.

- Junior/Primary ESV (1230910)
- Junior/Primary KJV (1231370)

Bookmarks: These are available in packs of 10 and can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the day.

- Gospel (1230760)—Day 1
- The Lord Is My Shepherd (1230770)—Day 5 or any day

Exploring God's Word: This little booklet encourages your students to continue discovering God's Word for weeks after VBS has finished. It features a daily question and answer found in the Scripture verse. You or the group guides can pass one of these to each student on the last day of class at dismissal. These are available in packs of 10.

- Booklets (1230750)

Decorating Decisions

A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories. So be creative and use the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations.



Key Decorating Elements

Classroom Set

To serve as a focal point for the teaching, the *Emerald Crossing* classroom set features an old stone bridge on a farm in the Irish countryside. The bridge is an essential part of the set and is used to display the daily “crossing.” Place it in front of a backdrop of rolling green hills under a blue sky, then decorate with clouds, rocks, flowers, a stream, sheep, and other animals. See the Resource Download for [clip art images](#). Add a barn or farmhouse in the background if desired.

For the rolling hills, paint each a different shade of green to make the backdrop more colorful. Dot the hills with small painted sheep.

For the bridge, there are a number of ways to paint faux stone or brick. One simple method is to paint the entire surface a solid color, then after it has dried, use a large rectangle sponge, dipped in a contrasting color, to

create a brick or block pattern. For example, if you want the mortar to be black, paint the surface black, then use a lighter gray for the stones or bricks.

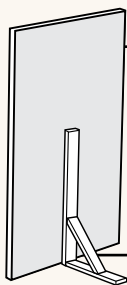
A stream can run under the bridge. Use a plastic tablecloth that has a water motif or buy a blue metallic fringe curtain and place it under/up against the bridge.

For clouds, make them either 2D (painted on cardboard, cut out, and hung) or 3D. Dimensional clouds can be made by gluing Poly-fil to white rice balls or white pizza boxes and hanging them from the ceiling with fishing line. Flowers can also be 2D (painted onto the set) or 3D. Make your own 3D flowers and cattails and place them around the set, or use fake flowers and place them in baskets here and there.

Fill out your set with animals such as sheep, a sheepdog, and chickens. Butterflies and birds can be flitting around as well.

Check out [Pinterest.com/answersvbs](https://www.pinterest.com/answersvbs) for colorful photos of decorations from our test churches!

Visit [YouTube.com/answersvbs](https://www.youtube.com/answersvbs) for how-to decorating videos!



Prop up your set and any freestanding decorations with wooden jacks made from 2 x 4-in., 2 x 3-in., or 2 x 2-in. boards. Smaller decorations will need smaller jacks and larger decorations will need larger ones. If necessary, jacks can be weighed down with bags of sand or road salt.

Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to making your own classroom set, a scene setter is available for purchase (1231260) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount the panels onto a rigid material using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples, and prop them up. Or you can attach them directly to a wall with mounting putty, Mavalus tape, or double-sided tape on top of painter's tape. Add a few freestanding animals, clouds, rocks, or flowers to give it a little dimension.



Crossing Signs

"Crossing Signs" are mounted to the bridge, then changed each day according to the theme. See the daily lessons for more information. [Printable sign images](#) are also provided. You can reduce or enlarge the signs to fit your particular bridge. If you are purchasing the classroom scene setter, the crossing signs are included and just need to be cut out.

Resource Posters

Contained in the [Teacher Resource Kit](#) are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters. These are important visuals for the kids and should be displayed in an organized fashion on a wall (or walls) adjacent to your set. The memory verse posters can be stacked with Day 1 on top and Day 5 on the bottom so the whole psalm is in order. Display your Map of Ireland Poster either on the wall or on a large easel—two posters need to be mounted together to make one big map. Each poster has a tiny label at the bottom indicating which age group and day it belongs with.

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

1. Photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
2. Place roll paper or a rigid material against a wall.
3. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
4. Trace the image outlines onto the paper or rigid material.
5. Paint the image and cut out.

Clip Art Images

Numerous [clip art images](#) are available. Use an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the images onto roll paper, poster board, corrugated cardboard, or foam insulation sheets. Prop them up with wooden supports (jacks) or mount them to a wall.

Miscellaneous Ideas

- Place a green grass rug or a raised platform in front of your backdrop to create a stage effect.
- Kids love color, so make sure your classroom is colorful.
- Kids also love animals, so include some in your decorating. See the Resource Download for clip art images of sheep, cows, chickens, a border collie, and other animals. Or use large stuffed farm animals.
- Prop a staff up somewhere on your set.
- A wheelbarrow can be off to the side (or a smaller, kid's wheelbarrow).
- Think "farm"—Irish sheep farm, in particular—as you decorate.

Painting Cardboard Tips

- Add a thin (1/2-inch) black border to your painted props. This helps them stand out better and makes the colors appear more vibrant.
- Because corrugated cardboard tends to curl when only one side is painted, first apply a quick single coat of paint to the back.

Puppet Stage

Because puppets are used daily in the Primary classrooms, you will need a puppet stage. Use one of the rolling hills on the set for this purpose and have the puppet appear from behind the hill. Or paint a separate hill that can be propped with a jack and placed just off to the left or right of your set that is specifically for the puppet. Alternately, you can make a puppet stage out of a large cardboard box or a trifold display board. Cut out a rectangular hole in the box or display board, cover the hole with fabric, and then paint or decorate the outside.



DAY 1

Lost to Found

BIBLE PASSAGES

Psalm 23:1
1 Samuel 17:34–37

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Is the Lord a distant God? Did he create the universe and then just sit back and watch?

MEMORY VERSE

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

NAME OF GOD

Shepherd

LESSON FOCUS

Like David, I can be a child of God and have the Lord as my shepherd.

ANIMAL PAL

Mia (My-a) the Connemara Sheep

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Sheep Farm in Donegal
- Teach It!
Part 1: This Way, That Way
Part 2: Gospel Presentation
Part 3: Puppet Pal—Lost to Found
Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game
~ Option 1: Animal Pal Moves
~ Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map
- Apply It!
Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse
Part 2: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Psalm 23 several times. Memorize it.
- Read 1 Samuel 17:34–37 several times.
- Read “Leading a Child to Christ,” found on the inside back cover of this guide.
- Read this lesson thoroughly and prepare the materials.
- For more information, visit AnswersVBS.com/emeraldfaq.
- Pray.

Devotion 1: The Lord Is My Shepherd

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

There's no doubt about it—our kids are anxious. Over 22% of children are in therapy, while 40% of high schoolers have experienced persistent hopelessness or sadness. They deal with household substance abuse, parental incarceration, neighborhood violence, and unmet basic needs. Social media, interpersonal relationship drama, and world events all contribute to instability among our youth. They don't know where to turn for comfort.

Moralistic, therapeutic deism is a dominant worldview among their parents. They believe in a god—a supreme being—who has no connection to the world he created, no personal involvement in their lives, and no demands on how they live. This worldview has an appearance of morality—the highest good is to be good to others—but no basis for saying one action is wrong and another is right. They ignore the biblical foundation for morality and instead impose their own idea of right and wrong; morality is based on “my truth” rather than absolute truth. And this worldview is therapeutic—the purpose for living is my own personal happiness; there is no higher purpose.

Without an anchor for their soul and the knowledge of a sovereign Savior who loves them and is working out all things for their good, it's no wonder our kids are lost. They're wandering on the wrong path of their own making, filled with worry and fear, depressed about their lack of happiness, and unsure of what the future holds for them.

This week, we are introducing kids to the gentle Good Shepherd through the life of David and Psalm 23. They will meet the God who created them in his image, with great care, for his glory, and the good of all of us. The God who loved the world so much that he gave his Son as a sacrifice for sin. The God who leads us on the right path, who offers comfort in every trial, who provides for all our needs, and in whom every promise is “yes” and “amen.”

Today, as you prepare to share with the children, first remind yourself of who Jesus is—is he *your* shepherd? Have you crossed from being a lost sheep to a beloved member of his fold? Does he know you (John 10:14)? Do

you run to the chief shepherd and overseer of your soul when you are anxious (1 Peter 2:25)? Is he the shepherd and rock on which you build your life (Genesis 49:24)? Do you know that he will lovingly carry you forever (Psalm 28:9)?

What amazing mercy that we can say, “The Lord is my shepherd.” That the Creator of the universe is *my* personal shepherd. Is he yours? May we pray that we live our lives in light of this Good Shepherd as the Puritans did.

Lord of all being,
There is one thing that deserves my greatest care,
that calls forth my ardent desires,
That is, that I may answer the great end for which
I am made—
to glorify thee who hast given me being,
and to do all the good I can for my fellow men;
Verily life is not worth having
if it be not improved for this noble purpose.
Yet, Lord, how little is this the thought of mankind!
Most men seem to live for themselves,
without much or any regard for thy glory,
or for the good of others;
They earnestly desire and eagerly pursue
the riches, honours, pleasures of this life,
as if they supposed that wealth, greatness,
merriment,
could make their immortal souls happy;
But, alas, what false delusive dreams are these!
And how miserable ere long will those be that sleep
in them,
for all our happiness consists in loving thee,
and being holy as thou art holy.
Help me to know continually
that there can be no true happiness,
no fulfilling of thy purpose for me,
apart from a life lived in and for the Son of thy love.

— Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 13.

- ◆ Map of Ireland Poster
- ◆ Different Sheep Poster
- ★ Lost/Found Crossing Signs
- Bible
- Modern-day farmer/shepherd costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape for posters
- Blank paper to cover map (see Prep)
- Optional: Large easel for map

Introduce It!

Sheep Farm in Donegal (10 minutes)

Study your lessons each day and know them well but feel free to say things in your own way. An **EDITABLE VERSION** of each lesson is available to download, as well as a shortened (20 minutes) **ONE-PERSON LESSON**.

Prep: Prepare your set backdrop and costumes. Bookmark the Scripture passages in your Bible for the whole lesson. Use the blank paper to cover the Days 1–5 photos on the two posters that make up the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER**. Mount or hang the posters so they look like one big map. Or place the mounted map posters on a large easel. Cut apart the **LOST/FOUND CROSSING SIGNS**. Cut apart the **DIFFERENT SHEEP POSTER** and hide the pictures of sheep around the room so they are just visible to the kids. Or if you have a large group and room, hide them under chairs or pews before the kids arrive and have them look under their seats at the right time. Hide them again before each rotation.

Teacher 1: Hello from Ireland, lads (boys) and lasses (girls)! Or should I say “dia duit” (deeh-uh-gwit), which means “hello” or “God be with you” in the Irish language. Have everyone say “dia duit” to each other. My name’s ___, and this is ___. We’re here to take you on a shepherd’s tour of Ireland. We’ll start right here at the Emerald Crossing bridge where we’ll be discovering what life is like when we live *our* way (hold up the “Lost” sign) versus *God’s* way (hold up the “Found” sign).

Teacher 2: Do you know where Ireland is? Take responses. Show the map. In Ireland, it’s so beautiful! There are lots of green pastures, farms, and sheep.

Teacher 1: Sheep are interesting creatures. We’ll be talking about sheep and shepherds all week long as we learn from Psalm 23 in the Bible. Point to it in your Bible. Who knows what a shepherd does? Take responses. A person who cares for sheep. Psalm 23 was written by a man named King David, who was a shepherd himself early in his life before he became a king.

Teacher 2: Okay, it’s time to begin our journey. First, let’s fly to Ireland. Put out your arms and “fly” for a few seconds. Now that we’re here, put on some rain boots because it rains a lot in Ireland! Have everyone pretend to do so. We better put on our raincoats too. Pretend to do so. And let’s not forget our shepherd’s staff! Pretend to pick one up. Okay, now let’s start at this sheep farm in the town of Donegal, which is here. Show the farm drawing on the **MAP OF IRELAND POSTER** and uncover the Day 1 Sheep Farm photo. Can you hear the sheep baaing? Do you feel the light rain coming down? Do you see a rainbow over there?

Teacher 1: Let’s pretend we have to find some lost sheep. Look around and see if you can find any pictures of sheep, then grab one (just one) and bring it to me. Do so.

Teacher 2: Once everyone is settled, show the **DIFFERENT SHEEP PICTURES** as you say the following. Sheep can be black, white, or mixed. Some have horns and some don’t. Some look fluffy and some don’t. Some have long hair and some have short hair. They don’t all look alike. But sheep that live on farms have this in common—they sometimes wander away from the flock, getting lost from their shepherd. The shepherd may have to go find them!

Teacher 1: A sheep can get lost from its shepherd, but how about you? Have you ever gotten lost? Ask for a show of hands to see who has. Share a brief story of a time you got lost.

Teacher 2: Sheep and people have some things in common, including being lost at times. That’s why God compares us to sheep in different places in the Bible. We’re going to check out Psalm 23 to hear more about going from being lost to being found, our first Emerald Crossing (put up the **LOST/FOUND SIGNS** at the top of the bridge), but before we do, we need a little background, so let’s play “This Way, That Way” to get that info.



◆ A shepherd’s hook (1230580) makes a great prop for the teacher throughout the week.

◆ Be familiar with the lesson, but don’t memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference.

◆ If co-teaching, decide daily which parts of the lesson each of you will be responsible for teaching. Both should plan to dress in costumes.

◆ Think of fun names for yourselves: Farmer Mac, Shepherd-ess Shannon, Sheep Herder O’Hara, Farmhand Finn, Lamb-lover Lucy, Caretaker Kelly.

◆ The Bible is listed just once daily in the supply list but is used throughout, so keep it handy and marked to the correct passages ahead of time.

◆ Mounting putty (also known as sticky tack or poster putty) or tape is listed just once daily but will be used whenever you hang up posters. Hang them up as you talk or just hold them up while teaching and hang them up after class.

Teach It!

Part 1: This Way, That Way (5 minutes)

Prep: Print the **THIS WAY, THAT WAY SHEETS** to hold up during the activity.

Teacher 1: To play, let's line up in the middle of the room. *Do so.* Now, listen to the statement and decide whether to go this way (point one way) or that way (point the other way). Here's the first one: There are 150 psalms in the Bible. (Quickly flip through the book of Psalms.) Go this way (point one way) if you think *King David wrote all of those*. Go that way (point the other way) if you think *other people wrote some of them*. *Pause as they move.* David wrote many of the psalms, but not all of them, so you should have gone that way. He *did* write Psalm 23. Now, head back to the middle, and we'll ask the next question. *Do so.*

Teacher 2: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think the psalms were written as *letters* or go that way (point the other way) if you think they were written as *songs*. *Pause as they move.* They were written as songs for a group of people called the Israelites and were meant to be sung.

Teacher 1: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think David wrote Psalm 23 when he was *young* or go that way (point the other way) if you think David wrote it *toward the end of his life*. *Pause as they move.* He wrote it toward the end of his life. We'll be able to see how he wrote from experiences he had lived through, like being a shepherd.

Teacher 2: Next one. Go this way (point one way) if you think Psalm 23 is a picture of *us* as sheep or go that way (point the other way) if you think it's a picture of *God* as a sheep. *Pause as they move.* It's a picture of *us* as sheep and *God* as the shepherd.

Teacher 1: Last one. I'm going to read a passage about David when he was a young shepherd. Listen, and then you'll go this way or that way. Read 1 Samuel 17:34–37. Go this way (point one way) if David killed a *lion*. Go that way (point the other way) if he killed a *bear*. *Pause as they move.* This is a trick question. They can go either way because he killed both when he was a shepherd. Have them sit down then show the **DAVID AS SHEPHERD POSTER**. The job of a shepherd wasn't a wimpy job. It took a lot of strength, courage, and care.

Teacher 2: Did anyone get all those right? Okay, now we're ready to roll into Psalm 23.

Part 2: Gospel Presentation (15 minutes)

Prep: Put up the **DAYS 1–5 MEMORY VERSE POSTERS** so they are stacked with 1 on top and 5 at the bottom. Cover each word and picture on the **GOSPEL POSTER** with a piece of paper or sticky notes. Copy the **IS THE LORD MY SHEPHERD? PATTERN** on white card stock and put each on a hard surface (e.g., a table, a clipboard, or a magazine with a binder clip). Gather the markers for each person. To speed things up, place the supplies at each person's place (under a chair) if possible so it's ready before they arrive. Reset before each new rotation. Learn the motions for Psalm 23:1 from the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video.

Teacher 1: Let's stand and start by reading Psalm 23 together. *Do so, using all the MEMORY VERSE POSTERS as a reference.* Now, let's read just verse one, doing the hand motions. *Do so then have them sit back down.*

Teacher 2: We know shepherds care for sheep, right? What kinds of things do you think a good shepherd would do when he's caring for his sheep? *Take responses.* One thing shepherds would do is lie down at the gate of the sheep pen once all the sheep were in for the night so no animals or robbers could get them. Shepherds laid down their lives for the sheep. Shepherds would also search for sheep that had strayed, or gotten lost, and bring them back to the fold.

Teacher 1: Did you know the Bible calls Jesus our Good Shepherd? He laid down his life for us, too, just like shepherds would do for their sheep. And he cares about every lost person, or "lost sheep," out there.

Teacher 2: When you say "lost person," do you mean a person who's actually wandering around lost somewhere, like in a store?

◆ **David as Shepherd Poster**
★ Optional: **This Way, That Way Sheets**

✦ If your room is small, have the kids just stand and turn to the left or right.



◆ **Days 1–5 Memory Verse Posters**
◆ **Gospel Poster**
◆ **Clockmaker Poster**
★ **Psalm 23 Hand Motions** and video player
★ **Is the Lord My Shepherd? Pattern**, 1 per person
☐ White card stock, 1 sheet per person
☐ Hard surface per person (see Prep)
☐ Blank paper or sticky notes to cover Gospel Poster
☐ Markers, several colors or 1 pack of various colors per person
☐ Optional: Clock parts

✦ Show a picture of a shepherd lying at the entrance of a sheep pen.

✦ If time, briefly share at any point, in an age-appropriate way, when the Lord became your shepherd.



Teacher 1: No, I don't mean physically lost but spiritually lost. A person is lost in a spiritual way if they aren't part of the Good Shepherd's flock. To be in his flock, I have to belong to Jesus and ask him to be *my* shepherd—like in our verse, the Lord is *my* shepherd. It doesn't say the Lord is *a* shepherd. It says he is *my* shepherd. This is personal for each one of us. God takes a personal interest in *you* and wants to be *your* shepherd, caring for you.

Teacher 2: Oohh, okay. Let's pass out/get out our supplies, then we can hear more!

Pass out the supplies or have them get them out if the supplies are already at each person's spot.

Teacher 1: Do you know what it says at the top of your sheet? [Pause for responses](#). Right—Is the Lord *my* shepherd? Did you know that that's the most important question you could ever ask yourself? Let's take some time to look into it.

Teacher 2: First, while we're talking, quietly draw the earth in space 1. [Uncover the earth on the GOSPEL POSTER](#).

Teacher 1: Before time began or the universe came to be, God existed. He has always been. But then, at the beginning of *time*, God created a very good world. You're coloring earth right now to remind yourself of the very good world God made. He made green plants, blue waters, the sky, birds, fish, animals, and the first two people, Adam and Eve. We learn about this in the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis. [Show Genesis](#).

Teacher 2: Now, quietly color a piece of fruit in space 2 while we're talking. [Uncover the fruit from the tree on the GOSPEL POSTER](#).

Teacher 1: God gave the first man, Adam, a command to obey and lovingly warned him that the punishment for disobedience would be death. But instead of obeying God, Adam and Eve disobeyed and ate fruit from the tree they weren't supposed to eat from. Disobeying God's commands is called sin. When they disobeyed God, it changed the very good world into a place that now has not only good but also sad and bad things.

Teacher 2: Can you think of a good thing in our world? [Take a couple quick responses](#). A sad thing? [Take a couple quick responses](#). A bad thing? [Take a couple quick responses](#). They all exist now, and that goes back to the sin of the first man and woman. Okay, now quietly draw a manger, a small animal feeding trough, in space 3 while we're talking. [Uncover baby Jesus in the manger on the GOSPEL POSTER](#).

Teacher 1: About 4,000 years after God created everything and sin came into the world, the most amazing thing happened. Jesus himself, God's Son, came to earth as a baby! It talks about this right here in the Bible. [Point to Luke 1–2](#). Jesus knew we were like lost sheep needing a shepherd, and he came to rescue us.

Teacher 2: Now, some see it differently because they aren't basing their thoughts on the Bible. They believe God *was* the Creator of the world, as the Bible tells us, but they look at it kind of like this clock. [Show the CLOCKMAKER POSTER and \(optional\) clock parts](#). [Talk about how you need this and that to make it run](#). They say God is like a clockmaker who made all these parts.

Teacher 1: But once the clockmaker made the clock, he just let it sit on the windowsill to work on its own. That would be like God making the universe (which he did), but then stepping back and letting it run itself without his involvement or help. Of course, the Bible tells us a very different view. We see throughout its pages that God is a personal God who cares about us. We learn about that in Psalm 23 where he describes himself as a good shepherd. A good shepherd is involved in his sheep's lives. He's not distant, ignoring them. He loves and cares for them, just as Jesus loves and cares for *you*.

Teacher 2: Take a second and look at your hair or your friend's hair. [Pause](#). Did you know God loves and cares for you so much, he even knows how many hairs are on your head right this second? And he knows if you're going to lose one in the next hour!

Teacher 1: God created each person in his image. You are fearfully and wonderfully made with great care and purpose. No one is a mistake. We're all here for a reason—to glorify God (give God all the attention and credit) and to care for others. The Good Shepherd really, really cares about you! He cares about you so much, he came to earth to rescue you!

Teacher 2: Now, draw a man (or heart) in space 4. [Uncover the grown Jesus on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). As we mentioned, Jesus came as a baby, but then he grew up and lived a perfect, pure life without any sin.

Teacher 1: He never did anything sinfully wrong—not even one time. He was all good and did all things right, including doing miracles, teaching people, and sharing his love. Jesus was perfect in every way.

Teacher 2: Now, draw a cross in space 5. [Uncover the cross on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Even though Jesus was perfect in every way—perfect in love, perfect in care, perfect in goodness as the Good Shepherd—when he was in his 30s, some bad men who hated Jesus decided to put him to death. They hung him on a cross and left him to die a horribly painful death.

Teacher 1: Jesus allowed them to do this to him because he didn't want any of his sheep—and that means you—to stay lost. Draw a sheep in space 6. [Uncover the sheep on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Isaiah 53:6 says we are all like sheep that have gone astray, doing what we want instead of what God wants. Whether you realize it or not, if you don't have Jesus as your shepherd, you're lost in your sin. But Jesus wants you to be in his flock.

Teacher 2: [Uncover the tomb on the GOSPEL POSTER](#). Draw a tomb with the stone rolled away in space 7. After Jesus died, he was put in a tomb, which was sealed and guarded so he couldn't get out—or so the bad guys thought! But Jesus is God, and he came back to life, rose from the dead, and burst out of that tomb! Jesus didn't stay dead! [Move behind the puppet stage while Teacher 1 wraps up this section.](#)

Teacher 1: Now, Jesus lives in heaven where he's preparing a place for all who call on him as their Good Shepherd. And remember—Jesus doesn't want us to be lost like sheep without a shepherd ([Matthew 9:36](#)). Let's put away our supplies then talk to our puppet pal, Paddy, a little more about this.

Part 3: Puppet Pal—Lost to Found (5 minutes or less)

Prep: Tape one PUPPET SCRIPT inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference.

Each day, the puppet pal will teach part of the lesson or reinforce what the kids just heard. It's always a favorite, so try to include it even if you have to cut something else.

Decide which of you will be the puppet and figure out when you need to leave the previous teaching so you will be positioned in time for the start of the puppet pal time.

If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist someone (a group guide or other volunteer) ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a suitcase with the lid flipped up or just stand and work the puppet. (It's fine if your lips move. No need to be a ventriloquist.)

You can use either a boy or a girl puppet. Its name is Paddy (for Patrick or Patricia). Use a consistent voice for the puppet all week. Speak clearly and exaggerate words and expressions. For instance, draw out certain words for emphasis or make an exaggerated action for things like groaning, turning its head, or sneezing. Use your free hand to do things with the puppet's hands or arms. For example, if the puppet is "thinking," put the puppet's hand on its chin. When the puppet is talking, make sure the mouth is open. (This is the opposite of what people often do!) In other words, the mouth should be open on most syllables. You don't have to open very wide, which will help you move the mouth faster and more naturally.

Your puppet should come out from behind a hill. (See [Decorating Decisions](#).) When the puppet is entering, hold your arm back and down and have the puppet take three steps up, getting higher each time, until the puppet is out and visible. When exiting, turn the puppet toward you and take three steps down until out of sight.

Teacher: Can you help me call for Paddy? Here we go. Do so.

Puppet: Come up.

Teacher: Hi there, Paddy.

◆ Gospel Poster

★ Day 1 Puppet Script
(2 copies)

- ☐ Boy or girl puppet and puppet stage
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Optional: Gospel bookmarks, 1 per person

◆ The puppet can be dressed in a small VBS T-shirt or farm-hand-type shirt. To make a small VBS T-shirt, photocopy, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the logo and tape it to a baby-sized T-shirt.

◆ If you want to get snazzy, use a quick musical introduction and exit when it's time for the puppet to come and go.

Puppet: Wave. Top o' the mornin' (evenin') to ya!

Teacher: What have you been up to today?

Puppet: Well, I've been out in the fields trying to find a sheep that got separated from me.

Teacher: Oh no! That's too baa-d!

Puppet: I know. I had a whole pasture full of sheep, and I had to leave them to go look for the one that strayed away.

Teacher: Did you find him?

Puppet: I sure did. He was down in the valley near the Emerald Crossing bridge.

Teacher: He'd still be lost if you hadn't found him.

Puppet: That's for sure.

Teacher: You know, that reminds me of a story Jesus told about a lost sheep.

Puppet: Oh yeah?

Teacher: Yeah. Right here (point to Luke 15:3–7), it says there were 100 sheep, and then 1 wandered off. The shepherd left the 99 and went to find the lost 1.

Puppet: I hope he found him.

Teacher: He did. Just like you found your sheep, the shepherd found his lost sheep.

Puppet: Then what happened?

Teacher: Everyone was so happy. It was a celebration. Let's do a happy dance! Do so with the kids and have the puppet do a silly dance too.

Puppet: I'm so glad they found him!

Teacher: This reminds us that we are like sheep who are lost and wandering from our Good Shepherd, Jesus. We need to decide that we're going to follow him.

Puppet: How do we follow Jesus?

Teacher: Remember how we said everyone sins (Romans 3:23)? Everyone does wrong things—everyone. We sin every day when we say or do or even think things that don't please God. God is truth. Can you think of a time you told a lie? Pause for responses. God is kind. Can you think of a time you weren't kind? Pause. God is caring. Can you think of a time you thought a mean thought about someone? Pause. Those are all examples of sin. Uncover the word *Admit* on the GOSPEL POSTER. God wants you to admit you do wrong things—admit you're a sinner. You need to tell him you know you don't obey all the time and you're sorry for it and want to turn from it (Mark 1:15).

Puppet: Then what?

Teacher: Uncover the word *Believe* on the GOSPEL POSTER. Then you must believe what the Bible says, that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins (Romans 10:9–10). But then, he rose from the dead. This shows us God was pleased with his payment.

Puppet: Admit and believe. Anything else?

Teacher: Uncover the words *Forever Receive* on the GOSPEL POSTER. Yes. Forever receive Jesus by asking him to forgive you and make you part of his family. You aren't automatically part of God's family. You aren't born belonging to the Good Shepherd. But you can become one of his sheep—one of his children—by admitting, believing, and forever receiving (John 3:16). If you do, you'll not only be part of your family here on earth, but you'll have God as your heavenly Father, and you'll be part of *his* family.

Puppet: I hope every person here believes in Jesus and wants to be his child!

Teacher: I do too! If you want to be a child of God, make sure you talk to your leader or parents or me today. And remember—the most important question you can ever ask yourself is this: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?

Puppet: I hope they can say yes!

Teacher: I hope so too! Well, bye for now, Paddy. See you tomorrow!

You may want to give children an opportunity to leave for salvation counseling with a pastor or qualified leader. This should be in a visible, safe place—not a room with just one adult with the children. You also may want to pass out the gospel bookmarks or give them to the group guides to pass out at the end of the day.

Part 4: Animal Pal and Review Game (5–10 minutes)

Hold up the **DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. Let's take a look at our animal pal poster to remember what we talked about today.

- Our animal pal is what kind of animal? *A sheep.*
- In the Bible, who can sheep be a picture of, or who do sheep represent? *People; us.*
- This sheep's name is Mia (*My-a*). Mia is a popular name in Ireland and means “mine.” What does that name have to do with what we talked about today? *Take answers. God wants me to be able to say that the Lord is mine. He is my shepherd.*
- How can we cross from being lost to found—from not belonging to the Good Shepherd to being one of his flock? *Take answers.*

Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home. It goes faster passing them out without names. Collect them after each day's use.

Play either game listed below as time allows. Animal Pal Moves takes a minute or two and no supplies, so it's good for a short and quick review. Option 2, which uses the map as a game board, takes longer but is a fun game.

Option 1: Animal Pal Moves

Directions: Have the kids baa like a sheep if the answer is yes and get on all fours like a sheep if it is no.

Review Questions

1. Does God compare us to bears? No—get on all fours. He compares us to sheep.
2. Is God the Good Shepherd? Yes—baa like a sheep.
3. In Jesus' story, did the shepherd leave the 99 sheep and find the 1 who was lost? Yes—baa.
4. Is it possible for us to go through life without ever doing anything wrong? No—get on all fours. We all disobey God. This is called sin when we don't obey God.
5. Is whining or grumbling an example of sin? Yes—baa.
6. Will God forgive our sin if we ask? Yes—baa. Review the gospel if time.

Option 2: Emerald Crossing Map

Directions: Divide into pairs and give each pair an **EMERALD CROSSING MAP** (which is also a game board) and two different game pieces (e.g., small candies, paper circles, coins, mini sheep and cow figurines available on Amazon). Determine who goes first in each pair. Read the first review question below. Player 1 quietly tells his partner what he thinks the answer is. The teacher shares the answer, then rolls the die. Player 1 moves his game piece that number of spaces if he got the answer right. Now, do the same thing with Player 2. Continue going back and forth as time allows. Make up more questions if needed. Whoever is farthest at the end of the time wins that day's round. Be sure to collect the maps before kids leave.

Review Questions

1. Today's Bible verse says, “The LORD is ____.” My shepherd (Psalm 23:1).
2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? *Sheep.*
3. What is the sheep's name and what does it have to do with our lesson? *Mia (My-a)—is the Lord my shepherd?*
4. What is something you learned about sheep today? *Answers will vary.*

◆ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

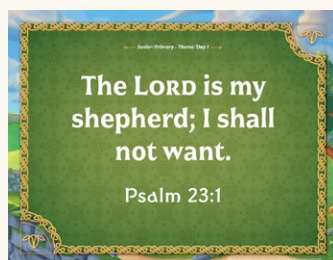
- Emerald Crossing Maps, 1 per person
- Option 1: No supplies
- Option 2: Game pieces (e.g., small candies, paper circles, coins, mini sheep and cow figurines), 1 per person, and 1 die



◆ Don't move to the next question until everyone is quiet. If need be, talking students may have to move back a space.

✦ The front page of each day's Student Guide is a review of today's lesson. The back page matches this section in the teacher guide.

- ◆ Theme/Day 1 Memory Verse Posters
- ◆ Optional: Day 2 Memory Verse Poster
- ★ Psalm 23 Hand Motions and video player
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides and supplies



5. Who wrote Psalm 23? David.
6. Was David ever a shepherd? Yes.
7. Did David write Psalm 23 when he was a young shepherd or later in life? Later in life.
8. God made the world. Did he just sit back and watch it run on its own, or is he involved? He is actively involved in sustaining his creation and working all things for his glory and our good.
9. How can you become part of God's flock? In other words, a Christian? Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus.
10. Can you say that the Lord is your shepherd? Encourage your students to silently think about the answer.

Apply It!

In the remaining class time, complete one or more of the following ideas. These are also on the back of the Primary Student Guides and can be done at home with a parent or caretaker if you are out of time. If you send them home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good stuff! Have the group guides check with the kids tomorrow to see how they did on them and consider giving contest bonus points to those who complete them for their hard work.

Supplies for this section are not included in the supply list on the back cover. Decide what you will do and add to your list accordingly.

Part 1: Good as Gold Memory Verse

Today's Verse (also the theme verse): The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1

Discuss what this verse means—particularly the “I shall not want” part since we already talked about “the Lord is my shepherd” part. If he is your shepherd, you shall not want. You will have everything important that you could ever want—salvation, God's love, God's goodness, etc. You may not have everything you ever wished for, like millions of dollars, the exact house or job you want, or certain abilities. But that's not what's most important. Having the Lord as your shepherd is what's truly important.

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the memory verse music and using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference, then try the challenge.

Challenge: Say the verse using the **PSALM 23 HAND MOTIONS** video. You can either play the video and have the kids do them along with the person in the video, or you can learn them ahead of time and do the motions for and with the kids. Then, for fun if you have time, pretend you're a sheep and walk around on all fours as you say today's verse.

Tomorrow's Verses: 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 23:2-3

If you have time, say tomorrow's verses together several times and try the challenge again.

Part 2: Go and Do

1. Make a poster showing sheep and a shepherd. Place yourself where you think you belong—either with the flock and shepherd or lost and on your own.
2. Ask someone if the Lord is *their* shepherd.
3. Tell someone something you learned today about sheep.
4. Check AnswersVBS.com for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?