

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 22

Describe a time when you've been out in nature, what was peaceful about it, where you were and how it felt to be there.

Note: If you are with a group, have each person take a turn sharing.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23 (a Psalm of David)

*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 right paths
for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.*

Reflection

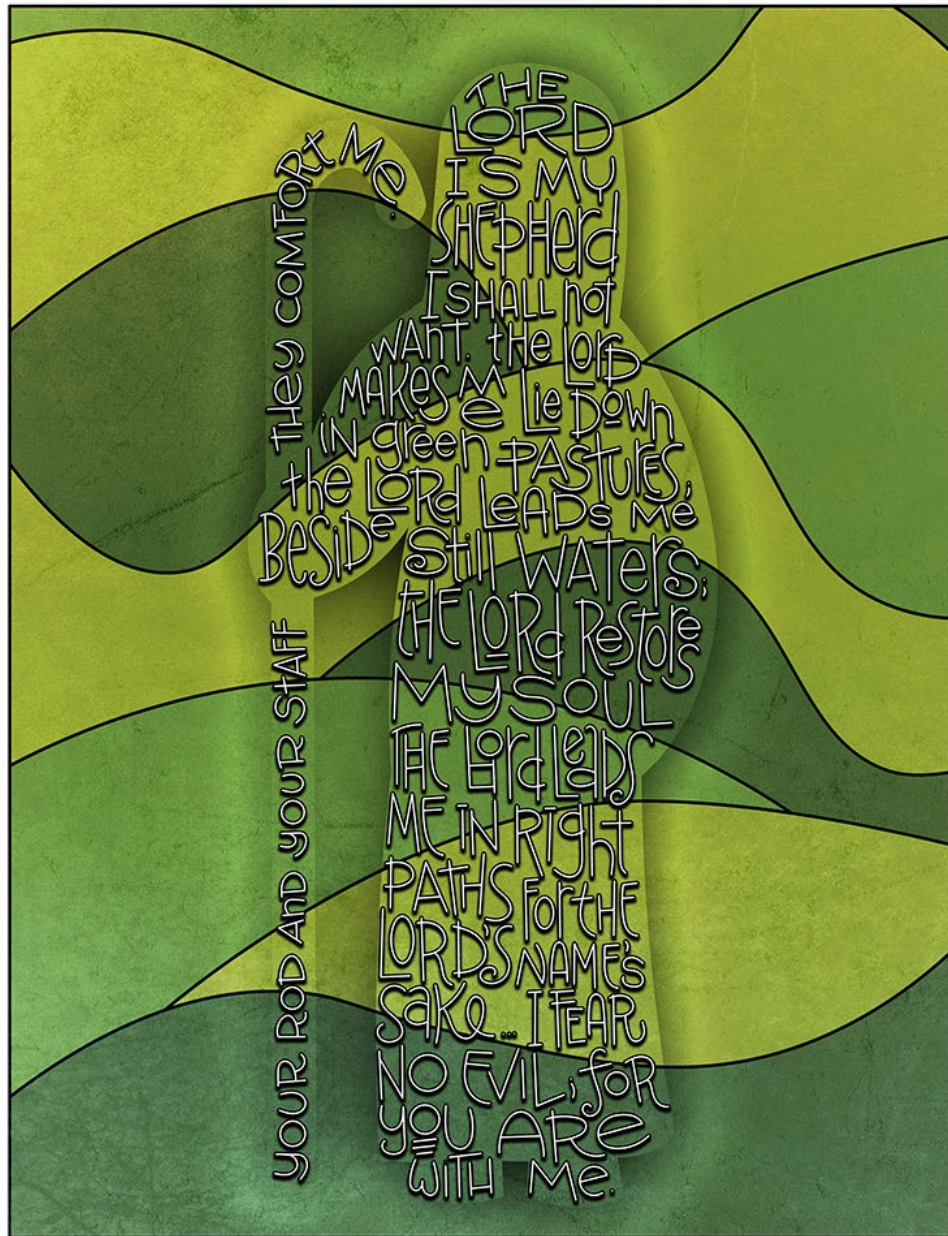
Today's scripture is from Psalms, an entire book of songs and prayers written to God. David, the author of this psalm, wrote many songs and prayers as a way to express his feelings to God about the things that happened to him - good things, difficult things, things he was thankful for, struggles he faced. He also wrote about how aware he was that God was always with him in every situation. He talked about how God has always been with God's people and will continue to be with us.

In Psalm 23, David describes God as a shepherd. Shepherds are like guides who give love, care always, and never leave their flock. He also describes being with God is like the feeling of lying down in a quiet green meadow or like walking by a quiet creek. Spending time with God, as David did, can help us to feel calm and safe when times are troubling, frustrating, and even a bit scary.

When we begin to worry, we can tell God all of our feelings and emotions like David did, because we know God is always with us, no matter what life brings. When we start feeling nervous or afraid, we can think of David's words in Psalm 23 and remember God is like our shepherd, guiding us and with us always.

Discussion Questions

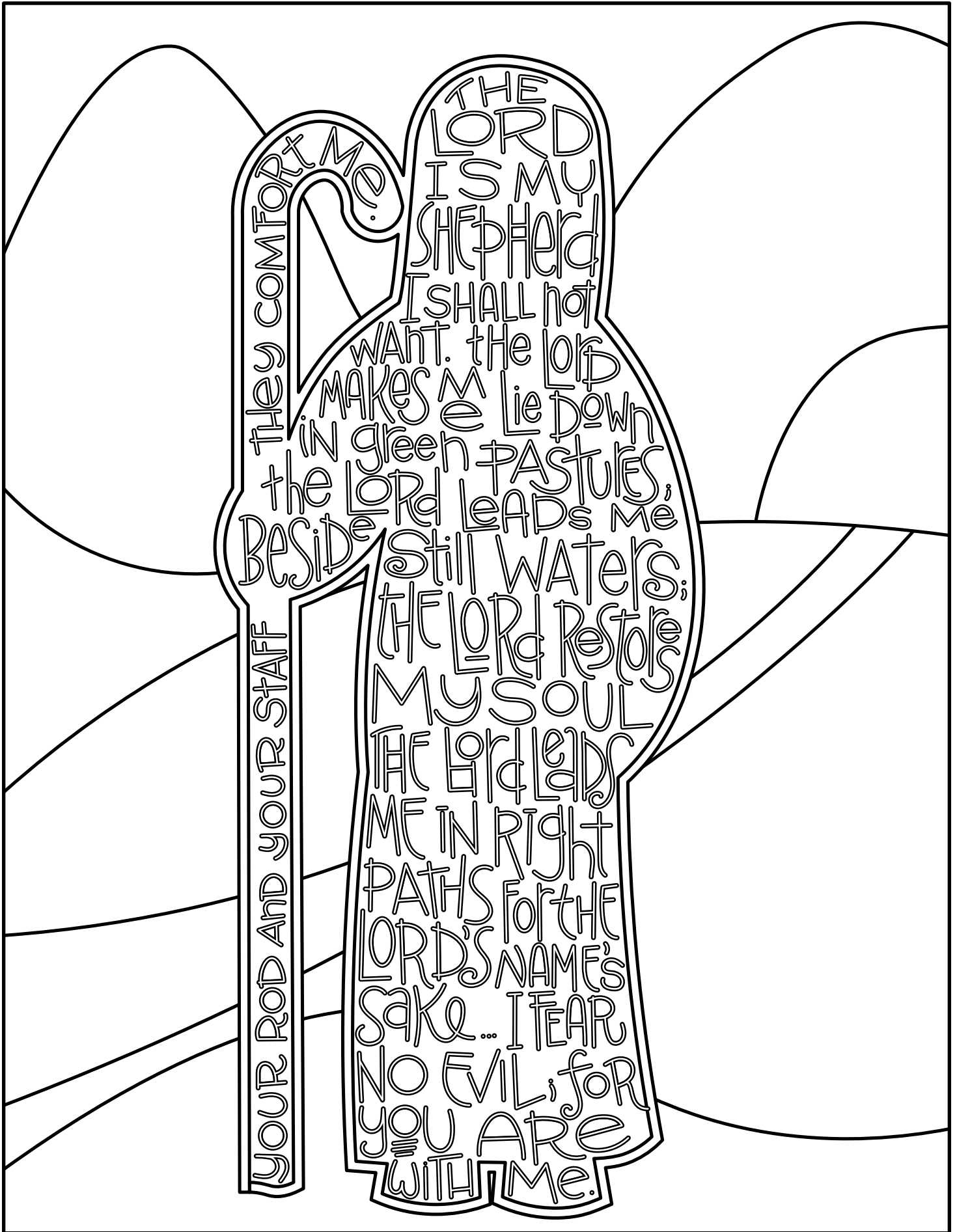
1. What it might be like to lie down in a green pasture? Or to walk along a quiet creek?
2. How do you express what you are feeling?
3. What can these feelings teach us?
4. What things help you feel really calm and safe?
5. How might our relationship with God help us feel calm and safe?



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Prayer

Dear God, thank you for being like a shepherd to us, helping us, and caring for us always. When we feel afraid or alone, remind us that you are always with us. **Amen.**



THEY COMFORT ME
THE LORD LEADS ME
BESIDE STILL WATERS;

YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
I SHALL NOT WANT. THE LORD
MAKES ME LIE DOWN
IN GREEN PASTURES;
THE LORD LEADS ME
BESIDE STILL WATERS;
THE LORD RESTORES
MY SOUL.
THE LORD LEADS
ME IN RIGHT
PATHS FOR THE
LORD'S NAME'S
SAKE... I FEAR
NO EVIL, FOR
YOU ARE WITH ME.

PSALM 23 ACTIVITY

Write out your own version of Psalm 23 or draw out your own scenes of what Psalm 23 means to you.



Psalm 23

(translation from *The Inclusive Bible*)

YHWH, you are my shepherd

I want nothing more.

You let me lie down in

green meadows;

You lead me beside restful waters:

You refresh my soul.

You guide me to lush pastures

For the sake of your Name.

Even if I'm surrounded

by shadows of Death,

I fear no danger,

for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff,

They give me courage.

You spread a table for me

In the presence of my enemies,

And you anoint my head with oil

My cup overflows!

Only goodness and love

will follow me

all the days of my life,

And I will dwell in your house,

YHWH,

For days without end.

PSALM 23 • LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is a way of prayerfully reading scripture that slows you down, creates space to listen, reflect, and respond to God as you center yourself on a scripture passage. This practice can be done by yourself or in a group and at your own pace. You can use the inclusive language translation provided or any translation you enjoy.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23 – a Psalm of David

(translation from *The Inclusive Bible*)

*YHWH, you are my shepherd, I want nothing more.
You let me lie down in green meadows;
You lead me beside restful waters: you refresh my soul.
You guide me to lush pastures, for the sake of your Name.
Even if I'm surrounded by shadows of Death,
I fear no danger, for you are with me.
Your rod and your staff, they give me courage.
You spread a table for me in the presence of my enemies,
And you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows!
Only goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in your house, YHWH, for days without end.*

Lectio Divina

Prepare to listen. Find a comfortable sitting position and take a few moments to prepare your heart, mind, body, and soul to listen to the Word of God. This might mean doing some breathing exercises to quiet your mind and slow your body down, lighting a candle, or saying a prayer.

Slowly, read Psalm 23 aloud. Notice any words, phrases, sentences that stand out to you or resonate with you now. Allow for a few moments of quiet.

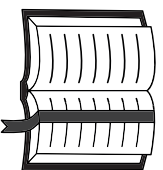
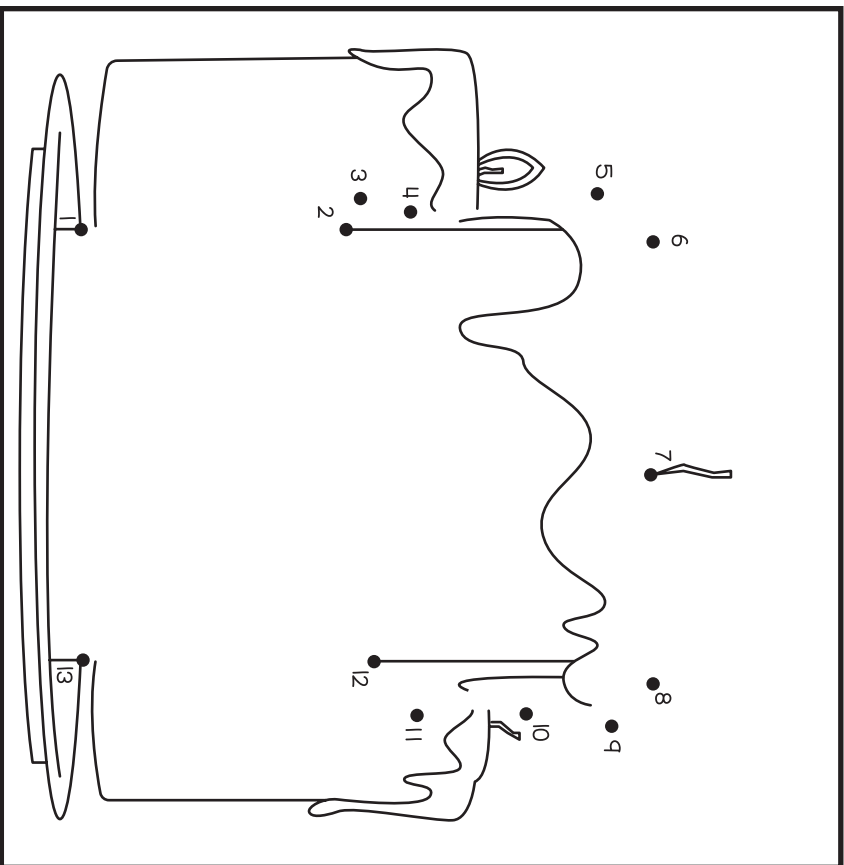
Read Psalm 23 aloud again. Draw your focus to the words, phrases, or sentences that stood out to you. Reflect on and be curious about why they resonate with you. You can even write or color in the phrases on the provided coloring page. Allow for a few moments of quiet.

Read Psalm 23 aloud again. As you hear the words, phrases, or sentences that stand out to you, offer up any emotions, feelings, thoughts you have to God as a response of prayer. Allow for a few moments of quiet.

Read Psalm 23 aloud one last time. This time, reflect on what was meaningful to you as you read or listen to the scripture. Allow for a few moments of quiet, and then offer a prayer to God as you end your Lectio Divina time.

CONNECT the DOTS

In John 9, Jesus tells his disciples that he is here to help all who suffer. He says "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Connect the dots to form a candle and draw a flame. Write ways you help bring light to the world inside the candle.

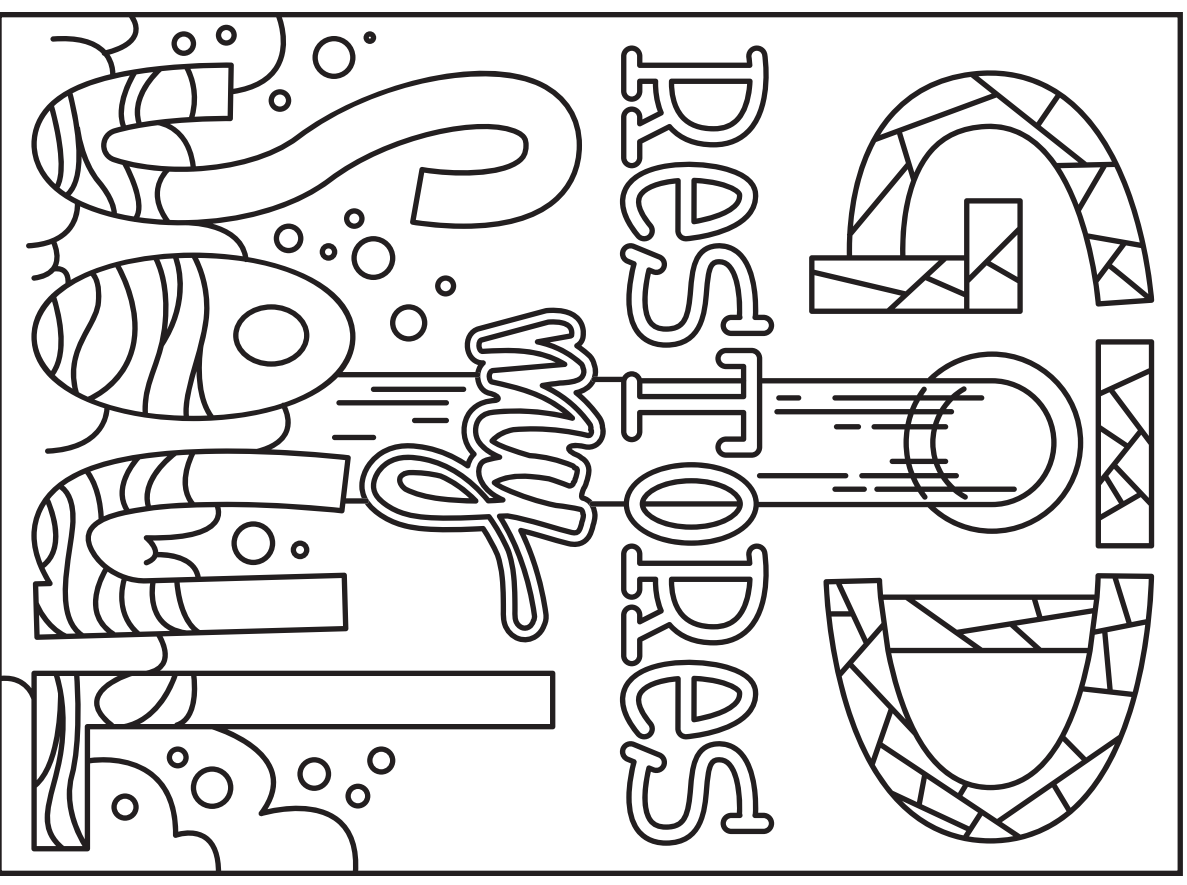


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Suggested for use on the Fourth Sunday of Lent based on the RCL.
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CHILDREN'S WORSHIP • BULLETIN

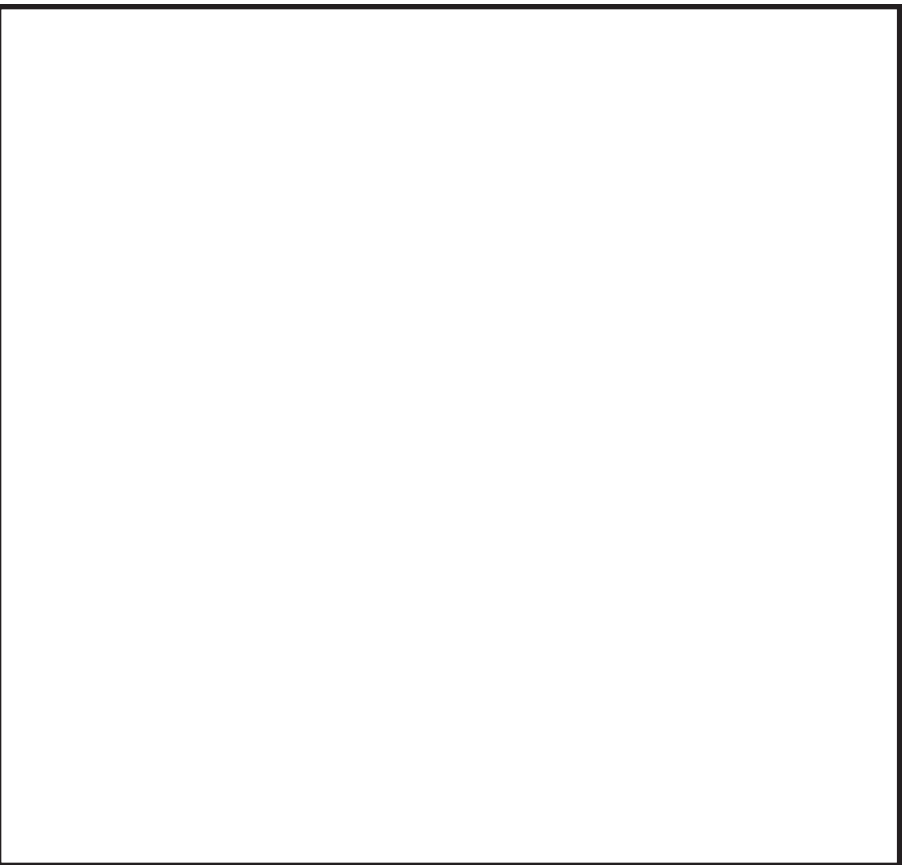
Activities based on 1 Samuel 16: 1- 13, Psalm 23, John 9: 1-11.





DRAW IT

When God tells the prophet, Samuel, that God has chosen a new king, Samuel expects God has chosen one of the strong, older sons of a man named Jesse. But instead, God completely surprises Samuel. God had chosen David, the littlest brother, to be the next king. God doesn't look at outward appearances and what people normally see. God looks at a person's heart. Draw the kind of leader you think God looks for.



WORD SEARCH

Try to find the words from Psalm 23 in the word search below. Words may go diagonal, up OR down and forward OR backward.

E K L F F A T S K C V H G F S
 G L A U R A V H A J R H F W P
 B A I D O V K S K W J F O G Z
 M W R H S S Y C L O R D O G S
 H C D D Q E U R J U A O O I H
 Q F O I L P I R V E D D O K D O
 L R A A L Y F R M M N D D I W U
 F K A H A D L O E K S D D C S
 M V I Z T O R S T E N D I M H E
 N D L U Y T S E E E E T F C
 J D N T A B L E H J C A C Q B
 Z Z L J N Z I F X P P T N N Y
 Z S R E T A W Y B C E F Z R Y
 A B W A F Q D F H X R H M C V
 J M I Z T A K U F M Q U S Q Y

LORD	GOOD	TABLE
SHEPHERD	WALK	ENEMIES
MEADOWS	VALLEY	OIL
WATERS	ROD	CUP
SOUL	STAFF	GOODNESS
PATHS	PROTECT	HOUSE

