Sheep Run. Before the lesson mark a start and finish line at opposite ends of the room using masking tape. You will also need to mark out large squares or triangles to be 'no go' areas spaced randomly between the start and finish lines like bunkers on a golf course.
Provide each child with a cotton wool ball to be their sheep and a straw for their staff. They all begin behind the start line and have to use their staff to get their sheep to the finish line, avoiding the 'no go' areas. They may either push their sheep with the staff or blow through it to move their sheep along. If a sheep lands in a 'no go' area that child must pick up their sheep and return to the start. The first shepherd to cross the finish line with their sheep is the winner.

Follow the Shepherd. Play a version of the game 'Follow the Leader'. You will need a staff/ walking stick to show that you are the shepherd. The children stand in a line behind the shepherd and follow wherever he leads.
After a while pass the staff to one of the children and get them to be the shepherd instead. Continue the game in this way, making sure different children are given a turn to be the shepherd.

Towards the end of the game you could set out a table with cookies on it and another with a drink. Encourage the shepherd to lead them past the tables and then sit them down to discuss the meaning of the psalm while they eat and drink. Remind the children that in today's Bible lesson the shepherd led, guided, protected, comforted and cared for his sheep.

Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (page 38) or Activity B (page 39).

Activity A – Make a sheep mask. Print page 38 onto card for each child. Each child will also require a length of shearing elastic/wool and about ten cotton wool balls.

Before the lesson cut out the mask and use a blade to cut the holes for the eyes and the X's for the elastic.

The children decorate their sheep by gluing the cotton wool balls on the sheep's head to give it a woolly top!

Help the children to fit the mask by securing it using elastic tied through the X's.

Remind the children that God is like a shepherd in the way that he cares for his people and we are like his sheep. Can they remember how God cares for those who follow him?

Activity B – Make a fridge magnet. Print page 39 onto card (one copy for every three children). Each child will also require a few cotton wool balls and a length of magnetic tape. If you do not have magnetic tape then Blu-tack will be sufficient.

Before the lesson cut out the ovals.

The children decorate their sheep by colouring it in and gluing the cotton wool balls onto the sheep's body.

Remind the children that God is like a shepherd in the way that he cares for his people and we are like his sheep. Can they remember how God cares for those who follow him? Ask them to stick the sheep on their fridge at home so that every time they open the fridge to get something to eat or drink they will be reminded that God is a our loving shepherd who provides all that we need.

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 40) or Activity Sheet D (page 41) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.

The lesson

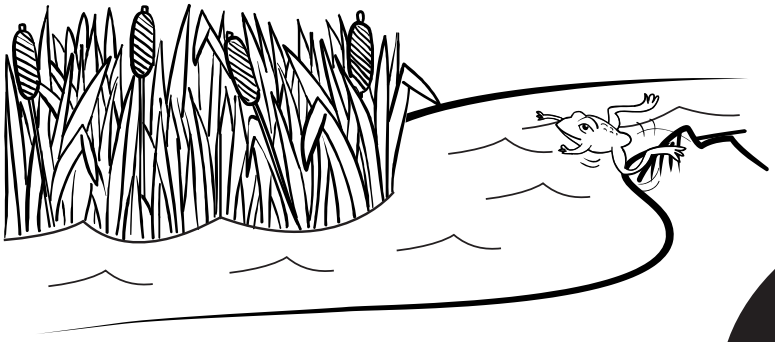
Place the pictures out on a table for your children to see - on one side place the shepherd and on the opposite side place the host. The children must look at the pictures and using Psalm 23 work out whether the pictures must go under/around the shepherd or the host.

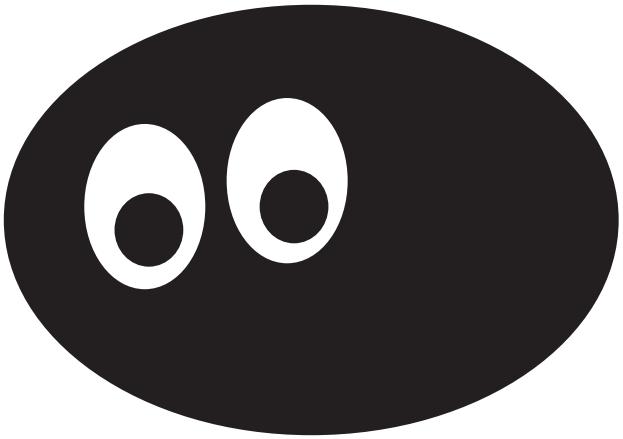
Shepherd: 23:1-4

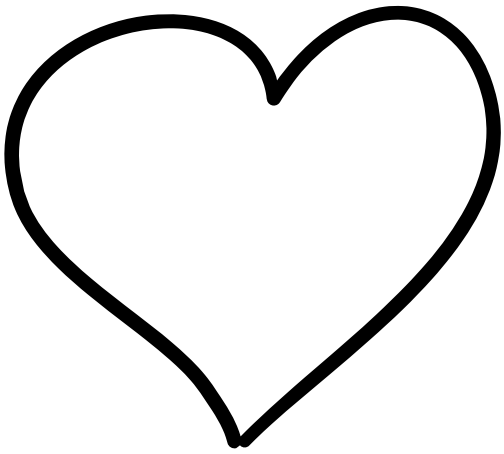
- Sheep resting (23:2) • Stream (23:2)
- Heart (23:3)
- Path (23:3)
- Eyes in the dark (23:4)
- Shepherd with staff and sheep (23:4)

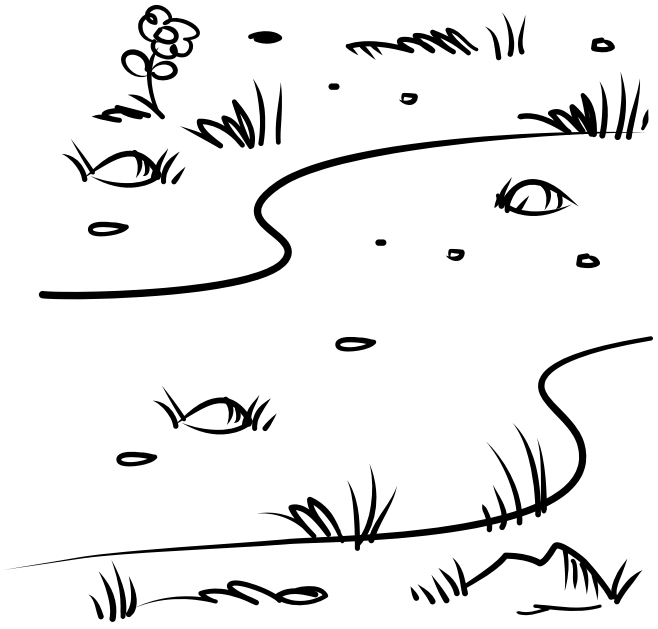
Host (23:5-6)

- Table of food (23:5)
- Enemies staring in shock (23:5) • Jug of oil (23:5)
- Cup overflowing (23:5)
- Happy face (23:6)









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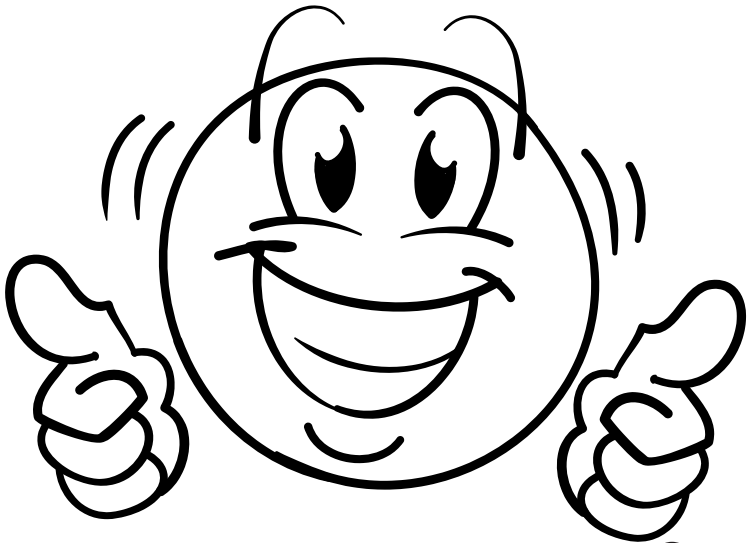

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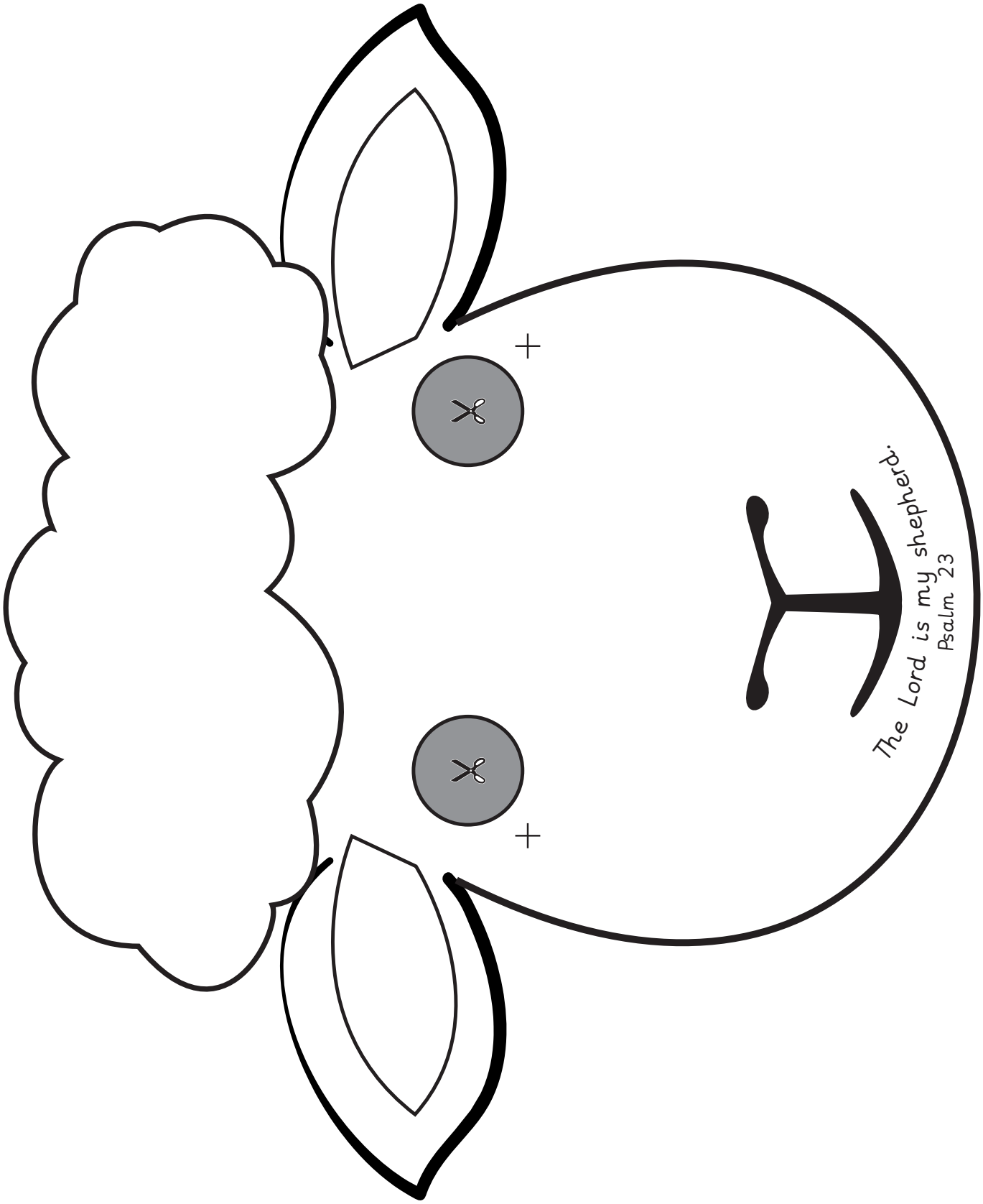

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Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd.

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God, My Shepherd

The true story can be found in Psalm 23

Discover

What does the shepherd do for his sheep? Circle the correct words.

23:1-2 He **keeps** / **provides** all that they need.

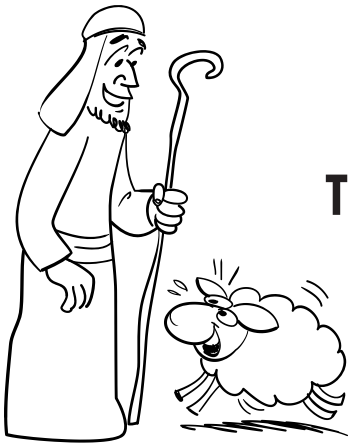
23:2-3 He **leads** / **carries** and refreshes them.

23:3 He **guards** / **guides** them on the **dangerous** / **right** path.

23:4 He is with them and comforts them so they don't need to **follow** / **fear**.

How does God welcome and honour his guests? (23:5-6)

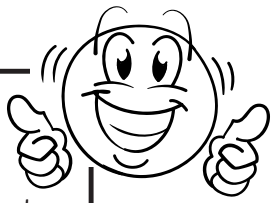
Draw some pictures in the space below.



Think Spot

Why is it so good to live in God's house forever? Who will be there?

Discuss



Who is God a shepherd to? Do you know him as your shepherd and friend? How is this possible if you don't?

In what ways is God like a shepherd to you? What has he provided for you? How does he lead and guide you?

What does it mean that God is with us? Why do we not need to fear? How does knowing this encourage you to trust him?

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