



## R.E. LESSON PLAN - WATFORD SCHOOLS TRUST

<b>LESSON TITLE:</b> Sacred Texts: Christianity - the Bible, Psalm 23	<b>LEARNING STAGE</b> LKS2	<b>WST TEACHER/DATE</b> Mrs Johanna Jordan/ Mrs Tricia Bastable
<b>AIM:</b> To know that and consider why Psalm 23 from the Bible is a key source of wisdom for Christians.  <b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b> To explore how Psalm 23 from the Bible can help Christians in their daily lives	<b>MAIN AREA/S OF LEARNING</b> (Herts R.E. Agreed Syllabus 2017-22) Sources of wisdom  <b>Other AOL covered:</b> Beliefs and practices  Prayer, worship and reflection	<b>LESSON RESOURCES</b> <b>WST provides:</b> Beginners' Bibles (16/set) on loan if requested Video lesson: <a href="https://youtu.be/Jpw1Vyp2i8k">https://youtu.be/Jpw1Vyp2i8k</a> Pupil worksheet available to download from <a href="http://www.watfordschoolstrust.org/lesson-plans">www.watfordschoolstrust.org/lesson-plans</a>  <b>School to provide:</b> Colouring pens/pencils

### Introduction

Johanna introduces the lesson by talking about books. She asks if the children have a favourite or special book? She explains that in this lesson we will learn about the Christian special book, the Bible, and how reading the Bible helps Christians in their everyday life.

The Bible is the number 1 best-selling book in the whole world. It is not just one book, but a collection of books, written over more than 2000 years by more than 40 different authors. The book of 'Psalms' can be found in the Old Testament. It contains 150 songs, poems and prayers written by different people, all addressed to God. Some are prayers to thank God for good things. Others are expressions of sadness and requests for help in times of crises. Many Christians and Jewish people find comfort in reading the book of Psalms as they can recognise themselves and their own feelings in them.

### Who wrote Psalm 23?

Tricia explains that many of the Psalms were written by a man called David. He was a friend of God all through his life. He was a shepherd and while he looked after the sheep, he wrote many poems and songs and played them on his harp. Besides being a shepherd, he was a songwriter and musician.

David is well-known from the story in which he defeated a giant named Goliath. And later on, David became king over Israel.

David was blessed by God and often gave thanks to God in his Psalms. But David also went through very difficult times in his life and he made some very poor choices. All these themes come back in the songs he wrote. One of his most famous songs is Psalm 23. Many people find this psalm comforting to read when they go through difficult times in life. This psalm has inspired many artists and musicians and was used in several films, including 'The Titanic'. This psalm is particularly helpful in understanding how reading the Bible might help a Christian in their everyday life.

### Psalm 23

Children read Psalm 23 from 'The Beginners Bible' (Lion Hudson), pages 190-193. .

Following that, Johanna explains how reading Psalm 23 might help Christians today.

### God as Shepherd

David compares God to a shepherd. Johanna asks "what does a shepherd do?" The video could be paused to allow the children to answer first. The Shepherd's job is to look after sheep, to guide them and lead them, to make sure they have food and water and to protect them from danger. Sheep are

helpless without their shepherd and the sheep trust their shepherd and listen to his voice. Just like, David says, God looks after people! He guides them, gives them everything they need and helps them when they are in trouble. And just like a shepherd guides his sheep down the right path, God helps people to make good choices.

Johanna asks what children think 'the darkest valley' might be? Sheep were exposed to many dangers, incl. wild animals trying to attack the sheep. Especially when the evening came and the sheep were guided back to the sheep pen. But the shepherd would have his rod and staff ready to fight off any attackers. Just like that, David says, people can trust in God when they face danger or difficult times. Many Christians find this reassuring and it helps them to face challenging times. Some people refer to the Coronavirus pandemic as a dark valley. Johanna then asks children if they can think of any situations they can compare to the dark valley in the psalm? What helps them in those situations? *The video could be paused to discuss answers.*

### **God's blessings**

The second part of the psalm talks about God's blessings. In David's time, if someone invited you to a special meal, they might pour some nice-smelling oil on your head as a special welcome. They would offer you plenty of food and lots of drinks (so your cup would run over). Johanna explains that David says here that God welcomes people just like that. God's blessings are many and they last for a lifetime, because God loves his people.

At the end of the psalm David states that even after he dies, God will still be there for him as he will live in God's house forever. Johanna asks 'What is God's house?' - Heaven. The Bible speaks about life after death in heaven with God. Some Christians read Psalm 23 when people are very ill or even when people have died. It comforts them to believe that death is not the end, but that God promises life in heaven forever.

### **Conclusion**

Johanna concludes by reminding the children that Psalm 23 is an example of how a text of a special book can help people in their everyday lives. This text reminds Christians that God loves them, looks after them and helps them. It helps them to feel they are not alone, but God is on their side.

### **Independent task**

Tricia introduces an independent task children could do. They could express their thoughts about this psalm by drawing a picture or writing their own song based on this psalm. Over the years, many artists have been inspired by it. Tricia shows some examples, including a mosaic portraying Jesus as the good shepherd among a flock of sheep, made in Italy in the year 425. And art work from Hannah Dunnett, a current Christian artist. In her version of Psalm 23 she has incorporated the text of the Psalm in her art work.

Tricia shows some work from previous years by year 4 children and asks the children which part of the text speaks most to them and will they choose for their work? We welcome any pictures of children's work as a response to this lesson. You can email us on [info@watfordschoolstrust.org](mailto:info@watfordschoolstrust.org).

### **Optional extension/enrichment activities**

- Find Psalm 23 in the Children's NIV or any other version of the Bible. How is the wording different?
- Research and listen to different musical versions of Psalm 23 (you could try 'googling' Scottish Psalter, Crimond, Stuart Townend)
- Discuss: How do you think reading (or singing!) Psalm 23 might help Christians when they are facing life's challenges and problems?
- Independent thinking: What helps YOU when you are facing a big challenge or problem?

For further lesson plans, resources and support material visit  
[www.watfordschoolstrust.org](http://www.watfordschoolstrust.org) or email [info@watfordschoolstrust.org](mailto:info@watfordschoolstrust.org)

