

Lesson 40: THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

A Thanksgiving lesson and project for 2 or more weeks

This is a lesson that can be used to prepare for Thanksgiving or at another time of year. It is built around the Twenty-Third Psalm and the book written by the Rev. George McCurdy: *The 23rd Psalm for Children in Words and Pictures*, but the lesson can be taught without it.

Lesson 40-A

INTRODUCTION:

The 23rd Psalm must be the most famous Biblical psalm there is. It is the one most people know by heart. And it has such an appeal because it is telling us such a beautiful thing—it is telling us about the many ways that the Lord lovingly takes care of us.

On Thanksgiving we thank the Lord for all He gives to us. That is why a project depicting this beloved psalm will make such a nice display for Thanksgiving. It can remind us of the many ways the Lord takes care of us, and how thankful we are to Him for His loving care.

We will look today at the first half of this psalm. We'll talk a little bit about what each phrase means, and think of a picture we could make out of felt to illustrate that phrase.

READING AND DISCUSSION:

Talk to the children a bit about what each phrase means. (If you have the book, show pictures from *The 23rd Psalm for Children in Words and Pictures* by George McCurdy.) Ask for ideas as to how to illustrate each phrase and write or sketch the idea on a chalkboard.

- ❖ **The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**
Like a shepherd, the Lord leads us, and makes sure we get enough food and drink—both natural food and spiritual food. He is always thinking of what we need.
- ❖ **He makes me to lie down in green pastures;**
He works to make us safe, so we can find rest. And as we rest, He keeps watch, guarding us against our enemies.
- ❖ **He leads me beside the still waters.**
Water means truth. The Lord leads us to His Word, which is like a deep well which will never run out of water, so we never have to be thirsty.
- ❖ **He restores my soul;**
He will refresh us and strengthen us after we've been through a hard time.
- ❖ **He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.**
He shows us the path to heaven, by teaching us how to be good and kind people. He teaches us in His Word, and by putting good thoughts and feelings into our minds.

See the Project: Making a Felt Banner

As they work on the project, you may want to read the pages from George McCurdy's book that deal with these first 5 verses.

Lesson 40-B

READING AND DISCUSSION:

Proceed as before with the remaining phrases.

- ❖ **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me;**
The Lord stays with us during hard or frightening times.
- ❖ **Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**
The Lord's Word is a rod and staff. It points the way to heaven, and supports us along the way.
- ❖ **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;**
The Lord invites us to eat spiritual food with Him, even though evil spirits hang around us, wanting to stir up bad thoughts and feelings.
- ❖ **You anoint my head with oil;**
The Lord sends us love for Him and for other people.
- ❖ **My cup runs over.**
The Lord sends us more goodness than we could ever know—more goodness than we use.
- ❖ **Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**
We can always count on the Lord to be with us, and if we choose to follow Him, He can bring us into His heavenly house forever.

PROJECT IDEAS

Felt Banner Illustrating the 23rd Psalm

Make a lovely banner to display at church for Thanksgiving.

OR

Twenty-third Psalm Book (*a project from New Church Vineyard*)

Make a miniature book illustrating the twenty-third psalm. See the enclosed project pages.

PROJECT: Felt Banner
Make a felt banner depicting the 23rd Psalm

Supplies:

one large piece of felt perhaps 1½ yards by 30 inches
11 felt squares
felt scraps in many colors
scissors
glue
some pens and paper
letter stencils

Procedure:

1. Have the children think of and discuss ways to illustrate the eleven different phrases that you have been going over from the 23rd Psalm.
2. Have each child choose a scene to work on, and have them create it by cutting out shapes from the felt scraps and gluing them onto a felt square. Leave room somewhere on the square to glue on a piece of paper on which is written the phrase that is being depicted.
3. When all the eleven scenes are completed, arrange them in order onto the large felt and glue them in place.
4. Create a title at the top that says:

Thank You Lord, for Your Loving Care

5. Display the banner at church for Thanksgiving.