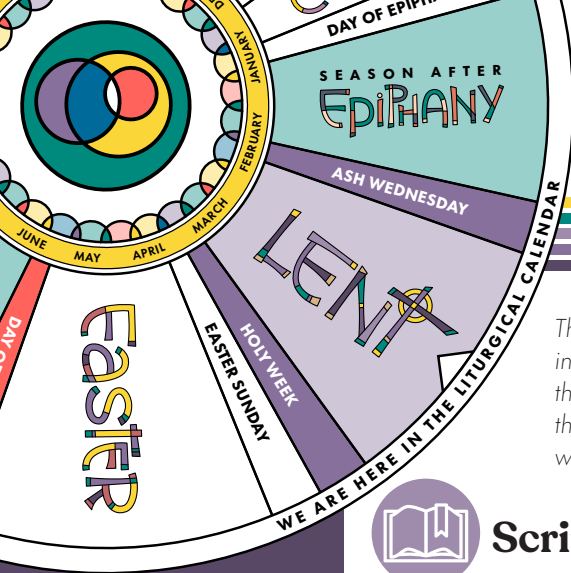


Psalm 23

Fourth Sunday in Lent



The Season of Lent is a period of 40 days, begins on Ash Wednesday, and is a period of introspection and reflection on the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. Episcopal author and theologian Barbara Brown Taylor says that Lent is a "springtime for the soul...Forty days to cleanse the system and open the eyes to what remains when all comfort is gone. Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves."



Scripture

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
You make me lie down in green pastures;
you lead me beside still waters;
you restore my soul.
You lead me in right paths
for your 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.



Questions

- Today, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, we continue to follow Jesus on his journey to the cross and new life. What are some of the images you see in today's scripture?
- Many psalms are written about a similar topic: naming something you're struggling with and asking for help. What are some things you could use help with right now?
- Tell a story of when someone gave you exactly what you needed when you needed it. How did you feel?
- Psalm 23 is a beautiful reminder that God provides for us and cares about us deeply. What has made you feel cared for and safe recently?
- In our reading, we see that goodness is not always about being kind; goodness can also be about truth and justice. Discuss some ways you can act with truth and justice in your own life.

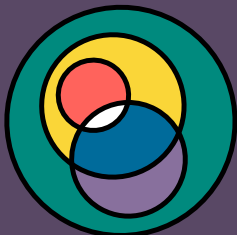
Look it Up!

Did you know scientists have researched the impact of being near water on the human brain? Look up what happens in your brain when you visit a waterfall, lake, or the ocean. How do you feel when you are near water?



YEAR A

mini
REVOLUTIONS





Activity

Materials:

Large paper
Letter-size paper

Markers
Tape

Today's scripture talks about God's presence in our lives. It reminds us how God leads and provides for us and how God's goodness and mercy are with us even when we face challenges. Though we may go through hard times, God is always present, giving us support and love.

Write Psalm 23 on a big piece of paper, and post it on the wall for everyone to see. Next, come up with a few different categories for places where your group faces challenges: school, home, church, neighborhood, etc. Have participants each write down a challenge they might experience in the place represented by each category on a piece of paper. For example, at school, one challenge may be trying to make new friends.

Once all the challenges are written, collect them, and shuffle them. Make a path with the challenges written on the letter-size paper by taping each piece to the floor. Be sure to leave space between them, so the group has somewhere to stand.

Once the path is complete, have the group walk up to the first paper on the path. Read the challenge out loud, and work together to figure out how God's goodness and mercy are present in that scenario. Do not move on to the next paper until the group has come up with at least one answer. If folks get stuck, use Psalm 23 posted on the wall as a guide. Once the group has at least one answer, they can move on to the next challenge on the path. The game ends when the group has made it through the entire challenge path, remembering God's goodness and mercy is always with them even when life is difficult.

Alternate Activity

Materials:

Writing utensils
Paper

Our scripture today talks about how God is present with us. It reminds us God is always with us whatever we go through, even if the situation is very challenging, and God helps us in different ways. Let's play a game to explore how God can use us to help meet needs.

Pick someone in the group to go first, and have that person make up a scenario in which someone is in need. Write down the scenario, so no one forgets it. One at a time, give each remaining group member a chance to creatively find a way they might meet that need. Write down each person's answer. If your group can write independently, have each one write down their answers. Then, have them lay their paper face down for the scenario creator to turn over and read. After seeing all the options, have the scenario creator select their favorite option.

Once every participant offers a possible solution, let the person who shared pick the best solution for them. Once they've chosen, move on to the next person and repeat the process. The game ends when everyone has had a turn to create a scenario.



Micropractice

People worldwide and throughout history have used Psalm 23 for meditation. People memorize it, carry it around in their pocket, and even paint it on their walls. Choose a way to take Psalm 23 with you this week.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illustratedministry.com/minirevALent4



Prayer

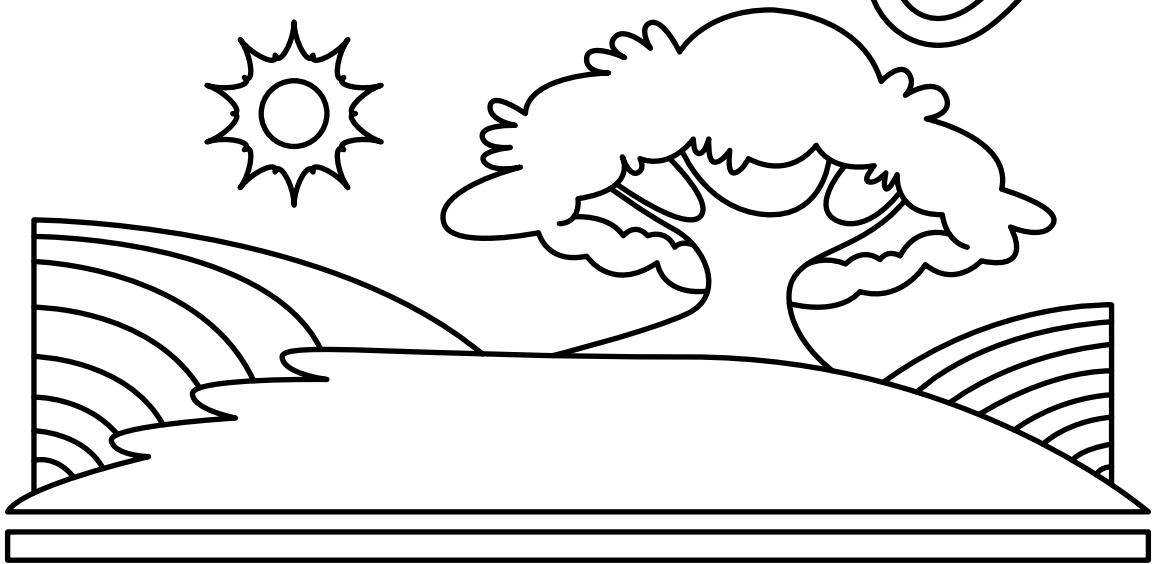
Merciful God, you are with us through our highs and lows. Thank you for being with us and providing what we need. Help us to be just and true and to live in your love. Amen.

SURELY

GOODNESS

AND MERCY

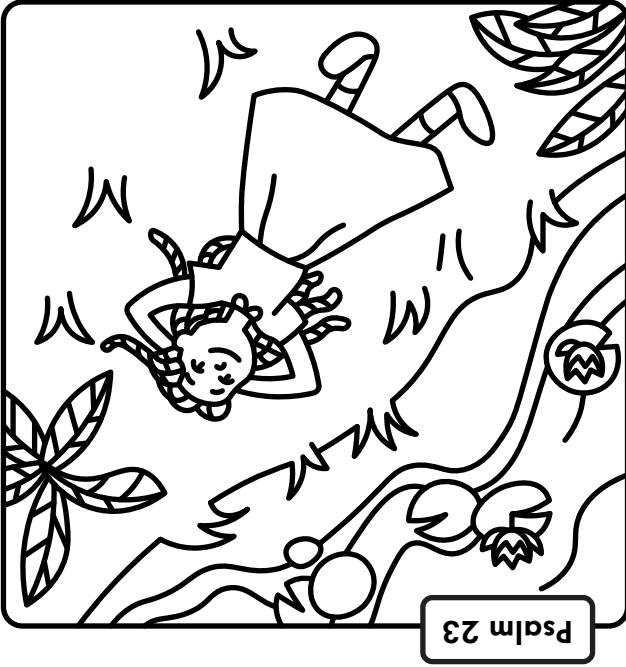
SHALL FOLLOW ME



ALL THE DAYS OF MY

LIFE

1. This song is from the book of Psalms in the Bible: God is my leader and protector; I don't need anything when I have God. You lead me to peaceful, green fields and still waters. You bring rest to my soul.



2. You keep me on the right path. Even when I go through times where it's hard to see clearly and face challenges, I am not afraid because you are with me.

4. Surely, I will know goodness and forgiveness every day of my life, and I will be near to you, God, always.



3. Your discipline and leadership bring me comfort. I am overjoyed because you love me deeply, even in my hardest moments.