

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

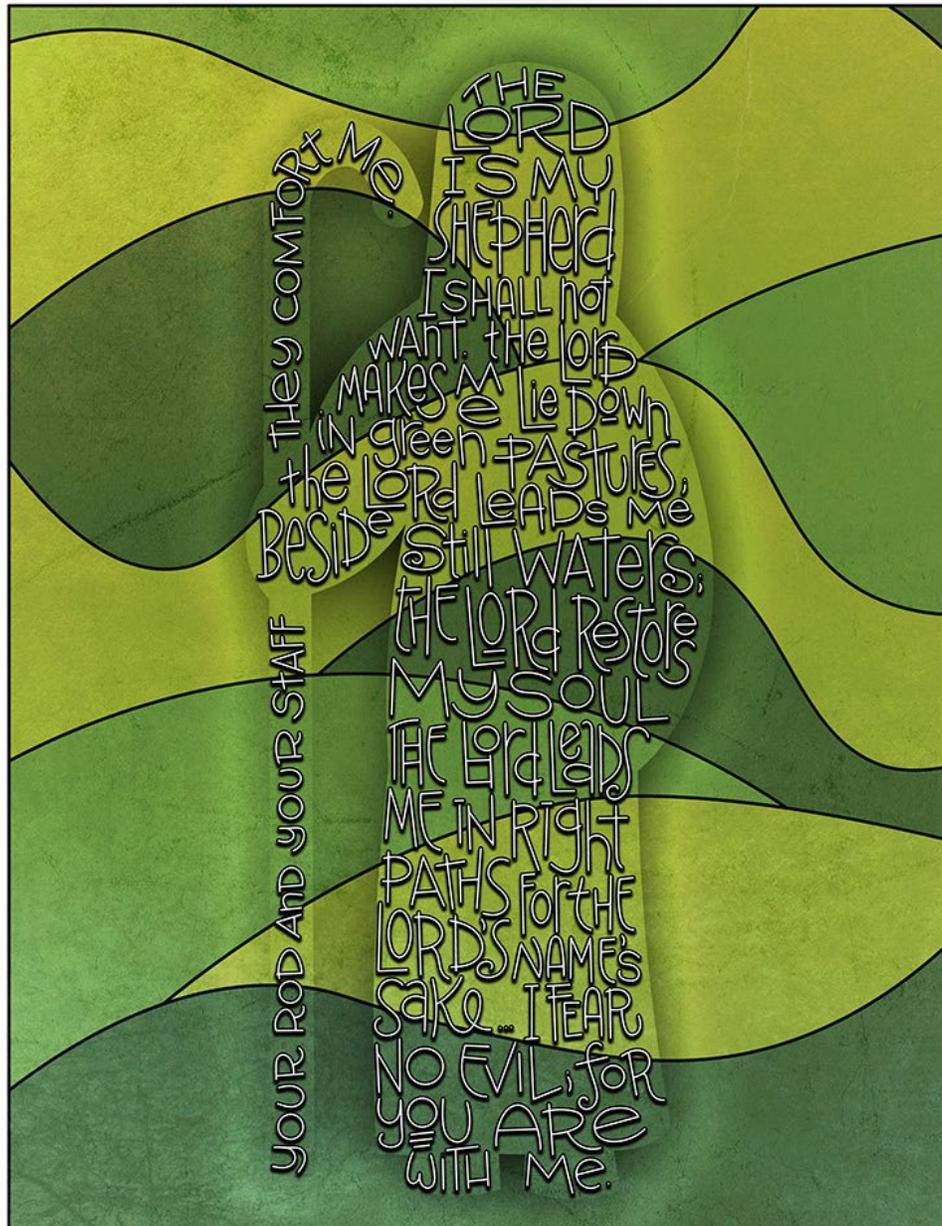
Today's scripture is from Psalms, an entire book of songs and prayers written to God. David, the author of this psalm, wrote many songs and prayers as a way to express his feelings to God about the things that happened to him - good things, difficult things, things he was thankful for, struggles he faced. 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

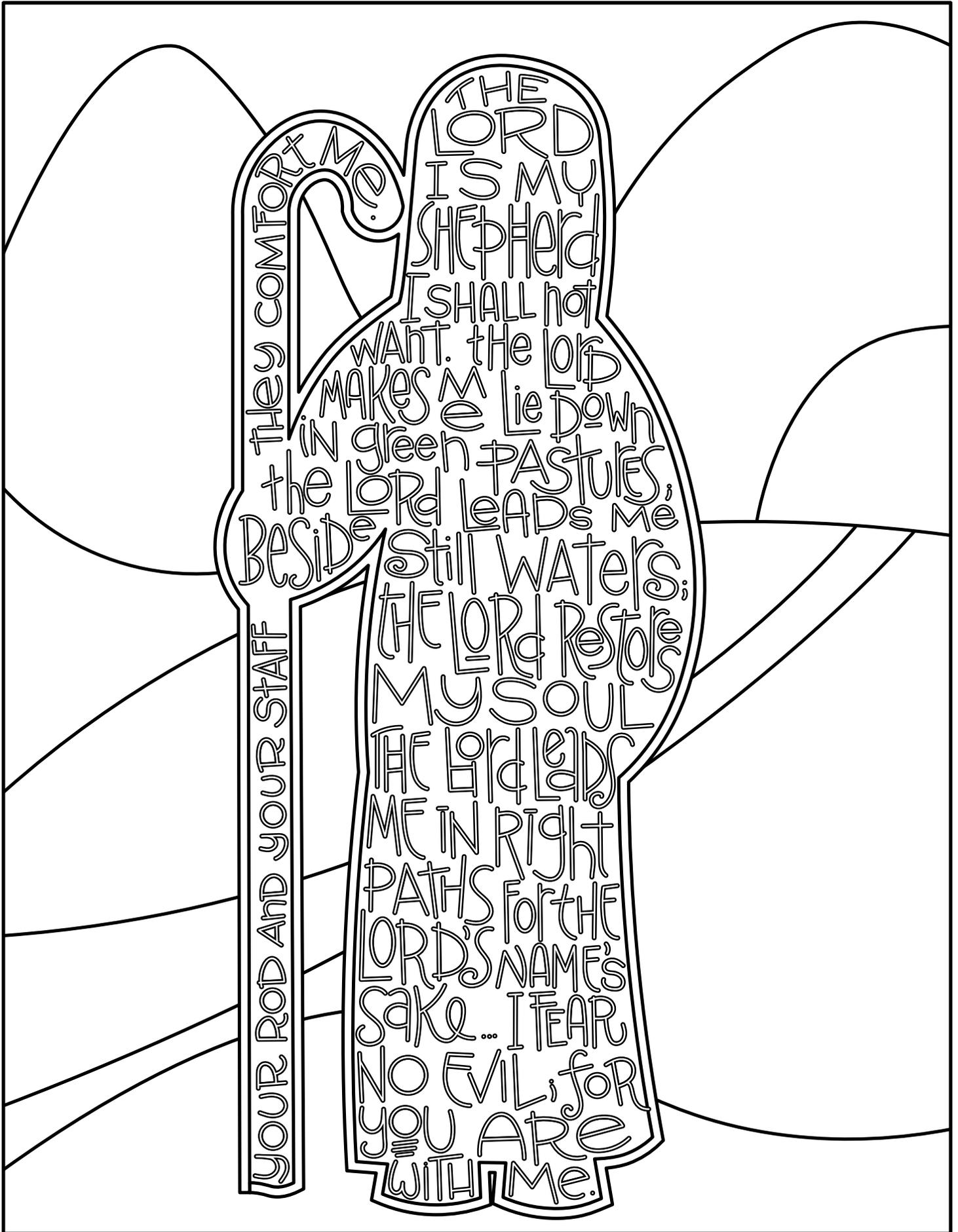
1. What it might be like to lie down in a green pasture? Or to walk along a quiet creek?
2. How do you express what you are feeling?
3. What can these feelings teach us?
4. What things help you feel really calm and safe?
5. How might our relationship with God help us feel calm and safe?



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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

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.

