SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVES FOR KIDS

With Sunday School taking a break for the summer, we at St. Matthew wanted to provide families with a meaningful way to stay connected to God's Word together. This year's VBS theme, *Emerald Crossing*, is based on Psalm 23 and is filled with opportunities to learn more about the love, care, and character of Christ, our Good Shepherd.

Through simple, hands-on science experiments you can do at home, your children will explore God's creation while deepening their understanding of Jesus. As you enjoy the summer months, these activities can help spark conversations about faith and connect the truths of Scripture to the amazing world God has made.

As your schedule allows, we encourage you to try some of these fun experiments and talk together about how they relate to Psalm 23.

We would love to hear about your discoveries! Feel free to share photos, drawings, or stories from your experiments with us at smlcsundayschool@stmattsonline.com

We pray you have a safe, joyful, and faith-filled summer.

Blessings,

Your St. Matthew Sunday School Team

Psalm 23

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 paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will 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 forever

GENETICALLY YOU

SUPPLIES

- *Optional* PTC paper to see if your child can taste it or not

DIRECTIONS

Test the following things to see what is the same or different among your family members.

1. Can you roll your tongue or not?
2. Do you have a widow's peak hairline or a straight hairline?
3. Do you have dimples or no dimples?
4. Can you bend your thumb backward ("hitchhiker's thumb") or not?
5. Can you wiggle your ears or not?
6. Are your second toes longer than your big toes, or shorter?
7. Can you make a clover shape with your tongue or not?

Optional: PTC paper strip to see if you can test it

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

God takes care of us and made each person special. Even small things in our bodies, like a widow's peak hairline or being able to roll your tongue, are part of how we are uniquely made. We don't need to feel like we are "missing" anything, because God made each person just right.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that make you different from your friends or family?
2. Do you think it's fun that everyone is a little different? Why or why not?
3. How does it feel to know that God cares for you just the way He made you?

WET WOOLLY

SUPPLIES

- Strip of wool fabric
- Strip of polyester fleece
- Strip of synthetic craft felt
- 3 cups or bowls
- Water
- Paper towels

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut all fabric samples into equal-sized squares.
2. Place one fabric sample into the water for 30 seconds.
3. Remove the fabric and let it drip for 5 seconds.
4. Measure how much water remains in the bowl.
5. Record the result in a data table.
6. Repeat with each fabric.
7. Compare your results.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:2a He makes me lie down in green pastures.

In our *Wet Woolly* experiment, different fabrics were tested to see how much water they can absorb. In the experiment, some fabrics absorb more water than others. This shows that materials respond differently when they come into contact with water. Similarly, Psalm 23:2 reminds us that God provides what we need to grow and thrive, just as water supports life.

Discussion Questions

1. How does studying science help us understand and appreciate God's creation?
2. How is water important in both the Bible verse and the experiment?
3. How can the differences in fabric absorbency remind us that people have different strengths and abilities?

SINK OR FLOAT

SUPPLIES

- Plastic tablecloth
- Clear, large bin, bucket, or bowl at least twice as high as the largest test item
- Water
- Items to test (e.g., pencil, coin, golf ball, Ping-Pong ball, plastic and metal spoon, cork, crayon, orange, stone, plastic Easter egg, apple, avocado)
- Towels for drying spills

DIRECTIONS

1.) Fill a container with water.

2.) Gather several objects to test.

3.) Before placing each object in the water, predict whether it will sink or float and write down your prediction.

4.) Carefully place the object in the water and observe what happens.

5.) Record whether the object actually sank or floated.

6.) Repeat with all the objects.

7.) Compare your predictions to the results.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:2b He leads me beside still waters.

Just as some objects float safely on the water while others sink, God guides and supports us through life's challenges. In Psalm 23, God is described as a shepherd who leads us beside still waters and cares for us. When we trust Him, we can feel secure even when life feels uncertain.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which objects floated? Which sank?
2. How does God help us stay strong when we face difficulties?
3. What does it mean that God leads us beside "still waters"?

FEAR NOT

SUPPLIES

- Opaque cloth bags or pillowcases
- "**Safe"** household objects, such as a spoon, a cotton ball, a small toy block, an eraser, crumpled paper, and coins
- **"Unsafe"** household objects, such as a wooden toothpick, nail, pushpin, or paperclip

DIRECTIONS

1. Place all the objects into the bag/pillowcase.
2. Have your child feel around to see if they can identify the objects inside.
3. Have the identify the “safe” and “unsafe” objects.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

In our game, we had to decide which objects were safe and which were unsafe. Sometimes it was easy to tell, and sometimes it was harder. As our Good Shepherd, God knows which paths are safe and which paths can lead us into trouble. Just like a shepherd guides sheep away from dangerous places, God guides us toward what is right and good. The safe objects in our game remind us of the safe path God wants us to follow. The unsafe objects remind us that some choices may look tempting or interesting but can hurt us or others. When we follow God's guidance, we can trust that He is leading us on the best path.

Discussion Questions

1. Was it easy or hard to figure out what was inside? Why?
2. What are some situations in life where you don't know what will happen next?
3. What are some ways God helps us know the right path?

SHADOW PLAY

SUPPLIES

- Flashlights
- White sheet of paper
- Small animals, shapes, or other objects for making shadows (e.g., little plastic animals, paper clips, feathers, leaves, toy cars, etc.)

DIRECTIONS

1. Turn off or dim the lights so shadows are easy to see.
2. Shine the flashlight behind each object to cast a shadow, and look closely at the shape of the shadow.
3. Move the flashlight closer or farther away; shine the light from the side, from above, or from below.
4. Watch how the shadow changes.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

In this game, you saw objects casting shadows. At first, the shadows look scary or confusing, but as the light changes, the shadows change shape and become easier to understand. Just like in Psalm 23, the "valley of shadows" can feel scary, but God's presence is like the light that helps us see more clearly and avoid being controlled by fear.

Discussion Questions

1. How can trusting God change the way we see difficult situations?
2. How can a shadow look scary even if the real thing isn't scary?
3. What are some ways people can remember God is with them when they feel afraid?

OVERFLOW YOUR CUP

SUPPLIES

- Water
- Cup
- Plastic pipette
- Paper towels

DIRECTIONS

1. Predict how many drops of water the cup can hold before it overflows.
2. Add water slowly and watch closely, counting each additional drop.
3. Stop when it overflows and see how close you were to your prediction.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

In the experiment, the cup could only hold a certain amount of water before it spilled over.
In Psalm 23, David says God's blessings are like a cup that doesn't just fill up, it overflows. Our experiment showed that cups have limits, but Psalm 23 teaches that God's care does not have limits. Just like water overflowed from the cup, God's goodness overflows into our lives in ways that are more than enough for us every day.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you see God taking care of you?
2. What are some "blessings" or good things in your life right now?
3. What is one way you can thank God for His goodness this week?

FIRM FOUNDATION

SUPPLIES

- 2 paper plates
- Card stock cut into strips
- Tape
- 4–6 building blocks
- 2–3 flat rocks
- 1 cup of dry sand

DIRECTIONS

1. Place a paper ring in the center of the two plates.
2. Fill one ring with rocks and the second ring with sand.
3. Build a small tower of blocks on top of the rock and sand.
4. Carefully slide or remove the paper ring from under each tower.
5. Observe what happens to the towers.

BIBLE CONNECTION

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

You built towers on two different foundations. One foundation was firm and stable, while the other was loose and shifting. When the paper ring was removed, we could see which tower had the support it needed to stay standing. In Psalm 23, David describes God as a shepherd who lovingly cares for His sheep. The sheep trust the shepherd because he knows where the firm ground is and where they will find what they need. The tower on the firm foundation could remain standing because it had solid support underneath it. In the same way, when God is the foundation of our lives, we have someone strong and dependable supporting us. We can trust Him because He is always with us.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the foundation mattered so much?
2. How can remembering that God is our Shepherd help us when we feel worried or scared?
3. How does God's goodness and mercy help us stand strong in life?

GOD'S BLESSINGS

SEE YOU IN THE FALL

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