

Week 1: David the Shepherd Boy



Summary

Today's lesson centers on David as a shepherd boy. Just as David trusted God to protect him in times of danger, we too should take comfort in God's protection and care in our own lives.

Order of Events:

1. Puppet Skit: Part 1--Introduction of characters & explanation of Survivor game
2. Lesson: David the Shepherd Boy
3. Object Lesson: Danger Zone
4. Prayer
5. Memory Verse: Psalm 23:1
6. Challenge: Rescue the Sheep
7. Puppet Skit: Part 2—Results of challenge and voting off puppet characters



Puppet Skit: Introduction to “*I Survived!* Serengeti Safari”

(5-8 minutes)

Props:

- A bow for Angelina’s hair, any color
- A pair of glasses for Dexter
- 2 t-shirts, one for Johnny and one for Dave
- A team jersey and a headband for Shamequa
- A military type shirt or camouflage shirt, and a hat to match for Sarge
- A pink or pastel colored shirt for Sweet Sue, with matching hair ribbon or bow for her hair
- A big flowered shirt or boy’s masculine shirt for Madge
- An “update page”—a piece of colored paper to be used to update the kids on how the first challenge went
- Ballot box
- Ballots with names of puppet to be voted off (see end of script)

TEACHER: *(In front of stage, talking to kids. The following words can be read as is, or can be paraphrased.)* How many of you have either heard about or watch the t.v. show “Survivor?” Well, here in our classroom we are going to have our own version of that show. I want to welcome you all to *I Survived! Serengeti Safari.* *(Puppets behind state simultaneously go Sssssss!)* The Serengeti, not to be confused with spaghetti, is a place located in the wild lands of Africa. For the next 8 weeks we will watch a group of courageous contestants battle the stifling heat, wild animals, and other dangers of these African lands, in order to win the ultimate prize—a trip to Disneyland to meet the head cheese himself, Mickey Mouse.

Here at our Serengeti Safari *(puppets go Sssssss!)* the name of the game is to outwit, outlast and outplay the other opponents. That means that only the smartest, the bravest and the most courageous person will win.

Each week, our players will face a series of challenges and tests. If they pass the test, they get a reward. If they don’t pass, they get nothing. At the end of each week, each player will vote for one person they want to see leave the Serengeti Safari. *(Sssss!)* The player with the most votes must leave the Serengeti and return home. The object of the game is to be the last player left. Whoever is left at the end of the game wins the trip to Disneyland and the chance to meet Mickey Mouse.

Are there any questions?

Now, let's meet our players. (*One by one the puppets pop up and introduce themselves. When they are finished they pop back down and the next puppet pops up so there should only be one puppet "on stage" at a time.*)

ANGELINA: (*snooty, prissy*) Hello everyone. My name is Angelina. I just want to say that if I had known there wasn't going to be any electricity on this Serengeti Safari (Sssss) I wouldn't have come in the first place. I mean, how am I supposed to blow dry and curl my hair? And my skin is far too delicate for this blistering heat. I need some moisturizer in the worst way. Can anyone direct me to the nearest JC Penney's? (*she exits*)

DEXTER: (*arrogant*) Good day everyone. My name is Dexter and my plan is simple--I'm going to win this game because I'm so smart. If you gave me a Q-tip, some dental floss and a curtain, I could build you a house. I was also the only person to discover what the secret ingredient was in the McDonald's Big Mac. And when playing the game of "Clue" I always know who committed the crime, with what, and in which room. Winning this game will be a piece of cake. Nobody here can match my brains and intellect. (*exits*)

JOHNNY: (*friendly, outgoing*) Hi. My name is Johnny. I came here to play this game because I thought it would be fun to make some new friends. Back home, I like to ride my bike and play with frogs. I'm a pretty good swimmer too, so I hope we get to do a lot of that here. I'd like to win this game, but if I don't, I'll be happy if I can just make a new friend. I wish everyone good luck! (*exits*)

SHAMEQUA: Howdy. My name is Shamequa and I just love playing sports! I love basketball, baseball, volleyball and soccer. I run track at my school and I've won lots of awards. I would play football too but the boys won't let a girl play on their team. I think it's just 'cause they know I play better than most of them and they don't want to be outplayed by a *girl*. Anyway, I think I can win this thing because I'm in great shape. I can outlast anyone on this team! (*exits*)

SARGE: (*very gruff*) People call me Sarge. I don't take orders from anyone! I'm always right and my way is always best. If you disagree with me you'll be sorry. I think I'll win this game for two reasons--First, because I deserve it. I'm in excellent condition, I'm smart and I'm rough and tough. And I can be sneaky if I have to be. Second, because the other players will be too scared of me to vote me off. They're all a bunch of wimps! I've got this game in the bag! (*exits*)

SWEET SUE: *(in southern style)* Hi y'all. People call me Sweet Sue because I'm just soooooo sweet! I'd never hurt a fly and I'm super nice to everyone. I try to see the best in people and I'd do anything I could to help someone in need. I don't know if I'll win this competition or not but I think I'll be around until the end because I'm just toooooo sweet to vote off. I wish we could all go to Disneyland to meet Mickey, but since we can't, I'll just wish everyone the best of luck. Do your best y'all! *(exits)*

DAVE: *(shy)* Hi. My name is Dave. I'm just an ordinary guy. I came here because I've always wanted to visit Africa and I thought this would be a good adventure for me. I'm hoping I'll get to see lion or a wildebeest but not up too close! I don't know if I have what it takes to win this game or not. I'm not very athletic or overly smart so I don't know if I'll be able to pass the challenges. I do have courage though. I'm not afraid to fail so I don't mind trying new things. Maybe that will be enough. If not, at least I tried. *(exits)*

MAGDE: *(mean and rough)* Yeah, I'm Madge. I didn't have a problem coming to the Serengeti because I like to sweat and get dirty and I don't care if I take a shower or not. I'm not here to make friends or to see big animals—I'm here to win this game, and I'll do whatever I have to do to make sure I win. I'm strong and I'm tough and nobody will play this game better than me. I'm here to win! *(exits)*

TEACHER: Well, there are our 8 contestants. Now that you've had a chance to meet them, the players are off to face their first challenge. We'll check back later and see how they did. We'll also find out who will be the first to get voted off Serengeti Safari. *(Sssss!)*

(The conclusion of the skit, Part 2, occurs at the end of the program)



Lesson: David the Shepherd Boy

I Samuel 17: 34-35 (15-20 minutes)

Props:

A robe

A towel, pillowcase or something to put over your head, similar to what a shepherd might wear on his head

A cane or long stick to represent a staff

As you begin the lesson, get into your garb, (or get dressed during the puppet skit) by putting on the robe, draping the towel over your head, and grabbing onto the cane or stick.

What's a Shepherd?

(Ask the kids) Who can tell me what I am supposed to be? That's right, I'm a shepherd. Who knows what a shepherd does? *(Allow children to answer)* Did you know that in some parts of the world there are still real shepherds who are responsible for watching over a flock of sheep?

Farmers who own sheep usually keep them on large ranches or farms. Depending on the size of the farm, there might be 25 sheep, 100 sheep, 500 sheep, or 1,000 sheep or more to take care of at one time. The sheep like to graze (eat) on the land. They eat the grass in the pastures. To make sure there is enough fresh grass for the sheep to eat, the sheep need to be moved to new areas of pasture quite often. So, one of the jobs of the shepherd is to guide the sheep to new areas of land. Sheep are natural followers: once they get used to the sound of the shepherd's voice and become familiar with him, they will follow the shepherd anywhere and do what he says. So, even though there may be hundreds of sheep to care for, the shepherd can easily guide them.

Another job of the shepherd is to protect the sheep from any wild animals that may want to hurt them. Coyotes, mountain lions or other dangerous animals are just waiting for a chance to grab one of the sheep and carry them off for dinner! The shepherd must stay alert (*watch very carefully*) for any signs of danger. The shepherd always stays with the sheep and never leaves them. The sheep look to the shepherd to provide them with food and protection, and if the shepherd were to leave the flock unattended for any length of time, there probably wouldn't be much of a flock to care for anymore. Sheep can't

survive on their own very long: they need the help and guidance of the shepherd. Even at night, the shepherd sleeps close by, sometimes inside a tent, so he can stay as close to his flock as possible, in case of any danger.

We're talking about shepherds today because over the next few weeks we're going to be talking about a very special person in the Bible who started out as a shepherd. Would you like to try and guess who this shepherd boy was? *(Allow children to guess)* The person we will be talking about is a man named David. David was an important man who would one day become a king. Over the next several weeks, we'll be looking at some of the interesting highlights of David's life. David was very close to God but he wasn't perfect: he made mistakes. We'll be taking a look at how David handled both the good times and bad times in his life.

David, as Shepherd



Today, I want to tell you about something that happened to David one day while he was watching over his father's sheep. Our story is found in 1 Samuel 17: 34-37. *(Show the children where this is in the Bible.)*

Let me set the stage for you: a young man stands in the middle of a huge field. It's a hot, miserable day. The sun is beating down on him and the sweat is pouring down his face, stinging his eyes. The boy looks around and all is quiet and still, except for the occasional "baaaa" heard from the sheep surrounding him.

There's nothing particularly special about this young man, although the Bible says he is handsome and is the youngest of many brothers. We don't know exactly how old he is but we might guess he is a teenager, perhaps high school age. *(Maybe some of the kids have a brother in high school so they could relate to the age that way.)* This young man is not a super hero. He doesn't have any powers or super strength. He can't make spider webs shoot out of his wrists and he can't leap tall buildings in a single bound. He can't fly or even jump real high. He's just a typical teenager whose father happens to own a lot of sheep. So, this young man helps his family out by being a shepherd. This man's name is David.

Most days are pretty boring. David calls the sheep, he moves the sheep, he pets the sheep, he leads the sheep to water so they can have something to drink etc. Not too exciting. But today is different. Today, something happens to David that he will never forget.

The flock is attacked

I imagine David standing still. I imagine him looking out over the beautiful countryside, noticing how green the grass is. I imagine David leaning down to pet one of the sheep near his feet, when something from the corner of his eye catches his attention. He quickly turns his head and as he does so, he hears the loud cries of his sheep, as the sheep begin to run and scatter. Off in the distance I imagine David seeing the outline of golden fur, huge paws and enormous teeth, as a ferocious lion pounces on one of the sheep. The lion grabs the sheep in his powerful jaws and leaps away all in a flash.

David's heart starts to pound and he only has a few seconds to react. What do you think is going through his mind? What would be going through your mind if you were David? (*Allow answers*) Remember it is the job of the shepherd to protect the sheep. What do you think David should do?



Without even thinking, David ran after the lion. The Bible tells us that David went after the lion and struck (*or hit*) it until the lion let go of the sheep. Then David rescued the sheep from the lion's mouth. Then when the lion turned on David as if to attack him, the Bible says David grabbed the lion by his hair (*his mane*) and killed it. Both David and the sheep were fine. Isn't that incredible?

The Bible also talks about another similar event happening to David, only this time he had to rescue the sheep from a bear. In both cases, God was with David. God knew David had a job to do. David was a shepherd and it was his job to protect the sheep, even if that meant risking his own life to face a ferocious lion or a hungry bear. As a shepherd, David had to face some dangerous situations, but during those times, God gave David the courage and the strength not only to *face* the situations, but also to *survive* them.

God can and *wants* to do the same for us.



Object Lesson: Danger Zone

(5-8 minutes)

(*Note: The Object Lesson is incorporated into the Bible Lesson this week. It should be an unnoticeable transition or continuation of the lesson.)

Props:

Pictures of the following: a “bully,” a tent or camper, lightning bolt, fire, a mean dog (Located in “Resources”)

Think about dangerous or scary situations that you may have been in. We all have times when we are scared or when we are in a situation that frightens us. Sometimes there is a bully at school who likes to tease kids or take their lunch money. *(Show picture of bully)* Sometimes when you go camping, a bad storm appears. *(Show tent or camper and lightning bolt)* The rain pounds down and the wind tears at the canvas of the tent until it feels like it’s going to blow away. Sometimes a fire starts in a house unexpectedly. *(Show fire)* Sometimes a neighbor’s scary dog gets loose. *(Show dog)*

Was there ever a time when you were in a dangerous situation like David and you were scared? *(Allow answers. Then tell of a situation that scared you or frightened you, either as an adult or as a child.)*

We’ve all been in situations that were scary. But you know what? God tells us that we don’t have to stay afraid. Do you know why? Because we aren’t alone. No matter where we are and no matter what is happening to us, God is always with us. Just like a shepherd will never leave his sheep, God will never leave us. God is like our own personal shepherd: He is always there to watch over us and He protects us from danger.

God tells us in His word, in Isaiah 41:10: *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you...”*

Does anyone know what it means to be “dismayed?” *(Allow answers)* It means to be sad, depressed or have anxiety, which is fear. So God is telling us to not be afraid because He is there to help us. He will give us strength when we need it and He will help us through whatever we are experiencing.

That means that if a bully is threatening you, God will help you stand up to the bully or encourage you tell a teacher or other adult who can help you. If your neighbor's scary dog gets loose and wants to bite your arm off, God will help you get away from the dog. All you have to do is ask for help. Just shout out to God, "Help me God! I need you!" God will be there. He wants to be your shepherd, to watch over and protect you.

So next time you are in a scary situation, think of David and how God helped him kill a ferocious lion and a hungry bear!



Prayer

Ask the children if they have anything you can pray for, and then include those things in your prayer time. Then pray:

Lord, I am thankful for every boy and girl that is here today. Please help them remember that you are their shepherd and that they can always count on you to be there for them. Be with them today and throughout the coming week. When they are frightened help them remember the verse we talked about today: Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. Watch over them and protect them, and bring them back safely to us next week. In the name of Jesus, Amen.



Memory Verse: Psalm 23:1

(10 minutes)

**Note: Each week the children will learn 1 verse from Psalm 23. At the end of the 8 weeks, the children should be able to recite the entire passage. If you desire, you can offer some kind of large prize as an incentive, to all students who can recite the entire Psalm at the end of the 8 weeks.*

Props: Pieces of paper, each paper with one word from the first verse printed on it. Overhead or poster with Psalm 23 written on it (Located in “Resources”)

Introduce Psalm 23. *(Show the overhead, located at the back of the book.)*
Tell the children they will be learning all 6 verses, 1 verse at a time, and by the end of the 8 weeks they will be able to recite the entire Psalm.

Read all of Psalm 23. You may read it all or call on children to read various verses. Discuss verse 1.

Ask: How is God like our shepherd? *(He never leaves us, He watches over us, protects us, He provides for us etc.)*

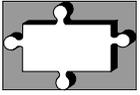
What does it mean to “lack nothing?” *(God will provide for all of our needs. He will take care of us and make sure we have everything we need to survive: clothes, food, money, a home etc.)*

Say the verse & class repeats it: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.” Psalm 23:1 *(Have the verse printed out on an overhead or hanging somewhere in front of the class so everyone can see it)*

Say the verse once or twice as a whole class. Then have only the girls repeat the verse, then the boys. See who can say it the loudest. Have different groups repeat the verse: age groups, those with blond hair, black hair, red hair, those with brown eyes, blue eyes, green eyes etc. Continue until you’ve repeated the verse several times.

Take down the overhead or poster and have the group try to say the verse without looking at the words.

Activity: Divide your group into teams. Ahead of time, divide the first verse of the Psalm into 9 words and write the words on 9 different pieces of paper for each team. Each team should have their own set of words. Give each member of the team a word from the verse. Make sure the words are in random order, not verse order. Each team will then have to arrange themselves in the correct verse order. The team to accomplish this first, wins. You can do this over and over or change members of the team. Or you can do this one team at a time and use a watch to see how long it takes each team. The team that can do it the fastest wins. You can do this as many times as your schedule permits.



Challenge: Rescue the Sheep

(10 minutes)

Explain to the class that they, like their puppet friends, will be faced with a challenge each week. They will have to work together as a team in order to win the challenge.

Objective: Be the team with the most “safe” sheep.

Props:

Each team should have the following: 3-5 pictures of sheep, 1 picture of a shepherd and 1 picture of a lion (Located in “Resources”)

At least 3 “markers” per team: could be anything, such as masking tape, a sheet of paper, a book etc. to represent rescue steps

2 boxes (or bags) per team

Review questions

Divide the group into 2 or more teams, depending on your class size. Each team will have to “rescue” their sheep by answering questions about the lesson.

Each team should have several sheep to rescue (3-5, depending on class size). The pictures of the sheep are at one end of the class, while the teams are at the other end. “Markers” are placed at specific intervals along the floor, leading to the sheep. Markers could be every 2 feet or every few inches, depending on your space. There should be at least 3 or more markers leading to the group of sheep.

Team members line up and a question is asked to the first team member. If he/she answers correctly, that person moves the picture of the shepherd to the first marker on the floor. If he/she answers incorrectly, a picture of the lion is placed on the marker, and that person goes to the end of the line. The idea is for the team members to keep moving their shepherd forward to rescue the sheep from the lion. Every correct answer moves the shepherd one step closer to rescuing a sheep. Once the shepherd reaches the group of sheep, he may rescue one sheep by removing it from the flock and putting it in a box, marked “safe.” The shepherd then goes back to the beginning. If the lion reaches the sheep before the shepherd does, a sheep is “eaten,” by being crumpled up and put in a separate box marked “dinner.” The lion then goes back to the beginning. The team with the most “safe” sheep is the winner.

Review Questions

1. In the lesson, two jobs of a shepherd were mentioned. Name one. (*To guide the sheep to new areas of land so they will have enough food, and to protect the sheep from wild animals*)
2. How can the sheep recognize their shepherd? Is it: the smell of the shepherd, the sound of the shepherd's voice or the touch of the shepherd? (*The sound of the shepherd's voice*)
3. According to the lesson, what do sheep like to eat? (*grass*)
4. What does it mean to be "alert?" (*Watch very carefully*)
5. True or False? Shepherds stay with the sheep during the day and go home at night. (*False*)
6. What was the name of the shepherd boy in our story today? (*David*)
7. Was David the oldest or the youngest in his family? (*The youngest*)
8. About how old was David when he was a shepherd in his father's fields? (*high school age or a teenager*)
9. What kind of "super powers" did David have? (*None—he was a typical boy*)
10. Our story told of two types of animals that David rescued his sheep from. One was a lion. Name the other one. (*Bear*)
11. What did David do when he saw the lion run off with one of his sheep? (*He ran after it, struck it and killed it*)
12. Why was David able to kill both the lion and the bear without being harmed himself? (*Because God was with him*)
13. What situation did I (*you, the teacher*) say I was in that scared me at one time? (*You fill in this blank*)
14. How is God like our own personal shepherd? (*He is always with us and He watches over and protects us*)

15. True or False: God is only with us when we are being good. *(False)*
16. What does it mean to be “dismayed?” *(Be sad, depressed, anxious or afraid)*
17. What should we do if we are in a situation that makes us afraid? *(Call out to God and ask Him to help us; pray etc.)*
18. What book of the Bible is our memory verse for today found in? *(Psalms)*
19. What does it mean to “lack nothing?” *(God will provide for all of our needs. He will take care of us and make sure we have everything we need to survive: clothes, food, money, a home etc.)*
20. What is the first sentence in our memory verse today? *(The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing)*