

He Leads Me Beside Quiet Waters

(He Quenches My Inner Thirst)

(Psalm 23:2b)

Pre-Session Warm Up

We've been learning the 23rd Psalm. So far, we've looked at the first one and ½ verses: "*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures...*"

We've learned that because the Lord is our shepherd, we have all that we need. First of all, He lets us rest in green meadows. We found out that this verse is not talking about letting us take nice long naps out on our front lawns! It's talking about the wonderful care Jesus takes to give us peace and joy in our lives so that we might rest in the knowledge of His love for us. If we trust that He'll take care of us, we can rest from worry and fear.

Today we will find out the next thing our Good Shepherd does for us is *He leads us beside quiet waters*.

Have you ever been really thirsty? After you have eaten lots of chips or other salty snacks, doesn't your tongue sort of dry up? When you're really thirsty, what do you like to drink? A nice glass of cool water is what really quiches *my* thirst. Your body needs water to survive! You will die if you go more than three days without water. You can go a lot longer without food, maybe even up to 40 days, but you need to drink lots of water every day.

I have been talking about *physical* thirst. But, we also have another kind of thirst—a *spiritual* thirst—that only our Good Shepherd can quench.

Opening Prayer

Father, You have given us a natural hunger and thirst for the things of Heaven. Show us where we can go to satisfy every need and desire that we have for You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

O God, You are my God; I earnestly search for You. My soul thirsts for You; my whole body longs for You in this parched and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)

Lesson

[Teacher, prepare a "tasting" table with these items:

- 12 different types of water in clear glasses including: carbonated water, mineral water, lemon water, spring water, tap water, distilled water, flavored water, dish water, water colored with yellow food coloring, iced tea water, salt water, sugar water.
- Number the glasses of water, 1-12
- Index cards labeled with the above water types. Place these cards face down under the glass of water
- Paper and pencil for each child
- Several small Dixie cups for each child

On another table, display things that stand for the **World's Wisdom**, like a crystal ball, a horoscope from a newspaper, food, alcohol, a movie, a Hollywood magazine, or money, symbolizing material wealth. Cover these items with a towel until you talk about them.]

What do you think it means to be *spiritually* thirsty?

We are born with a thirst for the things of God. We want to know who made us and where we come from and where are we going after we die.

Just looking at this beautiful world that we live in makes us want to know the Creator! Aren't you in awe of His wonderful creation? When you see a humming bird or a wood pecker or the clouds forming in the sky, doesn't that awaken in you a desire to know the Creator of the universe?

Well, when we get physically thirsty, we can drink a glass of water to satisfy that thirst. But when we get thirsty for spiritual things where do we turn to quench our spiritual thirst?

Well, some people look in all the wrong places trying to satisfy their spiritual thirst. [Uncover the "*World's Wisdom*" items on the second table.]

Some people try to quench their spiritual thirst by turning to the things that the world has to offer. But none of these things can quench the thirst that God created in us for Himself. They may seem to satisfy us for a while, but in the end, they do not lead us to God.

As we have been learning Psalm 23, we have used a lot of word pictures like, "*the Lord is my Shepherd.*" How is God like a Shepherd? [Let the children respond.] Well if God is our shepherd, then we must be His sheep. How do you think people are like sheep?

Did you know that sheep need help in every way to keep alive? Last week we learned that sheep won't eat if they are not at rest. So, it is the shepherd's job to lead the sheep to a safe place where they feel relaxed and secure enough to eat.

Well, sheep not only need to eat to stay healthy, they need plenty of water, too. When sheep become thirsty, they will drink anything to satisfy their thirst, whether it is healthy or unhealthy. They have no discernment about what is good for them; they need a shepherd to lead them to the good watering holes.

Let's play a game to see how well you, as *sheep*, would make the right decision between drinking waters. Let's say that you have been walking in the wilderness for many miles. It is hot. Your feet are sore.

Your body is tired. Your throat is dry and you need a drink. Now you need to choose some water but you don't have a shepherd to help you.

Look at the table set before you. See the glasses of water? They are numbered 1 to 12. [Distribute paper and pencils.] Write down the glass number that you would drink from if you were given a choice. For example, you might write "3, 11, and 7" on your card. You can choose more than one. [Give children time to write down glass numbers in order that they might drink. Then discuss their choices. Let all the children share their responses and explain why they made their choices. After the discussion, give each child an opportunity to come forward and taste their water choices. They will discover that what looks good is not necessarily good tasting at all.]

Sheep do not know how to make choices like you just made. Some of *you* were even fooled by the color of the water, thinking clear water was safe water. It is the same with sheep. When sheep are thirsty they will drink anything just to satisfy their thirst. If they are not led to clean water, they would even choose diseased, polluted, or dirty water just to try and stop their thirst.

The devil tricks people into drinking the wrong water, too. Just like sheep, people do not know what can be dangerous for them to drink when they are trying to quench their *spiritual* thirst. [Teacher, refer to the items on the *World's Wisdom* display table.]

Bible Story Center

One day Jesus and His friends were walking a long distance. They had been walking all day and they were tired and hungry and thirsty.

They came to a well of cool water. In those days, people didn't have water in their homes. Women got the water they needed for cooking, cleaning and bathing from a well, a deep hole in the ground. They would tie a rope to a bucket, lower it down into the water, and pull up the water. Then they would pour the water into big jars and carry it back to their homes on top of their heads. This is the way they got

water for their animals, too. In many third-world countries it is still done this way. It must be hard work to carry a heavy jar on your head!

So, Jesus stopped by the well to rest while His friends went into a nearby town to buy food. While Jesus was resting, a woman came to the well to get water. Jesus said, "*Hi! I'm thirsty. Could you give me a drink of water?*"

The woman was surprised when Jesus talked to her. She did not know who Jesus was. And men never talked to women in public places back in those days. By speaking to her, Jesus showed her that He cared about her. God loves all people, everywhere.

John 4:9

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are You asking me for a drink?"

Little did this woman know Who she was talking to!

John 4:10

*Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask Me, and I would give you **living water**."*

Jesus was saying, "*If you only knew that you were talking to the creator of the universe, you would ask Me for water...*" But the woman didn't understand what Jesus was talking about.

John 4:11-12

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? (12) And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

She noticed that Jesus didn't have a rope or a bucket; she wondered where He would get this special water.

John 4:13-14

Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. (14) But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

When you're physically thirsty, nothing tastes so good as a huge drink of cool water! Of course, that water can only satisfy you for a while then you need another drink. But Jesus said He could give you a drink of water that would last forever!

He wasn't talking about water that comes out of the faucet. Jesus was saying that all who believe in Him will have everlasting life.

When you believe in Jesus you are filled with the Living Water—everlasting life. Only this kind of *water* will truly satisfy our spirit.

To *believe in Jesus* means that you know that Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's anger against sin. Jesus' death on the cross paid for your sins. As soon as you come to Him and ask Him to forgive your sins, He can because he has already paid for them in full. He said, "*It is finished.*"

In Psalm 23:2b it says, "*He leads me beside quiet waters.*" What does it mean that He *leads* us?

Jesus knows where the good places are for us to go to get our spiritual thirst quenched. And He knows that we, like sheep, need a shepherd to show us the way. So, before He went back up to heaven, He told His disciples that He would send them a Helper.

John 16:13a

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth.

God, the Holy Spirit, leads us to the Living Water - **the water of everlasting life**. And that is Jesus, Himself! He is the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus by putting a desire in our hearts for more of Jesus. Where do you think the good places are

for us to get our spiritual thirst quenched? We quench that thirst for more of Jesus by reading His word, praying to Him, and spending time praising and worshipping Him.

But what is this about the “*quiet waters*?”

Sheep can drink the most and get the best water when it is still. If the water is rushing, over rocks, they could lose their balance and drown. Water that is moving scares them and they will not drink. A good shepherd always leads the sheep besides peaceful streams.

One place sheep can find nice calm water is right where they are grazing. A lush, green meadow usually has little streams of water meandering through it. Usually the sheep graze first thing in the morning and the water they find right in the meadow can be enough to keep them satisfied for the entire day.

In the same way, we need a peaceful environment to sit quietly with the Lord. You know how hard it is to concentrate if you have other family members talking all around you or the TV is blaring. It's important for you to find a quiet place to be alone with the Lord so that you can pray and read His word; a private place where you can sing and praise Him and talk to Him out loud.

Your private meadow streams might be right in your bedroom before anyone in the household wakes up.

It is important to get in the habit of spiritually drinking of God's word early in the morning. This way we can fill our hearts up with the knowledge of God's love and care for us before we even venture out into our day.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that when we placed our trust in what You did for us on the cross that you filled us with the Living Water of everlasting life with You. Thank you for giving us Your Word. You constantly satisfy our every need and desire. By just sitting and reading Your

Word, we can quench our spiritual thirst. You fill us to overflowing with the knowledge of Your love and care for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Early to Rise

(Children will learn the significance of seeking the Lord early.)

Divide the children into pairs and assign the following scriptures to each team. Have them report back to the class, **What** was done in their scripture, what **Time** of day the action happened, what **Benefit** or result there was. [Teacher, write *What*, *Time*, and *Benefit* on the board.]

- Psalm 5:1-3 & 12
- Exodus 34:2 & 5
- Psalm 59:16-17
- Psalm 92:1-2
- Psalm 30:1-5
- 2 Chronicles 20:20-22

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. What does it mean to be led?
2. How are we like sheep?
3. Who leads us?

4. How does the Holy Spirit lead us?
5. Have you ever been thirsty for the spiritual things of God? Explain. Was your thirst quenched?
6. What does the Bible promise to those who thirst after righteousness? (See Matthew 5:6, they will be satisfied.)
7. What are some of the wrong places to go to quench your spiritual thirst? (The World's Wisdom.)
8. What do sheep sometimes do when they get really thirsty? (They will drink anything even if it's not healthy)
9. What was Jesus referring to when He offered the woman at the well, living water? (Everlasting life)
10. How do you get Living Water? (By believing in what Jesus did for you on the cross and making Him your Lord and Savior.)
11. What is the best time of day to seek the Lord? (Morning)

