

## Worshipping at Home on March 22, 2020

### Psalm 23

#### GETTING READY TO WORSHIP TOGETHER AT HOME

When a family worships at home, it will look more free form than what happens in a sanctuary. Especially HEARING THE WORD will be more active. Children explore God's word with their eyes, voices, hands and even feet as well as their ears. Within this free form it also good to have a few rituals that are repeated every week.

You will find suggestions for ways to hear God's Word each week and rituals that surround it. Over the weeks, every family will develop their own worship style. With that in mind, check out the worship preparations and the worship plan focused on Psalm 23 for March 22<sup>nd</sup> below.

Set up your **worship space**. Make a worship center that may include a Bible (opened today to Psalm 23), a candle, or a flower. You may set chairs in rows or a circle ... simply worship wherever you gather.

**Print Psalm 23 at the end of this post OR write it with a marker in the middle of a large piece of paper** (on the inside of a paper bag opened flat or on the back side of some wrapping paper). This is a lot of words. Plan ahead so it will all fit 😊.

It is possible to worship together without **singing** at all. But if your family sings together, decide before worship what you will sing. Sing whatever songs about Jesus and God your family knows. If you have a hymnal, look up "God" or "Jesus" or "Praise God" in the topical index to find familiar hymns. Today look up Psalm 23 in the scripture index to find any Psalm 23 songs you know well enough to sing together. If you have instrument players, choose the songs enough ahead that they can practice and play along as you sing. If you have recorded music, sing along with your favorite singer.

## WORSHIPING GOD TOGETHER

### CALLING YOURSELVES TO WORSHIP

Keep it simple and repeat it each week. It becomes a way to say we are getting started now. Either a leader or everyone says,

***“Come, let us worship God together.”***

### SINGING FOR GOD AND JESUS

Sing one or more songs of happy praise that you selected as you prepared to worship together.

### TELLING GOD WE ARE SORRY AND HEARING THAT GOD FORGIVES

A parent reminds the family that each one of them have things they need tell God they are sorry about, maybe from the last week, maybe from a long time ago. Allow a full minute of silence for everyone to close their eyes and talk to God about the ways they have messed up.

The same parent then says, ***“Look at me. God promises us that whenever we mess up and are truly sorry, God forgives us. God always loves us no matter what. Because God loves us no matter what, we can love each other no matter what. So...”***

Then pass the peace as you do in the sanctuary if you are all healthy.

### HEARING AND EXPLORING THE WORD

The psalm for today is Psalm 23. This is a great chance for your family to read it together and unpack its meaning. Remember that many children have little experience with shepherds and so need help.

Try one or more of the following:

If you are all readers, read the psalm from the Bible together.  
If some of you do not read, ask a reader to do this job.

Read the psalm a second time from your poster. Stop at each shepherd word or phrase to put into your own words what a shepherd does.

Cut your Psalm 23 poster into as many puzzle pieces as there are people in your family. Cut across words and phrases. Give each person one puzzle piece. Work together to put the psalm back together. You may want to do this several times for fun, even leave it out where people can put together as the week goes on.

Instead of cutting your Psalm 23 poster into a puzzle, draw pictures of shepherds, sheep and people taking care of others like a shepherd around the edges. Post it somewhere you will see it often.

Make learning Psalm 23 a challenge for the week. Read it or say it together at least once each day. Work on memorizing it if you want.

When you finish your explorations, everyone says together,

***“This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.”***

### **OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND LOVE**

Do something together to share your love and God’s love. Try a different thing each week – unless you hit one you want to do again.

Write short notes and/or make cards for people who are shut away from you. Or, plan a Skype to one of them for later today. Think of friends you cannot visit or play with, people you will not see at church people who are working hard in their medical professions, etc.

Make coupons promising each other care while you are closed in together – “I will read you one story each day”

“I will play with the baby while you fix supper”

“I will set the table everyday”

When you finish say a brief prayer giving your gifts to God and sing whatever song you sing at offering time at church.

### **PRAYING FOR OURSELVES AND THE WORLD**

Invite family members to tell God about things the prayer leader will mention. In some families this will be eyes closed, taking turns to pray. In other families it will be eyes open and more like listing together what you want to say to God.

If you all know the Lord’s Prayer, conclude by praying it together.

Let us tell God what is hard and what makes us sad about this time with the virus.

*No sports, not seeing friends, not going to school, being stuck at home, etc.*

Let us ask God to help us with things that are hard for us.

*Patience when others are driving us nuts, kindness for each other, etc.*

Let us ask God to take special care of other people.

*Name individuals you are concerned about, pray for medical personnel, etc.*

Be with us all, God. Be our good shepherd and help us be good shepherds to others.

Amen.

**SING ANOTHER SONG *if you wish***

### **BENEDICTION**

Each member of the family says to at least one other person,

***“Go in peace. God loves you and I love you.”***

This may be done by going around the circle or with each member of the family saying it to every other member of the family.

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# Psalm 23

## (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> 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.