

Calvary Chapel  of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
SOCCER DEVOTIONS

10-17 year olds

Week 3

You are with Me

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The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Our lessons for our older age groups are designed to be more discussion-based. This section is for the coach to read ahead of time so that he/she understands the goal of the discussion and is able to direct the conversation.

Objective This study will look at how the Lord's presence with us helps us through difficult circumstances.

Scripture Passage:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. **Yea, 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.**"

Psalm 23:1-4 (verse 4 in **bold**)

Coaches Guide

As we've looked at Psalm 23's image of the Lord as our Shepherd, last week we focused on His guidance on the paths of righteousness. Today's verse emphasizes His role as protector of His sheep.

Verse 4 pictures the sheep journeying through a place called "the valley of the shadow of death." Just from the name, we can tell that this is a scary place to be. It represents places of trial and difficulty in our lives. Your "valley of the shadow of death" could be the sickness of you or a loved one, stress at school or work, issues with a friend, depression, or any other difficult circumstance or challenge. This verse assumes that passing through this valley is something everyone experiences.

But despite going through the valley, the psalmist here declares that he will "fear no evil," because the Lord is with him. Even though sheep can't protect themselves, when the shepherd is with them they don't have to fear, because he will protect them. The shepherd's rod and staff offer further comfort, as they can be used to fight off predators. The same way, in the midst of our trials, we as Christians can take comfort in the fact that the Lord is right there with us, helping and protecting us. Our problem may be too big for us, but nothing is too difficult for Him to overcome.

Jesus doesn't promise that His followers will never face hard times. All of us go through difficulties in life. What He does promise is that He will always be with us to help us face those trials. He will never leave us, and He is able to deliver us from any problem. In our trials, we can take comfort in knowing He has not left us alone, but He is with us, helping us.

Team discussion gives questions to ask your team in order to discuss today's topic. Use the information from the coaches guide to steer the conversation toward the biblical truth.

"On the Field" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Field" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

Team Discussion

1. What does Psalm 23 compare the Lord to? In what ways have we learned that the Lord is like a shepherd this season?
2. What do you think the "valley of the shadow of death" means? What are some examples of difficult situations we may face in our lives?
3. What does the Psalm writer say his response is to these situations? Why is he not afraid?
4. Does the Lord promise that Christians will never face hard times? What does it promise instead? Why does that matter?
5. Share about a time when the Lord helped you in a difficult situation.

On the Field

- In a situation where you have a teammate or opponent who is unkind to you, the Lord can encourage you and help you to keep doing what's right.
- If you make a big mistake during your game and feel discouraged or embarrassed, remember that the Lord is still with you.
- Sometimes when you play soccer, you can get injured. God sees you when you are hurt, He knows what you're going through, He cares, and He can help you.

Off the Field

- When you find yourself in a situation where you are alone and afraid, remember the truth of Psalm 23:4, that the Lord is with you, helping and protecting you.
- Sometimes you may face problems with friends. People may let you down, but God never will. He will never leave you.
- Times of sadness and loss are difficult, but Jesus sees you when you cry and is there for you.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, Psalm 23:3. Give a ticket to anyone who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize Psalm 23:4 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. Ask if any of the players are going through a difficult situation right now. Pray for them as a team and encourage them with the truth that the Lord is with them.