

David is a Shepherd Boy

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Scene Summary

David is a shepherd boy presents the tender story of a boy, born into a shepherding family, learning to care for his father's sheep. Scenes include: David with young lamb...leading sheep to pasture...making a quiet drinking place in a stream...making a sling...practicing with his sling...rescuing a lamb from a lion...pouring oil on a lamb's scratches...resting and thinking about God.

Scripture

(1 Sam 17:12-15 NIV) Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was old and well advanced in years. {13} Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. {14} David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, {15} but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

(1 Sam 17:37 NIV) The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

(1 Sam 17:58 NIV) "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

(Psa 23 NIV) [A psalm of David] The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. {2} He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, {3} he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. {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. {5} You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. {6} Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play’s “catechist” or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Jesse** – David’s father, should be played as an older person.
- **Brother 1, 2** – David’s brothers, usually speak with some sarcasm to their younger brother.
- **David** – This player should be a younger person, always helpful and hard working.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.
- A staff and sling for David.

Script – David is a Shepherd Boy

Narrator: The brothers crowded around to see the new baby.

Jesse: [proudly] His name is David.

Narrator: Jesse looked at his sons. Eliab was a fine man. Amanda and Shema were grown up also. David's father owned many sheep. As David grew up, he loved to play with the little lambs. Perhaps he had a special, pet lamb that stayed near the house. One day, when David was bigger, he asked his brothers a question.

David: May I go with you to take care of the sheep?

Brother 1: [softly] No, you are too small. When you are old enough and big enough, you can come with us.

Narrator: One day, the brothers let David take the sheep out all by himself.

Brother 2: [cautiously] Don't go too far. Watch for snakes and wild animals. Be sure to start back before it gets too dark.

Narrator: David was glad that he was old enough to take care of his father's sheep. He carried his club to drive off wild animals. He carried a staff to help the sheep. He led the flock to a field of juicy green grass. [pause] As David grew older, he was allowed to take the sheep farther from home. At noon he always found a slow moving stream of clear water so that the sheep could have a refreshing drink of cool water. Then he would let the sheep rest. [pause] One day, David made a sling. He braided two cords and tied them to a small piece of sheep's skin. David looked at the sky, the stream and the trees; everything was wonderful.

David: The earth is the Lord's. God made it all.

Narrator: Sometimes David had to lead the sheep along rocky places. Slowly and carefully he walked. He watched for wild animals that might be hiding behind rocks or caves. Then they came to a grassy place. While the sheep ate, David practiced using his sling. Everyday he practiced and practiced until he could sling a stone exactly where he wanted. [pause] One noon, David led the sheep to a stream for a cool drink. The water was running so fast that the sheep were afraid to drink.

David: [to himself] I will pile some rocks in the stream and make a small, quiet pool for the sheep to drink.

Narrator: [excited] Another day, a lion sneaked into the flock and grabbed a young lamb. Quickly David ran after the lion and hit him with his club. The lion dropped the lamb and David killed the lion.

David: [tenderly to the sheep] I will carry you to a shady spot and put oil on your cuts made by the lion's sharp teeth. This will make the cuts stop hurting and it will make them get well quickly.

Narrator: Soon the lamb was sound asleep. David was glad that he saved the lamb. He was glad that he was strong and could take care of the sheep.

David: [to himself] God takes care of me, just like I take care of my father's sheep.

Narrator: Sometimes, when David thought of God, he would make up a song about him. Then he would play his harp and sing to God.

David: [singing] The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything that I need.

Narrator: David thought about God often.

David: Thank you God for helping me take care of the sheep. Thank you God for taking care of me.

The End

Supplemental Information

David's father, like many other Hebrew men owned many sheep and other animals. The sheep's hair was cut off once a year, spun into thread, woven into cloth and made into clothes for the family.

A man bought the things he wanted by exchanging things of equal value, such as food for lamb's wool. They traded things instead of using money. Because sheep were so valuable, the father and sons usually cared for the sheep themselves. If a man had large flocks, there would be servant to help care for them also.

Taking care of the sheep was not an easy task. The shepherd led the sheep far out into the hills to find just the right grass for food. The shepherd would carry a club made out of hard wood, with a fist size knob on one end. With this, the shepherd would fend off wild animals such as bears or wolves. Sometime the shepherd would use the club to kill snakes that could bit the sheep as they nibbled the grass.

As the shepherd walked ahead of the sheep, he would use the crook of his staff to push aside the tall grass to look for snakes. The shepherd also looked for a poisonous weed that would make the sheep sick if they ate it.

A simple, but very important piece of equipment that the shepherd carried was a sling. From strong, supple leather a rectangular piece would be cut. As the sheep brushed against thorny branches, the thorns would pull off tufts of wool. The shepherd would gather these bits of wool and put them into a bag. Then, when there was enough, the shepherd would twist the wool into long threads. Then several threads were twisted together, and finally the yarn was braded together into two strong cords. One end of each of the cords was securely tied to each side of the leather strip. The sling was ready to use. A small, smooth stone would be placed in the leather piece, and then holding the other end of the cords, the shepherd would quickly twirl the leather pouch high above their head. At just the right time, the shepherd would let go of one of the cords and the stone flew with great force. Using a sling seems easy, but it takes months of steady practice to land a stone in exactly where it was supposed to go. A shepherd that was good with a sling could hit a mark up to 600 paces away.

The shepherd used the sling carefully and only for good purposes. If a sheep got too far behind the flock, the shepherd would sling a stone just behind the sheep. This reminded the animal to catch up with the others. Always the shepherd was careful not to hit the sheep with the stones. The shepherd also used the sling to frighten away or to sometimes kill wild animals, wolves and bears.

David and other shepherds walked many miles from home to find good grass for the sheep to eat. At noon, the shepherd would make sure to find a quiet stream where the sheep could drink. Sheep will not drink from fast running water. If the shepherd found a fast running river, then a small side pool had to be made using rocks to block the water, making a still pool at

the side. After drinking the cool water, the sheep liked to rest. David liked to play his homemade harp during this rest time. David liked to think about God. David often made up songs about God and songs about the world that God had made.

Sometimes the shepherd and the sheep would be far from home at nighttime. The shepherd would look for a dry cave or a sheepcote where they would be safe for the night. Building a wall of stone, rectangular and about 4 feet high made a sheepcote. Many sheepcotes were built in the hills for the shepherd's use. The doorway to a sheepcote was narrow so that only one sheep could enter or leave at a time. As the sheep entered the sheepcote they were counted. The shepherd would examine the animal for cuts or bruises. From an ox horn, the shepherd would pour soothing oil on the sheep's cuts to help them heal.

Extra Time

Sometimes David stayed in the hills all night with his father's sheep. He would guide them, one by one, into a sheepcote.

Children will enjoy making a sheepcote and sheep for the classroom. Make a sheepcote from a shoebox. Cut a 1-1/2 inch door in one side. Mix together two cups of salt and two cups of flour. Add water to make stiff dough. Divide the dough into two parts. Into one half, add a little more water to form soft dough. Spread this on the outside of the shoebox. Make small, uneven balls from the stiff dough to represent stones. Stick these into the walls of the sheepcote while dough is wet. Or press small stones into the walls. After several days, the sheepcote will be dry enough to paint, if you wish.

For each sheep, you will need two balls of cotton, five toothpicks, and one sheep's face. Make a face by tracing a sheep's head on a sheet of paper. Transfer your pattern to white construction paper. Push one toothpick through the centers of two cotton balls to hold them together. Then add the other toothpicks as feet. If toothpicks are too long, break off the ends. Glue head to body. Several children may work together on the sheepcote, while others can make sheep.