



BEAR
HUG 13

The Good Shepherd Is With Us in Scary Times

Make It Stick: Psalm 23:4: ... *I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* (Short version is in bold.)

The Big Buzz: Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We do not have to be afraid because He loves us and promises that He is always with us.

HONEY FROM THE COMB

Read: Psalm 23; John 10:11-15; Psalm 56

Memorize: Psalm 23:4

Did you know that there are over 365 verses in the Bible that deal with the issue of fear? That's more than one verse for each day of the year! Each of us faces fear, especially your little Cubbies. We know that we are not *supposed* to fear, but how can we stop the anxiety in stressful situations?

Psalm 56:3 and 4 offer hope: *Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word) ...* When we face moments of fear, we have a solution: we can trust God and rejoice in His Word! We can remember verses like Psalm 23:4 and rejoice that our Good Shepherd is always with us. We can rejoice that peace is already ours in Christ (John 16:33). We can rejoice that nothing separates us from God's love, and He works all things together for good (Romans 8:28-39). What other verses can help you praise God in times of anxiety?

Preschool children have many fears: dogs, the dark, loud noises, monsters, the bathtub drain, doctor's visits, and separation from Mom or Dad. When a child shares a fear, don't lecture with logic or try to talk him out of it. Rather, listen and let him know you understand how it feels to be afraid. Ask the child if he can think of ways to help him feel less afraid. For example, maybe he could hold his dad's hand when he walks by the dog or keep a flashlight near his bed at night. Suggest that he can also pray and remember Psalm 23:4. His Good Shepherd is with him and He loves him very much!

TASTE AND SEE!

Cubbies need to *taste and see* that the LORD is good (Psalm 34:8)! Pray that the Holy Spirit would work through this lesson so Cubbies:

1. Review that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and we are His sheep when we trust Him as Savior.
2. Identify and discuss situations that make them feel scared.
3. Learn the ways the shepherd used his staff and rod to rescue, protect and count his sheep.
4. Know that Jesus loves them and is always with them.
5. Name practical ways to remember to trust in Jesus when they feel afraid.

6. _____

(Add a goal the Holy Spirit brings to your mind and heart as you pray for Cubbies.)



COMING IN

(10-15 minutes before club officially starts)

IDEA 1: Shepherd's Staff

What You Need

- Pipe cleaners
- Brown and tan pony beads

Cubbies can each make a shepherd's staff by threading pony beads onto a pipe cleaner. Encourage older Cubbies to make color patterns with the beads. Help Cubbies fold a small portion of the pipe cleaner over the first and last beads to keep all the beads in place. Show Cubbies how to curve the top of the pipe cleaner to make the staff shape. Ask if anyone knows why a shepherd needs a staff. Explain that a shepherd sometimes touches the sheep with his staff to show them where to go. The shepherd uses the hook of his staff to pull the sheep away from danger. Recite Psalm 23:4 together.

NOTE: Supervise Cubbies carefully around pony beads. Small objects can become a choking hazard.

IDEA 2: Don't-Be-Scared Bags

What You Need

- Several paper lunch bags
- Objects or pictures that represent fears of children (e.g., toy snake, picture of a roller coaster or storm, clown nose or mask, toothbrush from the dentist's office, picture of a child alone)

Insert one object or picture into each lunch bag. Set the bags on a table. Let Cubbies take turns choosing a bag and pulling out the item inside. Talk about each item. For example, if a Cubbie pulls out the picture of a child alone, ask the group: Are you afraid to be alone? Why? When have you been alone? What can you do when you are alone to make you feel less afraid? Help Cubbies think of practical solutions to ease their fears. For example, when they are afraid, they can pray, sing "Jesus Is With Me" (see Songs section) or recite Psalm 23:4. The items in the bags can also be used during Lesson Time.

IDEA 3: Sheep and Wolf Masks

What You Need

- Sheep and wolf masks printed on card stock (resource CD)
- Scissors for leaders' use
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- Crayons
- Clear tape
- *Optional* — Mount each mask to a jumbo craft stick instead of using yarn. Cubbies can glue cotton balls on the sheep mask.

Beforehand, cut out each mask, including the eye holes. Let each child choose a wolf or a sheep mask to color. After Cubbies finish coloring, leaders punch holes in the sides of the mask (reinforce with tape) and thread yarn through the holes to fit the mask around the Cubbie's head. The masks can be worn during Play Time or Going Home.

IDEA 4: Build a Sheep Pen

What You Need

- Blocks, rocks or Lincoln Logs®
- Toy sheep or white, brown and black pom-poms
- Toy wolf or gray pom-pom (or toy bear or lion)
- *Optional* — green felt squares, blue felt circles, stand-up wolf and sheep and shepherd figures from prior lessons (resource CD)

Let Cubbies use blocks or other materials to build a sheep pen. Give them toy or pom-pom sheep and tell them to count the sheep and place them in the pen. Cubbies can pretend they are the shepherd and name the sheep, take them out to green pastures (felt squares) and still waters (felt circles). They can protect their sheep from predators or pretend a sheep gets lost.

STARTING TIME (3-5 minutes)

Continue your starting routine. Include the "Cubbies Song," Cubbies key verse and motto, unit Core Truth: Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the A and C verses, along with your favorite visuals, songs and motions.

PUPPET SHOW

(3-5 minutes)

What You Need

- Cubbie Bear puppet
- *Optional* — flashlight, blanket or sheet, two chairs

(Set up two chairs near the puppet area, which another leader will use later to make a tent with the blanket or sheet.)

LEADER: Boys and girls, let's call our friend, Cubbie Bear! Ready? One — two — three. CUBBIE!

(Bring the Cubbie puppet into view. Move his head from side to side as if he is looking for something.)

LEADER: Hi, Cubbie! *(Cubbie Bear doesn't respond. He keeps looking around.)* Cubbie, is something wrong?

CUBBIE (in a fearful voice): I-I was j-just ch-checking to make sure everything was OK. B-boys and girls, have you h-heard a loud, s-scary noise?

LEADER: No. We haven't heard any loud or scary noises here, have we, Cubbies? *(Encourage response from Cubbies.)*

CUBBIE: Oh, OK. I feel better now. Yesterday Timothy and I heard a scary noise, and I don't like scary noises.

LEADER: Can you tell us what happened, Cubbie?

CUBBIE: Timothy wanted to go camping with his family, but it was raining outside. So Timothy's mom said he could make a tent and camp in his room. Timothy asked me to come along too! I've never been camping before, but it sounded like fun!

LEADER: Camping IS a lot of fun!

CUBBIE: I packed two shiny red apples for a snack and hurried into Timothy's room. Timothy even had a flashlight for us!

(If you brought a flashlight, hold it up now.)

LEADER: Cool! Did you make a tent?

CUBBIE (nodding his head): Yes, we made a tent with a sheet and two chairs. As soon as it was dark, we climbed into the tent. I ate my apples

while Timothy made funny shadows on the wall with his flashlight.

(Ask another leader to make a tent by draping a sheet over the two chairs you set up. If you are using a flashlight, dim the lights, point the flashlight at a wall or the ceiling and shine it off and on.)

CUBBIE: We were having so much fun, but then we heard a strange noise. It sounded like something was scratching on the door.

LEADER: Did you know what it was?

CUBBIE (acting fearful again): No, but I was really, REALLY scared. I thought it was a tractor at the door. Tractors have big wheels that scare me!

LEADER: Hmm ... I don't think a tractor would scratch at the door. And I'm SURE Timothy's dad wouldn't drive the tractor in the house!

CUBBIE: Yes, you're right. But I was still scared. Then Timothy decided to go to the door and see what it was.

LEADER: Wow, Timothy is a brave boy! What was it?

CUBBIE: Well, I'm not supposed to tell you this week. The Cubbies need to read the story in their handbook at home. But I WILL say that it wasn't very scary at all!

LEADER (sighing with relief): Whew! That's good.

CUBBIE: But I still don't like scary noises. Are you sure you haven't heard any scary noises here tonight?

LEADER (looking at Cubbies): No, we haven't heard any scary noises, have we, Cubbies? *(Allow response.)*

CUBBIE (sighing with relief): Well, that's good to know. I'll go and tell Timothy everything is OK.

LEADER: OK, Cubbie. We'll see you next time!

(Have children say goodbye as the Cubbie Bear puppet is put away.)

SNACKS (5-10 minutes)

Snacks are optional and can be done at any time during the club meeting.

IDEA 1: Shepherd's Rods**What You Need**

- 24 large pretzel rods
- 24 ounces of milk chocolate chips or white chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Microwave
- Spoon
- Wax paper
- *Optional* — sprinkles

Place chocolate chips in a bowl and microwave on high for 1 minute. Remove from microwave and stir. Chips will melt as you are stirring. If necessary, microwave for 15 more seconds.

Lay out a sheet of wax paper for finished pretzels. Dip one pretzel into the melted chocolate. Use a spoon to spread the chocolate about half-way. Twist the pretzel to let the excess chocolate drip off. Lay pretzel on wax paper and shake sprinkles on top. Repeat until you have coated all pretzels. Let dry completely.

When you serve the Cubbies, talk about ways the shepherd used his rod and staff to protect, count and guide sheep.

IDEA 2: Sheep and Shepherd's Staff**What You Need**

- White and/or brown cereal puffs to represent sheep
- Marker
- Pretzel sticks to represent the shepherd's rod
- Resealable snack bags
- Index cards

Place snack in bags along with an index card with the child's name written on it. Encourage each child to look for his name. Remind Cubbies that Jesus knows each of them by name.

SONGS (3-5 minutes)

Songs can be done before or after Lesson Time.

SING:

- **“The Shepherd Knows His Little Lambs”** to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (from prior weeks). Add this new verse:

The Shepherd calls His little lambs,
Little lambs, little lambs.

The Shepherd calls his little lambs,
They follow and obey.

• **“If You're Scared and You Know It”**

to the tune of “If You're Happy and You Know It”

If you're scared and you know it, hide your eyes.
(Cubbies look fearful and cover eyes with hands.)

If you're scared and you know it, hide your eyes.
(Cubbies cover eyes again.)

If you're scared and you know it, that's not the way you show it!

If you're scared and you know it, say your verse.

Lead kids in reciting Psalm 23:4. Then add new song verses, such as “If you're sad and you know it, cry boo-hoo” or “If you're mad and you know it, stomp your feet.” Replace “say your verse” with other positive faith actions, such as “trust the Lord” or “you can pray.”

PRAYER (1-2 minutes)

(Use this time to intentionally model and teach Cubbies the basics of prayer.)

Cubbies need to understand that Jesus is with us, helping us to be brave — not that He'll always protect us from scary situations. What if a mean dog escapes and nips the child's leg? What if a Cubbie's family has a car accident? What if a grandpa dies? Did God forget to protect that day? God doesn't promise us immunity from bad things (John 16:33; Romans 12:12), but He does promise to be with us and help us *through* all things. Here is a way you could lead Cubbies in prayer:

Cubbies, if we trust in Jesus as our Savior, then He is our Good Shepherd. That means that He is ALWAYS with us, no matter what. Sometimes things happen that cause us to be afraid, but we can pray and ask Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to help us not be afraid. Is there anything that you are afraid of? Can we pray for you to not be afraid? *(If Cubbies choose to share something, pray for those children by name and ask God to help Cubbies remember that He is always with them.)*

LESSON TIME (15-20 minutes)

What You Need

- Teaching Cards (TC) 53-54, 58-59
- Bible a bookmark placed at Psalm 23:4
- *Optional* — cane to represent a staff, a thick stick or baseball bat to represent a rod (crinkle and secure a brown paper grocery bag over the top of the stick or bat so the top looks thicker, like a club), bathrobe, wolf mask (resource CD), a bag filled with items that represent fears of preschoolers (e.g., a picture of a storm or a child alone, a toy doctor's kit, a toy dog, a toy insect, a loud buzzer or timer)

(Adapt the words of this lesson so it fits you and your Cubbies. Open with prayer.)

Cubbie Bear and Timothy had fun when they were camping in their tent, but then they heard a scary sound! Cubbies, have *you* ever been afraid of a sound or something else? What happened? *(Let Cubbies share. Some may share about a scary thunderstorm, an insect or a barking dog, an imaginary monster under their bed, etc.)*

Did you know that even adults can be afraid sometimes? *(Briefly share a time when you were nervous or scared. Make sure your example is not too scary for Cubbies. Also, stay positive by sharing how things turned out alright or how you overcame your fear.)*

(Display TC54.) We don't have to be afraid, because **Jesus is the Good Shepherd**. When we trust in Jesus as Savior, we become just like His little sheep. Like a shepherd loves each sheep, Jesus loves each one of us. He takes care of us, like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

(Open your Bible to Psalm 23:4 and display TC58.) From the Bible, we learn that sometimes a shepherd had to lead his sheep through a dark valley. I'm sure the sheep heard some scary noises in the valley, but they didn't have to feel afraid because their shepherd was with them.

Their shepherd always kept his staff in his hand. A staff looks like a long pole with a hook on the end. *(If you are using a cane as a staff, hold it up now.)* If a sheep got too close to the edge of a hill, the shepherd could use the hook of his staff to gently pull the sheep back to safety. *(Point to the sheep being rescued.)*

The shepherd ALWAYS watched over the sheep to keep them safe from danger. Do you see anything in the picture that could hurt the sheep? *(Let a Cubbie come up and point to the wolf in the picture.)*

(Hold up your rod prop if you have it.) Shepherds would also carry a rod, which looked like a thick stick. *(Display TC59.)* If a wild animal, like a wolf, came to attack the sheep, the strong shepherd would use his rod to fight off the wolf. Other times he threw his rod at the wolf to scare the wolf away. The shepherd would do ANYTHING to keep his sheep safe. He would even get hurt or die if he had to, to save his sheep. He loved His sheep so much!

Optional: Beforehand, mark off an area of the floor with tape. To begin the activity, choose one child or leader to be the wolf. To keep children from being scared by the wolf, let the other children see him put on the wolf mask (from resource CD) and go to a hiding spot. Put on a bathrobe and pretend to be a shepherd. Carry the staff and rod as props. Tell Cubbies to pretend to be your sheep. They can crawl around on their hands and knees, staying within the marked tape lines, and pretend to eat grass, drink water from a stream or sleep under a tree. Tell them that you will make sure the wolf does not come near them. If a sheep moves over a tape line, gently tap her with the end of your staff to direct her back behind the line. The wolf can keep trying to sneak out from his hiding spot, but when you see him and hold up the rod, he must run back to his hiding space.

(Display TC53.) At the end of the day, the shepherd would use his rod to count the sheep as they moved back into their pen. He made sure no

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sheep was lost. Can you help me count the sheep in the picture? (**Count the four sheep with Cubbies.**)

(Prepare to read Psalm 23:4 from your Bible.)

Our verse this week talks about the shepherd's rod and staff, and it reminds us of our Good Shepherd, Jesus. Let's say our verse together. Psalm 23:4: ... *I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

(Repeat the verse twice with Cubbies.) This verse reminds us not to fear, which means not to be afraid. We don't have to be afraid, because Jesus is ALWAYS with us.

Sometimes scary things happen. A dog might bite. A bee might sting. You might get lost from your mom and dad for a little while in the store. But when these things happen, what can you do to remember that Jesus loves you and He is with you? (**See if Cubbies have any suggestions. They may surprise you with their insight!**) You can pray and ask Jesus to help you. You can also say our Bible verse out loud to yourself or say, "Jesus is with me!" (**Direct children to stand and repeat either "Jesus is with me!" or the short version of the memory verse a couple of times.**)

Let's pray and thank Jesus, our Good Shepherd, for loving us and being with us always. We never have to be afraid! (**Close in prayer.**)

Optional: Suggest that Cubbies could also sing the following song whenever they are afraid. Sing these words together to the chorus of "Jesus Loves Me."

*Jesus is with me. Jesus is with me.
Jesus is with me wherever I may go!*

Optional: Choose different Cubbies to each pull out an item from your bag. Discuss how that item might represent something that would be scary to them. For example, if a child pulls out the toy doctor's kit, ask them if they ever feel scared when they go to the doctor. Ask them to suggest ways to help them feel less scared. For example, they can think about all the fun books to read in the doctor's waiting room, they could bring their favorite

stuffed animal or they could hold onto Mom while the doctor checks them. If practical, let them act out some of their solutions. After discussing and (or) acting out each situation, have the Cubbies call out, "Jesus is with me!"

Optional: Let Cubbies take turns acting out the lesson with the stand-up figures (resource CD). Include all the figures used in prior lessons and the wolf figure. If desired, make several sets of figures.

HANDBOOK TIME

(15-30 minutes)

Give each handbook group leader a copy of Bear Hug 13 Handbook Leader Sheet from the resource CD.

Bear Hug 13 Activity Sheet

What You Need

- Copy of Bear Hug 13 Activity Sheet for each Cubbie
- Crayons
- *Optional* — construction paper, glue sticks, tube of non-toxic glow-in-the-dark glitter paint

Let Cubbies color the picture. Ask them if they ever feel scared when they are in their rooms at night. Remind them that they can pray or look at their Bible like the boy in the picture is doing. Jesus is always with them, so they don't have to be afraid. As a fun option, let Cubbies mount the sheet on construction paper and squeeze glow-in-the-dark paint on the moon and some stars. Cubbies can hang the picture in their rooms as a reminder that Jesus is watching over them.

NOTE: Additional idea for Handbook Time idea is on the Bear Hug 13 Handbook Leader Sheet.

PLAY TIME (15-20 minutes)**IDEA 1: Target Practice****What You Need**

- Stuffed toy lions, wolves and bears
- Beanbags or tennis balls

Set up animals at a distance from Cubbies. Tell them to pretend they are shepherds and their job is to guard the sheep from any animals that could hurt the sheep. Explain that shepherds would sometimes throw their rods at a wolf, bear or lion to scare them away. Let them take turns throwing beanbags at the animals to see if they can hit them and knock them over.

IDEA 2: Wolf and Sheep Tag**What You Need**

- Nothing
- *Optional* – mark off a sheep pen on the floor made with blue painter's tape

All Cubbies stand on one side of the play area and pretend to be sheep. A leader plays the wolf. The wolf stands in the middle of the room. When the wolf says, "Run, sheep, run!" all sheep must run across the room or to a designated sheep pen, trying to avoid being tagged by the wolf. Sometimes the wolf may specify certain Cubbies to run, using their names or descriptions. For example, the wolf could say, "Emily, Caleb and Will, run, sheep, run!" or "All boy Cubbies, run, sheep, run!" If the wolf tags a sheep, that sheep becomes a wolf also. Repeat the game until all (or most) of the sheep are tagged. The last sheep caught can become the first wolf in the next round.

IDEA 3: Shh, Shh, Sheep**What You Need**

- One blindfold

Divide Cubbies into two groups: sheep and wolves. A leader will be the shepherd. (In this game, it is best for a leader to be the shepherd rather than a Cubbie.) Remind Cubbies that a shepherd loved his sheep very much and one of

his jobs was to protect them from wild animals, like wolves. The shepherd will sit near one end of your play area, blindfolded or with eyes closed. The sheep will scatter in the same area and sit very quietly. The wolves will begin at the other end of the play area and quietly try to sneak up on the sheep. If the shepherd hears a wolf, he'll point to it. That wolf must return to the starting line. If a wolf tags a sheep, the wolves and the sheep switch roles, and the game begins again.

IDEA 4: What's the Time, Mr. Wolf?**What You Need**

- Nothing

A leader is Mr. (or Mrs.) Wolf and stands at one end of the play area with his back turned to Cubbies, who are standing at the opposite end. Cubbies repeatedly ask in unison, "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" Each time the question is asked, Mr. Wolf responds with a clock time, and Cubbies take the correct number of steps forward. For example, if Mr. Wolf says three o'clock, Cubbies take three steps forward. (Leaders may need to help Cubbies count their steps.) At some point, Mr. Wolf will respond, "Dinner time!" and he will turn around and chase the Cubbies back to the starting line. If Mr. Wolf tags a Cubbie, that child becomes the new Mr. Wolf for the next round.

GOING HOME (5-10 minutes)

As Cubbies wait for parents to arrive, have some fun with shadows. Dim the lights in the room, without darkening the room completely. Shine a bright lamp or flashlight on a blank wall and let Cubbies experiment with what happens when they block part of the light with their bodies. Ask questions such as "What happens when you move closer to or farther away from the wall? What happens when you turn sideways? Can you and a friend combine your shadows to make one shape?" Let them use props found in the room to create different shadow shapes on the wall. Remind Cubbies that even in the dark, Jesus is with us. We don't need to be afraid.

**... I will fear no evil; for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
(Psalm 23:4)**

NAME: _____



Basic Instructions: Color the picture. Do you ever feel scared in your room at night? If you do, you can pray or look at your Bible like the boy is doing in the picture. You could also say your verse, Psalm 23:4. Remember, Jesus is with you always. You never have to be afraid!

Even More Fun: Cut out the picture along the border and use glue to mount it to a sheet of construction paper.

Ultimate Fun: Squeeze glow-in-the-dark paint on the moon and some stars. Hang the picture in your room at night to remind you that Jesus is watching over you.