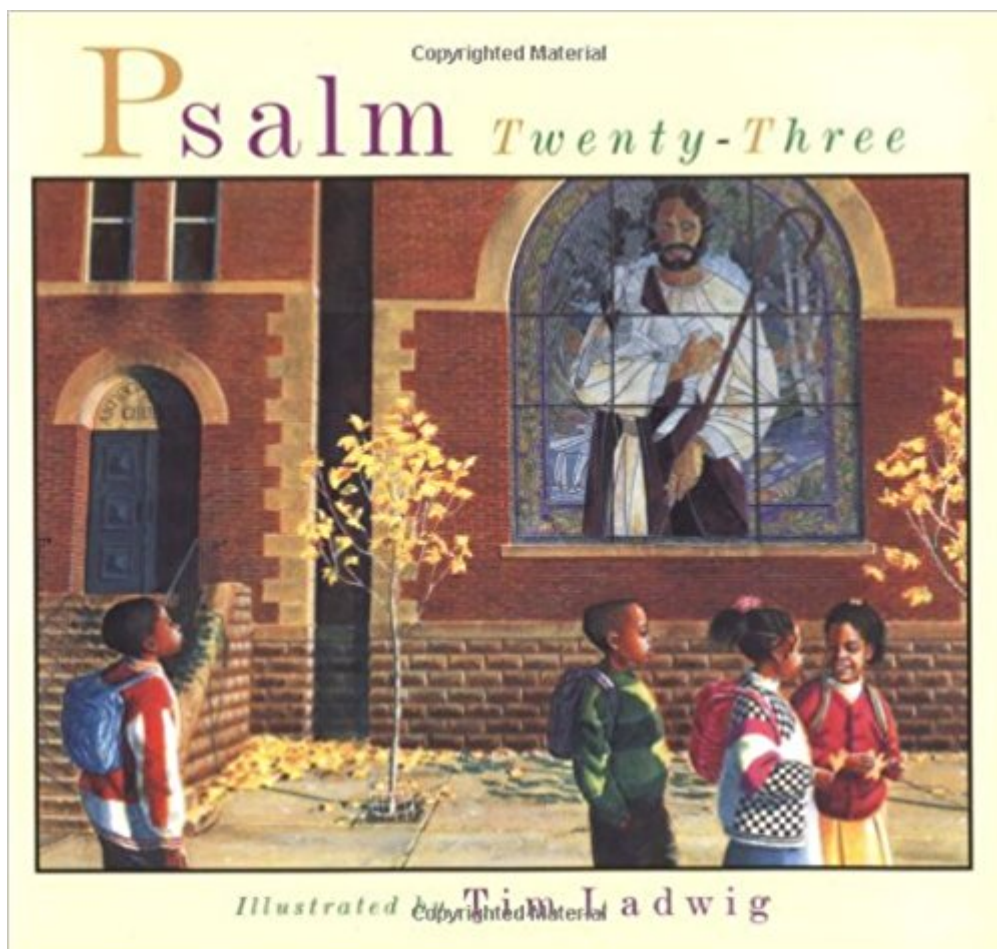


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# Psalm Twenty-Three



## Synopsis

Through poignant, heart-warming images of an urban African-American family, children experience the comfort and encouragement this favorite psalm still offers — the powerful message that they can rely on the Lord as they thread their way through the risk-filled maze of daily life in the city.

## Book Information

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (September 30, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802851630

ISBN-13: 978-0802851635

Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #107,595 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Sacred Writings > Hebrew Bible \(Old Testament\)](#) #79 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Tribal & Ethnic](#) #117 in [Books > Children's Books > Religions > Christianity > Bible > Stories](#)

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

Ages 4-8. The love, fear, and faith of one of the most beautiful psalms find expression in a picture book set in a contemporary urban neighborhood. Glowing, realistic paintings of two African American children in a warm extended family illustrate the lines of the psalm, taking the kids through one day from early morning to night. The children wake in a joyful, loving home ("The Lord is my shepherd"); have fun with their friends in the playground; receive devoted attention from their teachers ("He guides me in paths of righteousness"); and return to food and shelter ("You prepare a table before me"). But the scene is bleak. They must walk to school and back through "the valley of the shadow of death," where menacing figures lounge in wait in shadowy, crowded streets. While they eat dinner in the light, the darkness outside their window is filled with violence. The slightly modernized text is less poetic than the King James Version. The pages are so tightly bound that you miss part of the middle of each double-page-spread illustration, and that's too bad because the pictures make extraordinary use of light and perspective, showing that the children are being

watched with loving attention. In a final painting, they are asleep, the window above their bed transformed into a stained-glass vision of the Lord who is their shepherd. Hazel Rochman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

AWARDS and RECOGNITIONS  
• American Booksellers Association, • American Bookseller "Pick of the Lists" Booklist, • Top Ten Religion Books for Youth  
Parent's Guide to Children's Media, • Award Parent Council, Ltd., • Selected as Outstanding Booklist  
Notable for Ladwig's glowing, realistic paintings of two African American children who are part of a warm, extended family in a bleak, urban neighborhood. . . The pictures express the fears of everyday life and the love and faith of one of the most beautiful psalms."  
• Catholic Parent "Ladwig's beautiful illustrations depict God's grace in the day-to-day activities of the members of a loving African-American family amid the ever-present dangers of an inner-city neighborhood."  
• Christian Library Journal "Tim Ladwig's colorful, thought-provoking illustrations evoke new contemporary images and show Psalm 23 as fresh and relevant in today's world. This book brings a powerful message of hope, faith, and comfort into a new setting."  
• Cleveland Plain Dealer "This lovely, reassuring book makes visible the idea of community, good people acting together to make a safe place for the young."  
• Washington Parent "A beautiful book."

The illustrator of this book does a great job with the life like pictures. However, as an African American male who purchased this book for my children, I am not a fan of the pages that go along with "I will fear no evil....you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. I am a Christian and I am on staff at my church, but these words are coupled with pictures of African American males, therefore, depicting them as evil and enemies. I do know the scripture and respect the author (Jesus) and illustrator (Ladwig). In fact, I am a fan of both, but I feel that one has to be mindful of these dynamics when presenting books b/c there may be an unspoken or subliminal message...kind of like the books Dick & Jane, that depict the "American Dream" as only a Caucasian dream, since it displays no people of color.

I was introduced to this book by a friend from Church. What struck me was that the children in this book were of African descent. My son is white and married an African-American woman, so their children are interracial. Their parents teach Christian principals to their children and they love God's words. I am an art major and I was delighted by the beautifully illustrated book. My grandchildren

have many books but very few like this. It is wonderful to have both since there are many beautiful children of all colors. They teach them to love all people and this book helps them to feel that people of all races are God's creatures. This book brings it home to them. Congratulations for the fabulous book!

Tim Ladwig is the accomplished illustrator of numerous Christian-themed books. In "Psalm 23," Ladwig translates onto canvas the most famous Psalm of all, incorporating stirring paintings of African children in a loving family setting. Ladwig has applied the ancient rural setting of this Psalm to the modern urban world. No Pollyanna portraits, Ladwig combines the bleak nature of potentially menacing city life with the comfort of God's presence. The scenes are not so much "heavenly," as they are depictions of God's earthly provision through "Jesus with skin on"--loving parents, teachers, and other adults and extended family members. Reviewer: Bob Kellemen, Ph.D., is the author of "Beyond the Suffering: Embracing the Legacy of African American Soul Care and Spiritual Direction."

What a refreshing read of this psalm, with the beautiful and meaningful illustrations taking the words into an urban context. Not many of us live on farms anymore so the city scenes speak powerfully in a new day, even while the agrarian text continues to ring true.

I already owned a copy of this book, but ordered more to give as gifts. Primarily, I like the illustrations that go along with the phrases of the Psalm because they picture life in the city. For example, "streams of water" is a puddle in the street - this is a very good way to bring Ps. 23 to life for those who are living day to day in an environment where sidewalks, empty lots, crossing streets, etc. are most familiar. It goes through an example of a typical day for two children as they encounter different places and people and are ultimately and always cared for by their Shepherd. By reading it in a picture story format, one of our children had this Psalm in its entirety easily memorized at age 2.

Tim Ladwig's fresh new illustrations for this timeless Biblical Psalm are amazing. I love how he relates the Psalm to the every day life of inner city children. I used this book in my Sunday School lesson on Psalm 23. Even though my students are not from the inner city, the book still had a wonderful good affect on my class.

I'm a library person all the way, but every so often I find a book that I want to own... Psalm

Twenty-Three is one of those books. We first discovered it back when my kids, now in college, were in grade school. Tim Ladwig's sublime paintings capture the exact feel and atmosphere of every scene: the children's bedroom, the family kitchen, the playground, the classroom, the scary walk home. His paintings must be anointed, as they bring the meaning of this Psalm to vivid, relatable life. God's word is still fresh, and this book socks it home in a way any reader, of any age, can GET. I agree with all the points made by the other five-star reviewers here, and urge you to read their comments. I particularly like and agree with Robert Kellemen's statement: "The scenes are not so much "heavenly," as they are depictions of God's earthly provision through "Jesus with skin on"--loving parents, teachers, and other adults and extended family members." We're all called to minister to others and this book creates a desire to do just that, so thank you Tim Ladwig! P.S. By the way, you may have read that at age 8, Tim Ladwig lost an eye in an accident. With that in mind, notice the scenes of the Grandmother sewing an eye back on the stuffed lamb... that just gets me every time, along with the stained glass window at the very end. Oh my! Another one to knock your socks off: "This Is the Star" by Joyce Dunbar, with breathtaking illustrations by Gary Blythe. You'll see the Nativity with a new and startling clarity that I predict will fill you with joy!!

Representation matters! This book does a lovely job of juxtaposing an urban setting with the timeless peace of the 23rd Psalm. One of my all-time favorite children's books.

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