

God Redeems

Remember Verse


This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9

LESSON OVERVIEW

EXPLORE// 10 minutes

Option 1: Searching and Finding (for younger kids)

SUPPLIES

- Fake coins (3 per child, suggestion: chocolate coins) 
- Sheep and People cutouts*
- Scissors
- Bags (1 per child)
- Optional: stuffed animals, action figures/dolls (1 per child)

Option 2: Search-and-Rescue Obstacle Course (for older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Stopwatch
- Optional: firefighter helmets/hard hats (1 per child), rubber boots (1 pair per child), yellow raincoats (1 per child), ladder, “dummy” (supplies: long-sleeved adult male shirt, adult male pants, thread and needle, newspapers)

DISCOVER// 30 minutes

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image*
- Remember Verse animation*
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

Connect Activity:

Hide-and-Seek

SUPPLIES

- Connect Question image*
- Connect Activity image*
- Flashlight
- Coins (1–3)

The Big God Story

SUPPLIES

- Timeline image*
- Timeline animation*
- Bibles
- Optional: bags from EXPLORE

Worship as Response

SUPPLIES


- Party hats (1 per child)
- Streamers (24" per child)
- Image: “Amazing Grace” Lyrics*
- Upbeat, celebratory music (suggestion: “Jump Up,” TruWorship *You Are*)

RESPOND// 15 minutes

Reflect

“Fishing” for the Lost

SUPPLIES

- People cutouts*
- Bible
- Storage bin, large bowl, or other similar item
- String (6"–8" per child)
- Craft sticks (1 per child)
- Scissors
- Magnets (3–4 per child)
- Chocolate coins (1 per child) 
- Glue or tape
- Optional: construction paper (black), chalk (white), cotton balls, glue

BLESS// 5 minutes

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards*
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 10*
- Bible

Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

Customizable copy of Lesson 9 2018–19 Scope and Sequence TruStory How It Works Small Group Enhancements

At Home Weekly: Lesson 9

The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

LEADER PREP

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

My daughter and I scrambled around on our hands and knees in a pebbly cornfield looking for a wild kitten. The animal's meowing had caught our attention one evening while we were visiting my husband's family in Michigan. We could see the kitten from a distance, but as soon as we approached, she darted away into the cornfields. We set out milk and cat food, which she happily drank and ate. But as soon as we stepped too close, she hopped out of arm's reach.

My daughter, unlike me, was convinced we should continue after this cat. I tried to explain to her that in Michigan cats often lived in barns and fed on field mice. But still she responded, "This cat has no one to take care of her!"

So, an hour later, I was back out in the fields doing my best impression of a cat's meow. To my surprise, as I lay on my stomach facing this cat, she inched toward me. I meowed. The cat came closer. We played this game until the cat came near enough for me to grab her. A surprising sense of relief and accomplishment washed over me. This cat was beautiful, small, scared, and alone in this giant forest of cornstalks, and I had rescued her!

Through this experience, my daughter helped me to understand a very important characteristic of God. As logical as it might be for God to abandon me when I wander away from Him, He still pursues me by sending loving people and words from Scripture to remind me He loves me as His child. How powerful it is to know God rejoices when the lost are found, even after we've been running in the opposite direction! God redeems

Amy Palmerton
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

God rejoices when the lost are found. All of heaven rejoices because God redeems these found ones. In Luke 15, Jesus illustrates this point with three parables describing three situations—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The chapter begins by describing how the religious leaders grumbled about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. It then says, "Then Jesus told them this parable" (v. 3).

According to rabbinic scholar Jacob Neusner, of the 341 rulings of rabbinic tradition the Pharisees followed, 229 were related to "table fellowship." The Pharisees were fanatical about this issue. And the early church struggled with this issue (in the context of including Gentiles in the body of Christ) more than they struggled with anything else.

The Jewish Christian converts felt incredible pressure to stay faithful to the Jewish Law and their heritage. They felt the mandate to stay separate and distinct from the world more keenly in the realm of table fellowship and "breaking bread" with others than just about anywhere else. Sharing a table with others made a statement about your approval of them. Remaining separate from the unclean described much of how Jews operated in the ancient world. After much debate, this issue was eventually resolved for the early church by the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Through these three stories, Jesus taught about God's heart toward those who are lost and found. The Pharisees focused so much on the letter of the Law that they needed correction from Jesus about the spirit of the Law. They had also lost sight of how a faith community operates. Through both Jesus' actions of sharing "table fellowship" with the lost, as well as telling these three parables, He taught that God loves the lost and He is redeemer.

Support *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

Jesus commanded His disciples to see the lost as a harvest field: Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew

9:37–38). One way we can do this is by going on local and global mission trips. Another way is simply by developing relationships with people we know who have walked away from God or don't know Him yet. If someone comes to mind as you read this, pray for her. If you feel led, send a note to encourage her and communicate God's love for her. Sometimes the simplest gestures can speak volumes to a lonely heart. Let's pray that God would help us seek all those who are far from Him and, in the power of His love, help bring them into the fold of the faith community.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

EXPLORE//10 minutes




Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

In this EXPLORE, kids will have the opportunity to search and find items hidden around the room, go on a search-and-rescue mission, and explore the lives of firefighters—men and women who often search for those needing help.

Option 1: Searching and Finding (for younger kids)

SUPPLIES

- Fake coins (3 per child, suggestion: chocolate coins) 
- Sheep and People cutouts (see Resources)
- Scissors
- Bags (1 per child)
- Optional: stuffed animals, action figures/dolls (1 per child)

SET UP

If using the stuffed animals, dolls, or action figures, hide them around the room along with the coins. Otherwise, print the Sheep and People cutouts, cut them out, and hide those around the room along with the coins. Consider taping the coins underneath chairs and putting the cutouts (or stuffed animals, etc.) in drawers or on high shelves.

RELATE

As each child arrives, welcome him and give him a bag. Explain that you've hidden items including coins and cutouts of sheep or people (or stuffed animals and action figures) around the room. Tell kids they're on a mission to find the lost items! Invite each child to find one person cutout (or action figure), one sheep cutout (or stuffed animal), and three coins and place them in his bag. Optional: Have kids keep their found items to use as props during The Big God Story.

Be sure to help any kids who struggle to find the items. Consider having extra bags prepared in case a child can't find all the items. This way they can still participate during The Big God Story.

Option 2: Search-and-Rescue Obstacle Course (for older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Stopwatch
- Optional: firefighter helmets/hard hats (1 per child), rubber boots (1 pair per child), yellow raincoats (1 per child), ladder, "dummy" (supplies: long-sleeved adult male shirt, adult male pants, thread and needle, newspapers)

PREPARE AHEAD

Optional: If making the "dummy," sew the shirt to the pants and sew the bottoms of the pant legs closed. Stuff the pants and shirt with newspaper. Then sew the wrist and neck openings closed.

SET UP

Construct an obstacle course using chairs, the dummy (if using), and the ladder (if using). If possible, design the course so kids have to crawl on their hands and knees, climb up the ladder (you might place the ladder on the ground and have kids run through it without tripping), and drag the dummy (if using) to safety. If possible, consider going outside or to a playground and incorporate sliding down a pole and a slide as part of the course.

RELATE

Just like in the parables where the shepherd and woman went searching for what was precious to them, we are going to go on a search-and-rescue mission. And like the father who lost his son, God rejoices when His children safely come home. In this activity, kids will have an opportunity to go on their own search-and-rescue mission. Optional: Invite kids to dress up in their “gear” (boots, hard hat, and raincoat, if you have them). Explain that today they’re going to pretend they’re firefighters on a search-and-rescue mission by going through an obstacle course. (If you have the dummy, tell your kids that the goal is to get to the dummy and drag it to safety as fast as possible.) Have a leader demonstrate how to run through the obstacle course. Then have kids run the course one at a time. Have a leader time each child with a stopwatch and shout out her time at the end. After everyone gets a chance to run the course, allow kids to try it a second time and see if they can run through even faster.

LARGE GROUP

SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 minutes



Children participate in discovering God’s Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse animation (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure and celebrate when it’s complete.

This week’s Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that’s highlighted in today’s portion of The Big God Story.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9

Connect

QUESTION

Have you ever been lost? What was it like?

Activity: Hide-and-Seek

SUPPLIES

- Connect Question image (see Resources)
- Connect Activity image (see Resources)
- Flashlight
- Coins (1–3)

RELATE

Have kids sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one child to be “It.” Have It close his eyes and count to 20 while the others pass a coin around the circle. As It gets close to 20, have the child with the coin hide it in his hands, sit on it, or put it in his pocket. (Optional: Have It keep his eyes open while children pretend to pass the coin. Remind kids to keep their fists closed.) Once It finishes counting, he should try to guess who has the coin. He can ask questions, try to get other kids to give away the coin’s location, or look for other clues, but he can’t move from his seat. Once the child makes three guesses, reveal the location of the coin and play again. If It guesses correctly, the person hiding the coin is out. Play

until only two children remain. (Consider playing variations of this game by either choosing to have several small groups playing at once, passing around more than one coin, or having more than one It work as a team.)

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Luke 15:1–32

Storytelling Technique: Acting

God Redeems

SUPPLIES

- Timeline image (see Resources)
- Timeline animation (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Optional: bags from EXPLORE

SET UP

Ask some child and adult volunteers to act out the three parables you'll read today. If you did Option 1 of EXPLORE, have kids bring their bags.

RELATE

Today we've been talking about searching for something that's lost. Right now, I'd like you to turn to the person next to you and share a time you got lost. Describe how it felt, what you did, and who eventually found you. Pause for the kids to interact. Then choose one or two kids to share with the group, or consider sharing a personal story about being lost. **Being lost can be really scary and sad!**

What's a parable? Invite children to respond. **A parable is a story that tells us spiritual truths. Jesus used parables to teach people about God and His kingdom. Today we're going to hear parables about three people who lost something and how they rejoiced when they found it. Jesus told these three stories because He wanted the world to know that God redeems. What does *redeem* mean?** Invite responses. ***Redeem* means "to buy back."** **Before we go deeper, let's ask God to teach us.** Lead the children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

One day Jesus was preaching, and many people gathered to listen to Him. There were all types of people in the crowd—men and women, old and young, rich and poor. Jesus welcomed everyone to come to listen to His words. But some didn't like how Jesus welcomed everyone. These men were religious leaders called Pharisees. The Pharisees were very strict and believed everyone should follow the religious laws. In fact, some people who didn't follow the Law, such as tax collectors and sinners, were excluded from the Pharisees' faith community. So, when the Pharisees saw Jesus hanging out with the very people they excluded, the Pharisees started to complain and grumble. "Why does He hang out with those people?" they asked. They didn't understand that God redeems, that He buys back those who are far from Him—even tax collectors and sinners.

Jesus heard the Pharisees grumbling and told them three stories called parables. As we listen to these stories, think about what Jesus is teaching us. Let's hear His first story about the lost sheep. Invite the children to open their Bibles to Luke 15. Read the parable from Luke 15:3–7 while volunteers act it out.

The shepherd searched for the lost sheep, and when he found it, he rejoiced. Do you think the shepherd loved the sheep? Invite kids to answer. **He definitely did. Who do you think the shepherd represents in the story?** Interact with responses. **Right! God is like the shepherd. He rejoices when the lost are found! As we hear the next story, keep thinking about the big lesson Jesus was teaching.** Read the parable from Luke 15:8–10 while volunteers act it out.

Just like the shepherd searched for the sheep, the woman searched and searched for the lost coin. And when she found it, she rejoiced! Jesus told this story to help His listeners understand what God is like. What do you think the coin represents in the story? Allow kids to answer. **Right—it represents something precious to her, and we're precious to God!**

Read the parable from Luke 15:11–32 while volunteers act it out. **In this story, the father represents what God is like. Okay, now that we've heard all three parables, why do you think Jesus told these parables to the Pharisees? What do you think Jesus wants to teach us? Turn to your neighbor and talk about it.** Invite kids to talk to one another for a few minutes, answering the question. **Who would like to share his ideas?** Pause for kids to share with the whole group.

In the three stories, the lost sheep (if you did Option 1 of EXPLORE, have kids hold up their sheep cutouts or stuffed

animals), **the lost coin** (have kids hold up their coins), and **the lost son** (have kids hold up their people cutouts or action figures) **all represent things precious to those who lost them. Jesus told these stories to teach the Pharisees, and us, about God’s heart for the lost—people who don’t know Him. God wants to redeem them and buy them back so they become His children.**

God loves all people and wants them to know Him and be in a relationship with Him. Imagine you had three puppies and one wandered away and got lost. What would you do? Would you forget about the lost puppy, or would you make sure the two puppies were safe and then search for the lost one? Interact with their responses. **That’s right: You’d go in search of the puppy that was lost. What would you do when you found the puppy that had been missing?** Invite answer. **Yes, you would celebrate!**

When people who don’t know Jesus, also known as the lost, choose to trust and obey Him, God and His angels celebrate in heaven. Why? Interact with responses. **Good thinking. Because they once didn’t know God, but now they do! Those who were lost have been found. God has redeemed them and bought them back!**

Jesus told these stories to invite the Pharisees and us to join the celebration. Why should we celebrate? Because God redeems! So let’s rejoice! Share a personal story about a time when you rejoiced over a lost friend/family member who chose to follow Jesus.

Worship as Response

This time allows kids to respond to God through worship. Make plans for your worship time, but prepare yourself and your team to hold them loosely if the Holy Spirit leads the group in a different direction.

SUPPLIES

- Party hats (1 per child)
- Streamers (24" per child)
- Image: “Amazing Grace” Lyrics (see Resources)
- Upbeat, celebratory music (suggestion: “Jump Up,” TruWorship *You Are*)

RELATE

Hand out the party hats and streamers. **The shepherd, the woman, and the father all got so excited when they found what or whom they had lost! Because of this, they rejoiced! They called all of their friends and shared the good news. In the last parable, the father threw a huge party for his son to celebrate his return. God redeems. When the lost are found, God celebrates in heaven. He invites us to join the party and celebrate!**

Play an upbeat, celebratory song and allow your kids to jump, dance, clap, wave streamers, and sing their praises to God. Be sensitive to kids who may not yet have joined the faith community. Offer to talk with them about what it means to join God’s family. Afterward, come together as a group and read or sing the following verse from the hymn “Amazing Grace” by John Newton (*Tech: Cue “Amazing Grace” Lyrics image*). Before kids sing, explain to them that this is a famous hymn, or song, about how we can all rejoice, because without Jesus we’re lost—and through Him we’ve been found and redeemed.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

RESPOND//15 minutes

Children respond to what the Holy Spirit is teaching them as they reflect on the day’s portion of *The Big God Story*, engage in relationship, and create meaningful pieces of art individually or together.

Reflect: God Redeems

Encourage kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER KIDS

- **Why did Jesus tell these three parables?** Luke 15:1–3
- **What did the shepherd do when he realized one of the sheep was missing?** Luke 15:4
- **What did the woman do when she realized she was missing a coin?** Luke 15:8
- **What did the father do when his son returned home?** Luke 15:20
- **Why do you think the father forgave his son?** Luke 15:20–24, 32
- **How do you think the lost son felt when his father threw him a party?** Luke 15:21
- **Why do you think the friends of the shepherd, the woman, and the father celebrated with them?**
- **How has God redeemed you?**


QUESTIONS FOR OLDER KIDS

- **Why did Jesus tell these three parables?** Luke 15:1–3
- **What did the shepherd do when he realized one of the sheep was missing?** Luke 15:4
- **What did the woman do when she realized she was missing a coin?** Luke 15:8
- **What did the father do when his son returned home?** Luke 15:20
- **Why do you think the shepherd and the woman looked for their lost things?**
- **Why do you think the father forgave his son?** Luke 15:20–24, 32
- **How do you think the lost son felt when his father threw him a party?** Luke 15:21
- **Why do you think the friends of the shepherd, the woman, and the father celebrated with them?**
- **How has God redeemed you?**
- **What stories do you have of people who have been lost and then found in Jesus?** As leaders, model telling these stories by telling some of your own first.

“Fishing” for the Lost

In this game, kids “fish” for the lost by dangling their magnets into the “pool” of lost items and pulling them out.

SUPPLIES

- People cutouts (see Resources)
- Bible
- Storage bin, large bowl, or other similar item
- String (6"–8" per child)
- Craft sticks (1 per child)
- Scissors
- Magnets (3–4 per child)
- Chocolate coins (1 per child) 
- Glue or tape
- Optional: construction paper (black), chalk (white), cotton balls, glue

PREPARE AHEAD

Print and cut out the People cutouts. Tape or glue magnets to the chocolate coins and People cutouts. For younger kids, create fishing poles using sticks, string, and magnets. Tie the string to the stick, then glue or tie a magnet to the other end of the string.

RELATE

God often compares His people to sheep. What are sheep like? Encourage responses. **Sheep are animals that need a shepherd to guide and protect them. Sometimes sheep will wander off away from the flock. Some sheep might get stuck in a thorn bush, get caught between two rocks, or, even worse, be hunted by a wolf or lion! That’s why a good shepherd will go looking for the lost sheep. He knows a sheep can’t save itself.**

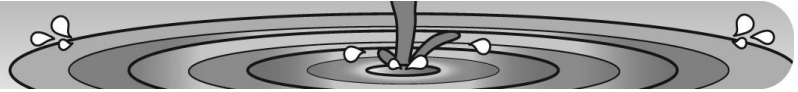
People are like sheep, and God is the Good Shepherd. Let’s read John 10:11–15. Read passage aloud. **What do these verses say about Jesus? What do they say about us?** Discuss passage of Scripture. **There are still many**

people who don't know God and aren't yet a part of the faith community. But God is good, and He is always ready to redeem those who are lost and far from Him. There might be times when we wander away from God's commandments, but God is always ready to seek us, redeem us, and bring us home.

After your discussion, play a fun game with kids during which they "fish" for the lost by dangling their magnets into the "pool" of lost items and pulling them out. Let the older kids make their own "fishing poles" by tying string to one end of a craft stick and gluing or taping a magnet to the other end. (Younger kids can use the poles you made earlier.) If kids want to create their own lost "sheep" to "fish" out, have them use the white chalk to draw a sheep on black construction paper and then glue cotton balls onto it. Have them glue a magnet to the back of each sheep and leave it to dry.

To make the game more difficult for older kids, give them longer lengths of string, or start a contest to see who can catch the most items in one minute, etc.

BLESS// 5 minutes



Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 10 (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage children to jump straight up and reach for the sky each time you say, "Rejoice." Practice a few times before reading Philippians 4:4–5:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

May you have God's heart for the lost. May you remember that God loves you and redeems you!

Send home Remember Verse cards and the At Home Weekly with your kids.