

May 5, 2024

Bible Passage: Luke 15:1–32
(Parables of the Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son)



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

CONNECT//
10 minutes



Feasting Together

SUPPLIES

- Food (chips and salsa, doughnuts, fruit, etc.) 
- Disposable plates, napkins, utensils, and cups (1 of each per child)
- Water

GATHER//
30 minutes



Remember Verse

Game: Clap a Word

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase marker

Storytelling

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions*

Discussion Questions

RESPOND//
15 minutes



Found-in-Him Words

SUPPLIES

- Word Group example*
- Fabric (solid color, 3')
- Fabric markers

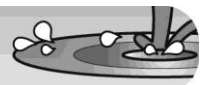
(Optional) Lost Coin

SUPPLIES

- Wide-mouth jars (2)
- Various items to fill the jars (e.g., buttons, dried beans, beads)

- Coins (2)
- Optional: stopwatch or timer

BLESS//
5 minutes



SUPPLIES

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

Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

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

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.

CONNECT//10 minutes




Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.

Feasting Together

Today you’re going to have a feast with your kids!

SUPPLIES

- Food (chips and salsa, doughnuts, fruit, etc.) 
- Disposable plates, napkins, utensils, and cups (1 of each per child)
- Water

SET UP

Fill the cups with water. Set out the food and supplies.

RELATE

CONNECT QUESTION: Welcome and greet children. Open your time by asking this question: **What’s the best thing you have ever eaten?**

Tell your kids that today you’re going to have a feast! Point out the food and encourage the children to eat while they talk about the questions below. If you have a small group, sit in a circle, ask the question, and allow each person in the circle to answer. If you have a large group, break the kids into groups of three to five and invite them to ask and answer these questions in their smaller groups.

- **Have you ever lost something important to you? Tell us about it.**
- **When was a time you ate some really bad food? What made it so bad?**
- **Where would be the worst place to be lost?**
- **When was a time you rejoiced with someone else?**
- **If you could have any animal as a pet, what would it be?**
- **Have you ever found some money? Where did you find it, and what did you do with it?**

GATHER//30 minutes



Children experience and learn more about God through prayer, storytelling from The Big God Story, an investigation into God’s Word, and creative ways to memorize Scripture.

Remember Verse

Each week children will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The 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

Game: Clap a Word

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase marker

SET UP

Write the verse on the board.

RELATE

Invite your group to look at the verse written on the board. Say the verse a few times together. Then ask for a volunteer. The volunteer will turn and face away from the verse. The kids facing the verse will slowly read it aloud. While (or before) they read it, the leader will point to a word, at which the kids will clap instead of saying the word. The volunteer not looking at the board will then have to guess which word was switched out with a clap. Play until each child has had a chance to guess the switched-out word.

Storytelling

Bible Passage: Luke 15:1–32

Storytelling Technique: Acting

God Redeems

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions (see Resources)

Script 1: Lost Sheep

- Lost Sheep Script (see Resources)
- Robe, sheet, rope (for a belt), pillowcase (for a headdress), sandals, or other Bible-times costume items
- Long stick (such as a yardstick) to act as a shepherd's staff
- Masking or painter's tape
- Optional: cotton balls (a few bags), shower caps (or disposable scrub hats, several), double-sided tape

Script 2: Lost Coin

- Lost Coin Script (see Resources)
- Robe, sheet, rope (for a belt), pillowcase (for a headdress), sandals, or other Bible-times costume items
- Coins (10)
- Broom

Script 3: Lost Son

- Lost Son Script (see Resources)
- Robe, sheet, rope (for a belt), pillowcase (for a headdress), sandals, or other Bible-times costume items
- Fake money

PREPARE AHEAD

Script 1: Lost Sheep

Print a copy of the script for yourself. Using masking or painter's tape, mark out a square on the floor, about four feet by four feet, to act as the sheep "pen." Optional: Use the double-sided tape to secure the cotton balls to the shower caps or disposable scrub hats, completely covering each hat.

Script 2: Lost Coin

Print a copy of the script for yourself. Place nine of the coins and the broom in the center of the room. Hide the remaining coin somewhere in the room.

Script 3: Lost Son

Print a copy of the script for yourself.

RELATE

Invite the children to join you in a circle. **Today we're going to have a very different type of Storytelling time. You're going to help me share this part of The Big God Story! But before we get started, let's stop and ask God to help us understand what He wants to teach us today.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

We're going to hear a few parables today: the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son. Through these three parables, Jesus taught about how God redeems. Redeem means "buy back." God wants each

person to be His child and to be a part of His family. We are all lost because of sin, but because Jesus is salvation, God can redeem us. God loves the lost and rejoices when we're found. Jesus used parables to teach this to His listeners, especially the Pharisees and tax collectors.

Okay, let's hear these parables! In order to tell them, I'm going to break you up into three groups. As I storytell today, I will come and stand by each group one at a time. When I stand by your group, I will ask some of you to act out what I describe.

Script 1: Lost Sheep

Go stand by group one. Ask one volunteer to be the shepherd and give that child the staff. Ask the rest of the kids to be sheep. (Optional: Give the sheep the cotton ball hats.) Then read the script and encourage the kids to act out the scene.

Script 2: Lost Coin

Go stand by group two. Ask one of the kids to act as the woman, and hand her nine coins and the broom. Also tell her where you hid the tenth coin earlier. Then read the script and encourage the kids to act out the scene.

Script 3: Lost Son

Go stand by group three. Choose three kids to act out the parts of the Older Son, the Younger Son, and the Father. Give the Father the fake money. Then read the script and encourage the kids to act out the scene.

After you've gone through each script, thank all the actors for their performances, and have everyone sit in one big circle.

God redeems the lost and the broken. Who are the lost? Invite responses. **All of us are, before we choose to trust in Jesus.** Take this opportunity to share a part of your own story. Tell the children about how you came to know and trust in Jesus and how your life is different because He redeemed you. **Each time a person chooses to know God and trust Him, we can celebrate that God redeems!**

Developmentally Speaking

Vague directions can be difficult and stressful for younger kids. Consider joining in the skits to help the kids feel safe as they "act out" the parables.

Discussion Questions

- **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
- **How have you seen God working in your life lately?**

RESPOND//15 minutes



Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond to God through creative activities and games.

Found-in-Him Words

Kids will put together a word group that represents the fact that they have been "found in" God.

SUPPLIES

- Word Group example (see Resources)
- Fabric (solid color, 3')
- Fabric markers

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the Word Group example. Using a fabric marker, write "God Redeems Us" at the top of the fabric. Lay the fabric on a hard surface such as a table or floor.

RELATE

God redeems us. He also created us to live in community and to experience Him together. We can rejoice every time someone new is "found in" (saved by) Him. Invite the kids to share ways they can rejoice together. Some ideas

could be to sing or dance together—or praise God together by shouting out ways they love Him, ways that He is good, etc. After the kids express ways the faith community could rejoice together, do those things!

God rejoices when lost people are found in Him. When we are “found in” God, that means we have put our faith in Jesus as our Savior. We have repented (turned away) from our sins and decided to follow Him with our whole lives. When we become “found in” (saved by) God, we become His sheep who know His voice and follow Him. If we stray from Him, He is always there to bring us back and redeem us.

Let’s take some time to create a representation of our thanks to God for being our Redeemer. Remain sensitive to children who may not have put their faith in Jesus as their Savior. Before you begin this time of creative response, give kids the opportunity to know God by choosing to put their faith in His Son.

Invite the kids to create a word group that represents the fact that they have been “found in” (saved by) God. Show the kids the printed word group example. Then invite the kids to write their names diagonal, sideways, upside-down, lengthwise, large, and/or small onto the fabric. When the kids finish, look at the word group and praise God that these children have chosen to put their faith in Jesus—and become “found in” (saved by) Him.

(Optional) Lost Coin

In this game, children will try to find a lost coin.

SUPPLIES

- Wide-mouth jars (2)
- Various items to fill the jar (e.g., buttons, dried beans, beads)
- Coins (2)
- Optional: stopwatch or timer

PREPARE AHEAD

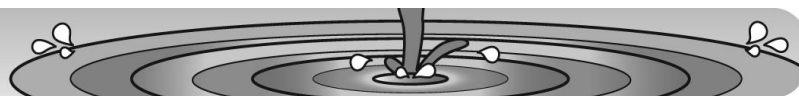
Fill up the jars with the various items. Put a coin in each jar, making sure they’re buried well among the items.

RELATE

Today we heard a parable that Jesus told about a woman who found one lost coin. What did the woman do when she found it? Invite answers. **Right. She rejoiced! Let’s play a game in which we also try to find a lost coin.**

Split the kids into two teams. Hand each team a jar. Have each team choose one volunteer to search for his team’s coin for 30 seconds. On your signal, let each team member hunt for the coin. Invite the kids to cheer on their team member as she searches. (She cannot dump the items out of the jar!) The first team whose volunteer finds the coin wins the game. Play until each child has had a chance to search for the coin. Optional: Allow each child to play individually. Use the timer to see who can find the coin the fastest.

BLESS//5 minutes



Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a 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
- Cotton balls

RELATE

Gather the children and read the blessing from Ephesians 2:13:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Then, speak to each child one at a time, saying, (Child’s name), **you can never be so far away that God’s love can’t find you.** Hand the child a cotton ball. **Sometimes, like the coin, or the son, or the sheep** (hold up a cotton ball), **we get lost. But remember that you have a Good Shepherd who has bought you back and will never give up on you.**

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.