



Lost and Found

(based on Luke 15:1-10)

Some people came to eat with Jesus. The religious leaders didn't like these people. The religious leaders believed that these people didn't follow all their rules. When the religious leaders saw Jesus with these folks, they shook their heads. "This man is friendly with the wrong people," they complained. "He even shares his food with them."

Jesus could see that the religious leaders didn't understand, so he told them two stories to help them understand God's loving ways.

"Once a shepherd had a flock of 100 sheep. This shepherd loved the sheep and looked after them carefully. Every night he would count his sheep to make sure that all 100 were there.

"One night, as the shepherd was counting the sheep, he counted only 99 sheep. 'Oh no!' cried the shepherd. 'One of my sheep is missing! Where can it be?'

"The shepherd left his flock and went out to look for that lost sheep. He searched the hills and the slopes.

"Finally, the shepherd heard a little 'baa.' The shepherd was so happy to find his lost sheep. 'Come!' he called to his friends and neighbors. 'Come and celebrate with me! I have found the sheep that was lost!'"

Then Jesus told them another story to help them understand. It was about a woman who had ten coins. She didn't have a big house or much money, but she was very happy and had lots of friends. One day, she lost one of her coins. What could have happened to it? She searched her house high and low.

"Oh, it's so dark in here," she said. "No wonder I can't find what I'm looking for."

She turned on all the lamps in the house. Again, she searched high and low. She looked under the table. She looked under the chairs. She looked under the bed and behind the pots and pans. But no luck—she still couldn't find the coin.

She picked up her broom and started sweeping. Finally, there in the corner of the room, under some dust and dirt, she found her lost coin.

She decided to have a party and invite all her friends to help her celebrate.

Jesus turned to the religious leaders and said, "Now do you understand? God is just like that shepherd who lost his sheep and the woman who lost her coin. Every single person is important. God does not want to see anyone lost. God is happy when everyone is included."



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Discuss with your children if they have ever lost anything. How did it feel while the item was lost? How did it feel when the item was found?
- We must really care about our stuff. The average American spends at least 16 minutes a day looking for lost items. Common lost items are the remote control, glasses, socks, and keys. What do you lose? What do you do when you lose something? Do you look for it? Why or why not?



Responding to God's Grace

- Watch a YouTube video of a real life lost sheep: “The Parable of the Lost Sheep for Kids - For Children” (goo.gl/RCW6UP).
- Jesus tells stories using examples from the lives of his listeners. Imagine how Jesus might tell the story of the lost sheep or lost coin today.
- Read *Who Counts?* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2017), pcusastore.com. Draw a picture of joy!

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Play Find the Thimble. If you don't have a thimble, use another small item. Take turns hiding the thimble, and let the person who finds it call out, “I found it!”
- Play Hide and Seek or Sardines, the opposite of Hide and Seek. There's joy in being found.
- Read *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown and remember that God wants to find us and care for us.
- Pray:

God, we thank you for loving us so much that you always want to find us. We are so glad to be found. Amen.

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