

Parable Of The Lost Sheep

PRESCHOOL LESSON PLAN

Theme: God rejoices when one sinner returns to Him.

Scripture: Luke 15:3-7

Memory Verse: Luke 15:6 - 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

The Children's Sermon

Parables are often described as earthly stories with heavenly meanings. Jesus used these stories that took what His disciples and followers knew to be true and helped them understand a new concept.

In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd knew his sheep well. The 99 sheep were safe together, and they depended upon each other. The lost sheep, however, was in grave danger on its own. This lost sheep would get colder on its own and was an easier target for predators.

Each sheep has great value to the shepherd. It's unthinkable to the shepherd to lose just one sheep—no matter how many sheep he has. It was completely worth it to spend the time and energy to search for the one lost sheep.

Jesus was mocked and judged for spending time with sinners—though that's exactly who He came to save. Jesus intentionally sought out those who were discarded by society, those who were considered beyond help.

It makes sense that a loving God would forgive a sinner who had gone astray and then repented. But the fact that God eagerly searches for each and every sinner and joyfully celebrates the sinner's return, shows His extravagant love for each of us.

Now, let's dive deeper into the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Imagine you have a favorite toy, one you love more than all the others. You play with it every day, and it makes you very happy. But one day, you can't find it. You look everywhere, under your bed, in your toy box, but it's not there. You feel sad and miss it a lot. Then, one day, you find it behind the couch! You are so happy and thankful to have it back. This is how the shepherd felt about his lost sheep.

The shepherd had 100 sheep, but one wandered away. Even though he still had 99 left, that one lost sheep was very important to him. He didn't say, "Oh well, I still have 99 sheep. That's enough." No, he went out to look for that one lost sheep because it mattered to him just as much as the others.

When the shepherd finally found the lost sheep, he was so happy that he didn't even think about how tired he was from searching. He joyfully put the sheep on his shoulders and carried it back home. He was so happy that he told all his friends and neighbors, "Come and celebrate with me! I found my lost sheep!"

This story teaches us how much God loves each one of us. Just like the shepherd in the Parable of the Lost Sheep, God doesn't want to lose even one person. He loves each of us so much that He searches for us and is very happy when we come back to Him.

Sometimes, we might feel like we are the lost sheep. We might feel alone or scared, like we are far away from God. But the good news is that God is always looking for us.

He wants us to be safe with Him, just like the shepherd wanted his lost sheep to be safe.

Pray: Dear Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd. We are thankful that you came to save those who are lost. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

Luke 15:6 - 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

You Will Need:

- Cotton balls
- Construction paper (green and blue)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Markers

Get Ready:

- Cut the blue construction paper into small sheep shapes.
- Cut the green construction paper into a large rectangle to serve as the field.

Do This:

1. Give each child a blue sheep cutout and ask them to glue cotton balls onto it to make it fluffy.
2. While they work on their sheep, talk about how every sheep is important to the shepherd, just like every person is important to God.
3. Once the sheep are 'fluffy', let the children use markers to add eyes and a mouth. Then, help them glue their sheep onto the green 'field' paper.

4. Gather the children and their completed projects, and recite the memory verse together. Explain that just like the shepherd is happy when he finds his lost sheep, God is happy when people who were lost find their way back to Him.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Soft toy sheep (or sheep cutouts from paper)
- A small box or container to serve as the "sheep pen"
- A picture of a shepherd (optional)

Get Ready:

- Place the sheep pen at one end of the room.
- Scatter the toy sheep or paper cutouts around the room, but keep one hidden with you.

Do this:

1. Tell the children they are going to help the shepherd (you can show the picture if you have one) find his lost sheep. Explain that the shepherd has 100 sheep, but one is missing, and he needs their help to find it.
2. Have the children search the room to gather the sheep and put them in the sheep pen. As they do this, count the sheep together to ensure they all make it back.
3. Once all the visible sheep are collected, notice together that one is still missing. Show them the hidden sheep and explain how happy the shepherd is to find his lost sheep, just like God is happy when one person who was lost is found. Celebrate by clapping or cheering, emphasizing the joy of the shepherd (and God's joy) when the lost is found.

Snack Activity: Lost Sheep Snack

You'll Need:

- Mini marshmallows
- Pretzel sticks
- Blue frosting
- Small paper plates
- Plastic knives

Get Ready: Spread a paper plate for each child and place the materials in the center of the table where children can easily reach them.

Do this:

1. Tell the children they will be making a snack that reminds us of how happy God is when someone who was lost is found, just like the shepherd who found his lost sheep. Explain the story from Luke 15:3-7 briefly, focusing on the joy of finding the lost sheep.
2. Use the blue frosting to make a small pond in the middle of the plate. This represents the world.
3. Have the children stick mini marshmallows (sheep) around the plate but leave one spot empty. Then, place one marshmallow away from the others. Explain that this sheep is lost.
4. Use pretzel sticks to make a fence, showing that the shepherd keeps the sheep safe. Finally, move the lost marshmallow back with the others to show it has been found. Share how happy the shepherd is, just like God is happy when we follow His way.

Game Activity: Lost Sheep Rescue

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoors or outdoors)
- Music player (for playing and pausing music)
- Pictures of sheep (one for each child)

Get Ready: Before the game, hide the sheep pictures around the play area at a level where they are accessible to the children but still offer a bit of a challenge to find. Ensure the music player is ready with a fun, upbeat song that the children enjoy.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that they are going to help find the lost sheep, just like in the story from Luke 15:3-7, where the shepherd rejoices when he finds one lost sheep. Tell them that God feels the same joy when one person comes back to Him.
2. Start the music and let the children search for the sheep pictures around the area. The music adds excitement and signifies that the search is on.
3. When a child finds a sheep, everyone stops and celebrates together, rejoicing over the found 'sheep'. Pause the music for this celebration. Then, hide the sheep again and repeat. The game continues until all the sheep are found, emphasizing the joy in finding each one.

Craft Activity: Lost Sheep Craft

You'll Need:

- White paper plates
- Cotton balls
- Black construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Googly eyes (optional)

Get Ready: Cut out little sheep legs and heads from the black construction paper ahead of time for the younger children. Older children can try cutting their own with supervision.

Do this:

1. Explain the story of the lost sheep from Luke 15:3-7, emphasizing how happy the shepherd is when he finds his one lost sheep, just like how God rejoices when one sinner returns to Him.
2. Have the children cover the paper plate with glue. Then, they stick cotton balls all over it to make the sheep fluffy.
3. Help the children glue the head and legs onto the edge of the plate to turn it into a sheep. They can add googly eyes if available or draw the eyes and mouth on the head with a marker.
4. While they work, talk about how each sheep (us) is important to God, and He is always happy to have us close to Him.

Prayer Activity: The Lost Sheep Prayer

You'll Need:

- A small toy sheep or a picture of a sheep
- A simple maze drawn on a piece of paper or printed out
- Crayons or markers

Get Ready: Draw or print a simple maze on a piece of paper. Place the toy sheep or picture of a sheep at the start of the maze.

Do this:

1. Tell the children the story of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15:3-7, emphasizing how happy the shepherd is when he finds his lost sheep, just like how God rejoices when one sinner returns to Him.
2. Explain that the maze represents the world and the sheep is like us when we stray away from God. Our goal is to help the sheep (us) find its way back to God.
3. Let each child take turns using a crayon or marker to guide the sheep through the maze back to God. As they do, encourage them to say a simple prayer, 'Dear God, help us to always find our way back to you. Amen.'