

Luke 15

Lost and Found

Scripture: Luke 15

Memory Verse: Luke 15:24a *“For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”*

Lesson Focus: Fewer passages of Scripture show the lovingkindness of God better than this one. As we look at all three of these “lost and found” stories, we will highlight how much God treasures us despite our sin. He is “on the hunt” for our hearts! Therefore, we will challenge kids to repent and believe in the gospel so that they may be “found”!

Activities and Crafts: Prodigal Son Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Lost and Found Craft

Starter Activity: Lost and Found Stories

All of us have had experiences where we have lost something precious to us, turned everything upside-down searching for it, and then finally found it. Consider getting the lesson started by asking some questions to get the kids thinking about losing and finding things. Then share your own “lost & found” story. If possible, bring in a personal item or two that you can show the kids as you tell your “lost & found” stories.

Something that all of us experience is losing things. We might put something down somewhere and then sometime later we realize we don’t have it anymore. * Uh-oh!
Q: At that point, what do you do? A: You go searching for it! *

Sometimes you may find it and other times you may not.

Q: But what determines how hard and how long you will search for it?
A: How much you TREASURE it! If it is not that important to you, you probably won’t look that hard. But if it is important to you, you won’t give up until you find it!
(**Teachers:** At this point, share your story about the item that you lost and found) *

I’d like to hear some of your stories too. What are some things that you have lost and then found? *

Q: And how did you feel after you found them? A: SUPER GLAD!

Jesus is going to share three “lost & found” parables or stories to teach us about God. You may be surprised to learn that God also has “lost” things that are precious to Him. And what is even more surprising is what He does when He “finds” them!

Bible Study:

Luke 15:1-2: This sets the stage for the three parables.

Q: Who were the one's listening and coming to Jesus? A: The sinners! The hopeless! And the religious leaders of Jesus's day were disgusted by Jesus receiving them.

It is because of their ugly self-righteousness that He teaches these three parables. *

Luke 15:3-4: First we have a parable or story about a man with 100 sheep.

Q: But what happened to the one sheep? A: It got LOST! * And what did the shepherd do after he realized it was lost? He went after it and kept looking until he found it! *

(**Teachers:** Consider bringing in a poster board with 99 cotton balls glued to it on a grid. Hide the 100th somewhere in the class and have the kids search for it until they find it!)

Luke 15:5: Look what he does after he finds it: He greatly rejoices! Maybe this is a lot like how you feel when you find something precious that you have lost.

Luke 15:6: But this guy was so happy that he even throws a "Lost and Found" party to celebrate! (**Teachers:** If you had the kids search for the cotton ball, consider bringing in some treats and have a "party" to celebrate) *

Luke 15:7: Here's the point of the story. Just as the lost sheep mattered to the shepherd, **lost sinners matter to God**...so much so that they are worthy of an all-out search party!

* And just as the shepherd greatly rejoices when he finds his lost sheep, all of heaven rejoices when a lost sinner is saved and found!

Q: How does a lost sinner become "found"? A: By repenting and believing in the gospel!

* A few weeks ago (see Luke 13:1-9 lesson) Jesus taught us that to repent and believe is to turn AWAY from sin and turn TOWARD God in faith. It is a change of direction!

Luke 15:8: Jesus continues with another story, this time it is about a woman who loses a valuable silver coin.

Q: What did she do? A: She turned her whole house upside down looking for that coin!

Luke 15:9: And just like the shepherd did with his lost sheep, the woman is so thrilled to find her coin that she also throws a "Lost and Found" party! (**Teachers:** If you didn't have the class search for the lost sheep above, consider hiding a nickel instead and have the kids search for that and have a "party" with some treats after they find it) *

Luke 15:10: Jesus makes the same point again: Lost sinners matter to God so much that when just one turns from his sin and turns to God, there is a party in heaven! Even the angels join in the festivities!

Before we go any further, let's review why Jesus shared these stories. Remember the self-righteous Pharisees were sneering at Jesus for receiving "sinners".

Q: But who is God more pleased with...the people who think they are good enough on their own or the sinners who admit they aren't good enough and instead turn to God? *

Luke 15:11-14: Jesus now will make these points one more time with another story. Here we have two sons and one of them has a bad case of the “gimmes”! He demanded goodies from his father and after he got it he went as far as away as he could from him. *
Q: How did that work out for him? A: Not so good!

Luke 15:15-16: It can't get much worse than this! He has lost everything and the only job he could get was one with the pigs! * Jesus is teaching us that this is the way of sin. If we continue in our sin, we will also be ruined! *

Luke 15:17-19: But there is hope! * The son admits his sin and turns away from it!
Q: What do we call this? A: REPENTANCE! But notice he doesn't only turn away from his sin, but he turns TOWARD his father!

Luke 15:20a: And now he is taking steps TOWARD his father! *
Q: How do you think the father is going to respond? Remember the son shamed his father by his greed and sin. The father has every right to be angry and punish him!
Luke 15:20b: But instead the father runs to him and embraces him!

Luke 15:21-24: Like the sheep and the coin, this son was lost, but now he's found! And the father throws a “Lost and Found” party to celebrate!
Q: Who do you think the father represents in this story? A: God the Father! Do you see how loving God is at His core? He is holy and all-powerful and yet He rejoices and embraces us when we turn away from our sin and turn to Him in repentance.

Boys and Girls: Turn to Him today! Jesus came to reveal the Father's love and proved this love when He died on the cross for your sins. When you trust in Jesus's death and resurrection your sins are forgiven and you become a child of God! * Why wouldn't you?

Luke 15:25-27: Remember there was a second son. Perhaps you aren't ready because you are too much like this other son. Let's see how he responds to his father's kindness.
Luke 15:28-30: How sad! Instead of joining in the celebration, he is bitter and disgusted with the father's lovingkindness toward his brother. * He has a similar bad case of the “gimmes” that the other son had when he was still “lost”. This son, even despite all of his good works and good behavior, is also lost! *
Luke 15:31-32: The father has one more kind word for him and then the story ends. We are left uncertain on whether the older brother changes his mind or not. I think Jesus does this on purpose to challenge those proud Pharisees to change their minds and repent.

Key Point: At the beginning of our lesson we talked about how many of us rejoice when we find lost things that we treasure. I hope this lesson taught you that God treasures you! * God loves you! But if you have not turned from your sin and turned to Jesus Christ in faith, you are LOST! Being “good” does not save you! * Turn to Him and be FOUND today! * May there be a “Lost and Found” party in heaven today because you decided to repent and believe in the gospel! Don't be like the older son who couldn't join the party because of his own pride and self-righteousness! *

BRING IT HOME

Read Luke 15:10
How do you feel when you find something you have lost?

Parent Signature:

Parent Challenge:
What did the older brother need to do?

Read Luke 15:24
What does it mean that the son was "lost"?

