



Use Week of:

Unit 25 • Session 2

Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 15

STORY POINT:

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation
according to His perfect plan.

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LEADER Bible Study

In Luke 19, Jesus went after Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus was not well liked, but his interaction with Jesus led him to repent of his wrongdoing. Jesus said to him, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

Who are “the lost”? What does it mean to be lost? In Luke 15, Jesus told three parables to the crowd of tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes. Jesus’ teaching brought gospel truth to the tax collectors and sinners—those whose unrighteousness separated them from God—and to the Pharisees and scribes—those whose relied on their own righteous efforts for salvation.

The first two parables are similar. In one, a man loses a sheep. He leaves his flock to find the missing sheep, and he rejoices when it is found. In the second, a woman loses a silver coin. The woman carefully searches until she finds it. Then she calls her neighbors and friends to celebrate with her. Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. Finally, Jesus told a parable about two sons. The younger son asked for his inheritance, wasted his money on immoral living, and decided to return to his father. Rather than rejecting his wayward son, the father embraced him. The older son, who had always been obedient to his father, reacted with anger.

As you read Luke 15, think about the crowd Jesus was speaking to. The focus is often placed on the younger son—the one with whom the tax collectors and sinners could identify—but Jesus also made a point about the older son. The older son was like the Pharisees and scribes, focused on his own morality and feeling entitled to his father’s favor.

Jesus taught what God is like. He seeks sinners who have wandered far from Him, and He seeks sinners who try to earn salvation by their good works. As you teach, help kids understand that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. God loves us, and He actively seeks to bring sinners to Himself.

The BIBLE Story

Three Parables

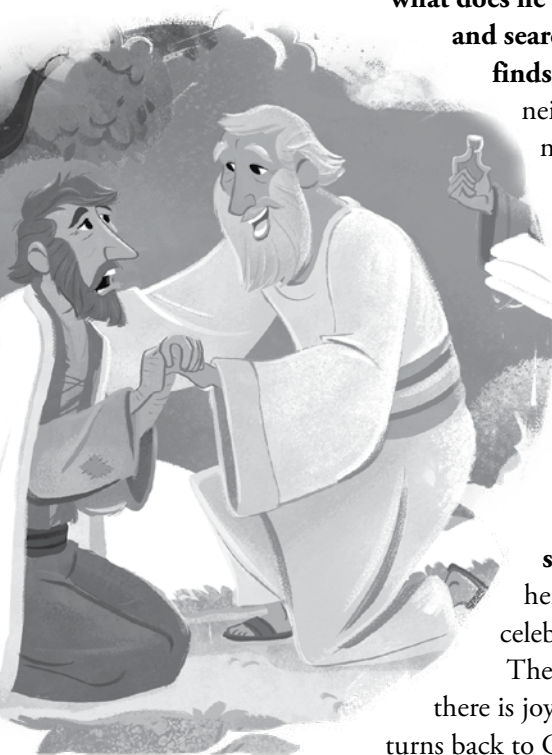
Luke 15

Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus teach. The religious leaders complained because Jesus welcomed sinners, so **Jesus told them three parables to teach them about God.**

Jesus said, “If a man has 100 sheep and loses one, what does he do? He leaves the 99 sheep and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it. Then he tells his friends and neighbors, ‘Let’s celebrate! I found my lost sheep!’ In heaven, there is more joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God than for 99 people who did not wander off.”

Jesus also said, “If a woman has 10 silver coins and loses one of them, what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it. Then she tells her friends and neighbors, ‘Let’s celebrate! I found my lost coin!’ ” Then Jesus repeated, “In heaven, there is joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God.”

Jesus told a third story. “A man had two sons. The younger son said, ‘Father, give me my inheritance today.’ So the father gave his son his share. The younger son left home. He wasted his money and lived foolishly. There was a famine, and the people in



that country did not have enough food. The son got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry, even the pigs' food looked tasty.

"The younger son made a plan. He would go back to his father and admit he was wrong. He would ask to work for his father like the servants."

"So the younger son headed home. He was still a long way away when his father saw him coming. His father ran to him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. The son began to apologize. 'I have sinned against God and against you,' he said.

"But the father told his servants, 'Let's celebrate with a feast! Bring the best robe and put it on my son! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. This son of mine was lost, and now he is found!'"

"At this time, the older son came from the fields and heard music at the house. 'What's going on?' he asked one of the servants.

"'Your brother is here,' the servant said. 'Your father is celebrating,'"

"The older brother was angry! He refused to go to the feast. The father asked him to come inside. The older brother said, 'I never disobeyed you! But you never threw a party for me.'"

"'Son,' the father said, 'everything I have is yours. We have to celebrate. Your brother was lost and is found.'"

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use sound effects:** Play sound effects as you tell the story, such as sheep baaing, coins jingling, or pigs oinking.
- **Draw pictures:** As you tell the story, draw simple pictures on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Consider drawing sheep, some coins, and a father with two sons.

Christ Connection: The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 15

STORY POINT: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they lost something. Did they ever find it? How did they feel?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Going Home” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Going Home” on the activity page. Guide kids to complete the maze to lead the shepherd and his sheep back to the flock.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, Jesus told three parables—or stories—to teach about God’s kingdom. In one story, Jesus told about a shepherd who lost one sheep. He still had 99 sheep in his flock. Would you leave behind 99 sheep to find just 1 lost sheep?

LOW PREP

- party horns or other noisemakers (optional)

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Celebrate!

Explain to kids that you are going to make some announcements. Kids should respond to the news according to how excited they are about it (boo/hiss, clap softly, jump

and cheer). Read the sample announcements or give your own one at a time, pausing for kids to respond. You may choose volunteers to explain why they reacted in the way they did.

- Teachers have decided to have school on Saturdays.
- Your parents are going to serve spaghetti for dinner every night this week.
- You can eat candy for breakfast.
- You are getting a new brother or sister.
- Your lost pet has returned home.

SAY • In the Bible story we will hear today, something happened that made a father rejoice and celebrate. But the same news made an older brother upset and angry. Let's find out what it was.

OPTION 2: What's missing?

Before the session, collect 15 to 20 various small items and arrange them on a tray. Display the tray for the kids. Encourage them to look at the objects for 30 seconds. Then cover the tray, move it out of sight, and remove one item.

- 15 to 20 small items
- tray
- small towel or blanket

Uncover the tray for kids to examine. Challenge the kids to identify which item is missing.

Play additional rounds as time allows, removing one or more different items each round.

SAY • Was it easy or difficult to notice what was missing? What if the tray had a hundred items on it? Would you notice if one was missing?

Today we are going to hear about a time Jesus told a story of a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. When one went missing, the shepherd noticed!

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- box of clothing and household goods
- Bible

[Leader enters wearing an apron and a name tag. Leader is carrying a box of clothing and household goods. A Bible is positioned nearby.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! Welcome to the Trash to Treasures thrift shop! My name is *[your name]*, general manager of Trash to Treasures. *[Set down the box and begin to remove items one by one.]* You would not believe how many calls I get every week from people saying they've lost something and are afraid it accidentally got mixed in with a recent donation. We've recovered lost photo albums, special baby clothes, and even boxes of money!

Someone called today looking for a missing casserole dish. She made her donation a week ago, so if there was a casserole dish in there, we've probably already sold it. But it doesn't hurt to take a look.

[Stop unpacking the box.] Well, it's not here. *[Pick*

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

up the Bible.] But this is a great time to share with you a story from the Bible about some things that were lost.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we get started, does anyone remember our big picture question? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That's right: ***How does God care for His creation?*** Remember, God created everything and He is in charge of everything. ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.***

As you hear today's Bible story, pay attention to how the story shows God's care for His creation.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • If you were with us last time, you might remember that when He was on earth, Jesus spent three years teaching people about God and His kingdom before He died on the cross to rescue people from sin and death. Jesus often told parables, or stories, to help people understand what the kingdom of heaven is like. In Matthew 13, we see how Jesus taught that **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.** Today's Bible story is called "Three Parables." Let's find out more.

• Bibles
• "Three Parables" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 15. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show

the Bible story video “Three Parables.”

LEADER • Jesus told three parables about things that were lost. First, a shepherd had 100 sheep. When one went missing, he left the 99 to find the missing sheep. When he found it, he celebrated! In the same way, a woman whose coin was lost searched her house until she found it. Then she invited her neighbors to celebrate with her.

Jesus told these stories to teach us what God is like. God cares about people. He won't ignore or give up on one lost person; He wants everyone to be part of His family. **Jesus came to seek and save the lost.**

In the third parable, how was the younger son lost? Look at Luke 15:12-13. [*Allow kids to read the verses and respond.*] The younger son made foolish choices and ended up far away from home with nothing. The Bible says when he came to his senses, he decided to go home.

How did the father react to his son's return? Look at Luke 15:20-24. [*Allow kids to read the verses and respond.*] Was the father mad at his son? No. He was so happy to have him home!

The story doesn't end there, though. The older brother, who never left home and always obeyed the father, saw that his father was throwing a party. Why was the older brother upset? (*He didn't think his father was being fair; he wanted special treatment for always obeying.*)

The religious leaders were like the older brother. They tried hard to obey God's laws, and they didn't think Jesus should be friends with people who had done bad things.

Christ connection

LEADER • The good news is that Jesus is the mighty friend of sinners! We are all sinners—whether we break the rules or try really hard to obey them—and Jesus wants us to turn away from our sin and trust in Him.

The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 33 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 25, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how they should treat others who have been unkind to them. Guide them to discuss how the way they treat someone can show that person the truth about Jesus.

• “Unit 25, Session 2” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Many of the people in Utah have heard of Jesus, but they do not know the truth about Jesus found in the Bible. Because **Jesus came to seek and save the lost**, Luis knows that Jesus wants the people in Utah to hear about Him.

Display the Soto family ministry photos. Distribute the captions to volunteers.

Encourage kids to work together to match each caption to a photo. Tape the caption to the bottom of the photo. Ask a volunteer to pray for the Sotos' ministry.

• “Soto Family Ministry” printable
• scissors
• tape

- Key Passage Poster
- “Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13-14)” song

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:13-14.

LEADER • Without Jesus, we are lost and in darkness.

Many people in the world are lost and don't even know it. They may not be physically lost, but they are spiritually lost. Jesus said that believers are like lights in a dark world. You can help people who are spiritually lost by telling them about Jesus. **Jesus came to seek and save the lost.** Everyone who trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and eternal life.

Lead boys and girls in singing “Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13-14).”

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Luke 19:10.

LEADER • Sometimes lost sheep don't even realize they are lost. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who goes after lost sheep and brings them home. The Bible says God wants everyone to be saved. When a person repents and turns to Jesus, we should celebrate! Let's sing.

Sing together “Jesus, Our Savior.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin. Help us be lights in a dark world full of people who do not know and love You. Give us boldness to tell others the good news about Jesus. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- Allergy Alert
- balloons

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading Colossians 1:13-14 aloud together. Inflate and tie a balloon.

Challenge kids to tap the balloon, keeping it in the air as they say the key passage together. If the balloon hits the floor, lead kids to say the key passage from the beginning. If kids complete the key passage, add a second balloon.

Invite any kids who have memorized the key passage to recite it from memory.

SAY • Because **Jesus came to seek and save the lost**, we don't have to remain in darkness. When we trust in Him, He invites us into God's kingdom and family forever.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 15. Ask kids to identify the testament and Bible division the Book of Luke is in. (*New Testament, Gospels*) Challenge kids to name as many books of the New Testament, in order, as they can. Then choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 15:20.

SAY • When Jesus told these parables, He was teaching

in Jerusalem. [*Point out Jerusalem (H4) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] By telling these stories, Jesus wanted to teach the religious leaders how they should react when someone turns from sin and trusts in Him. The religious leaders tried hard to be good, and they grumbled and complained when people who did not try hard to be good came to Jesus.

But like the father reacted to his son's return, we should be full of joy when anyone comes into God's kingdom!

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How are we "lost" before we trust in Jesus? *Lead kids to recognize that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Bible says that apart from Jesus, we are in darkness and are dead in sin. Jesus makes us alive and brings us into His kingdom. He shows us what is true about God and about ourselves.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 2:8-9.)

2. How does it make you feel that God came looking for you? *Allow kids to share their feelings. Remind kids that God created us, so He knows us and sees us. He seeks after us because He loves us.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 139:1-2.)

3. What might you say to someone who doesn't know Jesus? *Invite kids to share their ideas. Suggest that kids might share their testimonies, or stories of how they came to know and love Jesus. Review the Gospel Plan Poster and encourage kids to remember the five points to summarize the good news about Jesus: God rules, we sinned, God provided, Jesus gives, and we respond.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 15:3-4.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- "Soto Family Ministry" printable
- index cards
- pencils
- tape

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Soto family ministry

Direct kids to the Soto family ministry photos from the missions moment. Encourage kids to look at the photos again, re-read the captions, and write down ways that they can pray for the Sotos and for missions work in Utah. (Suggested prayers: for their family, health, people to trust in Jesus, their family back in Puerto Rico, and so on) Invite kids to tape the index cards next to the photos.

Consider making a prayer poster with the photos and index cards. If possible, display the photos where church members can see how kids are learning about missions.

SAY • Luis and Betty Soto know that many people in Utah are lost; they do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Our prayers help strengthen their work to share with as many people as possible about salvation through Jesus.

Close in prayer, asking kids to read the prayer requests they wrote. Ask for a few volunteers to pray aloud.

OPTION 2: Storytelling studio

Invite kids to work together to retell the Bible story using clay models. If your group is large, form smaller groups and assign each group one of the three parables from Luke 15.

If working as one group, focus on the parable of the lost son from Luke 15:11-32. You may assign roles of narrator, set designers, model builders, and so forth to give each kid a chance to participate.

Allow kids several minutes to design a scene and practice retelling the story, moving their models throughout the scene. Consider providing a digital camera for kids to take photos of each scene. Then invite the group to present.

- Bibles
- play dough or modeling clay
- poster board
- markers
- digital camera (optional)

SAY • Jesus came to seek and save the lost. When someone who was lost trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we should celebrate! The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for being a loving Father who joyfully welcomes into His home both people who have wandered away from Him and people who have trusted in themselves instead of in Jesus.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Storyboard Scenes" on the activity page. Kids should look up each reference in the Bible and draw a picture from the scene.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "Storyboard Scenes" activity page,
1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.