

September 13, 2020

Recap from last week:

Last week, September 6th, we saw Jesus teach that God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything. This week, we will watch as Jesus teaches that He came to seek and to save what was lost.

Three Parables



Bible Story & Activities

Gospel Points for Little Ones:

- Jesus told stories about God's love.
- The father was happy when his son came home.
- God is happy when sinners trust Jesus.

Bible Story

(from Luke 15)

Parent tip: if your kids are younger, you're welcome to try focusing on just the words **in bold**.

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.’”

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.

Family Activities

The following activities are all different options that help kids understand the story. Feel free to choose the activities that work best for your family!

Family Discussion Starters:

- What do these stories teach us about God’s love for people?
- What is the difference between something being lost and someone being lost spiritually?
- What happens in heaven when someone is sorry for his sin and turns to God?
- How do you feel about Jesus, knowing that He loves sinners?
- How should we treat those we think may be lost?
- Who are you most like—the younger brother who breaks the rules or the older brother who thinks rules can save him?
- How is the gospel good news for both rule breakers and rule followers?
- Pray as a family for someone you know who is far from God.

Make Mud (this activity is great for babies and toddlers)

You will need: Ziploc bags; dirt; water; permanent marker; duct tape; *toy plastic pigs (optional)*

Pour a handful of dirt and a little water in a Ziploc bag. Add small plastic pigs.

Seal the bag with duct tape. Write "God is Happy when Sinners Trust Jesus" on the bag. Encourage babies to squeeze the bags to make mud. Talk about the Bible story as they play.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Jesus told stories about God's love. A son left home, wasted his money, and was so hungry he wanted to eat pig food! The father was happy when his son came home. God is happy when sinners trust Jesus. Jesus is our King.

Play Emotion Charades (this activity is great for older preschool)

Describe a situation, then say, "I would feel ...," and act out that emotion without saying anything. Invite children to guess your emotion. Allow children to play out emotions one at a time. Use the suggested scenarios or make up your own. Ask, "How would you feel?" A child should silently act out their answer while the other children/family members guess. Suggested scenarios:

- Your pet runs away.
- A neighbor finds your lost pet.
- You hurt your best friend's feelings.
- Your friend forgives you.
- Your brother got the new toy you really wanted.
- Your brother shares his toy with you.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: In our Bible story this week, we heard about people who felt many different emotions. Most of us feel sad when we lose something special, and we feel happy when it is found. We might feel excited if one of us gets a cool gift, while some of us might feel jealous or angry. How we act when we feel those emotions is very important.

Sing "Amazing Grace" (this activity is great for preschool and grade school)

No supplies necessary

Teach the first verse of "Amazing Grace" to the children. Remind them that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. Point out that the hymn-writer compares being lost to being blind. Remind children of last week's Bible story where Jesus talked about people looking but not seeing (Matthew 13:10-16). Repeat the song until the children know it:

“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound!
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.”

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Christians have sung this song for many years to remember what Jesus did for us. Jesus looks for people who are lost, people who do not know Him. Jesus came to save people who do not know Him. Only Jesus can “find” us and help us “see” how amazing His grace is. That sweet gift makes me want to sing praises to God!

Lost Key Verse (this activity is great for older preschool and grade school)

You will need: a Bible; index cards or strips of paper; bookmark; pen or marker

Parent tip: if your kids are younger, you’re welcome to try focusing on just the words **in bold**.

Key Verse: “**He has rescued us** from the domain of darkness **and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves**. In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14 (CSB)

Write each word or phrase of the key verse on index cards or separate pieces of paper and hide them around the room. Place a bookmark at Colossians 1:13. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key verse and read it aloud. Encourage children to find all the missing words. Put the key passage in order and celebrate when it is complete.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Jesus looks for people who do not know Him and brings them to Him. He gave His life to save people from sin and bring us into God’s kingdom. God celebrates when people turn to Jesus whom He loves!

Parable Puppets (this activity is great for grade school)

You will need: popsicle sticks; cotton balls; pieces of fabric; coins; chenille stems (pipe cleaners); yarn; glue or tape; markers; other craft supplies

Provide craft supplies to the children. Help them make small stick puppets they can use to act out the parables. For example, a cotton ball glued to the end of a stick could be a sheep. Two sticks in the shape of a cross with a face drawn on

the “head” and a bit of cloth cut to look like a robe could be the lost son. Yarn used for hair could change the figure into the woman with the lost coin, or a chenille stem in the shape of a shepherd’s crook could mark the shepherd. Encourage kids to be creative.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He told three different parables to help us understand God's love for people who do not know Him. With these puppets, we can be a part of Jesus's mission to save lost people! You can use these puppets to tell the parables Jesus told to family and friends. When we live on mission by showing Jesus's love and telling others about Him, we glorify God and help grow His kingdom. That is why we are here on earth, to glorify God and lovingly obey Him. He does not want anyone to remain in the kingdom of darkness. [See 2 Peter 3:9.]

Coin Collecting (this activity is great for all)

You will need: ten coins; flashlights; stopwatch (optional)

Choose a room in the house to play in. Before the activity, hide 10 coins in the room. Give each child a flashlight and invite them to find the lost coins. You may choose to time them and see how quickly they are able to find all 10. Instruct them that they are to celebrate by clapping and cheering loudly when all 10 coins are found!

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Jesus told stories about people who were looking for things that were lost. He said a woman would light lamps and clean the whole house to search for one coin that was lost. Jesus told these stories to teach about Himself. Jesus looks for people who are lost, people who do not know Him. Jesus came to save people who do not know Him. He celebrates when just one person comes to know Him!

Sheep Toss (this activity is great for all)

You will need: a plastic cup; cotton balls

Place a plastic cup on the floor. Instruct the family to line up about five feet from the cup. You may use tape to mark a line for them to stand on when taking their turn. Give each person a cotton ball and allow them to take turns tossing their cotton ball to land in the cup. You may award points, such as one point for hitting the cup and three for landing the cotton ball inside the cup.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: Those cotton balls are soft and fluffy, almost like sheep. In our Bible story this week, we learned about a shepherd in a story Jesus told. He didn't toss his sheep away but went out in search of a single lost sheep even though he had 99 others that were not lost! Would you do the same to find a lost sheep?

What's Missing? (this activity is great for all)

You will need: a tray; 15-20 various small items; small towel or blanket

Before the activity, gather the various small items and arrange them on a tray. Display the tray for the kids and encourage them to look at the objects for 30 seconds. Then cover the tray, move it out of sight, and remove one item. Uncover the tray for kids to examine. Challenge the kids to identify which item is missing. Play additional rounds, removing one or more different items each round.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: 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? This week, we heard about a time Jesus told a story of a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. When one went missing, the shepherd noticed! Jesus told these stories to teach about Himself. Jesus looks for people who are lost, people who do not know Him. Jesus came to save people who do not know Him. He is the Good Shepherd!

Hide and Seek (this activity is great for all)

No supplies necessary

Play a game of hide and seek as a family.

How is this relevant?

Parents can lead by saying: 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.

Discussion and Bible Skills

Have a member of the family read from Luke 15 in their Bible or reread the Bible story above. Ask the following questions. Lead the family to discuss:

Preschool:

1. Who told stories to teach people about God? (*Jesus*)
2. What did the man who lost one of his sheep do? (*He left his other sheep to find the one that was lost.*)
3. What did the woman who lost a coin do? (*She searched until she found it.*)
4. Did the younger son make good choices? (*no*)
5. What did the father do when his younger son came home? (*welcomed him and celebrated*)
6. How does God care for His creation? (*God loves and rules over all He made.*)

Grade School:

1. What did the Pharisees and scribes complain about? (*Jesus' welcoming sinners, Luke 15:2*)
2. How did the three characters from the parables react when what they lost was found? (*by rejoicing and celebrating; Luke 15:6,9,32*)
3. Why was the older brother angry at the end of that parable? (*He felt his father was treating him unfairly, Luke 15:29-30*)
4. Do you ever feel like running away from God to live your own way? *Guide the family to think about the choices they make. Help them think through times when it may feel like obeying God is a burden, such as when seeing a popular movie or playing a popular video game dishonors Him. Encourage kids to speak openly about when it is hard to obey God.*
5. Do you ever feel like it's unfair for God to love people who disobey Him? *Help the family see that all people are sinners. We often try to rank our sin or compare it to other people's sin to justify why we chose to sin. Help them understand that all sin deserves death.*
6. How should we react to a person becoming a believer in Jesus? *Direct the family to remember how God reacts to sinners' repenting. Discuss the fact that God welcomes sinners and loves them. Help them see that we should respond like God does, with joy and celebration, not with doubt or skepticism.*

Parents can lead by saying: Jesus came to seek and save the lost. God loves when sinners turn from sin toward Jesus. We can rejoice in God's goodness to sinners—including ourselves—and celebrate when people come to faith. God's love is endless.

Journaling (this activity is great for older preschool and grade school)

You will need: paper, pencils, crayons, or markers

Take some time at the end of the lesson and activities to sit down and allow kids and family members to reflect on what they heard and learned. Give each member of the family a piece of paper and writing utensils. Allow them some time to think about and answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

If your children are younger, help them process the questions and encourage them to draw their answers if they'd like to. Lead your family in prayer when you are finished, taking prayer requests from each family member that feels like sharing. If you feel like your child is ready to accept Christ, check out the Gospel Plan on the kids' page of our website. Please let us know so we can celebrate this with you and provide you with additional resources.

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