

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: KINGDOM

These two parables are short and share many similarities in format. Jesus told these parables to teach the lesson that each one of us is valuable to God. In the story of the lost sheep, Jesus tells of a shepherd who leaves his flock to search for the one who is lost. Even though the shepherd still had ninety-nine sheep, he did not accept even the loss of one.

In the story of the lost coin, the coin would have been worth about a day's wages. While this is a significant amount of money, it is not a very large sum of money. The point of the story would have been lost if a great sum of money were involved. Rather, the woman has lost a single coin, a loss that some people would have just accepted. The woman, however, searches her entire house, cleaning every corner, until the coin is discovered.

The stories don't end with the recovery of the lost items. They end in celebration and rejoicing. The shepherd rejoices over his previously lost sheep. The woman calls her friends and invites them to celebrate with her because she has found what she thought was lost. With the addition of this scene, Jesus poses a question for us. Will we join in the celebration?

Every child will be able to relate to the experience of losing something. Each one of us has experienced that sinking feeling when we discover that something is not right, something is missing. Listen to your children's stories. Help them to identify with the feelings in the story. Then, help them understand God values them even more than the shepherd valued the sheep or the woman valued the coin. God celebrates with us, and God celebrates each of us.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

During the week, look for loose change. See how much you can find or collect. On Sunday, take the change to church and show it to your children. Encourage them to do the same. On the following Sunday, have the children bring their change to church. Collect the change and give it to the church or to an important community organization.

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, coins, and a sheep*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Hide the coins and sheep somewhere in the room, do not place them in the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *kingdom* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are learning about God’s kingdom.

ASK: Have you ever lost something? What happened?

- We recommend reading a story each week from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary child to read, “The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin” (pp. 228–229), from the storybook Bible or read Luke 15:3-10 from a CEB Bible.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for showing us who you are through the stories of Jesus. Amen.

Tip: *Do not place today’s items in the Wonder Box, but hide them somewhere in the room for children to find later.*

Sheep and Coins – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons, scissors, glue, cotton balls, foil*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy, “Sheep and Coins” (Reproducible 11A) for each preschooler.*

- Hand out a copy of “Sheep and Coins” to each preschooler.
- Invite the preschoolers to color the page.
- Help the preschoolers use pieces of cotton balls to glue on the sheep and pieces of foil to glue on the coins.

SAY: Today, we are learning about a lost sheep and a lost coin.

Color and Celebrate – Younger Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Color and Celebrate" (Reproducible 11B) for each child.

- Hand out a copy of "Color and Celebrate" to each child.
- Invite the kids to color the page.

ASK: What was lost in the Bible story today?

Search and Find – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Search and Find" (Reproducible 11C) for each child.

- Hand out a copy of "Search and Find" to each child.

SAY: Jesus spoke about lost things being found.

ASK: When you hear this Bible story, what do you feel? Have you ever been lost? Have you ever been found?

- Invite the children to solve the puzzle.

I Am Found Book – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers, construction paper, scissors, glue

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "I Am Found Book" (Reproducible 11D) for each child.

- Hand out a copy of "I Am Found Book" and a piece of construction paper to each child.
- SAY:** Jesus told two parables, one about a lost sheep, and one about a lost coin.
- ASK:** What do you remember from the Bible story?
- Invite kids to color and cut out the pieces on the page.
- Instruct children on how to fold their construction paper into a trifold book.
- On the outside of the book, glue the individual coin and the individual sheep. Glue the words "I was lost..." on the outside of the book.
- Instruct the children to open their book and glue the picture of Jesus with the sheep on one side of the page, and glue the picture of Jesus with the coin on the other side of the page.
- In the middle of the book, have children glue the words "But now I'm found" in the center section.
- Encourage the children to add details from each story to either side of the page.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 11 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

WONDER: What did Jesus teach in this story?

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 11F–11G. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time. Invite children to act out the story if they are comfortable.

WONDER: Why should everyone celebrate when the lost items are found?

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Locate and cut out the Unit 3 story figures (Class Pack—p. 3) if you haven't already.

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.

SAY: Today's faith word is *kingdom*.

ASK: What do you think the word *kingdom* means?

- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).
- Read the definition of the word *kingdom* from the Faith Word Poster.

ASK: Who is included in God's kingdom?

SAY: It is important that we all are a part of the kingdom of God.

- Have a child place the lost sheep on the Wonder Mat.

WONDER together:

- What does it mean to be lost?
- Have you ever looked for something that was missing?
- What do you like most about this story?

- Open the Wonder Box to reveal that it is empty.

SAY: There is nothing in our Wonder Box today. We need to look for what goes inside.

- Help the children look around the room for the lost items and place them in the Wonder Box.

Experience Wonder

Can You Find It? – All Ages

Supplies: a stuffed sheep and a play coin

SAY: Let's play a game to remind us of the Bible story.

- Gather the children together in a circle.
- Choose one person to be IT. IT will go outside the room or close their eyes in the corner.
- Give the sheep and the coin to two people in the circle. Have them hide the items in their lap or behind their back. As a variation for older children, have them pass the items to other people when IT isn't looking.
- Invite the person who is IT back to the circle. Ask them "Can you find it?" They will then have to guess who is hiding the sheep and the coin.
- Once IT guesses correctly, encourage the whole group to celebrate by clapping and cheering.
- Choose another child to be IT and repeat the game.

WONDER: How does it feel to look for something that is lost? How did it feel to celebrate?

Now I'm Found – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Now I'm Found" (Reproducible 11E) for each child.

- Teach the children the song and invite the children to color the page.
- Sing the song together.
- Encourage the children to take the song home and sing it with their families.

Examine the Bible Verse – Early & Older Elementary

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Mark 10:14b. Let's find it in our Bibles.

ASK: Is Mark in the Old or New Testament? (*New*). Where is the Book of Mark located in the New Testament? (*second book*) In what chapter of Mark is our verse located? (*10*) What is the verse number? (*14*)

SAY: The Bible story is found in the Book of Mark, which is one of the Gospels.

- Gather the kids around the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

ASK: Is anyone missing from the kingdom of God?

Peaceful Place – Preschool & Early Elementary

Supplies: *copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word (Reproducible Kids' Book 10F); Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook; Who Counts?: 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons, by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso; sand tray; sand; coins; box or basket*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word Coloring Page (Reproducible 10F) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Let the children use the sand tray to find coins. Each time a coin is found, have the child place it in a box.
- Encourage children to draw their favorite part of today's story.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring God's Kingdom Through Community

Supplies: *party hats, noisemakers*

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. This month we are going to practice ways that we can be encouraging members of God's community.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:

SAY: In the Bible story, a sheep and a coin were missing.

ASK: What happens next?

SAY: The community celebrates finding what is lost. Celebration is so important. In God's kingdom, we celebrate one another.

- Invite the children to celebrate together. Let the children wear the party hats and use the noisemakers.

ASK: What are some things we can celebrate as a church family?

- Allow the children to list joys and celebrations.

SAY: God celebrates with you. You are an important child of God.

PRAY: God of lost things, thank you for always finding us and bringing us to you. Amen.

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—p. 128

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Family Celebration Letter" (p. 128) for each child.

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages (*Reproducibles 11F–11G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There is a special game to do at home this week.

- Send a copy of the Take-Home Pages and a copy of the Family Celebration Letter home with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschool – God Celebrates Me

Supplies: paper, crayons

- Gather the children together.

ASK: What was lost in the Bible story? Did they find what was lost?

- Let the children pretend to be sheep.
- Have the children make a circle with their arms to be coins.

ASK: Are you a sheep? Are you a coin?

- Say the following chant:

I am not a coin (*make a circle with arms*) I am not a sheep (*pretend to be a sheep*)

But I am a child of God (*raise arms up with palms facing up*)

And God celebrates me! (*give yourself a hug*)

- Repeat as many times as desired.

Preschool or Early Elementary – Celebration Hats

Supplies: paper, markers, tape, stickers, hole punch, string or yarn

SAY: Jesus taught us that we should celebrate when lost things are found and when people are included in God's kingdom.

ASK: How do you like to celebrate?

- Let the children use the supplies to make a cone celebration hat.
- Have the children color and decorate the paper.
- Roll the paper into a cone. Tape the cone together. Punch two holes on each side of the hat and attach a piece of string or yarn to make a face loop.
- Encourage the children to wear their hats during the session.

Older Elementary – Circle Drawings

Supplies: paper, pencils

ASK: Can you draw a sheep and coins by only using circles and by never picking up your pencils?

- Have the children draw sheep and coins.

ASK: Was this hard? What does a circle represent?

SAY: God's kingdom is all about community. The community celebrates when we are all included and connected. Circles can remind us of the kingdom of God.

- Gather the children in a circle. Then, go around the circle and invite each person to say a prayer. When everyone has had a chance to share, say amen.

Intergenerational Activity – Cards for the Community

Supplies: paper, crayons, markers, cards or stationery

Prepare Ahead: Ask your church staff if there are a list of church members who have not been at church recently or who are sick or homebound.

- Divide up the names and invite the group to make cards for the community members who have not be able to come to church in a while. Send kind messages, words, and pictures.
- Mail the cards to your church friends, being sensitive to those who are no longer able to leave their homes.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for everyone in our church family. Amen.