

The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son

Lesson 19

Purpose	To help each child have the desire to help those who are less active return to full activity in the Church of Jesus Christ.
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Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayerfully study Luke 15, Matthew 18:12–14, and Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–11. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture accounts. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)2. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.3. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.b. Pictures 7-19, The Good Shepherd, and 7-20, The Prodigal Son (62155).
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Suggested Lesson Development	Invite a child to give the opening prayer.
Attention Activity	Share with the children a time when you or someone you know lost something valuable and then found it again. Describe for the children the value of the item, how you felt about losing it, what you did to find it, and how you felt when it was recovered. If appropriate, you could bring the object to show to the class. Ask the children to relate any incidents in their lives when they lost something valuable and found it again.
Scripture Accounts	Using the pictures at appropriate times, teach the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture accounts, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) Explain to the children that these parables, just like the parables of the sower and the wheat and the tares, teach an important gospel principle.
Discussion and Application Questions	<p>Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why was the shepherd so concerned with one sheep out of a hundred or the woman with one coin out of ten? (Luke 15:4, 8.) Explain that the people generally were poor and one coin or sheep was very valuable to them. In the same way, all of Heavenly Father’s children are valuable to him. Why do you think each one of us is valuable to Heavenly Father?

- Why do you think the sheep got lost? How do you think the coin got lost? How can we or someone we know be lost? Help the children understand that being lost also refers to people who are not obeying the commandments and are doing things that make them unworthy to return to Heavenly Father.
- What did the shepherd do with the lost sheep when he found it? (Luke 15:5.) How did his actions show he loved the sheep? Whom does the shepherd represent? Whom do the sheep represent?
- What did the woman do to find the lost coin? (Luke 15:8.) What has Jesus Christ done to help those who become lost and do not keep the commandments? (D&C 18:10–11.) How can we help those who may be lost?
- What did both the shepherd and the woman do when they found the sheep and the coin? (Luke 15:6, 9.) How would you feel if you had helped someone repent and come back to Jesus Christ?
- Why do you think that heaven and the angels feel joy when someone repents? (Luke 15:7, 10.)

2. The Prodigal Son

- What does prodigal mean? (To be wayward and wasteful.)
- What did the prodigal son do with his inheritance? (Luke 15:12–13.) What do you think “riotous living” means? Why do you think some people decide to live this way? How do you think the father felt while his son was gone? How would you feel if someone in your family acted like the prodigal son? (Be sensitive to children who might have family members who are not keeping the commandments.)
- What did the prodigal son do to get food when his money ran out? (Luke 15:14–16.)
- What does “when he came to himself” mean? (Luke 15:17.) How do you think the son’s suffering and sadness helped him want to repent?
- Why do you think the son decided to return to his father? (Luke 15:17–19.) What kind of master was his father? (Luke 15:17.)
- How did the father feel when his son came home? (Luke 15:20.) What did he do for his son? (Luke 15:22–24.)
- How did the older son feel when he learned that his younger brother was home? (Luke 15:28–30.) Why is it important to continue to love family members who disobey the commandments?
- What did the father promise the older brother? (Luke 15:31.) What example did the father set of how to treat those who have sinned but have repented? (Luke 15:32.) How do you feel when you see someone repent and turn from wrong to right? How should we treat people who have not kept the commandments but who are sincerely sorry?

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Have the children think of ways they could help a less-active child. (Answers could include being friendly, being a good example, inviting them to Church activities, doing things together, and so forth.)

2. Tell the following story:

Ten-year-old Joshua Dennis went with his father and others to explore an abandoned mine. He was careful in the mine but became separated from the other boys and was lost in the dark without food or water. When the others realized he was missing, they started searching for him immediately. After a while hundreds of people came to look for Joshua. Thousands of others fasted and prayed that he would be found safe. The searchers looked for five days, but they couldn't find him. An expert who knew the mine heard of the search and volunteered to help. He knew the mine so well that he found Joshua in a place the others didn't know existed. When he found Joshua, he couldn't begin to describe the joy he felt. All of the people at the mine and thousands of others cried with relief and joy when they found out that Joshua was alive and safe (see "Making Friends: Joshua Dennis—a Treasure of Faith," *Friend*, Nov. 1990, pp. 20–22).

Discuss the difference between being physically lost and spiritually lost. Explain that we must work just as hard to rescue those who are spiritually lost as those who are physically lost.

3. Play Search and Find. Ask a child to think of a place where he or she could get lost and write it on a piece of paper or whisper it to the teacher. Have the other children ask "yes" or "no" questions to determine where the child is located (Is it in a crowded place? Is it in the mountains? Is it under something?). Help the children understand that it takes time and effort to find someone who is lost, especially someone who is spiritually lost.
4. Help the children memorize Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.

Conclusion

Testimony

Share with the children your belief that Heavenly Father loves each of his children and that we are all important to him. Emphasize that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to help those who are lost come back to them.

Suggested Home Reading

Suggest that the children study Luke 15:11–32 at home as a review of this lesson.

Invite a child to give a closing prayer.