

Unit 5 The Lost Stories

Week 1 The Good Shepherd

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7

Main Teaching Points

- The Pharisees and teachers of the law complained because Jesus welcomed sinners.
- Jesus told this story to help everyone understand God's love for the lost.
- The shepherd in the story represents God and the lost sheep in the story represent us.

Themes to discover

The grumbling Pharisees

The Pharisees and the religious leaders complained because Jesus welcomed all kinds of people, tax collectors, outcasts, people of ill repute. The Pharisees were scandalized at this for although they had a knowledge of the Old Testament law and a desire for personal purity, but they had no love in their hearts. Jesus attracted sinners while the Pharisees repelled them. People came to Jesus not because he compromised his message or told them what they wanted to hear, but because he cared for them and tried to help them. The Pharisees on the other hand only criticized and looked down on them and tried to keep them at a distance.

Jesus came for the lost

The religious leaders did not understand Jesus' priorities. 'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.' Luke 19:10 The lost stories give us an insight into the loving heart of God and how he longs for us to be reconciled with him. The Pharisees were blind to the fact that they too were lost and needed saving by Jesus.

The **Introductory activity** helps children understand that there were people for and against Jesus
The **Story, Quiz and Craft Activity** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** gives the children the opportunity to thank God for each other and for people/things they are grateful for.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Who gets lost in this story that Jesus told?

Why do you think the shepherd tried so hard to find the lost sheep?

If you got lost who would come and look for you? Do you think they would try very hard to find you? Why?

If the shepherd in the story is God, and we are the lost sheep, what does the story teach you?

Ages 7-11

Who could the sheep and coin be? The Jewish people? Outcasts and sinners? You?

Why are they lost? How does a person lose their way in this life?

Who is the shepherd? What is his attitude? Does he give up or work hard at finding?

Week 1 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

This idea was adapted from <https://ideas.brf.org.uk/>

You will need

A few examples of foods that people generally either love or hate e.g., marmite, prawn cocktail crisps, tin of mushy peas, box of Liquorice Allsorts, raisins, Brussel sprouts, celery, cottage cheese, peanut butter.

What to do

Show the children the items you have brought in. These foods can divide people - some people just hate them while some love them. Have a show of hands - for and against. If you like you could allow some tasting.

Explain that today's bible story is one that Jesus told the crowd of people who were following him around. At the time this story is told, people in the crowd were beginning to make their minds up about Jesus and decide whether to be for Jesus or against him. Many of the people who were for him were the outsiders, the ones on the fringes, the ones who had messy lives and had done things wrong. They hung on Jesus' stories and wanted to be close to him. The leaders - the ones who knew their scriptures - didn't approve of this. [You could show the box of Liquorice Allsorts and say 'all sorts' were now coming to Jesus, and the religious leaders didn't like it]. In their opinion Jesus was behaving wrongly. He didn't seem to mind that people with bad morals (or sinful ways) were hanging around with him. The religious leaders thought Jesus should send these kinds of people away. So, Jesus told a story to help everyone understand what he thought.

Story telling suggestions for unit 5

Choose some of these options to help tell the story.

1. Read the story from the Lion Storyteller bible with good pace and expression. To add visuals to your storytelling, use the available PowerPoints (see digital resources).
2. Use the short videos provided to tell the stories. (see digital resources for this unit)
3. Use drama to act out the stories. Gather a few props that are featured in the story. Try an impromptu drama using the text from the Storyteller Bible. Use a leader to narrate the story and give some guidance to the actors as you go along. Have another leader or an older child as the main character/s in the drama. The narrator should adapt the text to ensure the actors have plenty of easy to carry out actions to mime. The rest of the children can get involved e.g. by being the sheep in the Lost Sheep drama, looking for the coin in the Lost Coin drama, or being party goers in the Prodigal son drama. See also scripts from <https://ideas.brf.org.uk/> and www.allageworshipresources.org in the resources section for this unit.

Story

pages 116-117 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Quiz

Rolling dice

You will need

Quiz questions (see resources section)

2 dice

What to do

Divide your group into two teams Ask questions alternatively. Children should put their hand up if they know the answer. When a team member gets a question right, s/he comes forward and rolls the pair of dice and whatever numbers they land on is the team's score for that question. Keep note of the points each team earns and reveal the winner at the end.

Prayer Activity

Balloon Prayer

You will need

Strips of paper e.g. A4 paper cut into 2-inch strips

A balloon for each child

Balloon pumps (optional)

What to do

Today's story ended with the farmer being so thankful that his sheep was back home that he organised a party! You can't have a party without balloons, so our prayers today are going to be thanks prayers with balloons.

Give everyone a balloon and a strip of paper/pen. Each child should write or draw something they are thankful to God for on the paper e.g., family, school, friends. Then they should roll up the piece of paper and insert it into their balloon. Blow up the balloon but don't tie it. On the count of 3 everyone lets off their balloons into the air. Enjoy watching them whizz around the room in different directions. Next tell the children to go and find a balloon that is not their own and retrieve the paper from inside it.

Everyone stands in a circle with the balloon they found. Take out the piece of paper. Leader chooses who will begin. That person thanks God for the person written on their piece of paper and the thing they are grateful for e.g., 'Thank you God for John and thank you for John's family.' Next John prays for the person on his sheet and the thing they are grateful for and so on. At the end everyone can shout out a big AMEN!

Craft Activity

Bubble wrap sheep

Younger Children (3-6yrs)

You will need

Bubble wrap

Scissors

White and black paint and paint brush or paint pens

Card or paper

Sheep's head template

Google eyes

Glue

Lollipop sticks

What to do

Print and cut out your sheep template onto card or paper

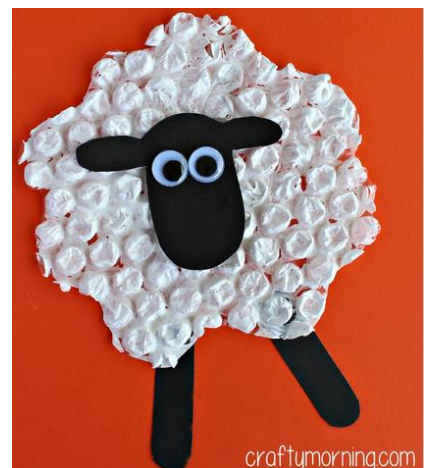
Cut out a piece of bubble wrap into a circle or a "flower" shape

Paint the bubble wrap white with paint or a paint pen.

Paint 2 lollipop stick black

Once everything dries, glue on the legs/head

Stick on the googly eyes and there you have a cute little sheep!



Paper chain sheep

Older children (7-11yrs)

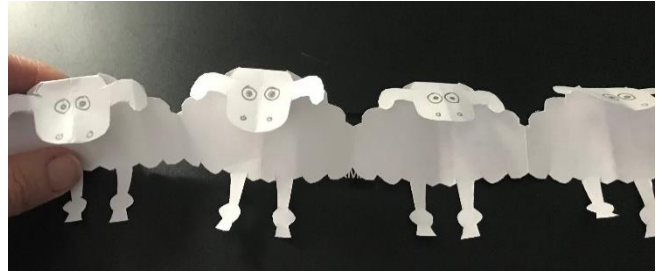
You will need

Copy of the video 'How to make a sheep paper chain' and the means to play it (see digital resources)

A4 paper

Scissors

Pencils/black/grey or brown markers



What to do

Watch the video to see how to make the sheep paper chain. Fold your sheet of A4 in half so the two short sides meet, then without turning the paper fold in half again and then in half again. Unfold and fold concertina style using the previous folds as guides.

Draw your half sheep and cut out. Unfold your sheep chain. Fold the head over as in the video and colour your sheep. If you string everyone's sheep together can you reach 100 sheep?

Week 2 The Lost Coin

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Luke 15: 8-10

Main Teaching Points

- The woman searches diligently for her lost coin.
- She rejoices and celebrates when she finds it.
- God is filled with joy when someone who is 'lost' finds Jesus and follows Him.

Losing something Precious

When a Jewish woman got married it was the custom that she was given as part of her dowry, a headpiece with 10 silver coins. which was worn during the wedding ceremony and celebrations. This could be the coins that Jesus was referring to. It would have been a catastrophe for a woman to lose one of those coins which helps to explain why she was so thankful to find the coin that she called in her neighbours and friends to celebrate.

Lost, found, rejoice

These 3 words sum up the 'lost' stories that Jesus told. Like the woman who loses a precious coin, Jesus was saying that God actually searches for lost sinners. This message would have surprised the crowd and angered the Pharisees who believed that rigorously keeping God's laws was what was needed. The woman is full of joy when she finds her lost coin and God is full of joy when someone who has wandered away from him comes back and seeks his forgiveness. God welcomes and forgives repentant sinners and rejoices with the angels!

Themes to discover

The **Introductory activity** helps introduce the theme of being lost.

The **Story, Challenge** and **Edible Craft** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** gives the children the opportunity to thank God for good things in their lives.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

What is the most precious thing you have ever lost?

How do you feel when you find something really important that you had lost?

How does God feel when one of his children come back to him and want to be his friend?

Ages 7-11

If somebody is 'lost' what does that mean about their relationship with God?

Do you think that God actively seeks out people who are 'lost'? How?

What do you think the Pharisees and the leaders/teachers of the law thought about this story?

Week 2 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

You will need

The Lost Glasses drama (see resources section)

Pair of glasses

What to do

2 leaders carry out this simple drama about one of them hunting around for a pair of glasses that are on top of their head all along. Use the drama to lead straight into the story of the lost coin.

Story

pages 118-119 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Challenge

Find the coins

You will need

DIY Moon Sand [8 cups plain flour, 1 cup oil (e.g. baby oil), few drops of food (if desired)]

Coins

Containers e.g. washing up bowls

Small containers e.g. yoghurt pots

What to do

Make up enough moon sand to fill your containers about a third full. There should be one container for each team.

Hide 5-10 coins in each (depending on the size of your group).

Set the containers on tables at one end of the room along with a small pot beside each one.

Divide your group into teams and line your teams up at the opposite side of the room.

Make sure you have enough hidden coins so that everyone in the team gets at least one go. Let the teams know how many coins they have to find in total.

Shout 'Ready, Steady, Go! Team members run one at a time to their team's container. Using one hand only, they must search for a coin. When they find it, they drop it into the pot and run back to their team. The first team to find all the coins and have all their members sitting down in their line wins.



Small space idea

If you have a small space or small numbers of children, you could do the challenge by calling volunteers to the front one at a time and timing them to see how quickly they can find all the coins using just one hand.

Make it a competition so that the others enjoy watching and anticipating their turn. You could even blindfold the participants to make it harder!

Prayer Activity

Jumping for Joy Prayer activity

This idea was adapted from the Prayer spaces in Schools website

You will need

Mini trampoline or safe place to jump

What to do

In all the stories Jesus told about someone or something getting lost, there was always joy at the end when the person/thing is reunited with family/owner. These stories are called 'parables.' Parables are stories Jesus told that have a special message inside about God. These stories show us that God longs for his children to come back to him when they wander away and he is filled with joy when they do.

Think of something or someone that makes you feel joyful ... or something or someone that you are thankful for.

Say (or shout!) a prayer as you jump for joy e.g. Thanks God for [as you say the thing you are grateful for, jump in the air.] If you don't have a trampoline, make the activity fun by encouraging everyone to think up their own jump and try to make it different to everyone else's. They could do a star jump, a tuck jump, a long jump etc.

Edible craft - Broom

You will need

Bread sticks

Tortilla wraps

Fruit winders or strawberry laces

What to do

Break your bread stick in half. Cut a strip from a tortilla wrap. Using clean scissors, make cuts along the length of the tortilla strip leaving a section at the top not cut. (Do this step beforehand for young children). Take a breadstick half, and with the broken end down, tightly wrap the tortilla strip around it. Continue rolling until you are happy with the size of your broom head, you may need to trim the strip down if it's too long. Tie the tortilla onto the bread stick using a fruit string or strawberry lace. You'll need to pull it quite tight to make sure it stays put.



Talk about

Check out Luke 15: 8-10 to see how the woman looked for her missing coin?

How did her broom help her?

Week 3 The Big Spender

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Luke 15: 11-32

Main Teaching Points

- The father never give up hope that his son will come home.
- The son is humbled by his circumstances and is sorry for the wrong things he has done.
- The father accepts his son with great joy and gladness.

Themes to discover

A selfish dream

The younger son dreamt of a life of freedom far away from the duties and responsibilities of family life. He wanted to have his own way and so he rebelled against his father and in so doing, broke his father's heart. He put more value on the things, money could buy than on the people closest to him who loved him. However, life in that faraway place wasn't quite what he expected. He soon ran out of money and his newfound friends quickly deserted him. He was forced to do the kind of work that he would never have had to do at home, and he was hungry, lonely and miserable. He began to realise just what he had left behind.

A generous welcome

When the son came back, the father didn't reproach him or get angry. He didn't even say 'I told you this would happen.' He simply offered his son the most generous of welcomes, beautiful new clothes, sandals, a ring, and a huge celebration with the best food available. There is significance in these gifts. The ring was a sign of sonship and the best robe was a sign of his acceptance back into the family. The son had hoped he could become one of his father's servants. Servants did not wear rings, shoes, or expensive clothing so the Father was showing him that his place as his son was guaranteed.

The **Introductory activity** introduces the theme of the story and links it to the children's own lives.

The **Story, Challenge** and **Craft Activity** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** gives the children the opportunity to think about relationships which need to be healed and to pray for reconciliation.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Why did the young son want to leave home?

What did he do when he had lots of money?

What made him want to come home and say sorry?

How hard it is to say sorry when you know you have done something wrong?

Ages 7-11

Why does the father never give up on his lost son?

Who do these people in the story represent- the father? the son? the older brother?

The people in the crowd would have realised that this story was really about them. What reactions do you think they would have had?

Week 3 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

Begin with a leader telling a true story about what happened when they lost a pet or a child, emphasizing how upset they felt and how relieved when they found their child/pet again.

Next allow the children to tell stories themselves. Most of the children will have a story about losing something so if you have a large or particularly chatty group you may prefer to split into smaller groups for this activity, which would allow everyone a chance to talk.

Finish off with the whole group back and talk about being lost and how it feels. You could start the discussion with some of these questions:

How does it feel to be lost? Choose 1 word to describe it.

How does the person who has lost something feel?

What do you do when you lose something important? How do you try to find it?

Jesus told stories about lost things to show that we are also lost. What do you think he might have meant?

God created us to be his friends. When we are not his friends we are "lost". That is why Jesus came – to find us again!

Story

pages 120-121 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Challenge Pig Hunt

Younger Children (3-6yrs)

You will need

Pig Hunt pictures (see resources section)

Blu tack

Scissors

Pig Hunt recording sheets

What to do

Before the session, print and cut out the pig pictures. Use Blu tack to stick them around the room in obscure places e.g. under a chair, behind the curtain, in a corner, high up on a wall, partly behind a radiator etc. Give each child a recording sheets and allow everyone to wander round the room trying to find the pigs. You may want to give them a time limit of 5 minutes. When they find a pig, they write or draw on their sheet the distinguishing marks on that pig e.g. starry pig, triangle pig. How many pigs can they find in 5 minutes?

Pictionary

Older children (7-11yrs)

You will need

Small cards with words from the story written on them

Flip chart or whiteboard and pens

What to do

Make up cards with words from the story on them e.g. money, frown, Jesus, son, younger, die, pocket, goodbye, pig, dirty, hungry, miserable, idea, servant, hug, party, ring, noise, angry, found.

You can make the words harder or easier depending on the age/ability of your group.

Divide the group into two teams. Call up a volunteer from each team alternatively and give them 30 seconds to draw what is on their card. Their team members can call out guesses until they get the right answer or time runs out.

Prayer Activity Reconciliation Prayer

This idea was adapted from the Prayer spaces in Schools website

You will need

Zips (can be on items of clothing)

What to do

Make sure the zips are unzipped.

Do you ever have arguments with your friends or family? Or have any of your friends and family been arguing or fighting with each other recently? When people argue or fight, they can sometimes have a big fall out and get separated from each other. It can be hard for people to say sorry and make friends again. Reconciliation means bringing the two people together. A bit like a zip.

Think about the people that you sometimes fight with or people you love that you want to bring back together. Say a quiet prayer for the people you're thinking of as you do up the zip. This is a reconciliation prayer.

Edible craft Pig cup cakes

You will need

Pink wafers

Plain cupcakes or fairy cakes

Marshmallows

Readymade butter cream icing (pink)

Chocolate chips

Napkins

Teaspoons or butter knives

What to do

Before the session, pre-cut the pink wafers into small triangles and set out the other ingredients.

Give everyone a cup cake and a spoon or knife.

Show the children how to spread some butter icing on the cup cake.

Add pink wafer triangles for ears, a marshmallow for the pig's snout and some chocolate chip eyes. Add 2 tiny blobs of icing for the nostrils.

Enjoy eating!

Talk about

Retell the part of the story with the pigs in it. Why was looking after the pigs such an unpleasant job? What did the son want to do with the pigs' food? Why did that make him decide to go back to his Father?



“Dive In” Activity Week

Welcome and Intro

Recap briefly on the stories covered in the last 3 sessions using some of the recap ideas at the beginning of the programme.

There is an information sheet to go along with each activity. It is helpful if leaders talk about the story as a reminder to the children when they are explaining the activity.

Eat the Story Fairy cake sheep

You will need:

Tub of Betty Crocker readymade icing (cream)

Mini marshmallows

Giant chocolate Buttons

White fondant icing

Black icing gel pen



What to do

- Apply a small layer of icing to the top of each cupcake with the back of a spoon
- Start to add on the marshmallows so the top of each cupcake is covered
- Use a fork or skewer to scratch two small dots onto a giant chocolate button to represent the nose
- Roll the fondant icing into 2 small balls and flatten. Add some black icing for the pupil. Use a tiny amount of butter cream on the back of each eye and attach them to the chocolate button face.
- Add a little butter cream to the back of the chocolate button and attach on top of the marshmallows as faces
- Cut the edges off another chocolate button to create ears and attach with butter cream
- You can also use the leftover pieces as tails if you wish.

Explore the story Disappearing Coin Trick

This easy disappearing coin trick uses refraction of light to make it look like a coin under a glass disappears!

You will need

Plain drinking glasses or glass jars

Coins

Jug of water

What to do

Place a glass on top of a coin and look through the glass from the side. You should be able to see the coin.

Now pour water into the glass and stand back and look for the coin now. It should have disappeared.



Why does the coin disappear?

Light (from the sun, or an artificial light) travels in a straight line, bounces off objects and into our eyes, allowing us to see things. Generally there is little or no refraction of light as it travels through air.

However, when you pour water into the glass or jar in this activity the light is refracted (bends) and doesn't make it to your eyes which is why the coin seems to disappear.

Know the Story Puzzle sheets

You will need

A variety of puzzle and colouring sheets
pens, pencils, rubbers, felt-tips, etc

What to do

Enjoy puzzling!

Draw the story Welcome home bunting

You will need

String
Clothes pegs
Bunting template
A variety of felt marker pens/paint pens/glitter pens etc
Stickers/stick on gems etc

What to do

Print out the bunting template sheets. Children can colour the letters in bright colours and decorate the background with party themed drawings e.g. balloons, cupcakes, party hats etc. and stickers/gems etc. Hang up a length of string and peg the bunting onto the string when finished.

Make the Story Binoculars

You will need

2 cardboard bathroom tissue tubes
1 sheet of felt or thin card
Scissors
White craft glue
Glue dots
Craft foam to match your felt
100cm piece of twine or yarn
Pen



What to do

Roll up your cardboard tube in card or felt to measure how much you will need and then cut to size. Glue the card/felt before covering your cardboard tubes. Leave to dry.

Cut a strip of craft foam long enough to go around the end of the tube, about 2cms wide. Add some glue to the end of your tube and then wrap the strip around the end of the cardboard tube. Secure at the end with a glue dot. Repeat for the other tube.

Cut another strip long enough to go around the opposite end of the tube, only this time cut it 1cm wide. Glue as above and secure with a glue dot.

Position the tubes side by sides with the cardboard/felt seams facing each other. Add some glue dots to one of your tubes and press the two Put a rubber band around both tubes to hold them in place. Use a pen to poke a hole in the side of the tube, about 1 cm below the 1cm wide craft foam strip. Insert the end of your twine into the hole from the outside of the tube. Bring it through the tube and tie a double knot. Trim off excess and gently pull the twine taut. The knot will keep the twine from coming back out through the hole. Repeat on the other side.

Forgiving Father

You will need

Long strips of coloured card (60cms x15cms)
A4 sheets of white/pale pink/light brown card
Forgiving father template (see resources for this unit)
Glue sticks
Pens/pencils

What to do

Fold a strip of card so that the two ends meet together in the middle to look like 2 swing doors.

Draw around both your hands onto another piece of card and cut out your handprints.

Print and cut out the Forgiving Father template. You can either write or stick on the words from the template.

Assemble your 'Forgiving Father hug' by gluing the template onto the middle section of your long strip of card and sticking your handprints on either side.

Open and close the folded arms to see the Father's forgiving hug.

