

Lesson #3-25

The Lost Is Found

Luke 15:1-32



Key Verse:

“We had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

Luke 15:32

The Point:

God celebrates when the lost are found and those who were dead find life.



Introduction

The religious leaders of the Jewish people are envious of Jesus' popularity and concerned about his practices. He eats with sinners and tax collectors. In response to the complaints of the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus tells three parables; the story of a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. In each story, something is lost that makes a whole incomplete; in each story, there is great rejoicing and celebrating when the lost has been found. The purpose of his ministry, Jesus seems to say, is not to spend time with the righteous but to seek out and reclaim the lost.

The Point

God celebrates when the lost are found and those who were dead find life. Today's parables teach us that God is overjoyed when those who feel lost are found and celebrates when a person repents. This returning to God is what makes the lost found! Sometimes it is difficult for us to be happy when someone is granted mercy, no matter what they have done. We can be like the older brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son and want people to face justice without mercy. However, God still loves us all and is happy when we are found.

Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Introduction

Lost in the Grumble

Hear the good news amidst grumbling.

10 min.

† Bible

Learning the Story

The Lost Have Been Found

Reinterpret the story.

10 min.

† Bibles

† Paper

† Markers or crayons

Activities

Singing the Story

Sing "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling."

10 min.

† Optional: Activity Sheet #3-25.A

Target Practice

Aim for the edges.

5 min.

† Masking tape

† Large sheet of paper

† Small sheets of paper

† Markers

Prayer



God's Story @ Home



Introduction (10 minutes)

Lost in the Grumble

Hear the good news amidst grumbling.

Supplies:

- † Bible

Instructions:

1. Gather together, either sitting or standing.
2. Ask one person to be the Reader. They should remain where they are sitting or standing.
3. Ask a second person to be the First Grumbler. They should be sitting or standing on the opposite side of the Reader.
4. Lead some practice grumbling. Just the word "grumble" in a low voice over and over can sound just like what it means. Other options include repeating the word "murmur" in the same way, or sighing loudly every few moments. It may take a few practice runs until you have expert grumblers ready to go.
5. Do the activity:
 - The Reader will read today's story from Luke 15:1-32 out loud, in a normal "inside" voice.
 - At the same time, the First Grumbler will begin grumbling.
 - When you can hear someone next to you grumbling, you should also start grumbling.
 - **How many grumblers does it take to make it impossible to hear the good news?**

Learning the Story (10 minutes)

The Lost Have Been Found

Reinterpret the story.

Supplies:

- † Bibles
- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons

Instructions:

1. Help everyone turn in their Bibles to Luke 15:1-32. Assign each person one of the three parables in the story.
2. Give everyone a sheet of paper. Have them divide their paper into four sections.
3. While reading their parable, each person should create a comic strip telling the story. Each section of the paper will be a panel of the comic strip.
4. After everyone has created their comic strip, invite each person to share their comic and tell the story to the rest of the family.
5. Ask the following questions:
 - **Why were the Pharisees and scribes so upset with Jesus?** *[He was spending time with sinners and tax collectors.]*
 - **How does Jesus respond to the Pharisees' and the scribes' grumbling?** *[By telling them parables.]*
 - **In the first two parables, what happens to the sheep and the coin after they are lost?** *[They are found, and the shepherd and the woman rejoice.]*
 - **In the story about the son, how does the father react when his younger son returns home?** *[He is happy and throws a party for his son.]*
 - **Jesus uses these parables to explain how God feels when we repent and are found. How do you think God feels when this happens?** *[Happy, joyful, excited.]*
 - **How does it feel to think about what you have lost?**
 - **How does it feel to think about finding what you have lost?**
 - **Is there something you can do to look for what has been lost?**

Activity (10 minutes)

Singing the Story

Sing “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling.”

Supplies:

- † Optional: Activity Sheet #3-25.A

Preparation:

1. Determine how best to listen to or sing the song:
 - Listen to a recording.
 - Sing along with a recording.
 - Sing along with accompaniment if someone can play piano, guitar, or other music.
2. Optional: Make copies of Activity Sheet #3-25.A.

Instructions:

1. **In today's story, Jesus portrays God as someone seeking the lost. Sometimes the lost are like sheep, who wandered away without meaning to hurt anyone. Sometimes the lost are like the son, who deliberately hurt his father because he wanted his inheritance right now. But no matter what, Jesus tells us that he will always offer us forgiveness and new life when we turn back from wandering away and admit it when we have hurt others. Today we will remember that by singing the hymn “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”.**
2. Distribute the Activity Sheet.
3. Invite everyone to sing or listen together.
4. **When we sing together, it is a reminder that each of us are lost. We have all been found in one way or another and brought together here today. And God is still seeking us, and all those who are lost, so that our song will fill the world with joy.**

Activity (5 minutes)

Target Practice

Aim for the edges.

Supplies:

- † Masking tape
- † Large sheet of paper
- † Three small sheets of paper
- † Markers

Instructions:

1. Draw a large target on the sheet of paper, filling it to the edges.
2. Ball up the small sheets of paper and cover them in tape, sticky-side out.
3. Invite the youngest member to throw the sticky balls at the target. Wherever the balls land, draw three circles. These are the new "bullseyes," no matter how far away from the center they are.
4. Invite each person to take turns trying to hit the bullseyes.
5. Discuss: **Jesus spends his time not with those in the center but with the people on the edges. Is it harder to aim for the center, or the edge? What is the benefit to aiming for the edge? Why do you think Jesus goes there?**

Prayer

1. Re-invite the Reader and the First Grumbler to return to their roles that began today's lesson.
2. Now, add a third person: a First Rejoicer. Ask: **Who is willing to be our First Rejoicer?**
3. **Once you hear words of rejoicing rather than grumbling, from the person next to you, you have to start saying those words instead.**
4. Privately instruct your First Rejoicer: **When the whole room is grumbling, turn to the person next to you and say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found what was lost."**
5. Just as with the opening activity, have the Reader and the First Grumbler begin their roles at the same time.
6. Once everyone is grumbling, the First Rejoicer should turn to the person next to them (as told in step 4).
7. Watch as the mood turns from grumbling to rejoicing!
8. **It can be hard to be the First Rejoicer in what seems like a world full of grumblers. But sometimes, if we are willing to listen and respond, we can hear a voice of celebration and hope amidst the mumbling.**

Prayer

Before ending, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Celebrating God,

We know that you and all the angels rejoice when what is lost is found.

As we go from here today, may we recognize how we were lost and how we have been found.

May we celebrate with you for all that has been restored.

In your name we pray. Amen.

If you have the "Living the Word: Sharing God's Story @ Home" sheet, remember to use it throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!

Singing the Story

Sing "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling."

Verse 1

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
see, at the doorway he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain:

Come home, come home;
you who are weary come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!

Verse 2

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me?

Verse 3

O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me!

Author: Will L. Thompson (1880)

Tune: [Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling] (Thompson)