



Lost and Found

Goal: To know that each person is important to God.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 15:1-10

On the surface, it's two simple stories about counting, missing something, searching, and celebrating in the finding. A man has 100 sheep, and at the end of the day, he counts them. One is missing. If you had 100 sheep and one got lost, would you leave the flock to search for the lost one until it is found? (v. 4). That's what he did. When the lost sheep was found, he carried it home and invited his neighbors to come over and celebrate.

A woman has 10 silver coins. She counts them and one is missing. "Who wouldn't light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until that coin is found?" we are asked, for that is what she does. And when she finds the coin, she invites her friends to celebrate.

The man noticed that one sheep was missing and the woman, her coin. They were not complete, even missing just one. These are parables, however, so there's always a sideways twist or another level to discover. Jesus doesn't just tell a story about sheep or coins for no reason. Look back at verses 1 and 2 and see the set up for these two stories, and then the third one that is going to truly drive the point home.

God wants everyone to be included in the realm of God's love and care. One person, even just one of us, is worth the search. God loves us, and in response to God's love, we work to include, not exclude, to invite and welcome, to see those who seem to be lost and hidden from sight. And we rejoice when one who was lost is found.

. . . In your experiences with the children

Some children like to collect things—like dolls, trading cards, toy cars, or stuffed animals. And a child knows when one of them is missing. The collection is not complete. Children will be able to hear this parable from many points of view: the man who lost one sheep or the woman who lost one coin, the need to search, the one that was lost, the other 99 sheep or 9 coins, and the neighbors who came to celebrate. Help the children connect this parable with their own lives at home, in their neighborhood, or at school. Is there a child who sits alone at lunch? Is there someone who doesn't have a friend to play with on the playground? God's loving family is not complete when someone is missing.

. . . In your relationships with the children

Children in your group may have had the experience of losing something or someone, or being lost, separated from family or a school group. They may also have had the experience of finding a pet or person who was lost or not in the right place. These experiences will help children connect with this parable Jesus told. The one missing was just as important as those who were safe. Children can be encouraged to think about children they know whom no one sees or notices. How can they be included and shown God's love?

*O God, I thank you that when I am lost you don't stop finding me.
Help the children know that they have been found. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 4, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: prepared
sheep shapes and
sheep heads from
Grace Notes (GN) 1,
clothespins

choice 2: copies of **GN 2**

choice 3: tray

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 3**

choice 3: copies of **GN 4**,
aluminum foil

choice 4: copies of **GN 5**

GN 2 Solution:

There are 9 hidden sheep.

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule." Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, for use in "Guided Play," choice 1, cut a cardboard (like a cereal box) body for each child using the sheep shape template on **GN 1**, and a sheep head from copies of **GN 1**. Gather ten of the same objects from your room. Hide one for "Hearing the Story."

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet the children as they arrive and say, "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt them to respond, "And also with you." Be attentive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents and caregivers who you do not know personally. Tell the parents today's story includes two stories Jesus told to show that each and every one of us is important to God. Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

1. **Making Sheep**—Invite the children to make sheep to bring to "Hearing the Story." Let the children glue cotton balls and a sheep head to the sheep shape. Provide two clothespins each, to make the legs. Pinch the bottom of the sheep with the clothespins so the sheep will stand on its legs.
2. **Find the Lost Sheep**—Provide copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Let the children color the picture. Engage them in a discussion about sheep and see if they can find hidden sheep in the picture.
3. **Lost and Found**—Gather ten small but different objects from the room and place them on a tray. Draw the children's attention to the tray to see the objects. Have them cover their eyes or turn around. Take away one object and hide it in your lap or under a cloth. Invite the children to look at the tray again and find what is missing. Repeat or ask for a volunteer to hide an object.

T *If transition times are difficult, consider introducing an object such as a stuffed lamb. Show the children where the object will be next and allow them to follow. Assure them that the object will follow them throughout the session and that they will see it when they return again.*

Transitioning to Story Time L

When the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, playing “Amazing Grace”—**SCM 24**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Helper Song

Sing to the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It” and invite the children to join in with the words and actions:

If you’re a helper and you know it, nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
 If you’re a helper and you know it, nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
 If you’re a helper and you know it,
 what you do will surely show it.
 If you’re a helper and you know it, nod your head. (*nod, nod*)

Call and Response

Write the children’s names on a sheet of paper in a column. Tell the children that you will call their name, and when they hear their name to respond, “I’m here!” Then invite the child to come put a sticker by their name and say, “I’m here!” again.

Hearing the Story L B MS

Open the Bible to Luke 15 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear two stories Jesus told to show us every person is important to God.

If the children made sheep in “Guided Play” choice 1, place them in front of you. Count the sheep. Tell the children that the shepherd in the story had one hundred sheep! Wonder together how one hundred sheep would fill up your story corner.

Read **SCM 4**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again, inviting the children to act out the story as you read it. Suggest that they are shepherds watching their flock. If you have stuffed animals available, give each child one to pretend to be a sheep. Encourage the children to place their “sheep” on their shoulders and carry it home as they celebrate.

Stop reading before the story about the woman and her lost coin. Show the collection of the same objects you gathered and tell the children that you lost one more of them in the room. Tell them how special the object is to you, and you would appreciate it if they would help you find it. After they find the object, finish reading the story.



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible* edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Finding Sheep

MS

Hand out copies of GN 3 and crayons. Say that the shepherd knew each sheep by name and knew if one went missing.

Invite the children to color their sheep, so they will know it is their sheep. When they have finished coloring, have the children close their eyes or put their heads down, so they are not looking.

Tell the children you are hiding their sheep so they can find them. Place their sheep around the room, hidden, but easy to find. Have the children look for their sheep and bring them back to the flock when they have found them. Rejoice and play again.

2. I Belong to God

MS

Say that Jesus told the stories about the lost sheep and the lost coin to tell his listeners that each one of us is important to God. God loves us all! Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your motions as you lead the action poem.

Up and down and all around, (*stand on tiptoe, crouch down low, stand and turn around*) /

I belong to God. /

When I sleep and when I wake, (*pretend to sleep, pretend to wake*) /

I belong to God. /

When I clap and when I sing, (*clap, then sweep right hand, palm up, from center out to your right*) /

I belong to God. /

When I'm sweet and when I'm mad, (*smile sweetly, then scowl*) /

I belong to God. /

When I'm happy and when I'm sad, (*pretend to laugh, pretend to cry*) /

I belong to God. /

Up and down, all around, (*stand on tiptoe, crouch down low, stand and turn around*) /

I belong to God. (*hug yourself*) /



3. Finding the Lost Coin A FM

Before the session, cut out a circle from cardboard about the size of a quarter and a two-inch square of aluminum foil for each child.

Remind the children that the woman searched for her lost coin by sweeping her house and looking under all her furniture. Tell the children that they will make a picture to remind them that each one of them is like the coin to God. Each person is important to God!

Give each child a copy of **GN 4** and invite them to color and cut out the broom and the banner. Assist with cutting, particularly the broom. Read the banner aloud. Show them how to make small cuts into the base of the broom to make the straw of the broom. Have them choose a piece of colored construction paper and glue the broomstick and the banner to the paper.

Give each child a cardboard circle and a square of aluminum foil. Show them how to wrap the circle with the foil to make a coin. Instruct the children to glue the coin under the broom. Encourage the children to take their picture home and share the story that each one is important to God with their family.

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page C

Hand out copies of **GN 5** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color using the following wondering questions.

- ▼ I wonder, “How did the sheep get lost?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the sheep feel when it was found?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the woman lose her coin?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the woman feel when she found the coin?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as hop like a lamb, take large steps like a shepherd, dance like a sheep that has been found, and so forth.*



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Encourage each child to put away one toy or object. Invite the children to sit around a table or on the floor and enjoy a snack.

Play “Amazing Grace”—**SCM 24**. This is a song with a lot of words, so ask the children to listen. Ask them if they are familiar with all the words and explain those that they are not familiar with. Explain that this song was written by someone who knew the joy of being found by God. Note especially the phrase “I once was lost, but now I’m found.” Ask the children to repeat this phrase, first quietly and then with increasing joy. Sing the song, asking them to echo each phrase of the stanza with you. Then play the song again and sing along with the recording.

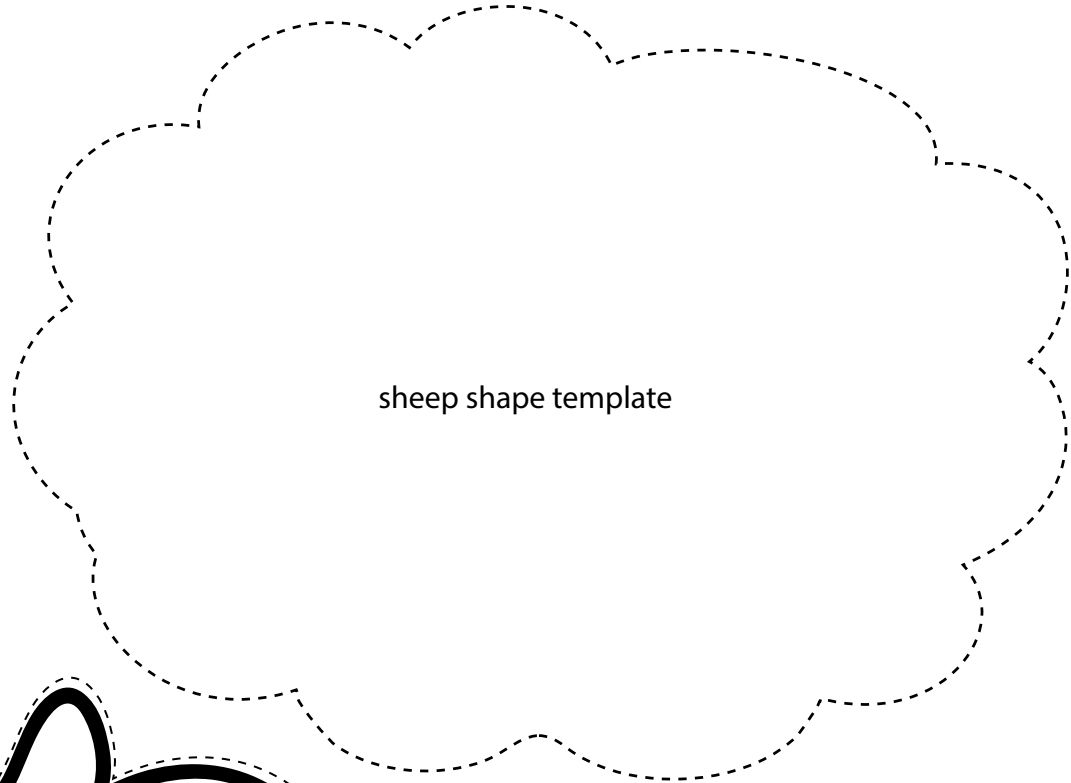
Invite the children to follow your motions and repeat the echo prayer.

For food to eat, (*raise hands to mouth*) /
and friends to share, (*hold hands out*) /
for those we love everywhere, (*place hands over heart*) /
we thank you, God. (*put hands together in prayer*) /

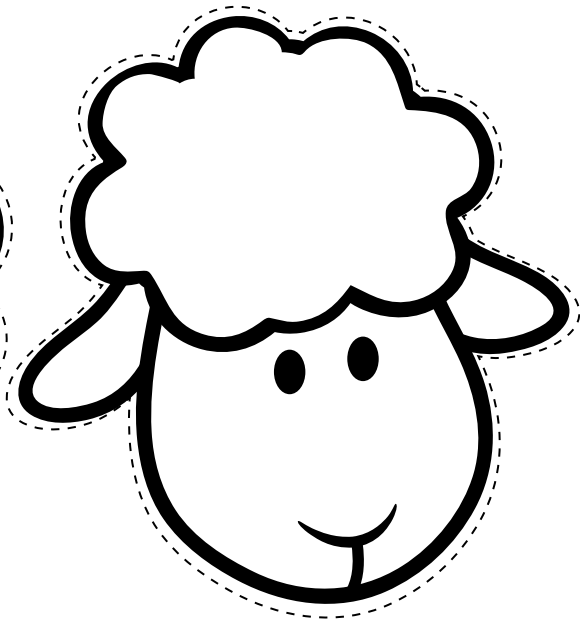
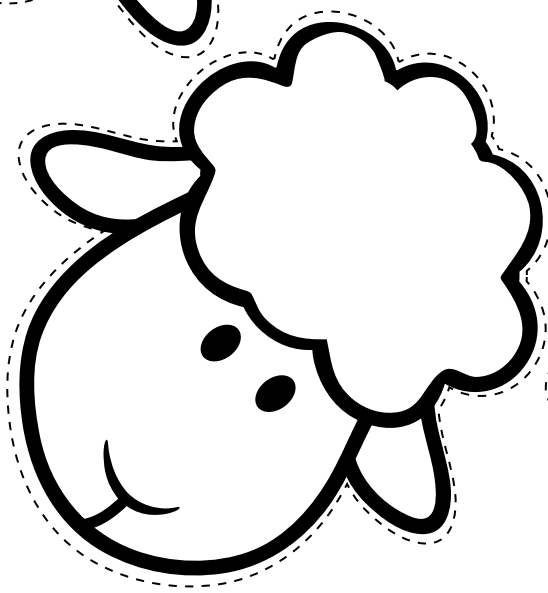
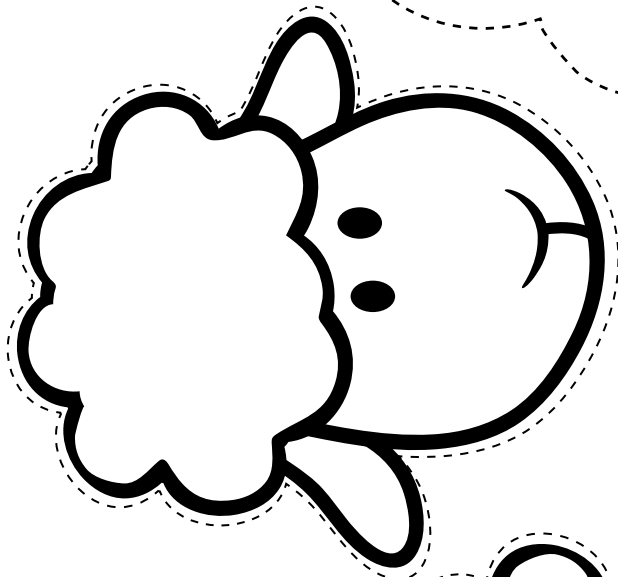
As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), you are important to God. God loves you!”



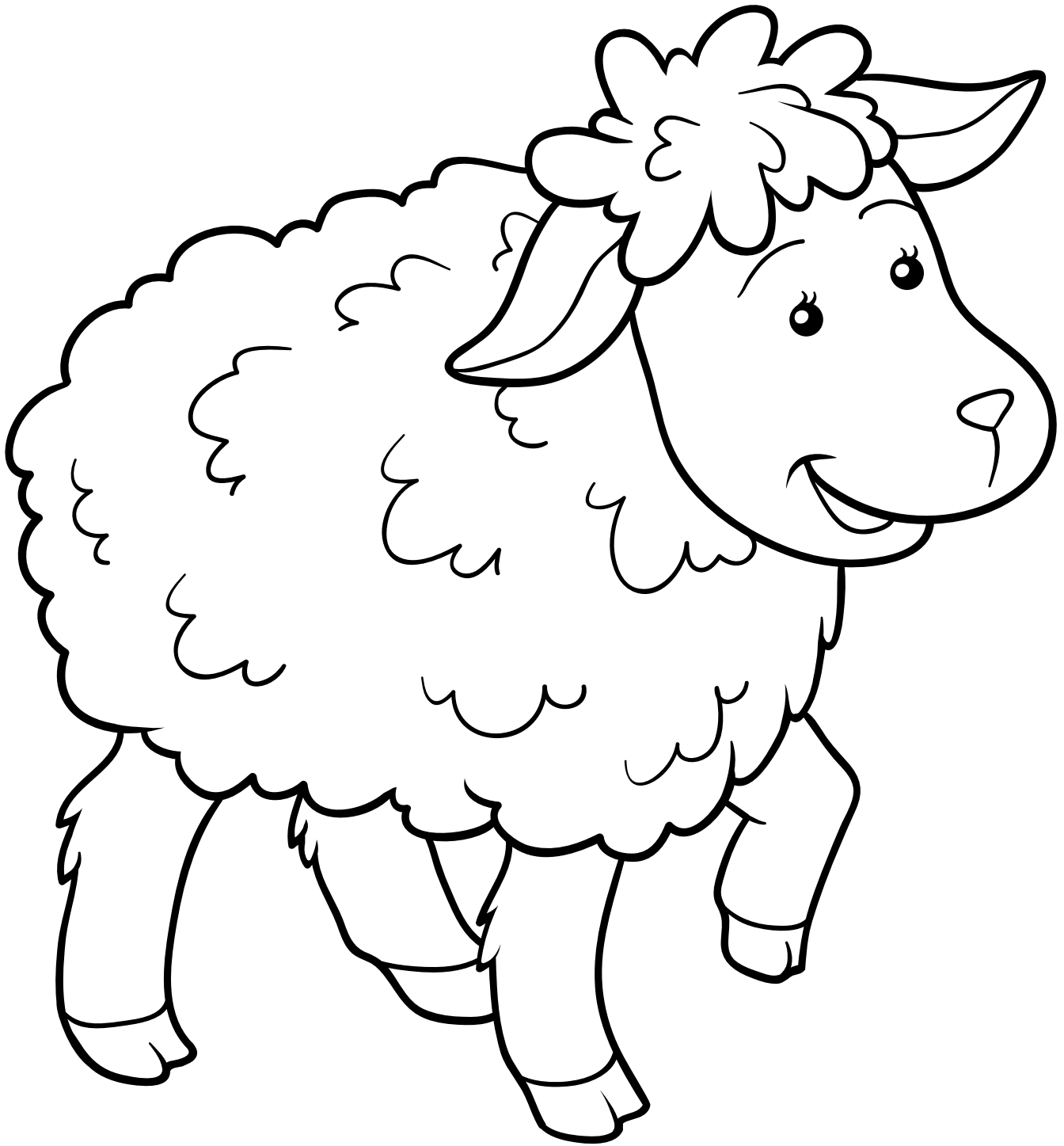
Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, Grace Sightings, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).



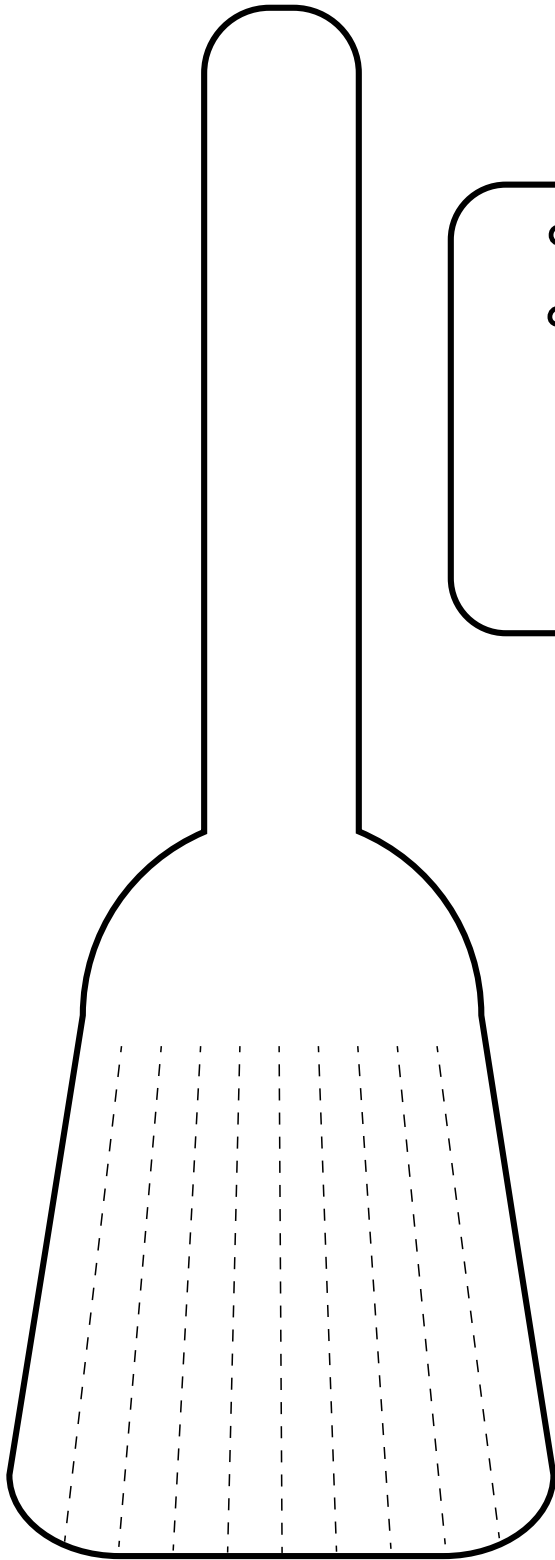
sheep shape template





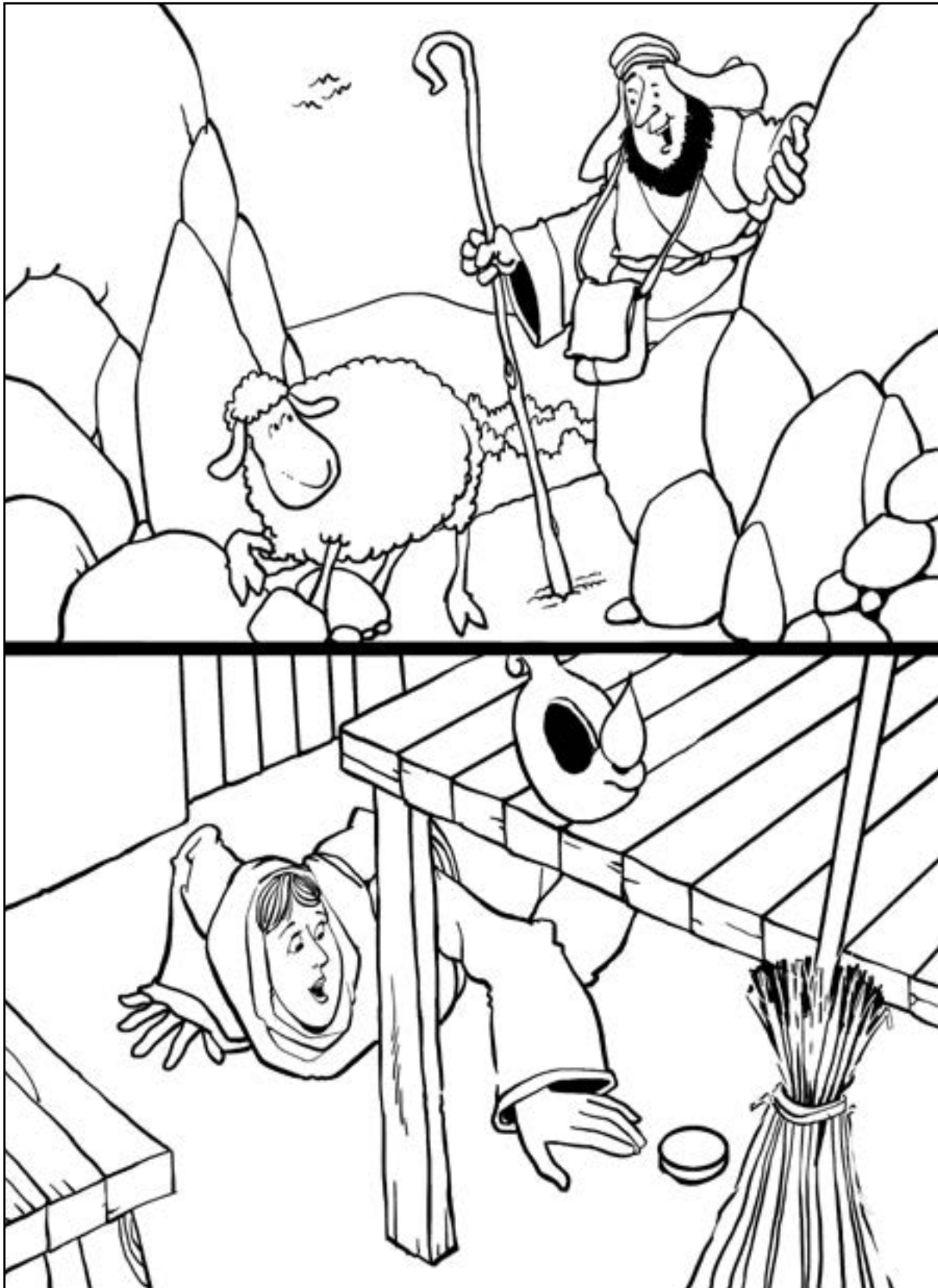


(name)



Each person
is important
to God!

Lost and Found



Like the sheep and the coin, each person is important to God.

