



Lost and Found

Goal: To know grace in being found.

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, 4a, 4b, 18, 22, 27

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

purple cloth

six votive candles
(purple if possible)

rhythm instruments

Who Counts? by
Amy-Jill Levine and
Sandy Eisenberg
Sasso, pcusastore.com
(optional)

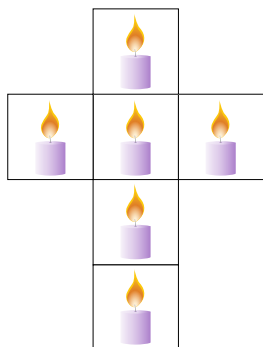
Responding

Offering

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1, cotton balls

Extra

copies of **GN 2** and **GN3**



GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on 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.

Welcoming and Preparing **LG**

Play “Jesus Loves Me” as children arrive. Greet each child by name and with the words “Grace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to say the same words to you.

Quietly, ask a child to hide the Bible somewhere in the room.

Tell the children that this is the fourth Sunday in Lent. Invite the children to prepare the space for Lenten worship using the purple cloth. Have them place six votive candles in the shape of a cross in the space. See the sidebar for placement of the candles. Turn on all the candles.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

When all is ready, tell the children that you can’t find the Bible. Talk about where you left it, what might have happened to it, and ask if anyone remembers putting it away. Talk about how it feels to have lost something that is so important. Ask the children to search for the Bible. Be really happy when it is found. Invite the person that found the Bible to place it on the worship table

Singing

Play and sing “We Are Dancing in the Love of God (Danzaremos en amor de Dios)”—**SCM 27**. Rejoice that the Bible has been found by playing rhythm instruments and dancing to the music.

T *For children struggling with transitions, set clear expectations and let them know how long activities should take.*

Praying

Point out the votive candles. Remind the children of the tradition to extinguish, or put out, a candle each week throughout the six Sundays of Lent. This is to remind us that even though Jesus was teaching and healing and serving people, some people were not happy with his actions. They wanted to put out the light that Jesus brought to the world. Have a volunteer turn off four of the candles.

Pray together, thanking God for everyone who is in your group today:

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Thank you for (*name each child*).

We remember . . . (*invite the children to name the children who are not with us today*).

Watch over them as a shepherd watches over the sheep or a woman keeps track of her coins.

Amen.

Preparing to Hear the Story LD A

Invite conversation on what they know about sheep. Show **SCM 4a** and **SCM 4b**. Ask:

- ▼ What are sheep like? (*they wander off, there are many kinds of sheep, they climb hills, and so forth*)
- ▼ Has anyone seen, smelled, or touched a live sheep?

Explain to the children that Jesus tells a story about a lost sheep and a lost coin to help them learn about God’s grace.

Hearing the Story

Invite a child to find Luke 15 in the Bible and place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 4** or use the story audio. Use your voice, expressions, and feelings to convey the sadness when the sheep is lost, how happy the shepherd is when the sheep is found, and how happy the woman is when the coin is found. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Reflecting on God’s Grace MS

Hand out Bibles and help the children find Luke 15:1–10. Form two groups. One group will be the Sheep group and the other will be the Coin group. The Sheep group will read Luke 15:1–7 and the Coin group will read Luke 15:1–2, 8–10. Have each group choose a narrator to read the parable. The rest of the children may act as the shepherd or woman, sheep or coins (one of each which gets lost), and friends to celebrate. Give the children a few minutes to choose roles and then invite each group to act out their story for the others.

After the skits or the storybook, tell the children that Jesus used stories like these to help us understand God better. Ask:

- ▼ With whom do you think Jesus was comparing the shepherd? the sheep? the woman? the coins?
- ▼ How does this story help you understand God’s love and care for you?
- ▼ Why do you think Jesus told these two stories?
- ▼ Where do you see God’s grace in these stories?



You may choose to read the first two stories, “One Hundred Sheep” and “Ten Coins” from *Who Counts?* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso.

Singing

Sing “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 18**.
Turn off the candles.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace

Ask the children to listen to the song “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 18**. After you play it, ask:

- Who in today’s Bible story might have sung such a song? Why?
- Why is being found a gift?
- How is the shepherd like God?
- How is the woman like God?
- How do you feel knowing God is like a shepherd? Like the woman?

Sing the song together. After singing, invite the children to play a game. Tell the children that they will pretend to be a person sweeping or a wandering sheep while the song is being played. Tell the children that when the music stops, they are to freeze in place. When the word “gift,” is played, stop the music. Call on a person by name and use one of the following prompts:

- “Show us how you give thanks to God.”
- “Show us how you rejoice!”
- “Show us a happy dance!”

Repeat so that each person is called on.

Praying God’s Grace



Ask the children to describe a place where they feel safe and comfortable or something that gives them a sense of comfort.

Explain that you will pass a Bible around the group. Each person who would like to read aloud will read a verse of Psalm 23 and then pass the Bible to the next person. If a person does not want to read aloud, they may pass the Bible to the next person.

Encourage the readers to pause for a moment between verses and reflect on the words. Listen as the psalm is read. Discuss:

- What is Psalm 23 about?
- What images or ideas in the psalm stood out for you? Why?
- Do you think God is like a shepherd? Why or why not?
- What does this psalm have to do with your life, if anything?
- What does it feel like to be cared for by God?

Invite a volunteer to conclude with this prayer:

Shepherd God, you are with us every place we go, and in everything we do. Thank you for your constant care. Amen.

LD *Don't assume what children can or cannot do with regard to participating in activities. Think of multiple ways children may be able to participate without feeling excluded.*

Offering God's Grace **L**

Tell the children that one way we can remember the found sheep and found coins is to make a sheep bank and find “lost” coins to put in the bank and give as an offering. Give children a copy of **GN 1** and instruct them to cut out the sheep bank pattern, as well as the ears and tail. Tell them to follow the solid cut lines carefully. Help the children cut the opening for the coins, as necessary. Show the children how to fold along the dotted lines and glue the tabs to make the sheep cube. Instruct the children to cover their banks with cotton balls and glue the ears and tail on their sheep.

Encourage the children to find “lost” coins to put in their banks. Ask them where might be good places to find lost coins. Some places may be on the floor of the car, under couch cushions, by the laundry, and on sidewalks. Suggest that they do not take money from family members, but only use found coins to fill their banks.

Invite the children to bring their banks as an offering to the church at a time of their own choosing.

Extra Activity **C**

Have the children play a game to find lost sheep and coins (sort of a variation of the game *Battleship*). Form pairs. Give each child a copy of **GN 2** and **GN 3**. Use the following directions for the game.

Preparation:

- ▼ Cut out the sheep and coin strips and the sheep, coin, and “X” markers from **GN 2**. Place the “X” markers in one envelope and the sheep and coin markers in a second envelope.
- ▼ Place a barrier between partners, such as a box or large book tented open, so that they cannot see each other's playing board.

Set Up:

- ▼ Decide who will hide “sheep” and who will hide “coins.”
- ▼ Players place their boards closest to the barrier.
- ▼ Place strips of one, two, three, and four sheep on the Sheep Field or coins on the House Floor as you wish. Strips of sheep or coins may be placed horizontally or vertically.

Play:

- The player whose birthday comes next will be Player 1. Note: the person who hid sheep will be looking for coins and the person who hid coins will be looking for sheep.
- Player 1 calls out a coordinate, such as B4 or D6. If a sheep or coin is in that spot, Player 2 identifies how many are in that set by saying, “baa” or “ka-ching” the corresponding number of times. (For example, if a coordinate lands on one of three sheep, the player with the Sheep Field would say, “baa, baa, baa,” indicating that the other player needs to find two more sheep to complete the strip of three sheep.)
- Player 1 places the appropriate sheep or coin marker on that spot. Player 1 gets another turn.
- If the spot is blank, Player 2 says, “Miss.” Player 1 places an “X” marker on that spot. Player 1’s turn is over.
- The game continues with Player 2’s turn.
- The game is over when one player has found all of their sheep or coins (strips of one, two, three, and four sheep or coins).

Rejoice together that the sheep or coins have been found. Play again if time allows.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Listen to and sing “Jesus Loves Me”—**SCM 22**. Wonder together what this song says about Jesus and his relationship with us. Ask the children what connections they can make between this song and the stories about the shepherd and the woman.

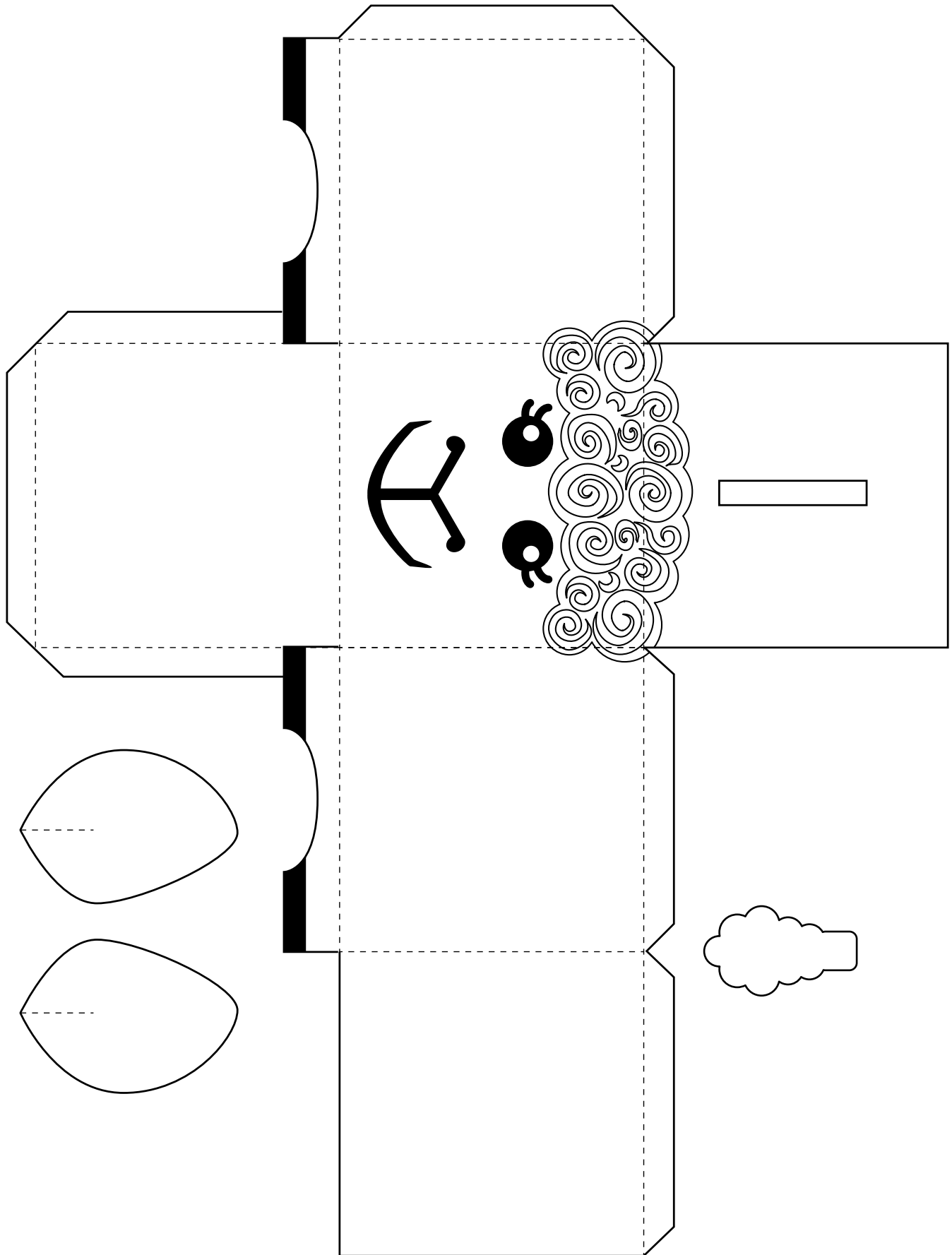
Invite children to tell what they will remember about today’s story. Wonder what they will tell their families and friends about God’s love. Pray the following prayer or one of your own choosing.

Dear God, thank you for these stories Jesus told about your never-ending love for us. You are like the shepherd and the woman because you don’t give up on us. You rejoice when we are in your presence. Amen.

Bless each child, saying, “(Name), you are God’s own beloved child. Go with God’s grace.”



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 Field

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1										7
2										6
3										5
4										4
5										3
6										2
7										1
	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	

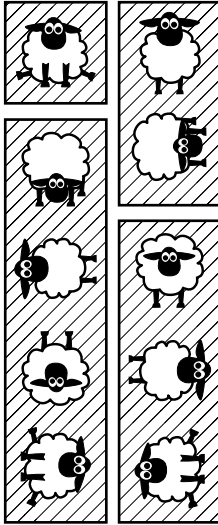
Sheep Field

House Floor

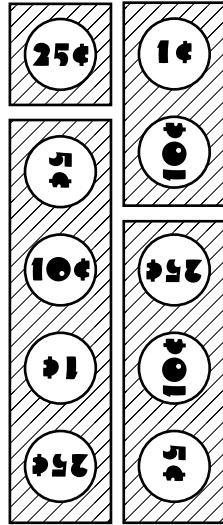
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1										7
2										6
3										5
4										4
5										3
6										2
7										1
	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	

House Floor

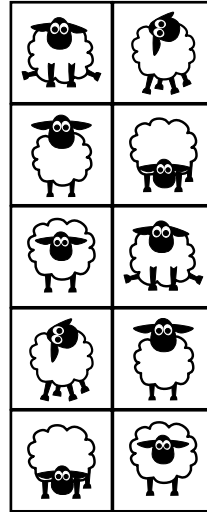
Sheep Strips



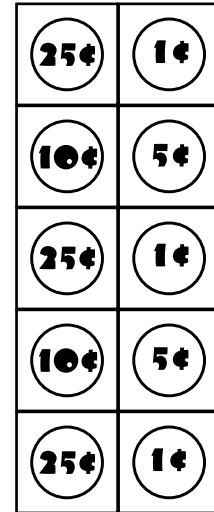
Coin Strips



Sheep Markers



Coin Markers



Game Markers

