

At Home Sunday School

# April 19 Lesson

Bible Passage: Luke 15:1–32

(Parables of the Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son)



## God Redeems

### Remember Verse

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9

### Items to gather:

- Food (chips and salsa, doughnuts, fruit, etc.)
- plates, napkins, utensils, and cups (1 of each per person)
- Water
- marker
- poster or piece of paper
- large paper or a few pieces of paper taped together
- markers
- Wide-mouth jars or cups (2)
- Various items to fill the jars (e.g., buttons, dried beans, beads)
- Coins (2)
- Optional: stopwatch or timer
- Bible
- Cotton balls

# LEADER PREP

*Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.*

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**Inspire** *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

My daughter and I scrambled around on our hands and knees in a pebbly cornfield looking for a wild kitten. The animal's meowing had caught our attention one evening while we were visiting my husband's family in Michigan. We could see the kitten from a distance, but as soon as we approached, she darted away into the cornfields. We set out milk and cat food, which she happily drank and ate. But as soon as we stepped too close, she hopped out of arm's reach.

My daughter, unlike me, was convinced we should continue after this cat. I tried to explain to her that in Michigan cats often lived in barns and fed on field mice. But still she responded, "This cat has no one to take care of her!"

So, an hour later, I was back out in the fields doing my best impression of a cat's meow. To my surprise, as I lay on my stomach facing this cat, she inched toward me. I meowed. The cat came closer. We played this game until the cat came near enough for me to grab her. A surprising sense of relief and accomplishment washed over me. This cat was beautiful, small, scared, and alone in this giant forest of cornstalks, and I had rescued her!

Through this experience, my daughter helped me to understand a very important characteristic of God. As logical as it might be for God to abandon me when I wander away from Him, He still pursues me by sending loving people and words from Scripture to remind me He loves me as His child. How powerful it is to know God rejoices when the lost are found, even after we've been running in the opposite direction! God redeems.

*Amy Palmerton*

**ROCKHARBOR** Church

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**Equip** *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

God rejoices when the lost are found. All of heaven rejoices because God redeems these found ones. In Luke 15, Jesus illustrates this point with three parables describing three situations—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The chapter begins by describing how the religious leaders grumbled about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. It then says, "Then Jesus told them this parable" (v. 3).

According to rabbinic scholar Jacob Neusner, of the 341 rulings of rabbinic tradition the Pharisees followed, 229 were related to "table fellowship." The Pharisees were fanatical about this issue. And the early church struggled with this issue (in the context of including Gentiles in the body of Christ) more than they struggled with anything else.

The Jewish Christian converts felt incredible pressure to stay faithful to the Jewish Law and their heritage. They felt the mandate to stay separate and distinct from the world more keenly in the realm of table fellowship and "breaking bread" with others than just about anywhere else. Sharing a table with others made a statement about your approval of them. Remaining separate from the unclean described much of how Jews operated in the ancient world. After much debate, this issue was eventually resolved for the early church by the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Through these three stories, Jesus taught about God's heart toward those who are lost and found. The Pharisees focused so much on the letter of the Law that they needed correction from Jesus about the spirit of the Law. They had also lost sight of how a faith community operates. Through both Jesus' actions of sharing "table fellowship" with the lost, as well as telling these three parables, He taught that God loves the lost and He is redeemer.

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**Support** *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

Jesus commanded His disciples to see the lost as a harvest field: Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37–38). One way we can do this is by going on local and global mission trips. Another way is simply by developing relationships with people we know who have walked away from God or don't know Him yet. If someone comes to mind as you read this, pray for her. If you feel led, send a note to encourage her and communicate God's love for her. Sometimes the simplest gestures can speak volumes to a lonely heart. Let's pray that God would help us seek all those who are far from Him and, in the power of His love, help bring them into the fold of the faith community.

**CONNECT**//10 minutes



## Feasting Together

Today you're going to have a feast with your kids!

### SUPPLIES

- Food (chips and salsa, doughnuts, fruit, etc.)
- Disposable plates, napkins, utensils, and cups (1 of each per person)
- Water

### SET UP

Fill the cups with water. Set out the food and supplies.

### RELATE

**CONNECT QUESTION:** Open your time by asking this question: **What's the best thing you have ever eaten?**

Tell your family that today you're going to have a feast! Point out the food and encourage everyone to eat while they talk about the questions below. Sit in a circle, ask the question, and allow each person in the circle to answer.

- **Have you ever lost something important to you? Tell us about it.**
- **When was a time you ate some really bad food? What made it so bad?**
- **Where would be the worst place to be lost?**
- **When was a time you rejoiced with someone else?**
- **If you could have any animal as a pet, what would it be?**
- **Have you ever found some money? Where did you find it, and what did you do with it?**

**GATHER**//30 minutes



## Remember Verse

Each week we memorize a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9 (week 1 with this verse)

## Game: Clap a Word

### SUPPLIES

- marker
- poster or piece of paper

### SET UP

Write the verse on a poster or piece of paper

### RELATE

Invite your family to look at the verse written on the board. Say the verse a few times together. Then ask for a volunteer. The volunteer will turn and face away from the verse. The people facing the verse will slowly read it aloud. While (or before) they read it, the leader will point to a word, at which everyone will clap instead of saying the word. The volunteer not looking at the board will then have to guess which word was switched out with a clap. Play until each person has had a chance to guess the switched-out word.

## Storytelling

**Bible Passage: Luke 15:1–32**

**Storytelling Technique: Acting**

**God Redeems**

### RELATE

Today we are going to watch a fun storytelling video and learn about 3 parables that Jesus told to teach about how God redeems. *Redeem* means “buy back.” God wants each person to be His child and to be a part of His family. We are all lost because of sin, but because Jesus is salvation, God can redeem us. God loves the lost and rejoices when we’re found. Jesus used parables to teach this to His listeners, especially the Pharisees and tax collectors. Before we get started, let’s stop and ask God to help us understand what He wants to teach us today. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

We’re going to hear a few parables today: the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son. Through these three parables, Jesus taught about how God redeems.

Okay, let’s hear these parables! Play the storytelling video and then do the discussion questions after.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the shepherd and the woman looked for their lost things?
- Why do you think the father forgave his son? Luke 15:20–24, 32
- How do you think the lost son felt when his father threw him a party? Luke 15:21
- How have you seen God working in your life lately?

**RESPOND**//15 minutes

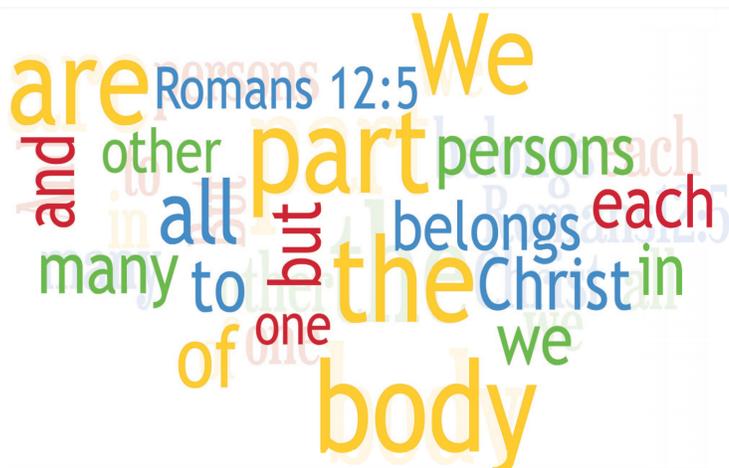


## Craft: Found-in-Him Words

Your family will put together a word group that represents the fact that we have been “found in” God.

### SUPPLIES

- large paper or a few pieces of paper taped together
- markers



### PREPARE AHEAD

Notice the word group example above. Using a marker, write "God Redeems Us" at the top of the paper.

### RELATE

**God redeems us. He also created us to live in community and to experience Him together. We can rejoice every time someone new is "found in" (saved by) Him.** Invite everyone to share ways they can rejoice together. Some ideas could be to sing or dance together—or praise God together by shouting out ways they love Him, ways that He is good, etc. After your family express ways the faith community could rejoice together, do those things!

**God rejoices when lost people are found in Him. When we are "found in" God, that means we have put our faith in Jesus as our Savior. We have repented (turned away) from our sins and decided to follow Him with our whole lives. When we become "found in" (saved by) God, we become His sheep who know His voice and follow Him. If we stray from Him, He is always there to bring us back and redeem us.**

**Let's take some time to create a representation of our thanks to God for being our Redeemer.** Before you begin this time of creative response, give your children the opportunity to know God by choosing to put their faith in His Son.

Invite your family to create a word group that represents the fact that they have been "found in" (saved by) God. Show them the printed word group example. Then invite everyone to write their names diagonal, sideways, upside-down, lengthwise, large, and/or small onto the paper. When finished, look at the word group and praise God that these people have chosen to put their faith in Jesus—and become "found in" (saved by) Him.

## Game: Lost Coin

In this game, children will try to find a lost coin.

### SUPPLIES

- Wide-mouth jars or cups (2)
- Various items to fill the jar (e.g., buttons, dried beans, beads)
- Coins (2)
- Optional: stopwatch or timer

### PREPARE AHEAD

Fill up the jars with the various items. Put a coin in each jar, making sure they're buried well among the items.

### RELATE

**Today we heard a parable that Jesus told about a woman who found one lost coin. What did the woman do**

**when she found it?** Invite answers. **Right. She rejoiced! Let's play a game in which we also try to find a lost coin.**

Split your family into two teams. Hand each team a jar. Have each team choose one volunteer to search for his team's coin for 30 seconds. On your signal, let each team member hunt for the coin. Invite everyone to cheer on their team member as she searches. (She cannot dump the items out of the jar!) The first team whose volunteer finds the coin wins the game. Play until each person has had a chance to search for the coin. Optional: Allow each person to play individually. Use the timer to see who can find the coin the fastest.

**BLESS//5 minutes**



#### **SUPPLIES**

- Bible
- Cotton balls

#### **RELATE**

Gather your family and read the blessing from Ephesians 2:13:

**But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

Then, speak to each child one at a time, saying, (Child's name), **you can never be so far away that God's love can't find you.** Hand the child a cotton ball. **Sometimes, like the coin, or the son, or the sheep (hold up a cotton ball), we get lost. But remember that you have a Good Shepherd who has bought you back and will never give up on you.**

**May you have God's heart for the lost. May you remember that God loves you and redeems you!**