

SPRING 2026 WEEK 9
YOUNGER KIDS (K-2)

GOD IS MERCIFUL

LUKE 15

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 5:8

ATTRIBUTE: *Merciful – God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.*

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus told these parables to teach about God's love and mercy. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus loves and seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

STORY POINT: Jesus told these parables to teach about God's love and mercy.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Let's set the scene: It's Monday morning, you're running late for work, where you have an important meeting scheduled first thing. But before you can make it to work, you have to drop off the kids at school. And before you can drop the kids off at school, you'll need to get everyone in the car, which means you'll need the car keys. And therein lies the problem. Where are the car keys?! A panicked search ensues, sofa cushions are tossed to the ground, bags are emptied, pockets are turned inside out. You have the car, you have the kids, you have the backpacks, lunchboxes, and your wallet, but without the keys, no one can leave.

Every time I read the three parables that Jesus shares in Luke 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son—I can't help but imagine such a scene. A valuable target that's worth the risk and resources to go and get.

From these three stories, it's fair to ask, "Who is it that Jesus is after?" A close look at the context where Jesus shared these parables helps us understand.

Jesus has been approached by tax collectors and sinners. These are the worst of the worst in the eyes of the religious people of the day. But there's another audience as well. The Pharisees and scribes had gathered. And while they complained about Jesus being with such terrible sinners, Jesus started to make a point that leveled the playing field.

These three parables illustrate that Jesus is concerned about the far-off sinner who has either wandered from faithfulness or has yet to taste and see the goodness of God. But He is also concerned with the outwardly righteous, inwardly sinful Christians who consider themselves deserving of the grace of God. Both are in great need of the love of God.

As we read Luke 15 it should stir our hope for those around us that are far from God and in need of salvation or restoration. But it should also cause us to see our own need for the love and grace of God.

The love of God is relentless, coming after us in our time of need. Whether He is leading us to Himself in salvation or leading us to repentance from our sin, Jesus is in pursuit. We are all always in need of His love and grace.

TERMS TO KNOW

Agape: the special unconditional love of God the Father for Jesus (John 3:35), of God the Father for an individual believer (John 14:21), and of Christ's love for a disciple (John 13:23).

WELCOME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to build relationships and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY *Have you ever lost something that was important to you? Did you ever find what you had lost? How did you feel when you found it?*

ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the activity page.

SESSION STARTER (10 MINUTES)

FIND IT!

Before this activity, hide three to five pennies in the room. Explain to the kids that you have lost precious coins and you need their help to find them. Challenge kids to go around the room and find all the pennies. Celebrate with loud claps and shouts when a kid brings you a lost penny that has been found. Encourage kids to join in the celebration as well.

SAY *God loves all people and sent Jesus to seek people who are lost. We celebrated when you found the lost coins. Our story today teaches that all of heaven rejoices when a person turns to Jesus and is saved. Let's get ready to hear our Bible story to learn more about the love God has for us.*

BIBLE STORY

INTRODUCE THE SESSION AND ATTRIBUTE (3 MINUTES)

SAY *Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so excited you are here. Together, we get to study true stories from the Bible.*

*Each week this year we'll be learning a new attribute of God. An attribute is something that helps us describe a person or thing. For instance, one attribute of a circle is that it is round. Knowing about the attributes of God helps us understand him better. **This week, our attribute is merciful. Merciful means that God doesn't give his children the punishment they deserve.** He shows grace to his people.*

REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 MINUTE)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review and show where today's story falls in the larger story of the Bible.

PRAY (1 MINUTE)

SAY *Before we open our Bibles to begin the story, let's pray together. Pray with me: 'Dear God, please open our ears to listen and our eyes to see the truth from Your Word. Give us hearts to believe. Amen.'*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY (10 MINUTES)

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD'S LOVE

Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus teach. Jesus told them three parables to teach them about God's love. **Jesus said, "If a man has 100 sheep and loses one, he leaves the 99 sheep and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it. Then he tells his friends and neighbors, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost sheep!' In heaven, there is more joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God than for 99 people who did not wander off."**

Jesus also said, "If a woman has 10 silver coins and loses one of them, she lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it. Then she tells her friends and neighbors, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost coin!'"

Then Jesus repeated, "In heaven, there is joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God."

Jesus told a third story. "A man had two sons. The younger son said, 'Father, give me my inheritance.' The father gave his son his share, and the son went to another country. He wasted his money and lived foolishly. There was a famine, and the people in that country did not have enough food. The son got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry, even the pigs' food looked tasty.

"The younger son decided to go back to his father and admit he was wrong. He would ask to work for his father like the servants.

"The younger son headed home. He was still a long way away when **his father saw him coming. His father ran to him,** threw his arms around him, and kissed him. **The son began to apologize.** 'I have sinned against God and against you,' he said.

"But the father told his servants, 'Let's celebrate with a feast! Bring the best robe and put it on my son! This son of mine was lost, and now he is found!'"

"At this time, **the older son** came from the fields and **heard music at the house.** **'What's going on?'** he asked one of the servants.

"Your brother is here,' the servant said. 'Your father is celebrating.'

"The older brother was angry! He refused to go to the feast. The father asked him to come inside. **The older brother said, 'I never disobeyed you! But you never threw a party for me.'**

"The father said, "Everything I have is yours. We have to celebrate. Your brother was lost and is found."

Christ Connection: Jesus told these parables to teach about God's love and mercy. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus loves and seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY In today's story, Jesus used the examples of a lost sheep, a lost coin, and two sons who were lost to teach about God's love. Without Jesus, all people are lost and far from God. But no one is too far from Him to be saved or too lost to be found by Him. He loves each person and wants all people to receive forgiveness and the free gift of salvation.

What happened each time a lost item or person was found? [Allow responses.] A celebration occurred! Jesus taught that all of heaven celebrates when a sinner repents and is saved. We repent when we turn away from sin and turn to Jesus.

Jesus told a story of a son who left home, wasted his money, and had nothing to eat but pig's food. He was very lost and had nothing. Then he realized he could beg his father to become a servant. Do you remember how the father responded when his lost son came home? Was he angry with his son? [Allow responses.] No! He rejoiced that his son was home! He threw a party and invited his friends to share in his joy.

How did the older brother respond to the father celebrating? [Allow responses.] He was angry. The older brother was just as lost as the younger son. Even though the older brother never left home, his heart showed that he did not truly love his father or his brother. He wanted all that was his father's, but didn't show love toward his father or his brother.

God searches for the lost and rejoices when they come to Him. When we realize our sin and need for salvation, God is not waiting to punish. He is merciful! He receives us happily, with open arms, just like the father in the story. When someone repents and asks Jesus to save him, God rejoices that another person has come to Him.

GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY *Jesus told these parables to teach about God's love. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus loves and seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.*

GROUP DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY *Why did Jesus come to earth?*

Guide kids to understand that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Remind kids that Jesus didn't come for those who think they don't need Him, but for those who are willing to confess their sin, repent, and turn to Him to be saved.

SAY *How does this story help us understand that God is merciful?*

Allow kids to share parts of the story that help us understand mercy. Remind them that God shows mercy to us just as the father showed mercy to the prodigal son.

SAY *How does Jesus bring us back to God?*

Prompt kids to think about the lost coin and the lost sheep and how the woman and the shepherd went searching for them. Remind kids that this is what Jesus has done for us. Tell kids that Jesus came to earth to find sinners, tell them the good news of the gospel, and then give His life to save us from our sin. Help kids understand that Jesus brings us back to God when we place our faith in Him and accept His forgiveness.

PRAY (2 MINUTES)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Apply.

APPLY

REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 MINUTES)

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 15. Tell kids that the Gospel of Luke was written by a man named Luke who was a doctor. Explain that Luke wrote this book to help his readers believe that Jesus was born to fulfill God's promises of salvation. Direct kids to look through Luke in their Bibles and see that it is the longest of the four Gospels.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 15:21-22 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Consider pointing out the location of Perea (F6) along the eastern shore of the Jordan River. Tell kids that Jesus traveled through this area on His way from Galilee to Jerusalem.

SAY *Did the son do anything to deserve or earn the father's love and favor? [Allow responses.] No, he did not. In fact, he had made many mistakes that dishonored the father, but the son did not have to do anything to earn his father's love.*

The same is true for all people. God loves and seeks to save all people. We do not have to clean ourselves up to come to God or do anything to earn salvation. He is merciful! Salvation is a free gift from God. God demonstrated His love by sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sin on the cross. Rather than try to earn God's love, we live to honor God because we love Him.

ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

CELEBRATE!

Provide each kid with a blank greeting card and markers. Remind kids that God and all of heaven celebrates when someone trusts in Jesus and is saved. Explain that we have opportunities to celebrate when people are saved. Challenge kids to create a card that will be given to a new believer in the church.

Consider using a dry erase board to write simple messages kids can copy such as *Congrats!*, *We're excited for you!*, or *We rejoice with you!* Encourage kids to draw pictures on the cards. Once everyone has completed their cards, pray for the people who will receive them and give them to a church leader who will be able to distribute them.

SAY *These cards will be an encouragement to new believers and help them know that they are loved, not only by God, but by the church. Any time someone trusts in Jesus as Savior, we have an opportunity to celebrate!*

REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.

BONUS CONTENT

Use these activities as time allows

QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 MINUTES)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

If there is only one God, how can He be with everyone at the same time?

How does knowing God is always with you help you trust that He loves you?

MISSIONS MOMENT (3 MINUTES)

Display the “Safadi Family Photos” printable. Remind kids that Amer and Victoria Safadi are missionaries partnering with Lakota Hills Baptist Church in Cincinnati to reach people who speak Arabic in the area. Tell kids that Lakota Hills Baptist Church also offers English classes to help those who want to learn English. Explain that the English classes also help the Safadis and church members build relationships with the people. Tell kids that as the Safadis build relationships they have more opportunities to tell Arabic speakers about Jesus.

SAY *The Safadis ask every Arab person or family they meet to come to their church or to their house to have tea and talk with them. Amer and Victoria know that they need to build relationships with the people living in the community to create trust. God uses relationship building to help others believe in Jesus.*

Pray that the Safadis continue to build relationships with the Arabic-speaking people in Cincinnati. Pray that their church will continue to grow to tell more people about Jesus in their community.

