

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 15:1-10

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Who are these people invited to table with Jesus, grumble the Pharisees? How dare he eat with sinners! These are people who have blown it, know it, own it, and choose to go beyond it. These grateful people know the sweetness of forgiveness and its power.

Theme: Rejoice with me: the lost is found!

Before Class: If this is to be your first session with this group, consider looking at the suggestions in Proper 18 for getting started. For ideas on getting acquainted, look at the Resources page for the "Get to Know You" activities (<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>) of Lesson Plans that Work.

You will need copies of the scripture or Bibles and copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Beginning: Invite the group to share stories of the lost being found: a child you were caring for who wandered off, perhaps you remember being that child yourself, or something of great value to you that you thought you had lost and then found.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, that when we return to you with penitent hearts you eagerly and lovingly welcome us back into your presence. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 15:1-10 The scripture today will be read in three sections. Invite one person to read verses 1-2.

Questions:

- Invite the group to try to identify with the courage it would have taken these "tax collectors and sinners" to come to a dinner with Jesus when the Pharisees are lurking nearby.
- Who were the Pharisees? (Religious leaders committed to making sure that rules were kept.)
- I wonder, if this were taking place in our town and in our place, who might be the Pharisees and who might be the "sinners?" (Who are the invisible ones, the shunned ones, the excluded ones? Who are the focused rule-keepers?)

Verses 3-7 Invite a different person to read this portion of the Scripture.

Questions:

- If this story were set in our town today how might Jesus change the story to fit our locale?

- I wonder what a modern example of this story would be since most of us probably do not shepherd sheep? What other example might fit our situation better? (A child lost on a camping trip, for example.)
- Invite the group to think, privately, of a time they knew they had blown it and they experienced forgiveness once they had owned the situation. Without necessarily naming the transgression, invite them to offer words to describe how they felt when they knew they had been forgiven.

Verses 8-9 Invite a different person to read this portion of the Scripture.

Questions:

- Invite the group to think, privately, about a time they thought they had lost something of value and then found it. Ask if anyone would be willing to share what was lost and how it was found. If they did something to celebrate the restoration of the lost, would they share what that was?

Verse 10 Invite a different person to read this portion of the Scripture.

Questions:

- Is this picture of angels celebrating with God at your repentance one that comes quickly to mind when you have chosen to repent? And if not, why do we think that is so?

Getting Closure: If you have time, invite the group (or groups of 2-3 people) to write rewrite this scripture lesson for today. When they are done, invite them to share with one another.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God, for reminding us that if we are lost, we will be found and that you will celebrate our return. Help us be mindful of your presence in our lives. Amen.

Luke 15:1-10

15 Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.’

3 So he told them this parable: ⁴ ‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

8 ‘Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’

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