

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**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 your first session with the children, you may want to look at the get-acquainted suggestions at the beginning of last week’s Lesson Plans for Older Children (Proper 18). Also refer to last week’s lesson for making name tents and the usage of journals. 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.

**Beginning:** Ask the children if any of them can remember a time when they were very little, and they got lost. Perhaps lost from their mother in a grocery store, maybe lost in a mall, or wandered away at a campsite, for example. If they do not remember anything, you could share a story of your own (either as the lost one or as the parent of a lost one).

Then ask the children to try to imagine what it might feel like to be lost because you had chosen to run away and now you are sorry you did. Tell the children that today's story has to do with people who were lost and were looking for a way to come back.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you God, for always finding for us when we get lost. Amen.

**The Story: Luke 15:10** Invite four children to read this passage. First reader: verses 1-2. Second reader: verses 3-7. Third reader: verses 8-9. Last reader: verse 10.

**Questions for verses 1-2**

- If Jesus were speaking at our school today, who are people that cause trouble at school who might be there to hear Jesus? (Bullies? Tattletales, etc.)
- Who would be the people that would ask: what are THESE people doing here?

**Questions for verses 3-7**

- Most people in our country do not make their living taking care of sheep. So, if Jesus were telling this story at our school, what do you think he would tell about instead of sheep? Can

you help Jesus by telling his story for our school? What might be lost? (Children who do not have a home to live in. Children who do not speak our language?)

- Encourage the children to paraphrase the story, setting it at their school, today.

### **Questions for verses 8-9**

- Pretend that Jesus is telling this story of the lost coin to us here in our class. What example might he use for the item that is lost? (My favorite CD? My baseball glove, the book I checked out from the library?)
- Encourage the children to paraphrase the story, setting it in our town, today.

### **Questions for verse 10**

- How would you define the word "sinner?" (Someone who has ignored God or turned away from God.)
- How would you define the word "repent?" (To turn around, change your mind, decide to change your behavior.)
- If we do something wrong, and we are sorry, what does this verse tell us about God's reaction? (Even the angels will be happy.)

### **Activity: Walking in their shoes**

Invite the children to imagine a person who has blown it big time and pretend to be that person. They could be the class bully, someone who has stolen someone else's work, a sports figure on steroids. Each child can play a different sinner. Then, invite each child to tell the story of the sinner — what bad stuff they have done. Then tell them they have all heard Jesus talking and decided to change their ways. Invite them to tell how surprised they were that Jesus accepted them even though they had done bad stuff and how cool it was to be able to start over.

**Option:** If the children are using journals, suggest they write a letter to themselves, from Jesus, in which Jesus tells them that something they are not proud of is forgiven and they don't have to do that anymore or worry about it anymore. Allow time for the children to write or sketch in their journals.

**Getting Closure:** Tell the children to be thinking about the sinner they chose. As a group, come up with strategies for these people for the next time they are tempted to do something bad.

- What might the first step be? (Could be stop and notice. Say Oops.)
- What can they do once they have noticed they have blown it? (Tell God they are sorry and mean it.)
- Then what could they do? (Celebrate! They have been forgiven.)
- And then? (Be on the lookout to try to keep it from happening again.)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you are always ready to forgive us and celebrate that we have come back. Amen.

## Luke 15:1-10

15 Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup> 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: <sup>4</sup> ‘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? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup> 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.” <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> 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.” <sup>10</sup> 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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