

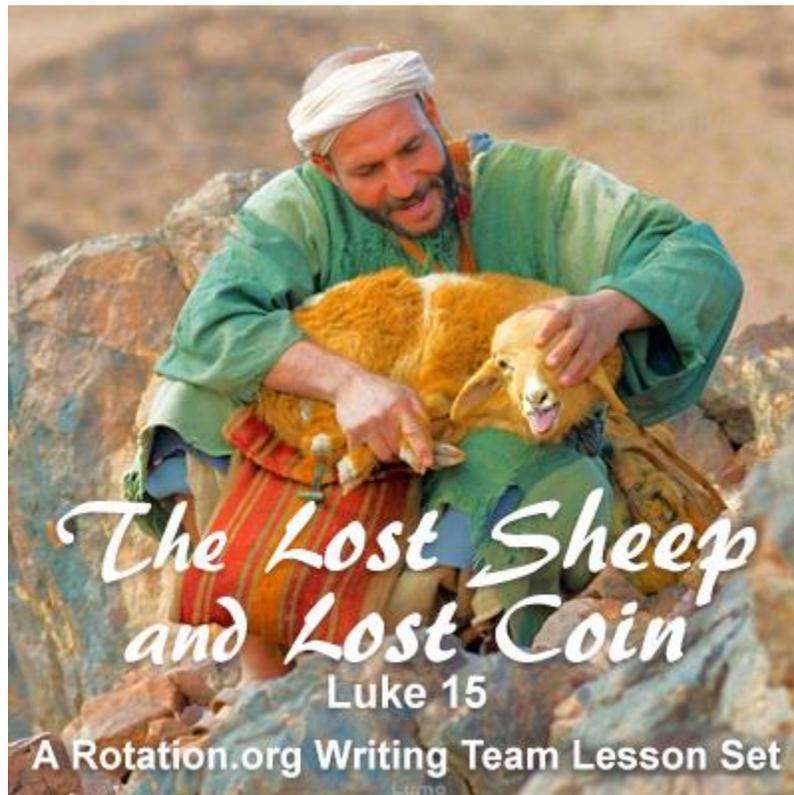
# (WT) Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin ~ Bible Background

 [The Writing Team](#) Creative Lessons for Creative Teachers

The Rotation.org Writing Team's

## Parable of the Lost Sheep Parable of the Lost Coin

### Bible Background



### Scripture

Lost Sheep: [Luke 15: 1-7](#)

Astray Sheep: [Matthew 18: 10-14](#)

\*Which version should you choose? Read on!

## Lost Coin: [Luke 15: 8-10](#)

**Key Verse:** "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? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices." [Luke 15:4-5](#) (NRSVue)

### **Lesson objectives for all the lessons in the set:**

1. Students will be able to retell the basic story of the Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin to the best of their ability in their own words.
2. Students will learn that God's grace and love for them never gives up—that it is the will of God that every lost sheep and lost coin be found and reunited with God. (Matthew 18:14)
3. Students will understand what the terms "lost," "astray," and "found" mean in these parables with regard to their relationship with God and how they feel about themselves in the world, what things can make a person become lost or go astray, and what it means to be "found" by God.
4. Students will learn some compassionate and gracious strategies for helping others who may be "astray" or "lost" when it comes to believing in God, making good choices, going to church, and living a godly life.



## **Bible Background**

**Few Bible verses so vividly and succinctly put the "good" in the Gospel news like the Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin.**

**In the presence of "excluders" like the Pharisees and scribes, who didn't think Jesus should care about sinners, Jesus teaches them and us that **God is for us and not against us**, that he has come to seek and save, and not condemn or abandon.**

These parables are a message of "radical" grace (free, unexpected, surprising, extreme, unconditional) that would eventually lead to Jesus' arrest and condemnation by the self-righteous religious establishment—and bring hope to the world. In contrast to so many other aloof and judgmental images of God, in these two tiny parables, Jesus teaches us that **God doesn't give up on us, that God will find all those who are lost or gone astray and carry them home rejoicing.**



These parables are especially good news to the "little ones" (Matthew 18) who because of their family situation, relationships with others, personal struggles, and doubts can experience feelings of being abandoned, unworthy, unloved, or led in the wrong direction.

While these parables certainly speak to God's plan for salvation, they also remind us that each of us "counts" to God. God knows our hearts and troubles, our "lostness"—and promises to be with us, to put us on his shoulders and bring us home ~ always.

♥ By sharing the good news of these parables with our children, they will know that they are always unconditionally loved by God no matter who they are, what has happened to them, what they have done, or what they are going through.

♥ They will learn that they are special to God, that they count, they matter, and are never far from God's seeking presence even in the darkest moments.

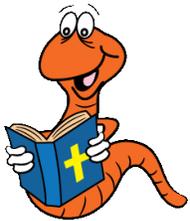
♥ They will begin to learn that, like God, we should reach out to others who feel lost or unloved and comfort them with grace and joy.

**The parables of the Lost Sheep and Coin are *great* news to everyone who has ever doubted, ever felt lost in the world, or strayed away from their faith, or ever been told they are "outside" of God's grace.** These parables are a great hope

to everyone who feels alone, unworthy, abandoned, or fears the fires of hell. God will not give up on you, says Jesus. God is looking for you. God has an eternity to find you, heal you, and restore you to himself. There's "nothing in all creation" that can separate us from the will of God. Nothing can stop the JOY God has planned.

**The parables of the Lost Sheep and Coin are also a comforting word to everyone who has ever worried about a friend, family member, or student** who has wandered away from God or his flock, or down a dark path. God the good shepherd and searching woman know where they are and will find them and restore them in God's own time. Says Jesus after telling the parable of the sheep in Matthew 18:14, ***"it is NOT the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost."*** God's will be done!

**The parables of the Lost Sheep and Coin also remind us to REJOICE both in our being found and when God turns other people around.** We are not to hold our past against ourselves, and not to hold other people's past mistakes against them. Apparently, the 99 need to be reminded of this because Luke uses the words "rejoice" and "joy" FIVE TIMES in our passage. And in Matthew 18's version of the parable, Jesus is instructing his disciples about welcoming others. Lost sheep not only need to be rescued and healed, ***they need people who will rejoice with them, not judge them.***



### **Three Surprising Things in These Parables**

One of the wonderful things about reading and studying the Bible is discovering its surprises. And often as not, the surprises reveal the heart of the message.

**SURPRISE #1: Matthew and Luke's versions of the Lost Sheep parable are significantly different**

Our lesson plans use Luke's version with the kids, but let the teachers know there's another version of the parable in Matthew --and they are not exactly the same parable!

[A side-by-side comparison of Matthew and Luke's versions](#) reveals significant and important differences in how Jesus' parable of the Lost Sheep was remembered and used to teach in the early church.

In Matthew 18, when Jesus tells the parable of the "**astray**" sheep, he is in the middle of addressing his disciples about how to treat fellow believers, especially the "little ones"—who aren't necessarily children, but are those who with "of little faith" or are new followers. Contrast that to Luke 15's version of the parable where Jesus is clearly addressing the Pharisees and scribes who were accusing him of spending time with outcasts and sinners.

Matthew uses the word "astray" to describe the sheep --a word which can be translated as "misled" or "distracted."

Luke uses the word "lost" to describe the sheep —which can be translated as those who are "outcast," or (spiritually) "perishing." "Lost" can also mean apart from God, lost their way, lost in sin, those without faith. ★ *See the word studies below for more about the differences between Matthew's "astray" and Luke's "lost" sheep!*

*For the purposes of teaching children, our lesson plans stick with Luke's version, but some lesson plans do explore what it means to be misled or wander away distracted from God.*

## **SURPRISE #2: In the Parable of the Lost Coin, Jesus depicts God as a woman!**

It's quite possible that you were NOT taught to think of the woman in Luke's Parable of the Lost Coin as anyone other than "just" a diligent woman. But **Luke clearly places the parable of the Searching Woman right in-between two other parables where the searching figure is God—the Searching Shepherd and the Prodigal Son's Father.** All three of these parables have God doing the searching—a shepherd, a woman, and a father, and all three find, celebrate, and invite others to celebrate with them.

(\*This is not the first time God is described in the Bible as a woman or mother, and it's not the first time for Luke either. See [Luke 13:34](#).)

## **Surprise #3 The coin in the parable of the Lost Coin isn't just any coin.**



Jesus' Jewish audience would have understood that the ten coins symbolically represented the Covenant—the "marriage" contract between God and his people. Indeed, many women in Jesus' day wore these coins as a sign of their marriage. To lose one of those coins would have represented a symbolic breaking of the Covenant—a contract Jesus came to "fulfill." In the time of Jesus and in later centuries and cultures, such coins were the symbol of a betrothal (marriage) between a couple and were worn by the woman as either part of her bridal veil or sewn into her clothing. (Over the centuries, the Covenant coins morphed into the tradition of engagement and wedding rings.)

God does not abandon some of his children just because he already has many. *This is God's house.* God's Covenant promise is made to each of us and is unbreakable.

### **A Closer Look at the Text**

Matthew 18 and Luke's 15's retelling of the Parable of the Sheep share the following things in common with each other, and with the Parable of the Lost Coin in Luke 15:

1. the 99, the 9 coins
2. the 1 sheep, the 1 coin that is lost
3. a searching shepherd or woman (i.e., God)
4. rejoicing when the sheep or coin is found, and a call to others to rejoice

Other than those shared points, the details and vocabulary of Matthew and Luke's versions diverge in intriguing ways. Read on for some examples!

**Matthew and Luke use similar but not exactly the same word to describe the sheep.**

**Matthew 18:12** uses [the Greek word "planao"](#) to describe the sheep that has separated from the flock. This isn't the common Greek word for "lost" at all. Rather, "planao" means "to be led astray," "to wander off," "to be deceived or misled." It suggests a follower who has been deceived and misled by the wrong message or

wrong messenger. When you look at the entire 18th chapter of Matthew, the reason for describing the sheep as "astray" becomes clear. The entire chapter is devoted to how we should treat fellow believers, including the "little ones"—those of little or new faith, or who have fallen away or been misled. Granted, in English "astray" may also sound like someone who is "lost," but read on for more insight!

**Luke 15** uses [the more common Greek word for "lost" which is "apollymi."](#) This word doesn't just mean "lost" as in "I don't know where I am," instead, "apollymi" is also a Greek metaphor for "useless," to "perish," or "to be destroyed." It can describe people considered "outcast," "un-save-able," "trash," "unworthy," or "the condemned." It's a word that the Pharisees and scribes in Luke 15 (who are confronting Jesus) might have used to describe those who were unrighteous and "not worth saving"—the very people Jesus was accused of eating with. While it doesn't seem strange to us now, to many in Jesus' audiences, the idea that the Messiah had come to save the unworthy was news to them! Many had expected the Messiah to do just the opposite --to get rid of the unworthy, not save them.

**How can the one short parable have two important variations in scripture?** The differences we read between the Gospels may occasionally reflect the differences introduced by Jesus himself who, like all good teachers, undoubtedly reused and tailored his stories throughout his ministry for different needs and audiences. To the disciples he's tailored the parable of the sheep to the problem of falling away. To the religious authorities, he may have tailored his parable to talk about the lowly they were ignoring. Matthew's parable of the sheep may also reflect how the parable was *remembered* in the early church by those struggling to deal with believers who had little faith or who had backslid in their faith.

### **Isaiah 53's "Astray" Sheep**

**Jesus** often quotes the prophet Isaiah, and undoubtedly drew his inspiration for the shepherd who intercedes for his lost sheep from **Isaiah 53's song of the Suffering Servant:**

*"We all we like sheep have gone astray,"* and it is the Lord who *"made intercession for the transgressors."* (Isaiah 53:6 and 12).

"Make intercession" in Hebrew literally means, "[to meet, reach, or join.](#)" The Lord is the one who reaches the sheep. The Lord is the one who joins what has been separated. Intercession = salvation.

Like Matthew's sheep, Isaiah's sheep are also "astray" or "[taw-aw](#)" as [Isaiah says in Hebrew](#). "Taw-aw" is often used in Hebrew to describe someone who is "wandering," "in error," "sinful," and even "staggering as if intoxicated."

## Psalm 139: the parable from the sheep's point of view?

Likewise, [Psalm 139](#) could easily have been on Jesus' mind when he taught these parables, only **Psalm 139 describes the steadfastness of God from the sheep's point of view!**



<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
<sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,"  
<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

Whether we've gone astray on our own or been misled, or are just lost in our own sinful ways, through Matthew, Luke, Psalm 139, and Isaiah 53, Jesus reminds us that no sheep is ever too lost to be found.

## The Woman and the Coin



In Luke 15:8-10, a woman loses one of ten silver pieces (aka "drachma" in the Greek, i.e. "coins"), then lights a lamp and sweeps her floor to look for the lost coin. When she finds it, she calls her neighbors to rejoice with her.

As mentioned, the first surprise is that the woman in the parable is a stand-in for God --just like the shepherd and father are stand-ins for God in Luke 15's other parables, But *unlike* the parable of the Lost Sheep where the sheep is at fault, in the parable of the Lost Coin it is the woman who loses the thing of great value. Does this mean God is a loser of coins? No. It simply means that not everything in a parable should be psycho-analyzed. Whereas the sheep got itself lost, Jesus doesn't say how the coin became lost, instead, Jesus focuses on what GOD does, and so should we.

The main point of both parables is that God searches diligently UNTIL what has been lost is found. And we are called to rejoice with God when it happens. (Some people, like the Pharisees, teach a stingy God who saves only the worthy. Jesus, on the other hand, teaches that God is a lavish sower of seeds, a relentless finder of the lost, and a joyful thrower of parties and banquets.)

GOD DOESN'T GIVE UP—no matter how many people he has saved from the wilderness or from the dirt, God searches for every last lost sheep and lost coin. Another way the Bible says this is when it calls God a "jealous" God -- which in the best sense of the word "jealous" means God will eventually find every last sheep and coin and bring them to himself. Why? Because God loves each soul, and each soul's salvation is the personal mission of God.

## **The Rejoicing!**

One of the main themes Matthew and Luke's parables of the sheep and coin share in common is that of REJOICING. In fact, you might even call these "**The Parables About Rejoicing**" as much as "lost."

**Luke's Jesus uses the word "rejoice" four times in a single verse!** (Luke 15:4). Matthew only mentions rejoicing once in the parable but makes welcoming

new believers and those with little faith a key point in the chapter. This suggests that to Jesus "rejoicing" was a very important part of the message he wanted to deliver to his disciples and detractors, and it was an important message within the early church.

The opposite of rejoicing in these stories might be "still holding a grudge," "still judging a person by their past and sins." And we know from experience that the church can sometimes feel like a place of judgment, not rejoicing; a place where "the regulars" are not welcoming to the newcomers and visitors. Sunday School classes are not immune to this. Teachers can sometimes send subtle signals about whom they "favor" and call upon. Kids can be very cliquy and "that's my seat" to others.

### **Rejoice = Welcome**

Both Matthew and Luke use the Greek word [chairo](#), "rejoice," to describe the shepherd's joy: "**Chairo**" is pronounced something like "high-roh" with a guttural "h" as in "Hhh-eye-row." "Chairo" means happy, cheerful, glad. It's a greeting that has come down to us as "Hail" and "Hi" in English but its biblical usage is one of joy and welcome and not mere politeness.

It's a common human response to look on new people as outsiders, or those who have "returned" as something lesser than those who "stayed," or the older as somehow better than the newer in faith. These parables remind us that we are all saved by the grace of God, and need to treat each other with the same love and respect that searched for us and laid us upon his shoulder.

### **The Repenting**

**Luke's versions of the parable of the sheep and coin each conclude with a line about "the sinner who repents."** Some scholars consider the last sentences of Luke's two "lost" parables to be a later "explanatory" addition by a well-meaning early Church scribe. Matthew 18 doesn't mention a repenting sheep. None of the lessons in this set get into that idea either. Instead, with children we chose to focus on what the parables focus on --which is our amazing, relentless God --and the comfort and hope it fills us with.

Depending on your theological tradition, you may view the "repentance of sins" as either what a sheep must do in order to be carried home by the shepherd, OR what a sheep **should do** *in response to being carried home and welcomed back into God's flock*. In Reformed theology, repentance typically begins in a moment and continues through a lifetime. This is otherwise known as the doctrine of "justification" (I believe) and "sanctification" (help me lead a holy life).

"Repentance" literally means a change in direction, a turning back to God. But isn't it interesting that Jesus seems to be saying that it is God who changes direction! It is God who leaves the 99 and comes looking. It is God who gets down on his hands and knees to look for his coin in the dirt. It is God who rejoices, not the sheep! *How fascinating.*

### **What causes sheep to go astray? A coin to become lost?**

That's a complicated question with as many answers as there are sheep! Each lesson in the Writing Team's lesson set addresses what "lost" can mean to children. Matthew and Luke's parables suggest a sheep can be led astray, pushed away, distracted, or simply think they are not worthy of being found. Jesus met many people who thought they were unworthy of God's grace, and each one he redeemed.

- Some people are easily led astray by others (including false teachers, tempters, well-meaning family members, and the wrong crowd).
- Some people go astray because they don't take the time to grow their faith, learn how to talk with and listen to God, know his word better, or seek the Spirit's help.
- Some sheep get lost in sin and can't break free of their habit, addiction, or its appeal.
- Some sheep think they are unworthy or unwelcome, that God can't forgive them, or maybe even God isn't really there.
- Many sheep slowly slip away from the flock because other things are more entertaining or easier. They don't take the time to worship or be with other growing Christians, or they let the actions of others push them away.

In the parable of the Lost Coin, the coin doesn't make itself lost or astray. Jesus simply says it becomes lost and focuses the rest of the parable's attention on what the woman does to find what is hers.

### **A Note about Sheep from a Shepherd**

We are blessed to have an actual sheep rancher on the Writing Team for this lesson set! She reminded us that sheep aren't dumb, they just aren't good at protecting themselves. They are creatures of habit and prone to follow whichever sheep is leading, and thus need a good shepherd to guide and take care of them. Don't we all?

**The truth is that every sheep strays and gets lost from time to time.** What we need is hope and grace, and that's what Jesus preaches. We also need to find other sheep we can feel safe with and not feel judged or misled. That is the essence of what Matthew 18 is all about: caring for each other with grace and love.

*Written for the Rotation.org Writing Team by Rev. Neil MacQueen (PCUSA)  
Copyright Rotation.org Inc.*

# Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

## A Video Workshop Lesson

### Summary of Activities

Students will watch and discuss Nest Video's "The Lost is Found"

### Scripture for the Lesson

**Lost Sheep:** [Luke 15:1-7](#)

**Astray Sheep:** [Matthew 18:10-14](#)

**Lost Coin:** [Luke 15:8-10](#) (To include this parable in the lesson, use the "More Class Time" suggestions found at the end of the lesson plan.)

**Key Verse:** "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? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices." [Luke 15:4-5](#) (NRSV)

### Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org for insights on this story and this set's complete list of objectives.

### Preparation and Materials

- Read the Bible Background and scripture.

# **(WT) Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin ~ A Movement and Music Workshop**

 [The Writing Team](#) Creative Lessons for Creative Teachers

Rotation.org Writing Team

## **Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin**

### **A Movement & Music Workshop**

**(or A Children's Worship Activity)**

#### **Summary of Activities**

Students will learn and celebrate the Parable of the Lost Sheep and its meaning using a free video from New Walk K!ds Worship that shows simple body and hand motions for the hit contemporary song "Reckless Love of God" by Cory Asbury. They will reflect on how they are the lost sheep and the lost coin as they sing an alternate version of the song with words from the Parable of the Lost Coin, and then will explore life applications.



## Scripture for the Lesson

Lost Sheep: [Luke 15:1-7](#)

Astray Sheep: [Matthew 18:10-14](#)

Lost Coin: [Luke 15:8-10](#)

**Key Verse:** "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? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices." Luke 15:4-5 (NRSV)

## Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org for insights on this story and this set's complete list of objectives.

## Preparation and Materials

- Read the Bible Background and scripture.
- Flipchart or whiteboard and markers
- Flashlight
- Write the scripture phrases (below) on the flipchart or board before class begins.
- Print the [PDF of the Reckless Love - Lost Coin version lyrics](#). If you have a large group, consider writing the words on "cue cards" in advance, or print it on extra large paper.
- Print the [PDF of the Reckless Love lyrics with key motions](#) for reference in the reflection activity.
- Preview and prepare to show on a big screen TV or a projection device in your classroom the short video "[Reckless Love Motions](#)" by New Walk K!ds Worship. (This four-minute video is available free online. New Walk K!ds Worship developed this video for their children's worship; they have more videos on their YouTube channel. If you'd prefer to use another song, see the "Alternate" option at the end of this lesson.)

★ See the technical notes at the end of this lesson for how to use your cellphone to show YouTube videos on a TV or a screen, and how to download the videos for teaching purposes if you can't connect to the Internet in your classroom.

---

## Lesson Plan

### Opening Scripture Reading and Movement Activity

Welcome students and tell them what they're going to be doing and learning today.

#### 1. Scripture phrases for motions



Assign individual students the following phrases from the two parables. Write the assigned students' names next to the phrases that you have written on the board. *Note: these words come from the NRSV. If you're using a different translation, adjust the phrases to match it.*

1. coming near to listen to him (Jesus)
2. Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling
3. a hundred sheep and losing one of them
4. leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness
5. go after the one that is lost until he finds it
6. he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices
7. 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'
8. woman having ten silver coins
9. loses one of them
10. light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it
11. When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me'

**Tip:** If you have fewer than 11 students, have students come up with the motions for more than one phrase. If you have more than 11 students, assign phrases to pairs of students.

#### 2. Create motions

Give your students a minute or so to come up with and practice a motion that pantomimes their assigned phrase. (You can write a reminder note about their motion next to their name.)

### 3. Read the scripture with the motions

**Say:** As I read the scripture, listen for your phrase(s). When I get to your assigned phrase, I'll pause for you to perform your motion, and then everyone will repeat it. After reading and practicing the passage once we'll do it a second time without the pauses.

**Read** the Parables of the Lost Sheep ([Luke 15:1-7](#)) and Lost Coin ([Luke 15:8-10](#)) twice.

### 4. Ask questions about the parables

- What was Jesus teaching that attracted sinners to him? (That God cares for everyone, including those who some people think are "lost" or unworthy of God's love.)
- In the parable, do you think it was wise for the shepherd to leave the 99 and go searching for the one? (Maybe not for a human shepherd, but for God—yes!)
- What is the secret identity of the shepherd and woman in the parables? That is, who do they represent?
- What do these two parables tell you about God's love? (It is relentless; He doesn't give up.)

**Tip:** You'll have more opportunity to dig into the meaning of the parables after the movement and music activities.

### Movement and Music Activity

**To begin,** have everyone stand in front of the screen about 3 feet apart. Tell them to **concentrate on the motions the first time through** and only sing lyrics as they are comfortable. The song repeats key phrases and simple motions several times, and all of the lyrics are on the screen so they are easy to follow and learn.

**Tip:** Have an older student or helper stand in front as a "song guide" and encouragement to other students.

**After the first time through, ask these questions.**

- What were your favorite motions and lyrics in the song?
- What was the motion for "chases me down"? Is God sitting in heaven waiting for his sheep (people) to have faith in him—to earn his love? Or is God always looking for us and seeking to show us his love, even when we are sinners??
- What was the motion for "You give Your love away"? (It was the shape of a cross.) How is the cross a symbol of God's love for us?
- Why do you think the songwriter described God's love as "reckless"? What was he trying to say? (See the explanation at the end of this lesson. Use synonyms for "reckless" to help explain it. Remind students that the Pharisees and scribes thought Jesus was preaching a reckless love.)

**Play the video a second time**, inviting everyone to sing along as they do the motions. Put the class "hams" toward the front of the group to encourage others. Turn up the volume so that shy students won't feel so self-conscious about their voices.

### **The Lost Coin Version of Reckless Love**

[Attached to this lesson is a set of "Lost Coin" lyrics](#) for "Reckless Love" that substitutes some phrases from the Parable of the Lost Coin in the chorus and interlude. Print the lyrics and tape them next to the screen for all to see. Read through the new words and create some new motions that go with the new "coin" lyrics. (However, if time is short, letting the students come up with motions during the song without rehearsing first can be just as much fun. 😊 )

**Play the Reckless Love video** with the volume turned down just enough so that the kids can sing some of the new lyrics over top of the lyrics being sung on the video. It doesn't matter if they get all of the motions right, just that they are trying and are having fun while the meaning of Jesus' parables sinks deeper into their brains 😊

**Tip:** [Print or write the new lyrics](#) on a big cue card or on the board next to the screen for all to see as they sing.

### **Questions to ask after the "Coin" version of the video:**

- Who does the woman represent in the parable of the Lost Coin? (It's God!)
- How do most people treat sinners? (They judge them and exclude them.) How does God treat sinners in these parables?

- God calls us to rejoice. What are some ways you can SHOW your joy to God, rather than just feel it? (Worship, thankful prayers, serving others—especially "the lost" in this world, those whom others have judged or excluded or refused to help.)

### **Closing: A Movement Quiz & Searchlight Reflection**

Remind the students that the woman used a light to search for her lost coin. Dim the lights and turn on the flashlight. Sitting in a circle, spin or shine or toss the flashlight so that it finds/points to a student. The teacher then says or sings a phrase from the Reckless Love ([lyric sheet attached](#)) and the "found" student must repeat/sing the lyric as they do the pose or motion from the video; students may improvise if they don't remember the motion from the video. (Dimmed lights allow shy performers to feel less self-conscious when it is their turn to do a motion.)

**Continue the flashlight searchlight game with questions about the lyrics** (you can repeat questions so everyone has a turn or make up more of your own):

- Name something you can do to show forgiveness and love to others like Jesus did.
- How did Jesus "pay it all for you"?
- Name a problem that's as big as a mountain that Jesus can help us solve.
- What is a way that someone can be Jesus' foe?
- Name an injustice or evil that Jesus wants to kick down.
- Name something that people say that makes someone feel bad or unloved (a "lie" that Jesus wants to tear down).

**Close with a prayer** composed of three or four favorite "motions" from the lyrics. (See the [lyric sheet](#) for ideas.) Have everyone say the words out loud as they do the motions together. End with an "Amen" motion. 🙏

# “Reckless Love of God” ~ The Lost Coin Version

## Verse 1: *(same as original lyrics)*

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me  
You have been so, so good to me  
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so, so kind to me



## CHORUS:

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, SEARCHING love of God  
Oh, it has a dress on, a light 'til it's found, looking for that coin  
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still You give Your Love away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, FINDING love of God

## Verse 2: *(same as original lyrics)*

When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me  
But You have been so, so kind to me

## REPEAT CHORUS

### Interlude (Sing Twice):

There's no floor you won't tear up  
Dirt you won't sweep up  
Looking for that coin (that's me!)  
There's no wall You won't kick down  
Furniture you won't move 'round  
Looking for that coin (that's me!)

## REPEAT CHORUS

A fun teaching resource created by the Writing Team at Rotation.org

Original version of Reckless Love by Caleb Culver / Cory Asbury / Ran Jackson  
© Bethel Music Publishing

# “Reckless Love of God” Lyrics

A lesson plan help from [Rotation.org](http://Rotation.org)'s Writing Team for [The Lost Sheep](#) and [Lost Coin Lesson set](#). Permission granted to copy for local church teaching use.

## Verse 1:

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me  
You have been so, so good to me  
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so, so kind to me

## CHORUS:

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine  
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still You give Yourself away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God (yeah)

## Verse 2:

When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me  
But You have been so, so kind to me

## REPEAT CHORUS

### Interlude (sing twice):

There's no shadow You won't light up  
Mountain You won't climb up  
Coming after me  
There's no wall You won't kick down  
Lie You won't tear down  
Coming after me

## REPEAT CHORUS

Songwriters: Caleb Culver / Cory Asbury / Ran Jackson © Bethel Music Publishing  
Lyrics and images reprinted under the “Fair Use” statute of U.S. Copyright Law for the nonprofit purpose of teaching and commentary. Screenshots from the [New Walk KIds Worship video](#).

A few key lyrics and motions





# (WT) Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin ~ "Cup" Memory Workshop

 [The Writing Team](#) Creative Lessons for Creative Teachers

Rotation.org Writing Team

## Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

### Cup Stacking Memory Workshop

#### Summary of Activities

In this lesson, students will play several "cup stacking" games to help them remember and retell the two parables. The lesson is introduced with a sleight of hand object lesson that can be taught to the students (if time permits) and concludes with a lost sheep game that explores key concepts and life applications.



*This lesson's activities can be applied to any Bible story or Scripture memory passage!*

#### Scripture for the Lesson

Lost Sheep: [Luke 15:1-7](#)

Astray Sheep: [Matthew 18:10-14](#)

Lost Coin: [Luke 15:8-10](#)

**Key Verses:** "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? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices." [Luke 15:4-5](#) (NRSVue)

#### Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org for insights on this story and this set's complete list of objectives.

## Preparation and Materials

- **Read** the Bible Background and scripture.



- **Prepare for the lost sheep sleight of hand cup trick:**

- One paper cup (such as a "hot cup" for coffee) with a thumb flap cut near the bottom
- A small white ball—we used a 1.5" smooth foam ball; a ping-pong ball will be too "noisy." Use a Sharpie to give the ball a sheep face.
- Practice the sleight of hand trick; it is explained below and demonstrated [here in a video](#).
- You will need the sheep ball again for the reflection game at the end.
- **Decide which [Cup-Stacking games](#) you will play.** For each game, decide whether you will use one set of cups for the whole class or one set for each student or for groups of students. Gather the needed cups for each game...

### Raised edge



- **For the Verse-Cup-Stacking game:** Styrofoam cups with a raised edge on the rim. Bigger is better! (12 cups in each set)



- **For the Verse-Tower and Pyramid-Stacking games:** Disposable plastic cups. If each student will be making their own set, purchase several different colors of cups so that students might have different colors to help sort out cups if the towers topple into each other. The lesson suggests games using a 12-cup tower, a 15-cup pyramid, and two different 6-cup pyramids.
- **Extra cups** for teachers to use during the lesson.

- **Permanent markers** - one for teachers to use during the lesson and one per student if they will be doing the writing and illustrating options described in the lesson and adaptations.
  - **Print the [Reflection Questions](#)**. Cut the questions apart, and put them into a big cup for use in the final reflection game.
  - **Print the attached documents with words and pictures for the games you plan to use.** Cut them apart and tape them to the cups.
    - [Lost Sheep Memory Verse Labels](#) (two sets per page; 12 phrases) for stacking in towers; includes 3 clipart stickers if you want to use them in a pyramid of 15 cups. Can be printed on Avery 8160 Address Labels. ([Link](#) to make your own Avery labels for a different translation.)
    - [Full lost sheep scripture passage](#) (with illustrations) for stacking in a pyramid of 15 cups.
    - [Lost sheep story summary pictures](#) (six illustrations for a 6-cup story summary pyramid)
    - [Parable Of The Lost Coin one-page story](#) PDF (select 6 images for a 6-cup story summary pyramid)
  - Clear packing tape
  - Stopwatch (most phones have this feature in their "clock/alarm" function)
  - Optional: dryer sheet or anti-static fabric spray (depending on humidity and static electricity, foam cups can cling to each other—rub or spray them)
- 

## Lesson Plan

### Opening

Welcome students and explain what they'll be doing and learning about today using the following intro and demonstration:

#### **Introduce the lost stories with a lost sheep sleight-of-hand cup trick.**

**Say:** Today we will be talking about some stories Jesus told about being lost and found. Jesus wasn't talking about losing a favorite toy and finding it under your bed! Jesus was talking about the kind of "lost" that a person feels when they feel so sinful or hopeless that they start to believe God doesn't care about them.

The first story Jesus told was about a shepherd who left 99 of his sheep to go out and find one lost sheep who had wandered off. The other story was about a woman who lost one of her ten precious coins. We'll be learning about the sheep first.

**Begin the Trick:** As you set up and perform the trick, say the following distracting (yet instructive!) "patter." (The [instructional video](#) below includes much of this patter.)

1. This is a sheep. **[Show them your sheep ball.]**
2. The Bible has lots of stories about shepherds and sheep, like Psalm 23's *The Lord is My Shepherd*, King David as a shepherd boy, and the shepherds at the birth of Jesus. Jesus describes God as a shepherd, he calls himself "The Good Shepherd," and calls us the "sheep of his pasture."
3. The prophet Isaiah taught us something very important about sheep. He said, "We are all like sheep who have gone astray." "Astray" means we've gone off course; we've wandered off, thinking we don't need God, ignoring God's rules, and getting into all sorts of trouble.
4. But lucky for us sinful sheep, the Bible reminds us that God is our Good



Shepherd and is always watching over us and is ready to forgive and guide us home once again. **[Pick up the cup with one hand and using the other hand, put the ball in the cup, holding the ball with your thumb through the flap.]**

5. Why do we need God to be our shepherd? Because sometimes life is hard, the path is rocky, and we can become lost and afraid. **[Place your hand over the top of the cup and flip the cup so it looks like you are putting the ball into your opposite hand, but actually, your thumb is holding the ball in the cup by pushing the flap. Pretend you are holding the ball in your closed fist.]**
6. Luckily for us sheep, the Good Shepherd promises to never abandon us, even when we are lost, even if we wander away from him, even if we are sinners. **[While you are talking, put the cup down, releasing the ball onto the table (or your open Bible), still under the cup. Open your closed hand and act surprised! that your hand is empty!]**
7. Where did my sheep go? **[Look around the table and on the floor.]**

8. Hmm. **[Lift the cup and show the ball is there. Smile.]** Look! We found it! **[Rejoice! High fives all around!]**

Here is a 3.5-minute video that demos the sleight of hand trick for the teacher.

<https://vimeo.com/687702532>

**Explain:**

What I just showed you is called "a sleight of hand trick." It's not real magic; I just distracted you so you did not see what happened. Sheep (and people) sometimes get lost when they are distracted. If you want to learn how I did the lost sheep trick, stick around at the end of class and I'll show you.

**What is important to remember**, is this: We ARE sheep just like the Bible says. When we wander away from God, we become lost in this world, thinking we don't need God, and worse, thinking God doesn't want anything to do with us ever again. But that's not what Jesus said. In today's parables, we will learn from Jesus that God does not abandon his lost sheep, and in fact comes looking for them to bring them home.

Let's read what Jesus said to us about God in the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin.

**Read and Discuss the Scripture**

**Say:** Open your Bibles to Luke 15 and notice that there are three parables about being lost: The parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son (also known as the "Prodigal" Son). Today we'll be focusing on the first two parables.

**Ask:** Take a look at verse 1; who is Jesus talking to? (Tax collectors and sinners, Pharisees and scribes.)

The Pharisees and scribes were very religious and they often argued with Jesus because they believed God only accepted religious people into his family/Kingdom. They taught that some people were beyond God's acceptance; sinners and tax collectors, for example.

**Read Luke 15: 1-10 together.**

**Ask:** How many times are these words used in our passage? "lost," "found" or "find," and "rejoice" or "joy"?

★ As a visual prompt, write these words in large letters on a cup.

**Ask:** How many times can you find the words "judge," "punish," "angry," or anything that suggests God isn't going to go find and bring all his lost sheep home? (Zero.)

★ As a visual prompt, you could write these words on another cup and smash it.

**Ask:** What or where is the "home" that God the good shepherd carries his lost sheep to? (Home can be "with the other sheep"—God's followers. It can also mean the "house" of God, where God lives, God's Kingdom, or Heaven.)

★ As a visual prompt, you could write those words on another cup and put the sheep ball into that cup.

**Say:** If all you remember from these two parables are these four words—*lost, found, home, and rejoice*—then you know God's heart and desire for all of his sheep. Those words are often summed up with a special single word that we use a lot in church. It's the word "**GRACE.**" The sheep didn't deserve to be saved, and the lost coin was only one coin out of many, but to God, every single one of us is valuable and worth saving!

**Ask:** Do you think the Pharisees and scribes believed Jesus? (Some didn't, and they would eventually have Jesus killed because they thought he was leading the people astray. But to everyone who felt they were lost and unwanted by God, this was Good News indeed.)

**Say:** Now let's play some cup-stacking games so you'll never forget Jesus' good news for all of the sheep!

## **The Cup Stacking Games**

Here are **three cup stacking games** with a variety of options and tips on how to play them with your students.



**For the Verse Cup Stacking game:**

Use Styrofoam cups with a raised rim so that the words will show even when the cups are inserted into one another. Larger cups are easier to write on. We have divided the memory verse into 12 phrases (including the citation) so use 12 cups per stack. (Click on images to view larger.)

**For the Verse Tower game:**



**Use the same Verse Cup Stacking cups with the**

verse phrases written on the rim, or write the words on the body of the cups (instead of the rims), or use the attached memory verse mailing labels and stick them to cups.

**Pro Tips!**

- ★ Attach the labels so they are right-side-up when stacked end to end.
- ★ Consider stacking the tower on the floor rather than a table so students can reach

the top.

★ Styrofoam cups do NOT stack well in this game.

### For the Story Pyramid Games:



The cups will have the words from the parables on them and get stacked in the correct word order starting on the bottom left of the pyramid and moving right to complete the row before starting the second row.

**For students who can read**, build a 15-cup pyramid using the full lost sheep scripture passage with illustrations.

**For younger students**, create six-cup pyramids for each story with pictures only and have them retell the story to go with the pictures.

### Preparing the Cups

**The teacher can prepare some or all of the cups in advance**, or if you have time let the students prepare the cups as part of their memory work. **Images can be included** on the cups to represent a keyword or idea in the verse. Images will help with memorization and with non-readers.

You can decide to make one set of cups that your entire class will use. Or, you can have students make their own cup sets for one or more of the games and take them home with them.

### Playing the Stack, Tower, and Pyramid Cup Games

We suggest you play two rounds for each cup stacking game (repetition is the cornerstone of recall).

All three games start the same way—with the cup set for that game randomly scattered on a table or the floor. First, you'll play the Verse Cup Stack, then the Verse Tower, then the Verse Pyramid (or any combination of those three you wish).

**FIRST ROUND:** On "go," the student (or team) reads through the cup labels and sorts the cups into the correct order as they stack the cups into the correct formation (either as a stack, a tower, or a pyramid). Check their work and give hints if any cups are in the wrong place.

**SECOND ROUND:** After stacking the cups in the right order once, *time* the student or team to see how fast they can do it a second time; or if you have several cup sets, have a head-to-head competition for fastest and most correct.

You may keep score or not. A little competitive energy will improve their recall and add to the fun.

### Cup Tips:



- For the verse cup stacking and pyramids, as the students become more confident in the words they are memorizing, substitute blank cups for some of the phrases to see if they can still sort and recite the verse.
- Depending on the size and age of your group and how many stack sets you've decided to create, you could have each student play all three games, or play just one or two of the stacking games. They can work alone, with other students, or as teams.

### Teaching points during the stacking games:

- If students are having problems with toppling towers and stacks, remind them that these two parables teach us that God does not give up on us. Just as the shepherd and the woman kept searching until they were successful, we should keep trying until we get the cups stacked correctly.

- Encourage students to help one another. Sheep gotta look out for each other!
- REJOICE! when a tower or stack or pyramid is completed. In the parables, God calls his followers (his neighbors and sheep) to celebrate his Grace. 🙌
- If some in the class are having trouble completing stacks correctly, remind the others that we don't want to be like the Pharisees and scribes, judging others. Have those who have completed their stacks encourage the other students, help them as needed, and rejoice with them when they complete their stacks.
- If cups tumble onto the floor, consider surreptitiously kicking one cup into a hidden corner. When the students discover one of the pictures or phrases is missing, it is another opportunity to talk about searching, finding, and rejoicing as the group looks for the lost cup.
- Rejoice at each successful completion of a stack, tower, or pyramid!! 🙌

### **Final Reflection: Sheep lost under a cup game**

After playing the cup stacking games, gather the students around the table. Place three cups in a row and hide the "sheep ball" from the sleight of hand trick under one of the cups. Move the cups around to scramble them.

Ask a student to guess which cup the sheep is under. If he/she is correct, that person gets to select a [reflection question](#) and answer it.

If they are incorrect, let them guess where the sheep is until they find it under one of the remaining cups (so that everyone is included and gets to answer a reflection question).

Let the person who answered the reflection question hide the sheep and scramble the cups for the next person to guess. Questions can be put back in the cup so that they get used again. Play this as long as you have time.

**Close with a prayer thanking God that we are his precious sheep and coins**, and rejoice in the good news that God cares for all his sheep and coins, every last one.

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?

When he  
has found it,

he lays it  
on his shoulders

and rejoices.

Luke 15:4-5



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?

When he  
has found it,

he lays it  
on his shoulders

and rejoices.

Luke 15:4-5



## Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

### Lost Sheep Story Pyramid Pictures for the Cup Stacking Memory Workshop



Cut the fifteen illustrations with Luke 15:3-7 scripture apart to use for a 15-cup story pyramid.

Some images are public domain clipart. The images by Richard Gunther were downloaded from Lambsongs: [https://www.lambsongs.co.nz/Bible%20Story%20new\\_testament.htm](https://www.lambsongs.co.nz/Bible%20Story%20new_testament.htm).

Created by the Rotation.org Writing Team for [The Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin lesson set](#).  
Copyright Rotation.org Inc. All Rights Reserved. Permission granted to copy for local church teaching use.



Jesus told them  
this parable:



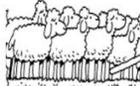
and losing one  
of them,

?

"Which one of you,



does not leave  
the ninety-nine



having a  
hundred sheep



in the wilderness



and go after the  
one that is lost



he calls together his  
friends and  
neighbors,



until he finds it?



saying to them,  
'Rejoice with me,



When he has  
found it, he lays it  
on his shoulders



for I have found my  
sheep that was lost.'



and rejoices.



Just so, I tell you, there  
will be more joy in  
heaven over one sinner  
who repents than over  
ninety-nine righteous persons who  
need no repentance.



And when he  
comes home,

# Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

## Lost Sheep Story Summary Pyramid Pictures for the Cup Stacking Memory Workshop



Cut the six pictures on the second page apart to use for a 6-cup story summary pyramid. Descriptions of the story for each picture are below.

Created by the Rotation.org Writing Team for [The Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin lesson set](#).  
Copyright Rotation.org Inc. All Rights Reserved. Permission granted to copy for local church teaching use.

1. Jesus told this story: 'There once was a shepherd who had 100 sheep. Every day he would count them into the sheepfold.
2. One day one of his sheep was missing.
3. The shepherd made sure the other sheep were safe then he went searching for his lost sheep.
4. The shepherd searched high and low.
5. The shepherd did not give up. He kept searching.
6. Finally, he found the lost sheep! The shepherd picked it up, put him on his shoulders and carried him back to the sheepfold. Then he called his friends to celebrate with him for his lost sheep had been found.

The images in this Bible story by Richard Gunther were downloaded absolutely free from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/r-g-lost-sheep/>.



CONTRIBUTED BY

**Richard Gunther**

These images are the copyright of Richard Gunther and distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license.

Richard has many free Christian resources, cartoons and a creation magazine at [www.gunther.net.nz](http://www.gunther.net.nz)  
email: [shamgar@callsouth.net.nz](mailto:shamgar@callsouth.net.nz)



[www.freebibleimages.org](http://www.freebibleimages.org)

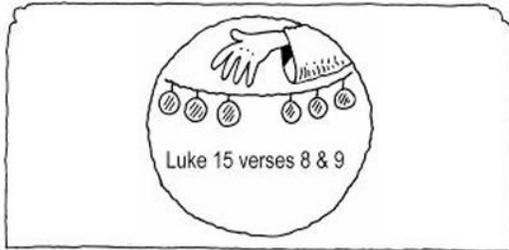


# PARABLE of the lost coin

Print Free: [www.lambsongs.co.nz](http://www.lambsongs.co.nz)

By Jill Kemp

Illustrated by Richard Gunther



Leaders from the temple asked Jesus why he was being friendly to people who didn't follow God's rules? He told this story, which also has another meaning.



"A lady had 10 silver coins that were very precious to her. One day she saw that one of her silver coins was lost!"



She counted them carefully "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.... Where could I have dropped my precious coin?" she wondered.



She looked in things and under things, but she couldn't find her lost coin anywhere.



Then she got a broom and swept her whole house, but she didn't find that precious silver coin.



The lady was sad. She lit a candle and searched for her precious coin in every dark corner until, at last, she found it!



She told her friends the good news! "I have found the one that was lost!" she said. Everyone was happy and they all celebrated together."



Jesus told this story to show how much God loves people who are far from him. "The angels in heaven celebrate when even one precious, lost person trusts in God," Jesus said.

**Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin**  
**Closing Reflection Questions for the Cup Stacking Memory Workshop**

*Cut these questions apart to use for the closing reflection game.*



What does it feel like when you are lost?

Name someone who God might choose to reach out to you to offer unconditional love and help guide you back to God's way.

What do you do to rejoice when you hear God's Good News?

Name someone you could invite to rejoice with you in worship.

What does it feel like when you are led astray by a wrong message?

What can you tell someone who has heard a wrong message about God and does not believe God loves them?

The woman got out a light and broom to help her search for the lost coin. What is an example of "lights and brooms" that God uses to search for us when we are lost?

Sometimes people feel lost because they are not welcomed into a group. What is one way you can welcome a new person at church or school?

What would make a person feel unwelcome at church or school?

How could someone be led away (astray) from Jesus?

What is a way to grow your faith so you aren't led astray?

What distracts kids your age from following God (our Good Shepherd)?

What is something you can do to help other sheep avoid wrong paths?

# Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

## Cal & Marty Scripture Memory Software Workshop

### Summary of Activities

Students will play a scripture memory game and create a quiz about the parables using *Cal and Marty's Scripture Memory Game*, a free software program!

★ Yes, the ***Cal and Marty's Scripture Memory Game*** is free to our Supporting Members for use in their Sunday Schools!

★ You are also invited to share this software with members of your congregation for their personal use at home.

Note: The software may not otherwise be uploaded or redistributed.

Rotation.org is the official home to [this and 18 other programs](#) from Sunday Software's catalog.

### Scripture for the Lesson

Lost Sheep: [Luke 15:1-7](#)

Lost Coin: [Luke 15:8-10](#)

### Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org for insights on this story and this set's complete list of objectives.

### About the "Cal & Marty" Scripture Memory Software



### Who are "Cal" and "Marty"?

They are none other than John Calvin and Marty Luther—the encouraging and usually funny onscreen animated hosts of the game. (As a bonus, there's also an optional, kid-friendly, and mercifully brief section of the software where they introduce themselves and the Reformation they led. See [the next post](#) in this lesson topic for more Cal & Marty helps.)

### Cal & Marty's Verse and Quiz Editor

The best part of the software is how easy it is for kids (or teachers) to type in any Bible verse using any translation and to add a 3-question quiz to be answered after the verse is unscrambled.

### Use Cal & Marty in Any Setting (and for any Bible verse)

- You can install the program on one PC, on multiple PCs you already have, or on PCs people loan to you. (Note: this software is PC-only.)

- This lesson describes how to use the software either with one group on a big screen or on multiple screens in a Sunday School, fellowship time, or at-home setting.
- Cal and Marty runs on older and newer versions of Windows.
- See the adaptations below for using Cal and Marty with early readers and even non-readers!
- See the [Guide for Cal & Marty's Scripture Memory Game Software](#) for additional teaching and tech tips.

## Lesson Preparation and Materials

- Read the [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
  - Download and install [Cal & Marty's Scripture Memory Game software](#). Take some time to become familiar with using the software.
  - Decide whether you want to input all or some of the four key verses ahead of time or let students input one or more of the verses as part of the lesson (and their memory-making experience). See the suggested verses at the end of this lesson plan to be entered into the Verse Editor. 🗣️ [See simpler versions](#) of these scriptures in the next post at Rotation.org.
  - 100 pennies; hide one of them in your pocket and place the rest in a container
  - 10 quarters
  - Fine point permanent markers (one for the teacher for advance preparation, or enough for all the students for the closing activity, depending on class length)
- 

## Lesson Plan

### Opening Penny & Quarter Demonstrations

Welcome your students and explain what they'll be doing and learning today.



### **The 100 Pennies Demonstration:**

Announce that you have brought in "100 pennies," then dramatically pour them onto the table where your students are seated, letting several fall onto the floor where they can easily be found. **(Keep the 100th penny hidden in your pocket.)** Ask your students to look for any that may have dropped and put them on the table. Then invite them to count the pennies to "make sure" you have all 100 pennies. (They should only have 99 because you have the last one.)

**Ask:** Have you ever dropped a penny and not worried about it? How important is it to find one lost penny? (Frankly, not very, because a penny isn't worth much, especially if you still have the other 99.)

**Say:** Jesus once told us a story about 100 pennies, except he said "100 sheep" instead of pennies. And one day one of the pennies, er... sheep, somehow wandered off and was lost. **(Now produce the lost penny with a flourish, snapping it onto the table as you make the following point.)**

**Say:** There's a "secret" about these pennies and Jesus' sheep that you need to know! That secret is that we're not talking about pennies and Jesus wasn't really talking about sheep that get lost. The secret is that we're talking about **people who are lost**—people who feel alone, left out, unwanted, as if nobody cares for them, as if God has abandoned them. **(As you describe being lost, move the single penny further and further from the 99.)** People who think their sins are too great to be forgiven, people who have done bad things. People who think they are not worthy of being with God.

**Ask:** Do you know what Jesus said about that lost sheep? Do you know what this story tells us the shepherd did? (Accept answers.) Yes! Instead of being content with having the 99 sheep safe and sound and letting the lost sheep stay lost forever and maybe even be killed, Jesus said that the shepherd left the 99 safely

behind and went out and FOUND the lost sheep and brought it home. **(As you say these things, reunite the one coin with the 99.)**

**Say:** The point Jesus was making—much to the shock of the people who thought one lost sheep wasn't much of a loss—was that God will never abandon ANY lost sheep, and God will never abandon YOU no matter how worthless or lost you feel. There is nothing you can do and there is not any place where you can go that God cannot find you and save you and take you to be with him. *(Move the pennies out of the way.)*

### **The Ten Quarters Demonstration**



*As you introduce the next story, place the ten quarters onto the table in front of the kids.*

**Say:** Now Jesus did tell a story that had coins in it! He said a certain woman had ten valuable coins, and one day she discovered that one of them had gone missing!

*Slide one of the coins under a student's hand and have him or her keep it there.*

**Say:** In the time of Jesus, many women wore valuable coins sewn into their headdresses—coins given to them as a wedding present. Each coin was a symbol of the Covenant of love between the husband and wife. To lose one would be like losing your wedding ring or something super important to you. (You may ask: "What things are important to you that you would hate to lose?")

**Ask:** So, what do you suppose the woman did? Did she ignore it because she still had nine valuable coins? No, she lit a lamp and started to sweep her dirt floor looking for the coin.

Do you suppose she found it? She did! And how do you think she felt?  
Jesus said that the woman invited her friends to rejoice with her.

**(Coin party! Dancing coins!)**

Now, who do you suppose the lost coin and the woman represent in the story?

**Say:** As in the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin represents YOU, and the woman represents God. Once again, Jesus reminds us that each of us is valuable to God so much so that IF we become lost, God will look for us and find us—even if we wander away from our faith or feel abandoned or so full of sin we think God doesn't want us anymore. Jesus says that EACH ONE OF US is an important part of God's "ten coins"—his Covenant of Love and Forgiveness with us. God will search for you as long as it takes!

**Ask:** How does that make you feel?  
How do you think it makes God feel?

### **Scripture Reading and Scrambling/Unscrambling**

*The scripture which you have just demonstrated and summarized with the coins will now be seen onscreen in the software where the verses will be scrambled and unscrambled.*

**1. Gather around the computer screen(s)** and start the Cal and Marty software.

**2. Briefly explain who Cal and Marty were** (use the "Who are Cal and Marty?" section of the software for a brief answer or refresher if you like).

**3a. If you are having students type in the memory verse on their own**, show them the Verse Editor and have them open their Bibles to the verse you want them to type in. Have one person read, while another types and a third proofreads. Save the verse and have the students at each computer create their three-question quizzes. Suggest that at least two of the three questions ask about the meaning of the parable, such as, "In the Parable of the Lost Coin, who does the Woman represent?" and "How long will God search for you if you are lost?"

**3b. If in advance you have already input the verses into the Verse Editor,** you may invite students to add a three-question quiz (if you have not already done so), or continue to step 4...

**4. Explain how the "drag and drop" unscrambling works, then have one student begin unscrambling the first Luke 15 verse in the game at each computer.** The game will time them by counting up. You may choose to let other students help by shouting out the next word to put into place.

**5. After the first verse has been unscrambled, move on to the second verse. Read it out loud from the Bible, then have the students unscramble it.** Let a different student go first, noting to the rest that it's easier to go second or third because you can watch the first student's attempt. (Again, you may invite students to input their own three-question quiz, or have it already input it in advance.)

**6. Continue until all four verses have been unscrambled and the quizzes completed.**

### **Discussion Opportunities:**

After each quiz, you'll have the opportunity to further discuss the meaning of the parables (especially if students give an incorrect answer). You may also point out the similarities and differences between the two parables. It is important to note that the sheep and coin don't appear to be doing anything to be found! Sometimes people don't think they need God, or they don't realize just how lost or misguided their life is. As in the parable, God is the one who reaches out to each one of us. Can sheep resist? Sure, but "for how long?" is the question. As long as it takes is the answer. God's love is steadfast and persistent!



### **Cal and Marty Tips:**

- The teacher can input some or all the verses ahead of time. If time permits, letting students type the verse into the Verse Editor can be a nice memory enhancement.
- The teacher can input some or all the three-question quizzes that appear after each verse is successfully unscrambled. Use asterisks to leave any

field incomplete for students to discuss and fill in during the class prior to playing.

- The game will keep track of "scores" (time required to unscramble). If you have time, let students try to "beat the best score."

## "Rejoice" Penny Closing Activity

Have each student write "rejoice" on a penny if time allows; otherwise, ahead of time, use a fine point permanent marker to write the word "rejoice" on as many pennies as you have students. (Add the words "lost" and/or "found" if you have time.)

Point out that the words "lost," "found," and "rejoice" appear in both parables, and summarize what the parables are about.

As you give each student their coin, offer something like this prayer over them:

*God, watch over \_\_\_ and always let \_\_\_ know he/she is yours forever.*

### Tips:

- Give the permanent ink a moment to dry before touching the coin.
- If students don't have a pocket to hold the coin, have them put it in their shoe.

---

## The four verses to be memorized...

The teacher or students enter these four verses to create their Cal & Marty memory game. Adjust the translation and wording as needed. [See the supplemental post](#) at Rotation.org for a shortened/simpler version of these verses.

### LOST SHEEP:

**Key Verse 1 - Luke 15:4** 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?

**Key Verse 2 - Luke 15:5** When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.

### **LOST COIN:**

**Key Verse 3 - Luke 15:8** 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?

**Key Verse 4 - Luke 15:9** 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."

---

## **Adaptations**

### **For Early and Non-Readers:**

With a "guide by the side" reading the onscreen words to them, even non-readers can tell the "guide" which word should come next.

5 and 6-year-olds are remarkably adept at figuring out and remembering the correct words by what they "look like" if you read the words out loud to them and give them hints.

Input the full verse ahead of time in the verse editor. During the game, start reading and moving the words into the correct order (asking them to say the words out loud), but then **STOP at keywords and ask them "which word comes next?"** You can hint at two words to choose from the scrambled words on the screen, and when they agree on the correct word, invite them to drag it into place to see if they were right.

You can also simply create a verse/story set of shorter verse parts, such as "*light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully.*"

### **If playing the game on one big screen or with one group:**

If you will be playing Cal & Marty with more than 3 students using one computer, have them split into teams and take turns seeing who can get "the best time" unscrambling the verses. Naturally, the team who goes first will be helping the

next team if they are paying attention... so mix up who goes first with each new verse to be played.

Appoint one participant per team to select and drag the words into the correct order by listening to their teammates.

### **For Older Students:**

They will enjoy editing (inputting) some or all the verses. You can start some verses in advance and let them finish them if you are short on time.

Older students tend to be more competitive, so let them try to beat their previous score by playing again.

### **For Those With More Class Time or More Than One Computer:**

You'll want to invite students to create the quizzes themselves for as many of the verses as you have time for. (Quiz content where you teach insights can have the greatest lesson impact).

If you have two or more computers, you can assign specific verses to each computer. Then when teams have finished inputting the verse and/or quiz at their computers, have the teams switch computers to play the other team's verse and quiz.

### **For a Shorter/Simpler lesson plan:**

Eliminate the coin demonstrations.

Input the verses and quizzes in advance.

### **Note regarding "repent":**

This lesson leaves off verses 7 and 10 in Luke 15 about the joy in heaven and angels rejoicing over "a sinner who repents." We've done this to shorten the verses and reduce their complexity. As well, the issue of repentance is a complex subject. The focus of this lesson is on memory work and on God's faithful action, not ours.

### **Tech Tips**

- See the "Adjusting Display Size" in the [Cal and Marty Guide pdf](#) to make the game fill more of your screen.
- Do not use punctuation or any extra spaces when typing the memory verses.
- See the Guide's Tech Tip if Cal and Marty appear fuzzy on the screen.
- See the Guide and [the post below](#) this for help with the Verse and Quiz Editing screens.

Written by Neil MacQueen and the Rotation.org Writing Team  
Copyright Rotation.org Inc.