

dwell[®]



Marvel . . . at God’s Love

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Questions or comments?

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Dwell
Marvel (Grades 4-5)
Year 1, Unit 1: Marvel . . . at God’s Love
Lost, Found, Foolish

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Welcome to Dwell!

Split-second images, fast-food dinners, instant messages, and intense competitions are part of daily life for the kids who walk through the doors of your church each week. What if children's ministry was different? Not more of the same, but less? What if kids had the opportunity to press "pause" on their fast-paced life so they could "be still and know that I am God"?

Dwell is more than a curriculum—it's a place where kids and leaders pause to wonder . . . imagine . . . marvel . . . and dive into God's story. Developed out of a desire to provide kids with less noise and more time to experience God, *Dwell* creates an environment where kids are offered opportunities to enter God's story, and then live into and live out of it together.

For information on the big things in *Dwell*, including the age-level characteristics of the kids in your group, the scope and sequence at each level, and the curriculum goals and values, visit www.dwellcurriculum.org. Meanwhile, here are some questions and answers you might find helpful when using *Dwell*:

What's in it for me?

You're a leader, but you're also a learner. So we added something just for you to every session. "Reflections" are short devotionals designed to take you deeper into the story with background information, wondering questions, and teaching suggestions. Reading them will help you prepare to teach . . . and grow!

What are "wondering questions"?

Wondering questions invite learners to dwell in God's story as they consider the people in the story, the choices they made, and how God was at work in their lives. They aren't a test—in fact they have no right or wrong answers! Wondering questions let you pause and reflect on God's story longer, allowing it to take root and grow faith. We've provided you with wondering questions for every story. Depending on the ages and attention span of your particular group, you may want to pause and wonder during the storytelling or wait until after the story is finished to ask them—feel free to tailor the session to work with your kids. And be sure to ask what they wonder about too!

How do I tell stories in a way that connects with kids?

Kids know the difference between a story told from the page and one that's told from the heart. The best way for you to prepare is by reading the story out loud several times at home. (Try doing so once a day for the week leading up to your session—you'll be amazed at the results.) When you tell a story we've provided, keep it nearby for reference but aim to know your story well enough that you can make eye contact with your audience and use your voice and face to express emotion.

Does theology really matter in a children's curriculum?

Just because a children's curriculum contains Bible stories doesn't mean it is designed to teach kids what they need to know. The Re★formed tips you'll find throughout this guide are your *guarantee* that every story is taught from a *Reformed, God-centered perspective*. It's a perspective that views the Bible as a story about God—not about biblical heroes or morals or us—and considers every story as part of the one big story of God's redemption and restoration of this fallen world through Jesus Christ. The Re★formed statements are your assurance that we take what your kids will be learning seriously; they explain our approach in every story you'll be teaching.

What do I need to know about "Faith Modeling"?

It's important to *tell* kids God's story, but you'll make a bigger impact when you *live into* God's story together. One of the ways to do that is by sharing your faith with the kids in your group. Throughout the leader's guide you'll find "Faith Modeling" tips to help you do that.

What do the multiple intelligence icons have to do with how kids learn?

Studies have shown that people learn differently. If *what* we teach is going to impact kids, we need to pay attention to *how* we teach. Each activity in *Dwell* pays attention to the ways kids learn. The icons (see p. 5) are there to let you know which learning styles each activity taps into the most. For more information on learning styles—and a fun quiz you can give your kids to find out how they learn best, visit www.dwellcurriculum.org.

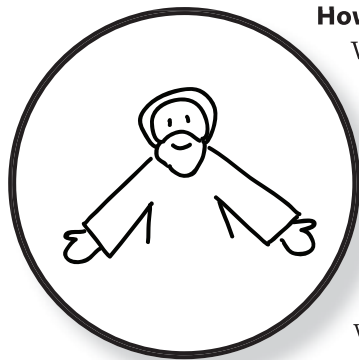
What are “story symbols”?

Each Bible story in *Dwell* has its own story symbol (you’ll find a complete set you can download for free at dwellcurriculum.org). By providing kids with a pictorial timeline, these symbols help them see how all God’s stories fit together in one big story. Each symbol is also found in the God’s Big Story cards that families will be using at home, so that the learning that begins at church can continue at home during the week!

Tip
Rearranging the symbols and having kids re-hang them is a fun way to review the stories you’ve told!

During the sessions you’ll use the story symbols to review where you’ve been in God’s story and to wonder about where you’re going next. Here are some suggestions to display your story symbols: hang up a new one each week to form a border that runs along the wall; attach each new symbol to form a “patchwork quilt” on the wall; or clip symbols to a “clothesline” that runs along one wall.

How does *Dwell* help me partner with parents?



When families open their God’s Big Story set, they’ll find 165 cards that connect directly to every single story taught in the Imagine, Wonder, and Marvel levels of *Dwell*. Each story card in the set features a Bible passage and the symbol that matches the one kids saw when you told that Bible story at church. On the back of each card are six ways a family can respond to that story. Easy and fun to use, the cards encourage kids and adults to talk about their faith and wonder about God’s story together.



In addition to the God’s Big Story cards that families will be using at home, we’ve provided you with a simple way to send families a message about what’s going on in your group. You can either print and distribute a reproducible letter to families or use an online customizable e-message at www.dwellcurriculum.org.

You’ll also want to point parents to www.nurturekidsfaith.org, where they’ll discover practical tips for Christian parents and recommended resources.

A few notes about music . . .

For the *Imagine* (grades K-1), *Wonder* (grades 2-3) and *Marvel* (grades 4-5) levels we've put together two song CDs called DwellSongs, one for each year of curriculum. On each DwellSongs CD you'll find songs that connect with the stories taught at each level as well as Scripture songs chosen to help kids remember specific verses and/or phrases of Scripture. We've also made all the songs available for a downloadable purchase at www.dwellcurriculum.org/music. (We think the whole family will enjoy listening to DwellSongs—you can purchase them for your families or direct parents to them at www.faithaliveresources.org.)


You'll find lyrics for the songs for each unit at the back of your leader's guide. The Scripture song lyrics can also be found in the Bible! (While the translations used in the recordings may differ or may use particular phrases from the Scripture passage rather than the entire verse, we're confident that all the Scripture song recordings offer you and your children a wonderful way to hide Scripture in your hearts!)


Dive! (middle school) kids are an eclectic bunch—they have a wide-ranging (and ever-changing) taste in music, and their willingness to sing and dance may vary. Where possible we've provided you with suggestions for songs at this level. Invite your kids to bring in their favorite God-glorifying music to enjoy together!


Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn


How do children learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the children in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.


Sessions in Dwell curriculum try to respect the many ways children learn. Dwell sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to children with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the children in your group learn best. Children who are


 **Word Smart**
learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.


 **Number Smart**
learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logic puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.


 **Picture Smart**
learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.

 **Body Smart**
learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving— anything hands-on.

 **Music Smart**
learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.

 **People Smart**
learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.

 **Self Smart**
learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.

 **Earth Smart**
learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

1

The Lost Sheep

Scripture

Luke 15:1-7; John 10:2-5, 11-15

Focus

Jesus is the good shepherd who searches for and finds the lost sheep.

Faith Nurture Goals

- Identify with the lost sheep and imagine the warmth and love of Jesus, the good shepherd.
- Share Jesus' joy when he brings "lost sheep" back into the fold.
- Tell what the story shows us about God.
- Honor Jesus as the good shepherd who knows us and cares for us.

Memory Challenge

Psalm 23:1

Reflection: Getting into the Story

This unit offers the delightful experience of telling some of Jesus' parables and wondering together about these down-to-earth and surprising stories.

Jesus' parables are word pictures or analogies. In simple, vivid stories, Jesus gives us glimpses of what God's kingdom is like. Here are a couple of good rules of thumb for understanding parables:

- In these analogies it's not that God or Jesus *is* the shepherd (or door, or father) but that this is what God is *like*.
- Not every detail of the parable is necessarily important. The question should be "What's the main point?"



Luke provides the crucial background for the three unforgettable parables of chapter 15. The Jewish leaders were upset that Jesus was spending time with "sinners" and religious outcasts. Jewish religion in Jesus' day was all about religious purity and keeping the law of Moses. Hanging around with obvious sinners might, according to the prevailing view, sully one's own commitment (see Psalm 1), and it might give those sinners the idea that they were OK after all. So the motto was *Stay away and remain pure!*

In this simple story, Jesus makes an analogy between a shepherd and himself. That in itself is mildly surprising, since shepherds were considered rough-and-tough, unrefined citizens in that society. Jesus is saying, "Watch the shepherd in this story, and you'll begin to understand why I hang around with 'sinners.'"

A hundred sheep was an impressive number for that time, likely made up of the combined sheep of several neighbors, who took turns tending the flock. This, perhaps, helps explain why the shepherd is so concerned. These aren't just his sheep but also his neighbors' possessions and investments. His accountability is to the community.

Still, it seems counterintuitive that the shepherd would leave the ninety-nine out there, vulnerable, "in the open country," to go after the lost one. There may be some explanation that goes beyond the detail provided in the story that would make this action seem less reckless; for example, the shepherd may have gotten a substitute to fill in while he was gone. But that open question shouldn't sidetrack us. The main point is that the lost sheep becomes the shepherd's passionate focus.

The finding of the lost sheep prompts a celebration in the village, a fact that makes more sense when we consider the communal nature of caring for such a large flock.

In this case (but not always), Jesus makes the analogy of the story starkly clear: “In the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

Ouch! What must that have sounded like to these religious leaders who were complaining about Jesus hanging around with sinners?

Wondering

- How would you feel if you were one of the religious leaders listening to this parable?
- How would you feel if you were one of the “sinners” listening to this parable?
- Do the “righteous” really need no repentance?
- How might this parable change the way you see and relate to your kids, neighbors, coworkers, and others?









Teaching

- Be aware that some children in your group may be feeling “lost”—due to divorce in the family, disabilities, lack of popularity, conflicts within families or peer groups, and the like. This story may be the only really good news they hear all week.
- Emphasize the passion of the shepherd for the lost sheep. In this parable, heaven (God) isn’t about counting and numbers; it’s about the single lost individual.
- As you focus together on the parables for this unit, it’s especially important that you let the kids do the work. Don’t try to over-explain or nail down every detail. Instead, let the parable itself prompt the sense of wonder and surprise that’s inherent in it.

General Materials

Each session of Dwell includes specific materials you’ll need for teaching it, such as printable pages or props to use for telling the story. In addition, you’ll want to keep a stash of the usual teaching supplies: Bibles, scissors, markers, board or newsprint, and the like, including a CD player or MP3 player and the Dwell CD.

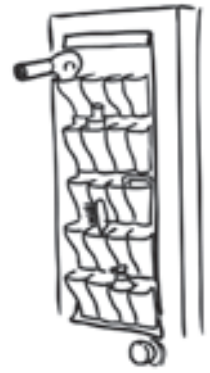
Session at a Glance

Steps	Time	Activities	Session-Specific Materials	Multiple Intelligences
Gathering for God’s Story	8-10	Name cards and questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-the-door cloth shoe organizer, optional <input type="checkbox"/> Mini notebooks	Aa 
Entering the Story	10-15	Prayer and storytelling	<input type="checkbox"/> Story symbol, session 1 (printable page 52)	 Aa 
Living into the Story	20	Graphic art retelling	<input type="checkbox"/> Story frames (printable pages 55-58), one per pair or child	   Aa
Living Out of the Story	5-8	Reflection and prayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Storymark 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Memory Challenge (printable page 50 or 51) <input type="checkbox"/> Family letter (printable page 49 or email version from www.dwellcurriculum.org), one per child	 Aa 

Step 1 Gathering for God’s Story

Today you begin something special and new! Think of yourself more as a listener than as a leader. Together with the children in your group, you will sit at the feet of Jesus, discovering God’s love in fresh new ways and being transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Your role is to help your group get swept up in this story of God’s love. It’s a story that begins in the pages of Scripture and continues in our lives today. As you explore Bible stories together, you can help members of your group find their place in God’s family and in the world. One of the ways you can do that is by creating a warm, inviting atmosphere where



Tip

Use an over-the-door cloth shoe organizer to make “mailboxes” for everyone in your group. Have group members decorate a note card with their name and then staple it to one of the shoe pockets, where they can keep the mini notebooks and pencils they’ll be using from week to week. Use the additional pouches to store other classroom items, such as a stapler, pencil sharpener, scissors, poster putty, and blank note cards.

all present can pause from their busy, noisy lives to meet with God. Help the kids see your time together each week as special and important. Expect them to be changed by the stories they hear and the time they spend with God. Model that kind of expectancy in your own life as you grow in Christ together!

Arrive early to set up everything you’ll need for the session before kids begin to appear. Have the Dwell CD playing softly in the background as you greet each member of your group with a friendly smile and learn their names. Make it your goal to memorize every new name by the end of the gathering time.

Give each member of your group a mini notebook and pencil and encourage them to keep it with them throughout today’s session (you’ll let them know how to use it a little later on). If you’ll be making mailboxes from a shoe organizer, set out markers and blank note cards for everyone to use to make name cards as they arrive.

Also use this time to learn a little bit about each person in your group. Here are some questions you could ask:

- **What school do you attend?**
- **What’s your favorite flavor of ice cream?**
- **What was the best thing that happened to you this summer?**
- **Do you have a pet?**
- **What sports do you like?**

Let your curiosity keep them busy talking until the name cards are finished. If time is tight, welcome everyone and get the session started while the kids decorate their name cards and then staple them to a pocket. Let the group know how excited you are to be their leader and to grow in faith with them this year. Express your hope that this meeting place will be a space where each feels welcome to share their stories, questions, and ideas, to experience God’s love and presence, and to grow into the person God is calling them to be.

Tell the group that the first few minutes of your time together each week will usually involve sharing your own stories in some way, as you get ready to hear God’s story. Choose *one* of following questions to ask your group:

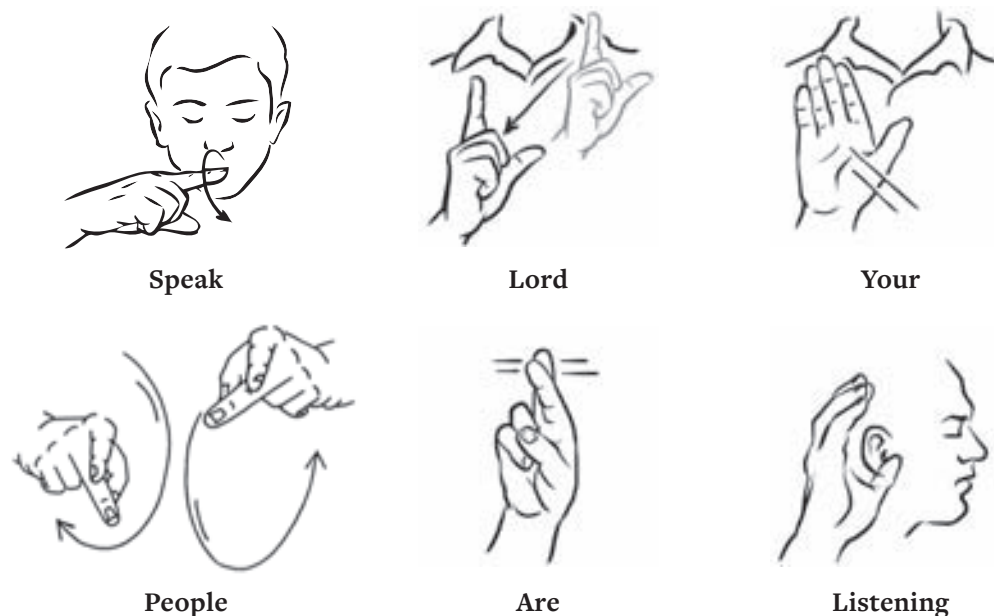
- **Name something you always seem to lose. Where is the funniest place it has turned up?**
- **What is the most valuable thing you’ve ever lost? What do you regret most about losing it?**
- **Tell about a time when you were lost. What did you do? Who came to find you?**

To get the ball rolling, start by answering the question yourself.

Step 2 Entering the Story

When everyone (who wants to) has had the opportunity to answer, point out that each of you has experiences and stories that make you unique but that you also share a common story that binds you together—it’s the story of God’s amazing love, shown to you through Jesus Christ! Let your group know that this week, and every week, you’ll be hearing a little more of that story.

To help quiet your thoughts and open your hearts to God’s Word, teach kids this short prayer in sign language: **“Speak, Lord, your people are listening.”**



This is the prayer you’ll offer for the rest of the unit each time you enter the story. When everyone has mastered the signs, say the prayer together twice: once verbally and in sign language, and a second time in sign language only.

Have the group take out their Bibles, and explain that today you’ll be sharing a story that Jesus told to a crowd of tax collectors, “sinners,” and Pharisees. It comes from Luke 15 and also includes some description Jesus used, as recorded in John 10. Ask whether anyone would like to share what they know about tax collectors, “sinners,” or Pharisees in Jesus’ time. Pause to listen for their answers. Then encourage your group to use their notebooks to jot down things they wonder about or anything that catches their attention as you share the story.

The story follows:

Our story begins with two groups of people who lived in Jesus’ time: the Pharisees on the one hand and the tax collectors and “sinners” on the other.

The Pharisees were religious leaders who wanted to do things “right.” In fact, the Pharisees were so good at being “good” that some of them self-righteously figured God loved them more than anyone else.

Once, a bunch of tax collectors and “sinners” gathered around to hear Jesus teach. At least some of them were probably robbers, addicts, cheaters, or violent outlaws. The Pharisees were upset that Jesus would even talk to this motley, low-life crowd. “Jesus is always spending time with those troublemakers—he even eats with them!” the Pharisees grumbled.

I wonder why the Pharisees were so upset. How might we feel if Jesus were to come today and spent his time with murderers and drug addicts instead of with Christian leaders? *(Pause for responses.)*

Re★formed

We take time to explain the attitude of the Pharisees because it’s exactly the opposite of the gospel truth. As Reformed Christians we believe that God is the One who initiates our relationship with him. Like the good shepherd in the story, God saves us not because we impress him with our goodness but because we are lost and because Christ has compassion on us.

Tip

If you prefer, have the children read this story from their Bibles; invite volunteers to read while others follow along. After the reading, use some of the questions bolded in the script to talk about the story.

The Pharisees thought the tax collectors and “sinners” were a lost cause—and they were pretty sure God thought so too.

(Lean in and whisper the next line conspiratorially.) But they were wrong!

So Jesus told this story to help them see people the way God sees them, and to let them know about God’s incredible love.



Tip

Story symbols are an important part of Dwell. Each week you’ll be using them as visual reminders of God’s story—together forming a picture timeline. Each story symbol can be found on the printable pages in this manual, on the Storymark for the session, and on its own card in the God’s Big Story box kids will be using at home with their families.

(Set down your Bible and this script for a moment and turn to the board/newsprint. Quickly sketch the story symbol for today’s story before continuing. Or use the symbol from printable page 52.)

Once there was a shepherd who took very good care of his sheep. He led them all over the mountains of the region later known as Palestine, taking them to the sweetest grass and the freshest water.

This shepherd went ahead of the sheep on the path. He pulled out poisonous plants and tossed aside rocks and branches that might harm the flock. He carried a heavy club to ward off animals that might try to attack the sheep.

He also used a long, thin staff with a curve at one end. If a sheep fell into a hole or began to wander off, the shepherd would reach for the animal with the crook of his staff and pull the sheep gently back to safety.

The sheep loved their shepherd. They knew his voice and trusted him. Wherever he walked, the sheep would follow behind. He watched them carefully and counted them often to make sure all one hundred were safe.

But one day a single sheep drifted away and left the flock without the shepherd noticing.

The sheep drifted farther and farther away until he could no longer hear the shepherd’s voice. The lost sheep stumbled into a ravine and couldn’t climb out.

The shepherd was taking the flock back along the path toward home when he noticed that one of the sheep was missing. He stopped and looked around at the other sheep; they were tired from the long day of grazing. Then he looked back at the trail.

The shepherd could have gone home with the other ninety-nine sheep and put them all safely to rest. But he loved that missing sheep, and he wouldn’t leave it alone to die. So he decided to search for it.

What do you think—was the shepherd being fair to the other ninety-nine? Who might have been keeping them safe? Why was that one sheep so important to the shepherd?

(Pause for responses.)

The shepherd made the flock lie down before he walked off to look for the lost lamb. He searched for a long time, stumbling over rocks and tearing his coat on thorns. Finally, the shepherd heard a faint bleating sound in the distance.

His heart leaped with hope as he scrambled down the steep slope of a hill toward the sound of a sheep’s “baaah.” There, at the bottom of the ravine, he found his lost sheep—its wool matted and full of thorns, its ear torn and bleeding. The sheep was shaken, hurt, and unable to walk.

The shepherd gently pulled out the brambles and thorns and put medicine on the sheep’s cuts. Then he hoisted the heavy sheep up onto his shoulders and slowly climbed out of the ravine.

All this time his heart was bursting with joy. He had found his lost sheep!

What words could you use to describe the shepherd? (*Pause for responses.*)

When he arrived at the place where the rest of the flock lay sleeping, the shepherd counted them all again. He laughed with relief when he counted all one hundred sheep. Still carrying the injured sheep, he led the flock home in the dark, settling them down in their pen for the night.

The shepherd was so thrilled to have found his lost sheep that he threw a party for his friends and neighbors. “Let’s celebrate!” he invited. So they danced and ate under the stars, delighted that the one missing sheep was back in the fold!

(*Pause for a moment, smiling at the good news, before continuing.*)

After he had finished telling this story, Jesus said, “Like the shepherd, God and the angels also sing and shout for joy whenever one sinner comes back to God! God is *happier* over one lost person who returns than over ninety-nine people who never went astray.”

Remind the group that the crowd who had been listening to Jesus tell this parable included some Pharisees—good religious leaders who always obeyed the law—and some sinners who cheated, stole, and perhaps even murdered or acted violently. Wonder together about how each of these groups might have reacted to the story Jesus told.

Tip

Let your voice, gestures, and facial expressions highlight the emotions of the story—the critical attitude of the Pharisees, in contrast to the tender love and joy of the good shepherd. Practice by reading the story aloud a few times in advance so you can make eye contact with the group as you share it.

Step 3 Living into the Story

Ask the children what they noted or wondered about during the story. What surprised them or stood out for them? Listen as they share and then briefly discuss this question:

What does this story tell us about God’s love?

You may also want to ask the children what they think the word “sinner” means in this context and talk together about how all of us are sinners—even those who are good, religious people who obey the law (like the Pharisees). The good news of this story is that God chases after sinners like us and forgives us, welcoming us back with joy.

Hand out copies of the story frames, along with crayons, markers, or pencils. Give one page to each pair or individual (depending upon how large your group is) and encourage the children to create a graphic novel/comic strip that depicts what happened during that portion of the story. *Assure everyone that stick figures are perfectly acceptable!* Ask kids to use thought and dialogue bubbles to imagine what people (and animals) might have been thinking or saying. If they run out of ideas, encourage them to look up the Bible passages that are listed at the top of each of the printable pages.

Allow everyone to work for 8-10 minutes. Then gather the group back together and include everyone in retelling the story in sequence, with each person or group sharing their work. You may want to display each set of story frames on the wall (using tape or poster putty), or you could spread the story frames across the table or floor and have everyone gather around.



Thank each person and group who shares, and note anything in their story frames that might spark conversation within the group. Wrap up this step by addressing one or more of the following questions or thoughts to help your group consider the way in which this story intersects with your lives:

- **In what situation have you have felt like the lost sheep in this story?**
- **Can you think of a time when Jesus rescued you, comforted you, or called out to you?**
- **Why do you think Jesus wanted us to hear this story today?**

Faith Modeling

Demonstrate that this is a safe place to share ideas and experiences by listening well and offering your own reflections along with theirs.

Be patient as you wait for answers. Some kids may be reluctant to share personal stories about times when they've felt distant from or particularly close to God. That's OK—don't push. They're thinking about the questions even if they aren't comfortable sharing. Receive every answer with respect, and in time your group will begin to open up.

Step 4 Living Out of the Story

Distribute Storymarks and explain that they're designed to fit in their Bibles and mark the location of each week's story. Point out the devotional ideas on the back of the Storymark and ask them to try one or both of them this week. Let them know that you'll be doing the same.

Faith Modeling

Ask your church to provide youth-friendly Bibles for anyone in your group who doesn't have one. Be discreet about offering these to kids in your group so that no one is embarrassed. Write a short note in the front cover that includes your favorite Bible verse and what you cherish most about your Bible.

Give the children 3-5 minutes to fill in the first part of their Storymark and to pray silently, using the prompts in the "My Prayer" section.

When everyone has finished, close by asking your group to stand to read Psalm 23 aloud together as a prayer. End with "Amen." Tell the group that for the next six weeks they'll be memorizing this psalm. Challenge them to work on verse 1 during the coming week. If you have time, you may want to introduce the memory work by playing "My Shepherd Is Near" from the Dwell CD. Your group will enjoy the rhythm, and the rap will make the words easier for them to remember.

Thank your group for a great first session! Remind children to take home their Storymark and a copy of the unit Memory Challenge (printable page 50 or 51, depending on which Bible version you are using) and to slide their notebook and pencil into their "mailbox" (or hand them to you) for next week. Challenge them to do some of the other "sheep" focused activities during the week.

Talk a bit as well about the God's Big Story card box their family has for use at home. Direct them to search for today's symbol in the box. Their family may want to do some of the activities suggested on that card as part of their family devotions this week. Connect with families this week with a Dear Family letter (printable page 49) or email (www.dwellcurriculum.org) about this unit.

Easy Extras

Here are some options you may choose in place of or in addition to the activities suggested for this session.

1. Arrival Activity: Getting to Know You 🧑🏻 Aa

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: slips of paper or note cards, pencils, bowl

Play a get-to-know-you game. Have each person write one interesting or surprising thing about themselves on a slip of paper or index card. Toss all of these into a bowl and take turns pulling them out, reading what's written, and guessing as a group who wrote it. When the

person's identity is revealed, ask a few questions so that everyone gets to hear the story behind the statement.

2. According to the Shepherd **Aa**

This activity could be used in place of Step 2: Entering the Story.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: shawl, staff

Instead of using the story script in Step 2, you may prefer to tell the story from the view-point of the shepherd. Use the beginning and end of the script to establish the context, and then develop your own narrative. Make the transition from being the narrator to being the good shepherd by wrapping a shawl around your head or by picking up a large staff. Adding a simple prop will provide a visual cue that you are changing character.

3. An Eyewitness Account

This activity could be used in place of Step 3: Living into the Story.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: box of costumes and props—a shepherd's staff, fuzzy blankets for the sheep, a curling iron or wooden table spoon for the microphone, and so on.

Your group may enjoy creating a newscast and reporting “live from the streets of Jerusalem” to talk to the tax collectors and Pharisees and “live from the hills of Judea” to interview the shepherd and his lost sheep. Brainstorm a list of people and animals that could be interviewed and the questions they'd like to ask. Then, with you serving as the reporter, “film” some of the following:

- Ask the tax collectors why they've gathered to hear Jesus.
- Invite the Pharisees to tell you what they have against tax collectors.
- Ask Jesus why he thinks telling this story might be helpful.
- Interview the shepherd about caring for his flock—and the sheep about being cared for.
- Do a “breaking news” sequence on the shepherd searching for his lost sheep. You might invite someone to pantomime the shepherd while you narrate the events you're seeing.
- Be sure to film the big celebration when the one lamb is found!
- Summarize the news by saying something like this: “There you have it, folks. God is like the good shepherd who is eager to save every lost sheep—I mean, person—no matter how far it has strayed. Thank you for joining us tonight for this special report. And we thank the helpful witnesses and the brave camera crew who climbed the mountains of Judea to bring you this important story!”

Between “takes” you can talk with the group about what will happen in the next scene. Make sure everyone who is being interviewed feels as though they have something worthwhile to say. Kids of this age can be very creative when it comes to acting out stories and imagining answers to questions that an interviewer might ask. They may not even realize that they're discovering the meaning of the story as they go through this exercise!

If you find that someone can't think of anything to say in response to a question, just rephrase the question. If that doesn't work, say “Cut” and coach the participant a little before beginning again. Or you can simply work this into the story by saying something like, “Wow, folks, it seems as though she's speechless—it's been that kind of night!”

Include as many people as possible in each scene—as extra tax collectors or Pharisees, the camera crew, or sheep. If you have a box of costumes and props—such as a shepherd's staff, fuzzy blankets for the sheep, a curling iron or wooden spoon for the microphone—that would make this option even more fun!

Wrap up with the questions included in the original step.

Tip

If you have a video camera or even a video feature on your phone, bring it along. You may have someone in your group who loves to make YouTube videos and would like to film the newscast to watch together or post online. **Be sure to get the permission of all the parents and kids before posting any class pictures or videos on the Internet.**

2

The Lost Son

Scripture

Luke 15:11-32

Focus

God is the loving Father who welcomes his lost children home.

Faith Nurture Goals

- Identify with the lost son and imagine his joy at being welcomed home.
- Tell what the parable teaches about God.
- Show and express the Father's love.
- Worship God, our heavenly Father.

Memory Challenge

Psalm 23:1-2

Reflection: Getting into the Story

This is one of the most widely known and beloved of Jesus' parables, and it's easy to see why. It has everything a good story needs—emotion, drama, character, and the elusive element of surprise. All that makes it an exciting—but also difficult—story to tell and talk about. Part of the difficulty comes from its very familiarity and part from its complexity—three important and engrossing characters all claim our attention.

It's important to note that this story is part of a series of parables about lostness, all in response to the religious leaders' grumbling that Jesus hangs around with "sinners and eats with them." In each parable Jesus raises the ante of tension, until it nearly explodes in this one. All the participants in the real-life drama have their counterparts in the characters in the parable—the sinners (the lost son), the Pharisees (the older son), and the Son of God (the father). But at the center of this complex story is the father; this isn't at its core the parable of the lost son but of the incredibly loving father.



Let's start with the lost son. It's easy to understate how outrageous his behavior really is. Who would ever think of asking for a share of an inheritance before the parent had died? This is like saying to the father, "I wish you were dead, but since you aren't yet, give me my share now—I'm out of here." The son is thoughtless, ungrateful, and self-absorbed.

His behavior after he leaves only confirms what a scoundrel he is. Throwing his money away in pleasure-seeking, he ends up just where he deserves to be: among the pigs (unclean and despised animals to Jews). Even his "repentance" seems to fall short. We suspect that it may be motivated more by hunger and desperation than by sorrow for what he has done to his father.

Then there's the father. As outrageous as the lost son's actions are, the father's seem even more unwarranted. He's continually gazing down the path, pining for the scoundrel's return. And, when he finally glimpses the kid, he does something terribly undignified. In that culture, no man of substance would run, and yet the father hitches up his long robe and scuttles on his old, gangly legs to embrace his son, in full view of the scandalized neighbors.

And it doesn't stop there. Before the kid can blurt out his well-rehearsed speech, the father covers his face with kisses, calls for a robe and a ring, and orders a party in the son's honor. *Ridiculous! Let the kid know much grief he's caused, we want to object, or at least let him work his*

way back into favor. Instead, the father’s love is so immediate, so extravagant, that we shake our heads in bewilderment when we hear the story.

Then there’s the older brother, who is in many ways the point of the story. We get him. He’s the only character who acts like an ordinary person. Of course he’s hurt and angry. His stupid kid brother gets all the attention, while he’s been right there, plugging away all along and all alone, working hard at being a good son.

Notice that the story ends with no resolution. The father pleads with the older son to join the party and celebrate the return of his lost brother. How will he respond?

Wondering








- What would be going through your mind if you were one of the religious leaders listening to this story?
- Do you think the younger son was truly repentant? Does it ultimately make a difference either way?
- What other ways might the father have acted, while still accepting back his son?
- What do you think the older son will do?

Teaching

- Be sensitive to the family situations of the children in your group. Some may be dealing with very difficult home dynamics, including such issues as divorce, abuse, teenage rebellion, or sibling rivalry. It may be difficult for a child who has never experienced a positive example of an earthly father to envision a loving heavenly Father. Even in this situation, the story has healing power. This is what God is like, and God is the ultimate model for earthly parenthood, not the other way around.
- Explore the outrageous behavior of all the characters, even as you notice together that the most ordinary and expected behavior comes from the older brother.
- Try to fit the parable into its biblical context of the Pharisees’ questions, and show how each character is intended to answer them.
- Ultimately focus on the father, who stands at the center of the story—and on the loving God he represents.

General Materials
 Each session of Dwell includes specific materials you’ll need for teaching it, such as printable pages or props to use for telling the story. In addition, you’ll want to keep a stash of the usual teaching supplies: Bibles, scissors, markers, board or newsprint, and the like, including a CD player or MP3 player and the Dwell CD.

Session at a Glance

Steps	Time	Activities	Session-Specific Materials	Multiple Intelligences
Gathering for God’s Story	5-8	Prayer cards	<input type="checkbox"/> None needed	Aa  
Entering the Story	10-15	Readers’ theater	<input type="checkbox"/> Story symbol from previous session <input type="checkbox"/> Notebooks	Aa 
Living into the Story	20	Act and discuss	<input type="checkbox"/> Story symbol, session 2 (printable page 52) <input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous Drama (printable pages 59-60) <input type="checkbox"/> Character Nametags (printable page 61)	Aa  
Living Out of the Story	5-8	Prayer, reflection	<input type="checkbox"/> Storymark 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Song: “My Shepherd Is Near”	Aa  

Step 1 Gathering for God’s Story

Warmly greet students as they enter the room. Briefly touch base with each child (both those who attended last time and any who are new). You may want to invite the kids to tell

you something funny or exciting or special that happened to them during the week. Give positive feedback to those who've remembered to bring their Bibles with them today.

Invite the group to think about ways in which they've seen God in their lives during the past week. Maybe it's just in day-to-day things—like having enough to eat. Maybe something more extraordinary happened this week (safety during an accident or near-accident or healing from a bout with strep throat, for example). Be prepared to mention a few of the ways in which you've seen God at work in your own life too—and in the beauty of the world around you.

Hand out pencils and one or two note cards to each person. Ask kids to close their eyes and take a deep breath, and then to write down one or two words that describe who God is or what God is like (for example, a loving Father or a mighty protector). Tell kids that you will be using their own descriptive words—often called *attributes*—in an opening prayer. (You may wish to play music from the Dwell CD—especially the song “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” —as group members think and write. After two minutes or so, collect the cards.

Begin your time of prayer by saying “**God, we thank you for being . . .**” Then read the attributes on each card. (Or cue group members to read their own cards.) During the prayer encourage everyone to reflect quietly on God's goodness.

Conclude your prayer time by inviting the group to say the sign language prayer from Session 1, “**Speak, Lord, your people are listening,**” as they prepare to hear God's story (see p. 9 for signs).

Step 2 Entering the Story

Re★formed

The Reformed way of looking at the Bible involves understanding that God is always the main character in the overarching story. Seen in that light, this story is ultimately about the *love and forgiveness of the father*—not about sibling rivalry or teenage rebellion.

Display or draw the symbol for today's story. Ask the group to guess what the story might be about. Explain that Jesus told today's story to the same group of people he told last week's story to: Pharisees, tax collectors, and sinners. Invite them to tell you what they remember about that audience, especially the Pharisees. (Note the invitation on today's Storymark to find out more about the Pharisees.)

Ask children to open their Bibles to Luke 15:11-32, commenting that this story, the story of a father and two sons, is another part of God's big story. Choose a few volunteers to read the story out loud. If your group wrote in their notebooks during the last session, hand out the mini notebooks and pencils again (or invite group members to get them from their “mail-boxes”). As they listen to the story, invite them to write down words that

describe how each character might have felt, or to draw a picture that helps them visualize the story.

Step 3 Living into the Story

Next invite the group to retell the story by performing it as a spontaneous melodrama. A melodrama is a type of skit that uses exaggerated acting to emphasize the action and emotion of the story. Since this story is loaded with emotions, both sad and joyful, and action all the way from feeding pigs to celebrating at a feast, it should be easy to dramatize.

Use your copy of the story script (printable pages 59-60) and assign everyone a part in the script by passing out character tags (printable page 61) along with a piece of tape. Choose outgoing kids who enjoy being the center of attention to take the three main roles.

- Father
- Older Son
- Younger Son

- Servants (optional)
- Friends (optional)
- Farmer (optional)
- Pigs (optional)

Make sure everyone has a role (you can include as many servants, friends, and pigs as needed!).

Choose a space in your room (or move to a larger room) so that everyone can stand and move around for the skit. You may want to hang signs to identify where the father’s house and the distant country are in your room. Tell the children to listen for their cues and to act out the story as it’s being read. Let them know that when their character has a line, they’ll need to repeat after you with intense emotion and expression. Encourage the younger son and his friends to really get into their wild living, the father to welcome his son back dramatically, and the pigs to snort a lot. The kids will get into it quite quickly! The key word is “exaggerate!”

You may want to practice by reading a few lines and coaching your actors a bit. When everyone understands their role, read the story from the script slowly (but enthusiastically), emphasizing each character or animal’s name. Some small prompts from you may still be necessary as the story moves along. Have fun as you narrate the story! The group will follow your enthusiastic lead.

When you’re finished acting out the story, talk about it together with some or all of the following questions:

- **What do you suppose the younger son thought would happen when he got to his father’s house? What ideas ran through his mind as he took those last steps?**
- **Can you think of a time when you were forgiven for something very wrong or hurtful you had done? How did it feel?**
- **The groups listening to the story were Pharisees, tax collectors, and sinners. How do you imagine each group of people reacted to this story? Why? What do you imagine members of each of these groups said to Jesus?**
- **Where do you see yourself in the story? Are you a younger son? An older son? Why?**
- **What does this story show you about God?**

Tip
Open-ended questions are a very important part of Dwell. We want 4th and 5th graders to find themselves in the story and to wonder about God, to imagine God’s love and forgiveness. Instead of just providing answers for the group, give them time and space to come up with their own answers. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion in meaningful directions. This story is probably one of the most vivid pictures in the Bible of our loving, forgiving Father God!

Faith Modeling
You may want to use this opportunity to tell your group how much it means to you personally to know that God forgives you—even when you really mess up!

Step 4 Living Out of the Story

Remind the group that the stories Jesus told weren’t just for the people in his day. They’re for you and me too. Pass out the Storymark and invite group members to spend a few minutes filling out the sentence starter on the front of their Storymark:

This story makes me feel . . .

I think Jesus wants me to know that . . .

Invite them to write a prayer to God in their notebooks or in the “My Prayer” section of their Storymark, using these prayer starters:

Dear Father, thank you for being my loving Father, even when . . .

Help me to show your love to others, even when . . .

Amen.

Encourage the children to use their Storymarks to mark today's passage Luke 15:11-32 in their Bibles. Challenge them to do some of the activities on their Storymark throughout the week and to look for today's symbol in the God's Big Story cards. Assure them that you will be doing the same.

Close the session by reading Psalm 23 together or by playing "My Shepherd Is Near" from the CD. Encourage the group to learn verses 1 and 2 of the psalm by next week.

Easy Extras

Here are some options you may choose in place of or in addition to the activities suggested for this session.

1. Get the Ball Rolling! 🏹 👤 Aa

Option for Step 1: Gathering for God's Story.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: note cards, pencils, small ball or beanbag

Hand out the note cards and pencils and ask each student to write down one word that describes who God is (*holy, powerful, compassionate, and so on*). Collect the cards, shuffle, and redistribute them. Then have group members read their new cards and remember the word they have been given.

Gather the group in a circle and toss a beanbag or ball to one person. Have that person start the game by saying "God is . . ." and then tossing the ball to another person in the circle. That person will say the word on the card they were given, and then toss the ball to another person, who will in turn share the word they were assigned. Continue playing until everyone has had a chance to share their word. Then try the game again, this time a little faster! End with a prayer thanking God for having all the characteristics everyone has mentioned. Tell the kids that today's story will remind them that God is a loving Father.

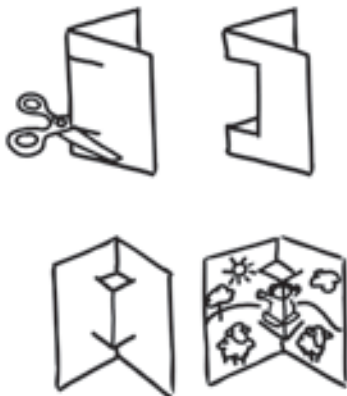
2. Pop-Up Scenes 🖨️ 👤

Option for Step 3: Living into the Story.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: construction paper, magazines, scissors, glue, markers

Hand out the materials listed above and ask group members to create a pop-up scene of a part of the story that was especially meaningful to them. Feel free to make suggestions: perhaps the moment when the lost son "came to his senses" while feeding the pigs or the party the father threw for his son. If you have magazines available, group members could cut out pictures to help make their scenes come alive. Invite them to use contemporary scenes and characters, as this story could just as well have taken place in our own day.



Before they begin, demonstrate how to create a pop-up scene, as follows:

- Fold the sheet of construction paper in half, as though making a card.
- Cut two slits on the folded part of the paper.
- Pull the slits forward so that the scene pops out.
- Create as many slits as needed, depending on how many images you want to have pop out from your scenes.
- Either draw images on your pop-outs or cut them from magazines and glue them to the scene.

Give group members time to work on their scenes. Leave the last few minutes for volunteers to share their scenes and explain why the part of the story they chose was meaningful

for them. If you have time, challenge the group to put all of the scenes they've created in sequential order to retell the story.

3. "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" Aa

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" lyrics (p. 47), Dwell CD, notebooks

Play this moving version of "Amazing Grace." Invite group members to draw or write in their notebooks some of their reactions to the words of the song. Ask them to comment on how this song fits with the story Jesus told about the father and the two sons.

4. Memory Challenge Mural Aa

Option for Step 4: Living Out of the Story.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Posterboard or construction paper, Dwell CD

Psalm 23 is chock-full of vibrant and colorful word pictures. Challenge your group to create visual images of Psalm 23:1-2 to help them memorize this beautiful psalm. Suggest the following word pictures they might want to use: shepherd, green pastures, and quiet waters. Form small groups to create a poster or mural for the psalm, or have kids work individually on separate sheets of paper.

Encourage the kids to write out the verses at the bottom of the pages, mural paper, or posterboard. If you choose either of the cooperative options (mural or poster), have the same groups work on a different verse each week (instructions included for each additional session of this unit). By the end of the unit, your group will have a colorful display of Psalm 23. As they work, play "My Shepherd Is Near" rap from the CD.

Song Texts

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see.
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed
My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, My Savior, has ransomed me.
And like a flood, His mercy rains
Unending love, Amazing grace.

The Lord has promised good to me
His work my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbears to shine.
But God, who called me here below
Will be forever mine.
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

Words: Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio © 2006 worshiptogether.com Songs (ASCAP) sixsteps
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My Shepherd Is Near (Psalm 23)

The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want. . . .
He makes me lie down in fields of green
Walks with me along quiet streams
He restores my soul and gives me rest
Guides me in paths of righteousness
For his name sake and even though I take
A journey to the valley of the shadow of death
There's nothing to fear, because you are with me
Your rod and staff bring peace and uplift me
There is nothing to fear
Because my Shepherd is near.
You've set a table full of good things
In the presence of my enemies
With oil you anoint my head and bless me
And my cup is filled to overflowing
Goodness and love will be with me
Every day I live brings brand new mercies
It will never end, because I'll be a guest
In the house God forever find my rest.
There is nothing to fear
Because my Shepherd is near.
The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want. . . .

Words: Greg Scheer © 2010 Faith Alive Christian Resources

Dear Family,

Lost sheep, lost sons, sumptuous banquets—the stories Jesus told are full of images and discovery. They were told to men, women, and children a few thousand years ago. But their meaning is as rich and meaningful for us as it was for those first listeners.

During the next six weeks, take time to marvel at these stories with your child, to wonder what they mean for your lives, and to live into them together. Your set of God’s Big Story cards will help you to do that together.

This is what our schedule looks like:


Date: _____ The Lost Sheep 

Date: _____ The Lost Son 

Date: _____ The Great Banquet 

Date: _____ The Rich Fool 

Date: _____ The Ten Bridesmaids 

Date: _____ The Wicked Tenants 

During these six weeks, we’ll also be memorizing Psalm 23 together. You may want to make that a challenge for your whole family!

P.S. Check out the great tips about growing faith at home on NurtureKidsFaith.org. Also consider purchasing a copy of the Dwell Year 1 CD, available from www.faithaliveresources.org, or download the songs from www.dwellcurriculum.org/music. It contains a great rap version of Psalm 23, the memory challenge for this unit.

Yours in Christ,

Memory Challenge

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

—Psalm 23, NIV

Memory Challenge

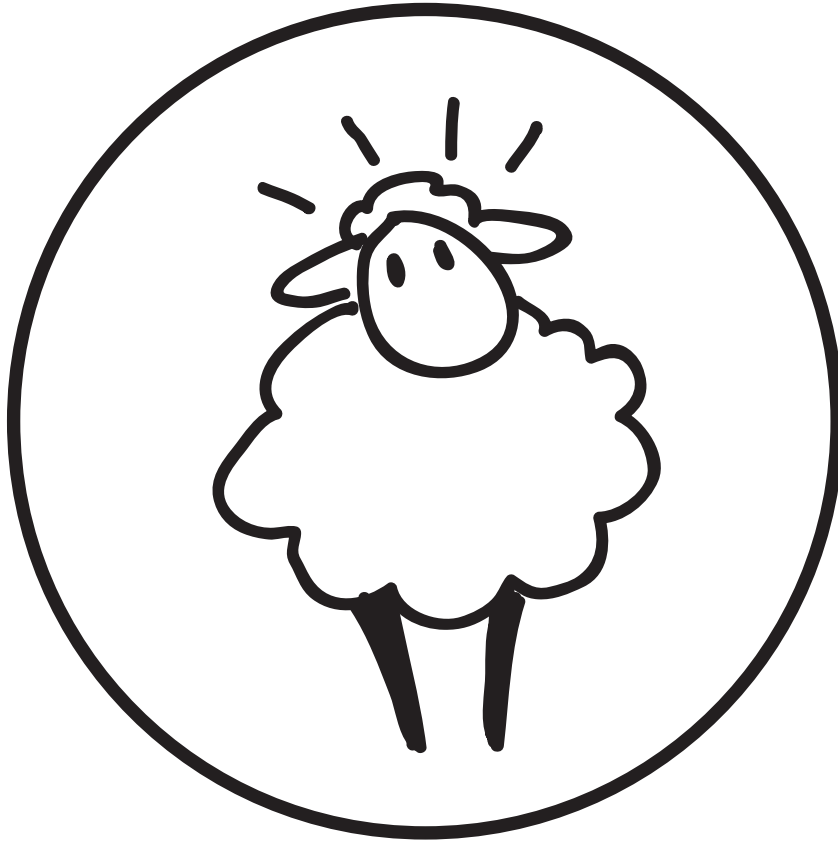
The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

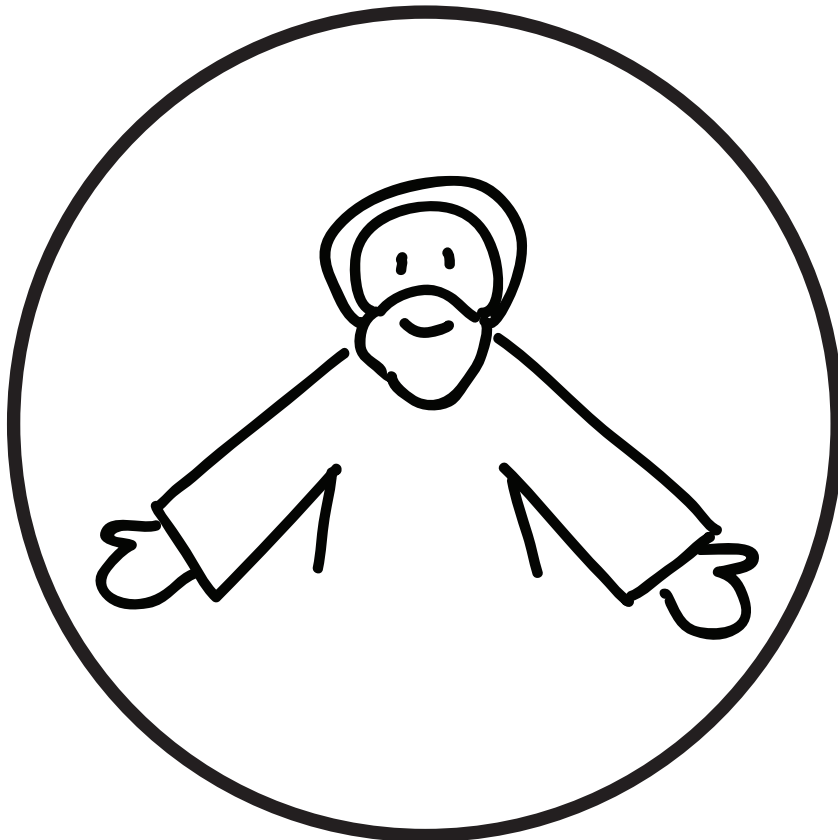
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

—Psalm 23, NRSV



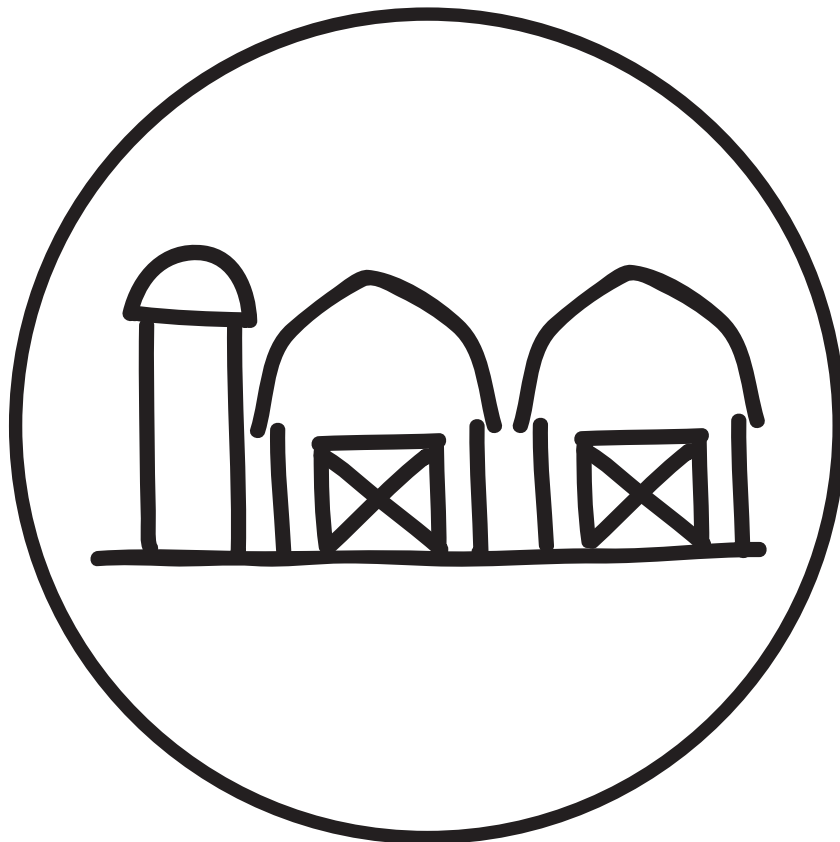
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 1



Year 1, Unit 1, Session 2



Year 1, Unit 1, Session 3



Year 1, Unit 1, Session 4



Year 1, Unit 1, Session 5



Year 1, Unit 1, Session 6

The Lost Sheep

From Luke 15:1-7 and John 10:2-5, 11-15

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One day a crowd of tax collectors and “sinners” gathered around Jesus to hear him teach.

The Pharisees, the religious leaders, looked at what was happening and muttered, “Jesus is always hanging out with ‘sinners’— he even eats with them!”

Jesus didn’t agree with their attitude, so he began to tell them a story. It started with a good shepherd and his flock of sheep.

The Lost Sheep

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This shepherd took very good care of his sheep. The sheep loved their shepherd and followed him.

But one day a single sheep wandered away without the shepherd realizing it.

As the shepherd was getting ready to take the flock back home, he realized that one sheep was missing. It was getting late, but he didn't want to leave that sheep behind.

The Lost Sheep

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So he had his other ninety-nine sheep lie down in the field, and he went off in search of the one missing sheep.

He searched and searched for his lost sheep, looking everywhere and listening for the sheep's cry.

Finally the shepherd heard the sheep and ran to the place where his lost sheep was lying. He tended the sheep's wounds and then lifted it onto his shoulders.

The Lost Sheep

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Then the shepherd gathered the rest of the flock and took them all back home. He was overjoyed to have his lost sheep back!

When he had all his sheep safely back in their pen, he threw a party for his neighbors to celebrate that his lost sheep had been found!

When Jesus finished telling this story, he told the crowd that God celebrates more over one sinner who comes back to him than over ninety-nine people who never went astray!

Spontaneous Drama of The Lost Son Parable

(adapted from Luke 15:11-32, The Message)

Jesus told this story to a big group of people that included Pharisees, tax collectors, and sinners: There was once a father who had two sons.

The YOUNGER SON said to his FATHER, **“Father, I want what’s coming to me right now.”** *(Pause and invite actor to repeat lines.)*

The FATHER was very **sad**. But he **divided the property between his two sons, giving half to one and half to the other.**

It wasn’t long before the YOUNGER SON **packed his bags and left home for a distant country.**

While he was there, the YOUNGER SON made some FRIENDS who **partied and lived the wild life with him, spending money and having fun.**

When the YOUNGER SON’S money was all gone, these new FRIENDS **left him.**

After the YOUNGER SON had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country, and he had no money to buy food. **He was very hungry.**

The YOUNGER SON **begged** a FARMER for work.

The FARMER **sent the YOUNGER SON out into the field to feed the PIGS**

The YOUNGER SON **was so hungry**. He wanted to eat the corncobs he was feeding the pigs. But when **he tried to grab some**, the FARMER **said no.**

That brought the YOUNGER SON to his senses. He said, **“All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day . . .** *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and here I am starving to death. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I’m going back to my father. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I’ll say to him, Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

The YOUNGER SON **jumped up and started walking** the long way back to his father.

When the YOUNGER SON was still **walking** a long way off, his FATHER **saw him.**

The FATHER’S **heart was pounding.** *(Give actor a chance to dramatize by pounding fists against chest or something.)*

The FATHER **ran out and embraced** the YOUNGER SON.

The YOUNGER SON started his speech: **“Father, I’ve sinned against God . . .**
(pause for actor to repeat)

I’ve sinned before you; *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

But the FATHER wasn’t listening. He was **calling to the SERVANTS:**

“Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! *(pause for actor to repeat)*

My son is here—given up for dead and now alive!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

All this time his OLDER SON was out **working in the field**

When the day’s work was done the OLDER SON **approached the house and heard the music and dancing.** He **called over** to the SERVANTS and asked them what was going on.

They said **“Your brother came home.** *(pause for actors to repeat)*

Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!” *(pause for actors to repeat)*

The OLDER BROTHER **stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in.**

His FATHER **came out and tried to talk to him,** but the OLDER BROTHER **wouldn’t listen.**

The OLDER BROTHER said, **“Look how many years I’ve stayed here serving you . . .**
(pause for actor to repeat)

but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money shows up . . . *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and you have a feast!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

The FATHER said, **“Son, you’re with me all the time . . .** *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and everything that is mine is yours . . . *(pause for actor to repeat)*

but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

This brother of yours was dead, and he’s alive! *(pause for actor to repeat)*

He was lost, and he’s found!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Character Nametags

Father	Older Son
Younger Son	Servant
Servant	Servant
Friend	Friend
Friend	Pig
Pig	Pig



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