

Good Shepherd

(Luke 15:1-7)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever been lost? [Teacher, describe situations the children may have experienced: lost in a store, in a crowd, in the woods, and so on.] How did you feel? (Scared, alone, hopeless, frantic, etc.)

Today our lesson is about what it means to be lost spiritually.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, open the eyes of our understanding this morning so that we might see You and know You more fully. We hunger for You, O God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. (Matthew 18:11)

Lesson

One special day the Lord Jesus told a crowd of people a story about something that was lost.

Luke 15:1

Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.

Tax collectors were hated by most Jews because they collected money for the Roman government. They had a reputation for being dishonest and greedy and they often kept the money they collected for themselves.

Luke 15:2-3

This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them! (3) So Jesus told them this story:

The Pharisees and scribes were the leaders of the Jewish religion. They spent their lives studying the scriptures. They were very proud religious people and thought that these tax collectors were such terrible sinners that Jesus shouldn't have anything to do with them! But Jesus cares about everyone, no matter who they are or what they've done. Jesus loved the tax collectors as well as the Pharisees. All were special to Him, just like you are very special to Him, too.

So, Jesus decided to tell them a story that would help them understand His love and concern for everyone.

Luke 15:4

"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?"

When Jesus lived on earth, many of His countrymen kept sheep. Those who looked after the sheep were called shepherds. Some shepherds took very good care of their sheep. Their animals ate well; they grazed and slept in safety. Everyone in Jesus' day knew that good shepherds protected their sheep from lions and bears and were willing to do anything to keep their sheep safe.

How do you think a shepherd would feel if he discovered that one of his sheep was lost? [Teacher let the children discuss various attitudes the shepherd could have had: "Oh well, missing one out of a hundred isn't too bad"; "It's his own fault"; "I'm too busy to look for that sheep now."] A good shepherd would be very concerned!

Did you know that if a sheep falls down and rolls over on its back, it cannot get up without help? A good shepherd would not want to rest until he found that poor lost lamb.

What a terrible thing to be lost! God's Word says that a person who has not believed in Jesus is just like that lost sheep. They are

spiritually lost. Being spiritually lost is a very serious problem. Without Jesus you cannot enjoy God's help in this life or go to heaven after we die.

Even after we have believed in Jesus and have become Born Again, we still do naughty things, don't we? Sin still separates us from the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus. God's Word says, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way*" (Isaiah 53:6). You and I go our own way by doing wrong things. Can you think of ways you have made some unwise choices and gone your own way? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

We do wrong things because we were born with a "want to" to have our own way. The Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, wants to save you from being lost in your sin. He wants to protect us from Satan, God's enemy, and to care for our needs. But like this one sheep who strayed from the shepherd's care, you and I were lost without Him.

In the story Jesus was telling the Pharisees and scribes, the shepherd immediately searched for the lost sheep, because he was a good shepherd. This is a wonderful picture of what the Lord Jesus did for you and me. Jesus left His beautiful, perfect home in heaven and came to this sinful earth to take the punishment for all the times you and I have gone our own ways.

Jesus willingly gave His life's blood for you and for me. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, wanted to save us from being lost in our sin. He provided a way for us to be under His protection and care like a shepherd watching over his lambs.

Luke 15:5

And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders.

After diligently seeking, the loving shepherd finally found the sheep that was lost and brought him to the safety of the fold.

Luke 15:6

When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'

Overjoyed, the shepherd called his friends and neighbors to celebrate his finding of the one that was lost.

Luke 15:7

In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

Looking into the faces of the Pharisees and tax collectors, Jesus told of the joyful celebration in heaven "*over one sinner who repents* [turns from his own way] *and comes to Jesus.*"

The Pharisees and scribes never seemed to change their attitude towards the tax collectors; but much worse, they never believed in the Lord Jesus as their "Good Shepherd." The Lord Jesus, wants to save each and every one of us from being lost in our sins. He willingly died to take the punishment for our sins. He laid down His life for you and for me.

Let's bow our heads thank Him for what He's done for us.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for Your loving care and protection. You are like a Good Shepherd to us and we are like your little lambs. Thank You that when we were lost in our sins, You came and found us and brought us into Your sheep fold, so now we are one of Your sheep. I pray that You will continue to watch over us and keep us from straying away from Your protection. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

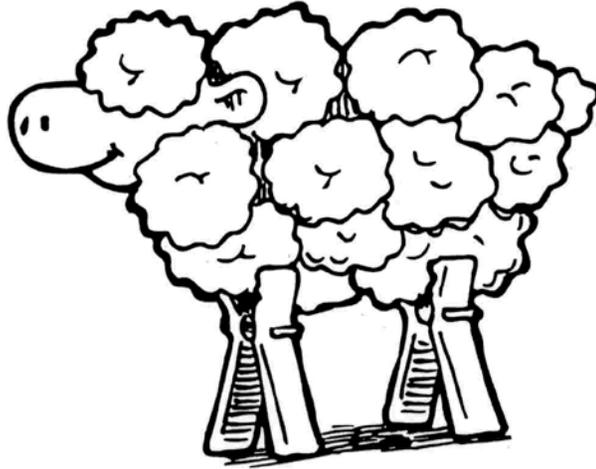
Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Lamb Craft

Materials:

- poster board
- black crepe paper
- 2 spring style clothespins
- black and red markers
- paste or glue



Directions:

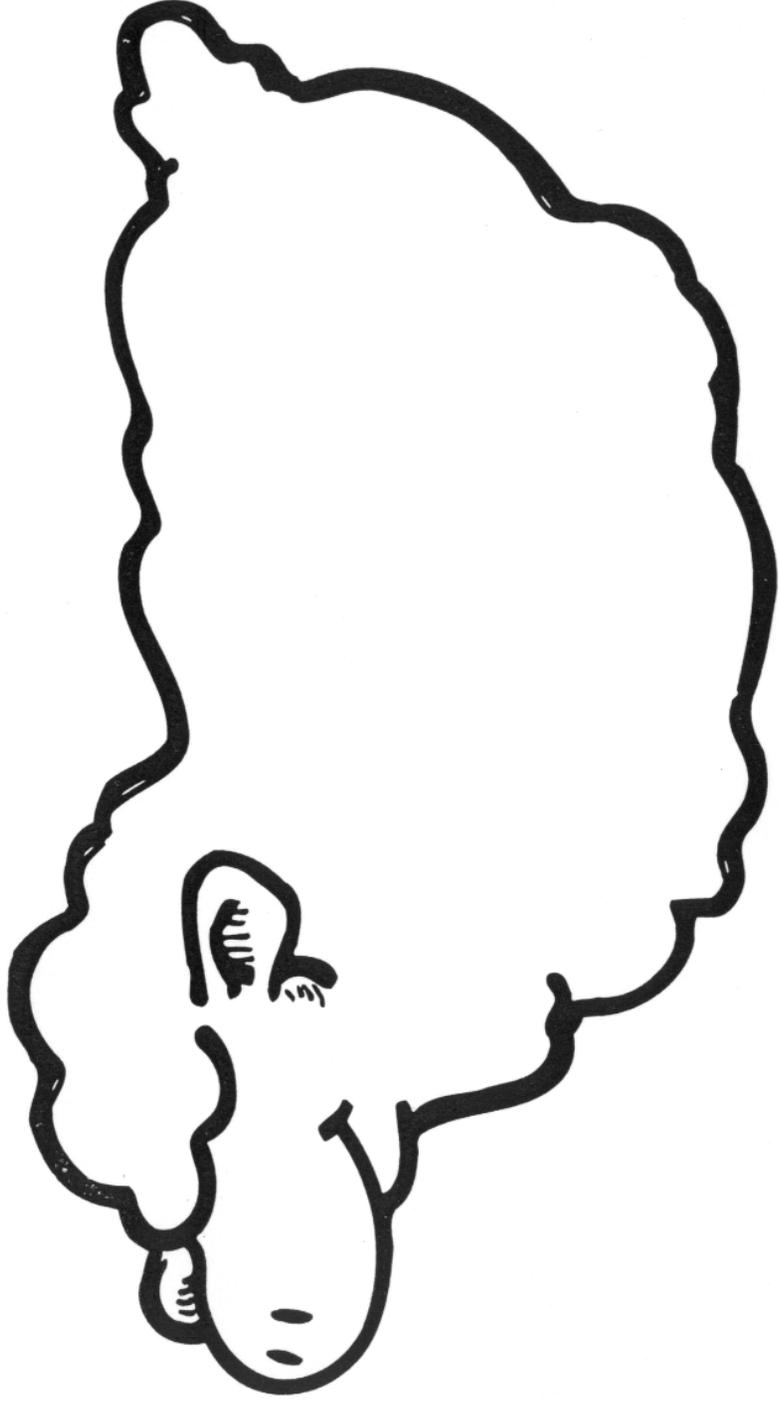
1. Cut the lamb's body from poster board, using the pattern that follows.
2. Use a red marker to color the lamb's mouth.
3. Use a black marker to color both clothespins and to outline the lamb's facial features.
4. Cut the crepe paper into 1" squares. Wad each square in a loose ball. (You will need about 50 squares.)
5. Cover the lamb's body (but not the face) with paste or glue. Attach the crepe paper balls to resemble black wool.
6. Clip the black clothespins to the bottom of the lamb so he can stand alone.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why did the Jews hate tax collectors? (They collected money for the Roman government and they were often dishonest and greedy.)
2. Who were the Pharisees and scribes? (They were the Jewish religious leaders who were proud and haughty.)
3. Why did Jesus tell the crowd the story of the lost sheep? (To help them understand His love and concern for everyone.)
4. How do you think a good shepherd would feel if he discovered that one of his sheep was lost? (Concerned.)
5. Spiritually, who is like a lost sheep? (A person that hasn't asked Jesus to forgive them of their sins.)
6. If you are spiritually lost what don't you get to do? (Go to heaven when you die.)
7. What does sin do to us? (It separates us from God.)
8. How is Jesus like a Good Shepherd? (He was willing to even lay down His life for us so that we could be found spiritually.)
9. What did the shepherd in the story do after he found the one lost sheep? (He called his friends and neighbors to celebrate.)
10. Where is the celebration when a lost sinner comes to Jesus? (In heaven!)

Lamb Pattern



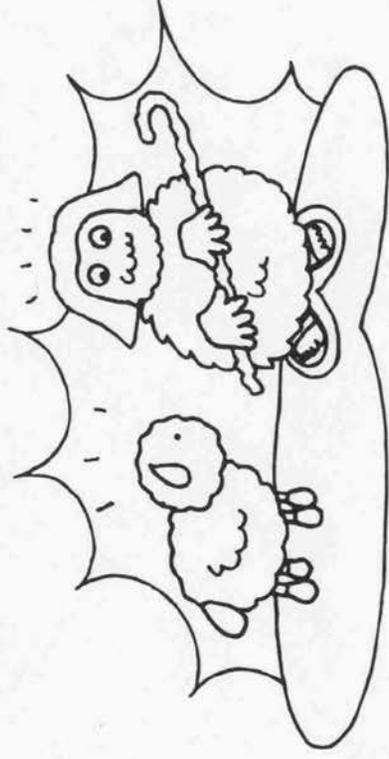
Lamb Pattern



Lamb and Shepherd Craft

Materials Needed:

- 2 cotton balls
- 2 cotton swabs
- poster board or thin cardboard
- pipe cleaner or chenille stem
- 1" pink pompon
- 1½" pompon
- 5mm wiggle eyes (2)
- 2" colored tissue paper square
- scissors
- tacky glue
- black fine-tip marker or colored pencils (for coloring the shepherd's feet and hands)



Directions for the lamb:

1. Cut two ears and one tail from poster board, using the pattern on this page.
2. The cotton-wrapped ends of the swabs form the legs of the lamb. Cut them off about ⅛" above the cotton. (Each cotton swab will make two legs.)
3. Pull a cotton ball gently into two equal pieces. (Each piece makes the head for a lamb.) Gently roll the piece round again.
4. Glue the head to one end of a whole cotton ball "body."
5. Use a marker to make dots for eyes.
6. Glue the swab legs to the lamb. (The cotton ends make the lamb's feet and the bare end is glued to the body.)
7. Glue the ears and tail to the lamb.



Patterns for the lamb's ear and tail and the shepherd's hands

Directions for the shepherd:

1. Glue the pink pompon (the head) to a colored pompon (the body) and set them aside to dry.
2. Cut feet and hands from poster board, using the patterns on this page, and color them.
3. Glue the head and body to the feet and let it dry.
4. Bend a pipe cleaner into a shepherd's crook.
5. Glue the shepherd's eyes to the head.
6. Glue the shepherd's crook to the front of the body. Glue the hands over the crook.
7. Put glue on the head and mold the tissue paper square on the head to look like a head covering.



Feet pattern for base of shepherd figure

