

Stories of God's Love

The Good Samaritan

Day One

Adults

THEME:	"I will be a good servant"
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Luke 10:25-37
MEMORY VERSE:	"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." John 13:34 (NRSV)

Objective	Through this parable, the participants will see a good example of Christian service.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carefully prepare and study the day's class, reading the Bible passage several times.• Prepare and have ready all the material you will use, so that you might be able to make the best out of the time allocated for the lesson.• Always have your Bible in your hand so that the students will know and understand that all they are going to learn is coming from the Word of God.• Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to meet the lesson's objective so that the lesson might be a great blessing for the children and may touch the hearts of those in need.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual aids related to the Bible story.• Always have paper, pencils or pens handy to share with the group.• Optional: Newspapers and magazines (make sure there are pictures of people), poster board, glue, scissors, markers.• Optional: Materials to make buttons: poster board, ribbon, stapler.• Memory verse printed out on paper to post on the wall.

Introduction

- *Welcome everyone, shaking hands and calling people by name. If you have not had formal introductions, give them name tags so everyone can be on a first-name basis; help them feel welcomed and cared-for as they arrive at the classroom.*
- *Pray for the participants and thank God for their presence today.*
- *Ask one of the students to pray, thanking God for the day and asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead this class according to God's will.*
- *Share an experience in which you have been anguished over something and someone helped you come out of that problem. Ask someone (a volunteer is even better) to share a similar*

experience and finally ask someone to share how they helped someone having a problem. Then you can ask why they helped that person or why they received that assistance. The main point should be love and concern for the other person's wellbeing, emphasizing that it should be completely disinterested.

- Have you ever been in trouble and people did not help you?
- Have you received help from a stranger or have you helped a stranger? How has that impacted your faith?
- How did you feel when you helped the person or when someone helped you, especially a total stranger?
- If you received help from a stranger, did this help you the next time you had the opportunity to help someone?
- Did you ever not help someone and then wished that you could have gone back in time and help them?
- *Read the memory passage John 13:34 (you may want to have them look up the passage in their Bibles) and ask: What did Jesus mean when he said "one another?" Listen to their answers. Help them see that Jesus teaches us not only to love our parents, siblings and friends, but to love all who need it, even if we don't know them personally.*

Studying the Bible passage

You may want to define the following terms for the class before going on with the story:

- **Parable** is a type of story which Jesus told the people who followed him. In a parable, there is usually something that Jesus is teaching us
- A **Neighbor** is not just someone who lives next door to you. A neighbor is really any one you might meet, whether you know them or not.
- A **Samaritan** is a person who lived in Samaria, a country right next to Israel, where Jesus lived. Unfortunately, the people of Israel and the people of Samaria did not get along.

In this day and age, it may be hard to find disinterested help, maybe because people might have a fear of being hurt. For example, if someone has a flat tire, or their car breaks down on the highway, it may not be easy for someone to stop by and lend a helping hand, perhaps because they're afraid that it is a trap or maybe because they're in a hurry and can't afford stopping. This leads us to situations where we act passively, especially as we encounter people in need, not only in these examples of car trouble, but also in times when others need love, comfort or simply attention.

NOTE: You may read the following paragraphs to guide the class discussion, or you may look at them in preparation for class ahead of time, and then during class you may share the message of the passage in your own words. Throughout the discussion, be sure to ask people for their interpretation of the passage and their opinion about applying it to our lives.

The parable for today is related to this theme of helping. Please open your Bibles to today's passage, in the Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 10, and we'll read together verses 25 to 37.

First, let's look at the passage's context. Jesus is being tested by someone to see how Jesus applied his teachings to the law. We see in verse 25 that an interpreter of the law (that is, not just anyone, but someone who had studied Jewish legal issues) asks Jesus what he had to do in order to fulfill the law and go to heaven.

Jesus answers by asking instead what the law said about the matter, to which the interpreter responded with verse 27: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Then, wanting to seem like a just man, and to show that he lived his life properly, he asked Jesus another question: And, who is my neighbor? Anticipating that Jesus would answer that a neighbor would be any Jew he came across on the road, because that's basically what the law said, and sure that he had never done anything wrong against another Jew in that city, then the lawyer figured that he was about to win the argument with Jesus. Truly we think to ourselves that we are good with those who are "around us" like our family, our friends, people who live next door, people from church, and we think that we've done what God wanted from us, that by doing this, we were at peace with God. Of course, this is important, because we should first and foremost help those who are around us and more so our own family. This much makes sense. We help those near us. But Jesus did not answer the educated Jewish lawyer with what he wanted to hear. Jesus knew perfectly well that the man had fulfilled the law as far as people near him were concerned. So Jesus told him to have mercy and kindness towards any other person he met on the road, of any nationality, from any social class group, from any religion, with any physical condition... that's your neighbor. Maybe in another country besides the United States one doesn't see the same kind of gathering of people from all over the world, with so many ethnic groups, but each one of them is our neighbor, that is, they literally live near us and if they have a need, we are to help them, for that is what the Lord Jesus taught in the parable that he shared.

- Do you notice any tension among groups of people in our community?

The parable tells us that there once was a man who was traveling from the city of Jerusalem towards Jericho. This was the main public road in Judea, since it was a vital communication artery between the two cities, and therefore all sorts of people traveled it. There were people who traveled because of commerce, and because of that, they traveled carrying some money.

As this person traveled on the road, he was ambushed by thieves. The thieves beat him up severely, wounded him, and took everything he had. The word of God says he left him almost dead. In verse 31 we find the words "by chance" which in the original mean "it so happened" like speaking of a coincidence of time and space. When the wounded Jewish man was left there half dead, because of the beating he had gotten, that's when the priest and the Levite walked by. The priest and the Levite are mentioned in this passage for two reasons: one is that they were a group that traveled the route frequently; the second reason is that their professions and their responsibilities within their service in the temple would have meant they were expected to show a certain amount of mercy towards someone in need. So in telling the story, the Jewish audience would have thought that surely one of those two would have helped the wounded Jewish man and furthermore they would have thought that not lending help would have gone against their duties as servants at the temple.

- Today, who would be a person you would expect to offer you help if you were in need?

But as we can read, in both cases they saw the wounded man, and passed by on the other side. So often we ourselves act similarly. We don't stop to lend a hand even when we see great need. We might not even so much as offer a prayer or a word of encouragement. We don't have to find someone in dire condition outwardly. It could be that they are broken inside. Think about the needs of our children, our spouse, our parents, our siblings; we can always find someone to help. We should not pretend that we don't see them. We should not let people be stuck in their misery and despair. We should at least offer them a comforting word.

- Have you had someone show you kindness, that even if it didn't solve your problem it helped you deal with it?

But the Bible says that a Samaritan came. They mention the Samaritan to show that it was a non-Jew who had no obligation to offer anything, let alone help, because of the strife between the two peoples. In fact, when Jews traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee, instead of traveling through Samaria, they would go around crossing the Jordan River and when they had cleared that region, they'd cross the river again and continued on the more direct route. Such was the hate between them that they avoided seeing and speaking to each other. But it was this character that had mercy on him, and was able to help.

In order to be able to help like the so called Good Samaritan we have to pay attention to four things, besides being alert to notice the needs people have: first, like the Bible says, we need to draw near. We have to have contact with the people we are trying to help. We can't help from a distance.

- Has anyone experienced this? How does it make a difference?

Someone used to say "My feet won't get me there, but my check will reach them." That is not enough. We should be ready to act right away. Many times there is a call for volunteers to do something and we turn a deaf ear. The first sign of service is to approach the one in need; the personal touch is better than dealing with someone from a distance.

Secondly, the Word of God says that not only did he draw near, but that he bandaged the wounded man. He healed him. It is not enough to get near and take a look; when there is need, we have to see that their wounds be healed. We need to be concerned that whatever assistance we provide may be enough for the healing to begin.

- Can someone offer an example of this in your life?

Third, the Samaritan took care of him, looked after him in case he would have a set back, and cared for him so there would be no complications. Sometimes that's the reason we don't help others, because it implies that we have to dedicate part of our time to offer the help. It is not enough to help in passing, because conflicts and wounds are not easily healed, they take time. When we say we are going to help someone, we have to assume that we have to give of our time to that person, son or daughter, brother or neighbor, even though we might have much work to do. To serve others and to show our love for Christ we have to give of our time, just as we spend time at home with friends, or at work, look for the time to give. Religion and service are not just about coming to church on Sundays. It's about giving of our time to the Lord and the work of God.

• Can someone share a time when helping someone was more than just a one time thing, that it extended over a period of time, maybe even unending?

The Samaritan showed mercy to the Jew. The Bible doesn't tell us but surely the Samaritan had things to do, but he was able to put everything on hold to show love to the person in need. Who knows if one day we will not need someone to help us heal and we need to be cared for; not only that, but now let's look at the last part. The Good Samaritan spent money on him when, as he was ready to leave the inn where he left the wounded man, and he paid the expenses that were still to come. He didn't know if the wounded man was rich or not, whether the money he was leaving was enough or not, but he provided for his care.

A way to be a good servant is to help with God's work, through our offerings collected during services in church to help continue to work of mercy by the church, to keep up the work God is doing through us, and this way we help others even without knowing who they are, which is a sign of God's love in our hearts. Part of our service is also to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us, including our care for this world, which is God's creation. Then Jesus concluded by saying "Go and do the same" which means, we should help our neighbors in any way we can, in order to show our love to one another.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

Ask the students the following questions, so they can reflect on and realize what Jesus is teaching in this Bible story.

- Do you think the priest and the Levite had second thoughts about not helping the man who was robbed? How do you think they felt?
- Why didn't they help him? *(Allow them to share several answers. You may suggest that they did not know if the man was dead, and they were afraid because touching the body of a dead person was a bad thing and they would have had to return to the temple to be "cleansed."* See Leviticus 21:10-11)
- How do you think the event affected the faith of the person who had been robbed?
- *Help them note that the man who was kind and helpful did so because the Spirit of God was making him feel that kindness in his heart. Through his good actions he was able to show love to his neighbor and helped him in any way he could.*
- What excuses do we make not to help people in need?
- What does it mean when Jesus says in Luke 10:27: "love... your neighbor as yourself"? When is it easy and when is it not easy to love our neighbor?
- Consider this: Jesus was also saying that we need to love ourselves! When is that easy and when is it not easy to love ourselves?
- What does this story teach us about God's love for us? The Bible also says: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." 1 John 4:7-8. List several experiences or Bible passages that show that "God is love" *(you can help by offering passages like John 3:16, Gen. 9:8-11, Isa. 43:4, Isa. 54:7, Mat. 9:36, Mar. 1:41)*
- How do you see your church, your participation in church, reaching beyond your neighbor, your community? Where can you do more?

❖ *Optional Activity: Write a Lament*

A lament is a prayer to God in the midst of difficulty which deeply acknowledges our human pain or suffering, at the same time crying out to God for the delay in

sending help and at the same time knowing that help is on its way. A lament is not the opposite of praising God, but rather, a first step towards real prayer (Billman and Migliore, 2-3)

What do you think the man in the parable who was hurt by robbers was thinking before the Good Samaritan came? There are moments in which it may be hard to feel God's love, even though we know that God loves us. Let's read Psalm 13, which is a lament. Does it remind you of a particular time in your life? Re-read verse 5. What do you feel when reading that?

Invite the students to create their own lament (as a group or individually) using the elements of a lament, which are generally, in various orders: (Billman and Migliore, 27)

Address
Complaint
Confession of Trust
Petition
Vow of Praise

Let us see where these elements appear in Psalm 13 (or see Psalm 6 and 142)

1 [Address] *How long, O Lord?*

[Complaint] *Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me?*

2 *How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

3 [Petition] *Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,*

4 *and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.*

5 [Confession of Trust] *But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation*

6 [Vow of Praise] *I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

Applying the Bible passage to our life

❖ *Optional Activity 1:*

Invite the class members to retell the story of the Good Samaritan from the perspective of each of the characters and consider especially the feelings and reasons for their behavior. They can act out the story or just ponder how each character would have experienced the story.

❖ *Optional Activity 2: Putting the lesson to practice*

Divide the class, give each of them a piece of paper to write and describe how they can put to practice this very day this kind of Christian service helping others. Give them 10 minutes.

Give them the chance to share what they wrote. Invite them also to comment in case they have a need at this moment and if it is possible for the group to surround them with care to resolve it.

❖ *Optional Activity 3: A story of help*

Divide the class into groups of two or three students. Tell them that you want them to tell a story inspired by the passage for today using pictures from the newspaper and magazines you brought. They will tell the story in a comics format (creating different scenes in frames, one after the other, telling the story). Tell them to cut out pictures of people who seem to be in need of help (someone who looks hungry, sick, sad, etc.), who are willing to help, adult or youth, and of buildings (hospital, church, house). Once they've cut out the pictures, have them order them on the poster board, so they can begin to tell the story. Encourage all of them to participate in creating the story. Once they are in agreement about the story's details, they should start to create dialogue among the characters or make notes beneath each picture explaining the scene. Ask them to write the dialogue on another piece of paper first. When they have finalized the dialogue, then they can glue the pictures, write the text, add drawings, etc. When they're done, ask each group to take turns using their poster board to tell the story to the rest of the class.

Conclusion

Encourage them to put to practice what they learned today.

- ❖ *Optional Activity: To help them remember the lesson, you could ask them to make buttons out of color poster board and they can write on it "Love your neighbor" and/or "God is Love" and/or "Love one another." Add ribbon to the button so they can use it as a bookmark. Ask them to write the date on it so they can remember that they are to seek ways to help others*

Invite them to start applying right away what they learned today.

If someone has a special need, ask that they share it and pray for each other. Ask them to pray for the needs lifted up by the group tonight before going to bed.

Offer a final prayer by inviting the students to join you in praying: you will begin the prayer and then the students will each say a sentence about how they can help other, and then you will close asking God to help us all become better servants of one another and thereby be able to show true Christian love.

Billman, Kathleen D., and Daniel L. Migliore. *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope*. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1999.

Stories of God's Love

The Widow and the Unjust Judge

Day Two

Adult

THEME:	"Pray Always: Nurturing our Relationship with God."
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Luke 18:1 -8
MEMORY VERSE:	"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." Matthew 7:7(NRSV)

Objective	The student will learn that our loving God connects with us in a more personal way than how the judge treated the widow in the parable. The student will learn that praying is our way to have a relationship with God.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare for this lesson by reading Luke 18:1-8. Read also Jeremiah 33:3, Mark 1:35, Luke 22:41-42, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 10:10-22. Pray for understanding of what God would have you teach through His word.• Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted without being rushed.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible, paper and pencil for each student, and a blackboard or marking board to write on.• Memory verse printed out on paper to post on the wall.• Prayer verses handout (optional)

Introduction

- *Welcome the students and say a prayer thanking God for them, for the way in which God speaks to us and listens to us through prayer.*
- *Make sure everyone has their name tag on and mark them present in the attendance chart*
- *Review the theme and memory verse from the previous day.*
- *Present today's theme and help the students practice today's memory verse Matthew 7:7..*
- *Tell the students: Today we are going to focus on what it means to talk to God. We are going to discover what it means to pray and how we can talk to God.*

Begin the class with a discussion about friendship with the focus on the importance of communication - talking and listening - in order to keep a relationship alive. Have the students think about their best friend and have them consider how often they talk to that person. It is important for the relationship to have open and frequent communication.

In the same way as Christians we have a personal relationship, a friendship, with God through Jesus, and prayer is our means of communication. Sometimes, however, we may do more talking than we do listening when we pray.

Today we are going to learn a Christian spiritual practice called "lectio divina", which means "divine reading" in Latin. This practice was used during the time when many Christians could not read. As they heard someone read a passage of scripture, they would listen to hear what God was saying to them in his Word.

God tells us in Ps. 46:10 to "Be still and know that I am God." First let's quiet our hearts before God.

Studying the Bible passage

Our parable today is from Luke 18:1-8 about the widow and the unjust judge. As I read the scripture passage to you, listen for a word or phrase that speaks to your heart. Perhaps this word or phrase stirs in you a feeling of love and gratitude to God, or maybe it disturbs or convicts you. In whatever way, this word or phrase will seem to stand out.

Read the passage to the class, allow a few minutes to reflect on the passage and then ask students to share only their word or phrase. Each person in the group may speak that word or phrase one at a time, without elaborating. Read the passage a second time or ask someone in the class to read it.

As the passage is read again, by a different person, pay attention to what feeling or image comes into focus in connection to the word or phrase you chose the first read-through.

Have each person in the group briefly state his/her feeling/image. Use the same process as when the word/phrase was spoken.

The passage is read a final time, by a third person, if possible.

As you listen to the passage again, how does this word or phrase connect with your life right now - with what is happening at home, at work, in your leisure time, in your community, or in the world? Take time to explore this connection to see how God is present to you there. What is God like for you in your life? Is He calling you to anything in your present circumstance? *Again, have class members briefly share their thoughts one at a time, this time sharing more deeply, with more detail. Have a moment of silence, resting in the presence of God. A spoken blessing or prayer may complete the silence.*

Reflecting on the Bible passage

In I Kings 19:1-13, the Lord speaks to Elijah in a whisper. To hear a whisper, we have to listen carefully. Lectio divina is a method to use in our quiet time with God to help us listen for his whisper. You may want to write your thoughts down, perhaps in a journal.

First, let's "set the stage" by trying to understand the time in which Jesus lived. In the Bible, God had instructed his people to care for widows, because they had a difficult time making ends meet without a husband. The judge held court in a tent, set up the agenda, and approved and accepted the cases to be heard. Women had little standing before the law, and a widow would have

had no husband to represent her or money to pay a bribe, which was sometimes necessary in order for a case to be heard.

Now let's look more closely at this parable to see and apply what Jesus is teaching. Some of these points may have been brought out in the Bible study activity, but reviewing by writing them on the board will reinforce the learning.

- Pray always and not lose heart (vs. 1). Paul writes in 1 Thess. 5:17 to "pray continually" or "pray without ceasing." But what does that mean? We can't always be on our knees in prayer and Jesus warns us in Matt. 6:7 not to be constantly repeating prayers, which He called "vain repetition." Instead, prayer should be as natural to us as breathing - the "atmosphere" in which we live - a natural habit of our lives. If it isn't, we will become discouraged and lose heart or give up. If we become anxious and fail to be persistent in presenting our requests to God (Php. 4:6), life and its problems will defeat us.
 - Can you relate to this scenario?
 - When has prayer been uplifting for you?
 - The unjust judge granted justice to the widow because she was persistent (vs. 2-5). Although the judge "neither feared God nor had respect for people," he heard her request and granted her justice because she was continually "bothering" him and was going to "wear (him) out." Jesus is not saying here that we are "bothering" God by continually coming to him in prayer. Rather, He is pointing out the contrast between a selfish judge and a compassionate God who will lovingly hear and not delay long to help and "grant justice "to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night" (vs. 7).
 - When answers to prayers are delayed, how do you deal with it?
 - Even in the face of things we don't understand, true believers will patiently pray and trust God until Jesus comes again (vs. 8). In order to understand why Jesus adds the question in vs. 8, we need to see it in context. At the end of Chapter 17 Jesus is telling his disciples about the end times when He will return in judgment and in glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As believers we need to be persistent in prayer and persevere in faith even when it seems that sin and evil increasingly prevail. As the saying goes, "We know the end of the Book, and we win!"
- ❖ *Optional Activity: Review other passages from the list of biblical verses on prayer and choose a few to share and discuss with the group.*

Applying the Bible passage to our lives

Reflect on and discuss the following questions to summarize and reinforce the truths learned.

1. What do we learn about God from this passage? After the students share thoughts, summarize with the following:

When we look at the contrasts between the unjust judge and our gracious God, in addition to God's justice and compassion, we see his patience and longsuffering. We believe in a God who is

Love, full of mercy and grace towards his children, shown to us through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.

2. What do we learn about our relationship with God through prayer?

- Because we are God's chosen ones (vs. 7), prayer is much more than just words - it is the desires of our hearts expressed to our loving Heavenly Father. We are to have such a holy desire in our hearts to be in the will of God that we are constantly in communion with him, even if we never speak a word.
- Unlike the widow who had no husband or friend to present her case, we have in heaven a High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18), Jesus Christ, our Savior and Advocate, who constantly represents us before the throne of grace.
- When we pray, not only can we claim God's promises from his Word, but we also have the indwelling Holy Spirit who intercedes for us according to the will of God.
- *Invite someone in class to share how God has touched their lives through this lesson.*
- *Share a prayer, bringing to God those needs or joys that may have been expressed during the time of sharing.*

Conclusion

Review memory verse Matthew 7:7.

Jesus promotes having a close relationship with God through prayer. These prayers help us get to feel God in our lives and allow us to sense what God wants us to do with our life.

Jesus wants us to pray as often as we can. If we have short prayers in our hearts, we can say them many times during the day. We can make it a habit to turn to God during all the moments of our lives.

Offer a closing prayer.

Biblical Verses on Prayer / Versículos sobre Oración



I trust in God's unfailing love. Psalm 52:8 NIV
Yo confío en el gran amor de Dios. Salmo 52:8 NVI

PRAYER / ORACIÓN:

1. ANSWERED - CONTESTADA» Cain (Genesis 4:13-15)
2. ANSWERED » Abraham, for a son (Genesis 15)
3. ANSWERED » For Sodom (Genesis 18:23-33)
4. ANSWERED » For Ishmael (Genesis 17:20)
5. ANSWERED » For Abimelech (Genesis 20:17)
6. ANSWERED » Hagar, for deliverance (Genesis 16:7-13)
7. ANSWERED » Abraham's servant, for guidance (Genesis 24:12-52)
8. ANSWERED » Rebecca, concerning her pains in pregnancy (Genesis 25:22,23)
9. ANSWERED » Jacob, for deliverance from Esau (Genesis 32:9-32;33:1-17)
10. ANSWERED » Moses, for help at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15,16)
11. ANSWERED » Moses, at the waters of Marah (Exodus 15:25)
12. ANSWERED » Moses, at Mount Horeb (Exodus 17:4-6)
13. ANSWERED » Moses, in the battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-14)
14. ANSWERED » Moses, concerning the complaint of the Israelites for meat (Numbers 11:11-35)
15. ANSWERED » Moses, on behalf of Miriam's leprosy (Numbers 12:13-15)
16. ANSWERED » Moses, Aaron, and Samuel (Psalms-Salmos 99:6)
17. ANSWERED » From bondage (Exodus 2:23-25;3:7-10; Acts-Hechos 7:34)
18. ANSWERED » From Pharaoh's army (Exodus 14:10-30)
19. ANSWERED » From the king of Mesopotamia (Judges 3:9,15)
20. ANSWERED » Sisera (Judges 4:3,23,24; 1 Samuel 12:9-11)
21. ANSWERED » Ammon (Judges 10:6-18;11:1-33)
22. ANSWERED » For God's favor under the reproofs of Azariah (2 Chronicles 15:1-15)
23. ANSWERED » From Babylonian bondage (Nehemiah 9:27)
24. ANSWERED » Gideon, asking for the token of dew (Judges 6:36-40)
25. ANSWERED » Manoah, asking about Samson (Judges 13:8,9)
26. ANSWERED » Samson, asking for strength (Judges 16:28-30)
27. ANSWERED » Hannah, asking to give birth to a child (1 Samuel 1:10-17,19,20)
28. ANSWERED » David, asking whether Keilah would be delivered into his hands (1 Samuel 23:10-12)
29. ANSWERED » David, asking about Ziklag (1 Samuel 30:8)
30. ANSWERED » David, asking whether he should go into Judah after Saul's death (2 Samuel 2:1)
31. ANSWERED » David, asking whether he should go to war against the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:19-25)
32. ANSWERED » David, in adversity (Psalms-Salmos 118:5;138:3)
33. ANSWERED » Solomon, asking for wisdom (1 Kings-Reyes 3:1-13;9:2,3)
34. ANSWERED » Elijah, raising the widow's son (1 Kings-Reyes 17:22)
35. ANSWERED » Elijah, calling for fire to come down upon his sacrifice (1 Kings-Reyes 18:36-38)
36. ANSWERED » Elijah, asking for rain (1 Kings-Reyes 17:1;18:1,42-45; James-Santiago 5:17)
37. ANSWERED » Elisha, leading the Syrian army (2 Kings-Reyes 6:17-20)

38. ANSWERED » Jabez, asking for prosperity (1 Chronicles 4:10)
39. ANSWERED » Abijah, for victory over Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 13:14-18)
40. ANSWERED » Asa, for victory over Zerah (2 Chronicles 14:11-15)
41. ANSWERED » The people of Judah (2 Chronicles 15:15)
42. ANSWERED » Jehoshaphat, for victory over the Canaanites (2 Chronicles 18:31;20:6-27)
43. ANSWERED » Jehoahaz, for victory over Hazael (2 Kings-Reyes 13:4)
44. ANSWERED » Priests and Levites, when blessing the people (2 Chronicles 30:27)
45. ANSWERED » Hezekiah and Isaiah, for deliverance from Sennacherib (2 Kings-Reyes 19:14-20; 2 Chronicles 32:20-23)
46. ANSWERED » To save Hezekiah's life (2 Kings-Reyes 20:1-7,11; 2 Chronicles 32:24)
47. ANSWERED » Manasseh, for deliverance from the king of Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:13,19)
48. ANSWERED » The Reubenites, for deliverance from the Hagarites (1 Chronicles 5:20)
49. ANSWERED » The Jews, returning from the captivity (Ezra 8:21,23)
50. ANSWERED » Ezekiel, to have the baking of his bread of affliction changed (Ezekiel 4:12-15)
51. ANSWERED » Daniel, for the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzars dream (Daniel 2:19-23)
52. ANSWERED » Daniel, interceding for the people (Daniel 9:20-23)
53. ANSWERED » Daniel, in a vision (Daniel 10:12)
54. ANSWERED » Zacharias, for a son (Luke 1:13)
55. ANSWERED » The leper, for healing (Matthew-Mateo 8:2,3; Mark 1:40-43; Luke 5:12,13)
56. ANSWERED » Centurion, for his servant (Matthew-Mateo 8:5-13; Luke 7:3-10; John-Juan 4:50,51)
57. ANSWERED » Peter, asking that Tabitha (Dorcas) be restored to life (Acts-Hechos 9:40)
58. ANSWERED » The disciples, for Peter (Acts-Hechos 12:5-17)
59. ANSWERED » Paul, to be restored to health (2 Corinthians 1:9-11)

60. IMPORTUNITY IN - INSISTENCIA EN ORACIÓN » Jacob (Genesis 32:24-30)
61. IMPORTUNITY IN » Moses (Exodus 33:12-16;34:9)
62. IMPORTUNITY IN » Elijah (1 Kings-Reyes 18:22-44)
63. IMPORTUNITY IN » The two blind men of Jericho (Matthew-Mateo 20:30,31; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:39)
64. IMPORTUNITY IN » The non-Jewish, Syro-Phoenician woman (Matthew-Mateo 15:22-28; Mark 7:25-30)
65. IMPORTUNITY IN » The Roman centurion (Matthew-Mateo 8:5; Luke 7:3,4)

66. SUB-TOPICS – TÓPICOS VARIOS» Prayer test proposed by Elijah (1 Kings-Reyes 18:24-39)
67. SUB-TOPICS » Daily, in the morning (Psalms-Salmos 5:3;88:13;143:8; Isaiah 33:2)
68. SUB-TOPICS » Twice daily (Psalms-Salmos 88:1)
69. SUB-TOPICS » Thrice daily (Psalms-Salmos 55:17; Daniel 6:10)
70. SUB-TOPICS » All night (Luke 6:12)
71. SUB-TOPICS » Without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

72. SUB-TOPICS » Enjoined (Hebrews 4:16)
73. SUB-TOPICS » Exemplified by Abraham in his inquiry concerning Sodom (Genesis 18:23-32)
74. SUB-TOPICS » By Moses, supplicating for assistance in delivering Israel (Exodus 33:12,18)
75. SUB-TOPICS » Secret (Genesis 24:63; Matthew-Mateo 6:6)
76. SUB-TOPICS » Silent (Psalms-Salmos 5:1)
77. SUB-TOPICS » Weeping in (Ezra 10:1)
78. SUB-TOPICS » In a loud voice, satirized by Elijah (1 Kings-Reyes 18:27)
79. SUB-TOPICS » Of Pharisees (Matthew-Mateo 23:14)
80. SUB-TOPICS » Of scribes (Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)
81. SUB-TOPICS » Profuse, to be avoided (Ecclesiastes 5:2; Matthew-Mateo 6:7)
82. SUB-TOPICS » Vain repetitions of, to be avoided (Matthew-Mateo 6:7)
83. SUB-TOPICS » By Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:14)
84. SUB-TOPICS » Gideon asks for a sign of dew on a fleece (Judges 6:36-40)
85. SUB-TOPICS » Of Moses, at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15)
86. SUB-TOPICS » When Moses prayed to see Canaan, the promised land (Deuteronomy 3:23-27)
87. SUB-TOPICS » Of Joshua (Joshua 7:10)
88. SUB-TOPICS » Evils averted by (Jeremiah 26:19)
89. SUB-TOPICS » Unbelief in (Job 21:15)
90. SUB-TOPICS » However, see (John-Juan 17:1-26)
91. SUB-TOPICS » Of Balaam (Deuteronomy 23:5; Joshua 24:10)
92. SUB-TOPICS » Of Job (Job 30:20; with42:12)
93. SUB-TOPICS » Of the Israelites, when attacked by the Amorites (Deuteronomy 1:45)
94. SUB-TOPICS » The prayer of Jesus, "Let this cup pass away," (Matthew-Mateo 26:39,42,44; with26:45-75)
95. SUB-TOPICS » And (Matthew-Mateo 27)
96. SUB-TOPICS » Answer to, delayed (Psalms-Salmos 22:1,2;40:1;80:4;88:14; Jeremiah 42:7; Habakkuk 1:2;)
97. SUB-TOPICS » Solomon asked for wisdom; the answer included wisdom, riches, honour, and long life (1 Kings-Reyes 3:7-14; 2 Chronicles 1:10-12)
98. SUB-TOPICS » The disciples prayed for Peter; the answer included Peter's deliverance (Acts-Hechos 12:15; with12:5)
99. SUB-TOPICS » Moses asked to be permitted to cross the Jordan River; the answer was permission to view the land of promise (Deuteronomy 3:23-27)
100. SUB-TOPICS » The Israelites lusted for the fleshpots of Egypt; the answer gave them, flesh, but also leanness of soul (Psalms-Salmos 106:14,15)
101. SUB-TOPICS » Martha and Mary asked Jesus to come and heal their brother Lazarus; Jesus delayed, but raised Lazarus from the dead (John-Juan 11)
102. SUB-TOPICS » Paul asked that the "thorn in the flesh" be removed; the answer was a promise of grace to endure it (2 Corinthians 12:8,9)
103. SUB-TOPICS » See NATIONS, PRAYER FOR
104. SUB-TOPICS » Of David (Psalms-Salmos 51:1-17)
105. SUB-TOPICS » Of the tax collector (Luke 18:13)
106. SUB-TOPICS » See SIN, CONFESSION OF

107. SUB-TOPICS » Submission in, exemplified by Jesus (Matthew-Mateo 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42)
108. SUB-TOPICS » David (2 Samuel 12:22,23)
109. SUB-TOPICS » Job (Job 1:20,21)
110. SUB-TOPICS » Private, enjoined (Matthew-Mateo 6:6)
111. SUB-TOPICS » Lot (Genesis 19:20)
112. SUB-TOPICS » Eliezer (Genesis 24:12)
113. SUB-TOPICS » Jacob (Genesis 32:9-12)
114. SUB-TOPICS » Gideon (Judges 6:22,36,39)
115. SUB-TOPICS » Hannah (1 Samuel 1:10)
116. SUB-TOPICS » David (2 Samuel 7:18-29)
117. SUB-TOPICS » Hezekiah (2 Kings-Reyes 20:2)
118. SUB-TOPICS » Isaiah (2 Kings-Reyes 20:11)
119. SUB-TOPICS » Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:18,19)
120. SUB-TOPICS » Ezra (Ezra 9:5,6)
121. SUB-TOPICS » Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:4)
122. SUB-TOPICS » Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:16-25)
123. SUB-TOPICS » Daniel (Daniel 9:3,19)

Source:

Nave's Topical Bible

Found in www.biblegateway.com

Stories of God's Love

The Prodigal Son

Day Three

Adults

TEMA:	"God Loves Me and Forgives My Sins"
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Luke 15:11-32
MEMORY VERSE:	"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 (NRSV)

Objective

The student will know the story of the prodigal son, and will see the connection between the love of the father in the parable and the great love God has for us.

Preparation

- Pray that God will give you understanding and wisdom to understand God's word and pray for the youth who'll be in class.
- Always have the Bible in your hand, so the students will know and understand that what they are going to learn is coming from God's word.
- Don't forget to practice the entire lesson, to measure the time and then pray asking for God's help and God's blessing for the teaching team and the students.
- Read the section "Biblical and Cultural Background" found below.
- Memory verse printed out on paper to post on the wall.
- Copies of handouts.
- Optional Handouts: Fred Craddock story and Forgiveness verses

Material

Biblical and Cultural Background:

Think about this as you read Luke 15:11-32. The audience Jesus had that day were publicans and sinners from the city who came out to listen to him. They knew their own sins very well and they were willing listeners. Among them were also scribes and Pharisees. But they kept themselves apart, condemning the publicans and sinners; they were especially critical of the way in which Jesus was receiving sinners and was eating with them.

Jesus taught them about the love of God through a story about two sons and a loving father. One of them, because he didn't understand his father's love, asked his father one day for his portion of the inheritance that would belong to him, and he left home. He went to a far away country, and after he lost it all and after he hit rock bottom, feeding pigs and being so hungry as to desire their feed, he realized that he had sinned against his father and against God, and so he set out to return to his father to ask for forgiveness. Jesus longed for these Israelites to recognize their own sin and the love of God the father, and so be able to return home from the dark country of sin.

God loves us and is willing to forgive our sins if we ask God to.

Introduction

Ask how many of them are sons/daughters, parents and siblings. Ask them to think of a situation which has created some distance between them and another person because of something bad that person did against them or vice versa.

Studying the Bible passage

This story we will see today is traditionally called the Prodigal Son. The word "prodigal" means someone who is not very careful with what they have and they end up wasting and losing what they have. So, for example, let's say that you have a job that pays you every Friday. Then imagine that you weren't careful with how you spent your money. You bought some books, the dog chewed up the shoes you just bought, and you went out with your friends and ate so much pizza that it gave you a stomach ache. You even lost some of the money! By Monday, you realize that you are out of money and the week is just starting. That is being wasteful, that is what a prodigal person does.

Have the Bible open to Luke 15:11-32. Invite a volunteer to read the passage aloud.

In this parable we find three different important situations and teachings which challenge us to reflect and realize something about ourselves, our present behavior and what it should be.

First, we have the scene of a young man trying to begin his life, thinking that he could figure things on his own using his portion of the inheritance which would be rightfully his eventually. So, after asking his father for that portion of the possessions, he left for a far away country where nobody could watch over his shoulder, and that's how he ended up wasting his money on bad things, therefore sinning against God and his father.

- Do you think the prodigal son's sin is disobedience, disrespect, something else?
- Did this ever happen to you? Did you ever leave home and turn away from your family? What brought you back?

Soon the young man runs out of money, and therefore also without those claiming to be his friends, and he finds himself alone and penniless. However, that doesn't stop him, but he keeps stumbling. Because of his desperate situation, he went and got a job, and finds himself humiliated by caring for and feeding pigs. We should remember that according to the law of Moses, pigs were considered unclean animals, and a Jew could not so much as look right at a pig, let alone watch the pig eating, because it was considered humiliating. However, the young man not only cared for the pigs and watched them eat, but he himself got to the point of even wanting to have their food, which in those days would have been completely unacceptable.

So there he was, watching the pigs eat, and he remembered how nice things were when he lived with his father, how he never lacked anything, but above all, he remembered that his father loved him so much, and he realized that he had made a terrible mistake and that he had sinned against God and his father, and decided to return and ask forgiveness, not really expecting anything in return, because he understood that he did not deserve anything, instead he only wanted his father to forgive him.

Secondly, we see a father who did not force his son to do anything, but did not give up hope or faith or certainty about what he had taught his son. We see a father that prayed to God for his son to understand the error of his ways and to repent. The father was anxiously awaiting the lost son's return, and so when he sees him returning, the father does not ask for explanations.

- Have you ever forgiven someone in this way?

- Have you ever welcomed someone back in this way?

The father had already forgiven his son and with great joy and love he shows his son his love and how happy he felt that he had returned. The father knew that his son had learned a lesson and the only thing that mattered was that his son, who was as good as dead because of sin was alive again, that the son who had been lost was now found.

The third situation to consider is that the brother believed that he was an excellent son because, by his way of looking at things, he was always obedient and had remained with his father. He expected to have his father and all that his father owned all to himself. He was selfish and jealous when he saw that his father threw the party for his brother instead of scolding him and turning his back on him. The older brother did not know forgiveness, he only knew rules and obedience in order to be in dad's good graces, but not because he loved his father.

- Which are you more like, the older or the younger son?
- How would you feel if you were the older brother and saw your younger brother return?
- Consider these dictionary definitions of the word prodigal: "Recklessly extravagant." Or "Characterized by wasteful expenditure." Or "One who spends or gives lavishly and foolishly" (Merriam-Webster, 930). Can you make an argument that both the sons are prodigal? What about the father?

The older son was losing the chance to feel the joy of forgiveness and the joy of seeing his family was reunited. He did not feel joyous that his brother was once again on the right path.

- Would you be able to welcome the prodigal son back and throw a party?

Reflecting on the Bible passage

Rebellion and repentance, being hurt by someone and then forgiving them... these are very emotional things to talk about. Have you ever had a difficult time forgiving someone? What did you do? Have ever hurt someone and then from the heart sought their forgiveness?

Let's look at a few passages in the Bible and discuss the examples of obedience, disobedience and repentance found in the texts:

Disobedience:	Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:1-24
	Jonah. Jonah 1:1 - 2:10
	Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5:1-11

Obedience:	Abram and Sarai. Genesis 12:1-8
	Isaiah. Isaiah 6:1-23

Disobedience and repentance	David and Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11:1 - 12:25
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What are the common themes in these passages? What characters do you relate to and why?

Applying the Bible passage to our life

I am sure each one of us can relate one way or another in each of those situations, perhaps with our parents, siblings, children, church members, friends or even with God. If you have wronged someone or even God, or if you find yourself sinning, don't wait until you hit rock bottom. God is

waiting for you to ask for forgiveness. God will not stop loving you, no matter what you do; if one of your loved ones has been lost, don't stop praying for them. Ask God to help him/her to find the right path and don't stop loving him/her. If someone asks for your forgiveness and is repentant about the harm caused to you, don't judge and learn to forgive. God forgives you in spite of your faults. Lend your support to these people so they may grow in their relationship with Jesus. Don't squander the marvelous opportunity to feel joy and communion with others; if someone repents rejoice with them, just like angels rejoice when a sinner repents and returns to God.

- ❖ *Optional Activity: Read and discuss the story "If you lived next door to the prodigal son's father's house, would you have gone over to the party?" by Fred Craddock. What would you have done as a neighbor to the young woman? Have you had difficulty forgiving someone or is there someone whom you judge? What would help you forgive / stop judging?*
- ❖ *Optional Activity: Review other passages from the list of biblical verses on forgiveness and choose a few to share and discuss with the group.*

Conclusion

God loves you and doesn't want you to be lost. If you have wronged someone one, repent from your heart and ask God to forgive you. God loves you and will listen to you. If someone you love is lost, don't lose faith, but trust in God. God is great and merciful and will help that person, if they repent of their sin, no matter what their offence. Help him/her grow in Christ and rejoice in him/her.

You may conclude the class with a prayerful exercise (*you might need to go outside and be very careful if you do burn the papers*). Ask the class members to take pieces of paper and write a sin they want God to forgive, or a sin someone committed against them. Then have them come up and place the papers in a metal bowl or trash can and burn the papers (*alternatively, you can use a shredder or cut the papers with scissors into tiny, illegible strips*). The burning (or shredding) is an expression of lifting up our sins before God and of God's forgiveness. Close with a brief prayer.

"Prodigal" in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition. Merriam-Webster Inc. 1993. p. 930

*If you lived next door to
the prodigal son's father's house,
would you have gone over to the party?*

I've told some of my friends what a shocking thing it was to discover that I had not really heard the story of the prodigal son when I preached those sermons about his coming from the far country, about them bringing the ring and the robe and killing the fatted calf. Then they bring the musicians and there's a party, and there's music and dancing, and all of that. I preached that sermon as though this was the wonderful, natural, easy, right thing to do.

I had never thought about that party until a family up the street divorced and left three or four youngsters, girls, one of them attractive, prematurely mature, and about fourteen years old. She was truant at school, into marijuana, always in trouble, always up before the judge, chasing around and hanging on the tail end of every motorcycle that went roaring through the neighborhood. She finally was so truant and so involved in misdemeanors that the judge said, "You're going to the reform school in southern Oklahoma." She was sent away to a detention home for girls. About the fourth or fifth month that she was there, she gave birth to the child she was carrying. She was fifteen at the time.

Word came to the neighborhood some months afterward that she was coming home. "Will she have that baby with her?" "Is she really coming home, back to our neighborhood?" The day we heard she was to come, all of us in the neighborhood had to mow our grass. We were out in our yards, mowing our grass and keeping the house. She didn't show, nobody came, and we kept watching the house and mowing the grass. I was down to about a blade a time, you know, watching the house, when a car pulled in the driveway – and out steps... "It's Cathy. She has the baby. She brought home the baby." People in the house ran out and grabbed her and took turns holding that baby, and they were all laughing and joking, then they went in. Another car pulled in, then another car pulled in, and another car pulled in. They started parking in the street. You couldn't have gotten a Christian car down the street, just cars on either side, and they're all gathering there, you know. Suddenly I got disturbed and anxious and went in my house. It suddenly struck me, what if one of them saw me down in the yard and said "Hey Fred, she's home and she has the baby. We're giving a party, and we'd like for you and Nettie to come."

"Well, I've got a lot of papers to grade and all." Would I have gone? If you lived next door to the prodigal son's father's house, would you have gone over to the party? It's easier to preach on that than to go to the party.

Craddock Stories

by Fred B. Craddock

Mike Graves and Richard F. Ward, Editors

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I trust in God's unfailing love. Psalm 52:8 NIV
Yo confío en el gran amor de Dios. Salmo 52:8 NVI

FORGIVENESS / PERDÓN:

1. OF ENEMIES – A ENEMIGOS (Exodus 23:4,5; Proverbs 19:11;24:17,29;25:21,22; Ecclesiastes 7:21;)
2. INSTANCES OF – EJEMPLOS » Esau forgives Jacob (Genesis 33:4,11)
3. INSTANCES OF » Joseph forgives his brothers (Genesis 45:5-15;50:19-21)
4. INSTANCES OF » Moses forgives the Israelites (Numbers 12:1-13)
5. INSTANCES OF » David forgives Saul (1 Samuel 24:10-12;26:9,23; 2 Samuel 1:14-17)
6. INSTANCES OF » David forgives Shimei (2 Samuel 16:9-13;19:23; with 1 Kings-Reyes 2:8,9)
7. INSTANCES OF » Solomon forgives Adonijah (1 Kings-Reyes 1:53)
8. INSTANCES OF » The prophet of Judah forgives Jeroboam (1 Kings-Reyes 13:3-6)
9. INSTANCES OF » Jesus forgives his enemies (Luke-Lucas 23:34)

Information Source / Fuente de Información:

Nave's Topical Bible

Found in / Encontrada en www.biblegateway.com

Stories of God's Love

The Lost Coin

Day Four

Adults

THEME:	"We are God's Treasure and God seeks us out"
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Luke 15:8-10
MEMORY VERSE:	"For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" Luke 19:10 (NRSV)

Objective

Through learning the story of the lost coin, the student will learn that even when we are separated from God because of our sins, God will seek us out. Once we are found, that is, when we repent and God forgives us, God will celebrate and rejoice!

Preparation

- Prepare for this lesson by first asking God to open the eyes of your understanding of His Word and to prepare you to teach His message.
- Read all of Luke 15 - Jesus' three parables about the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son - in order to put today's lesson into context.
- Also read Luke 18:9-14, 2 Thess. 2:13-14, Isa. 53:6, Ps. 103:8-14.
- Read through the lesson and time it. Make sure your plans fill the time allotted, allowing time for sharing by the students in addition to the teaching material.

Material

- Materials you will need for this lesson: Bible, paper and pencil for each student, and a blackboard or marking board to write on.
- Memory verse printed out on paper to post on the wall.

Introduction

- *Welcome the class and offer this prayer:* "O living God, we praise you and thank you for this day. We ask that you lead us in our discussion as we learn your Word. Guide us as we learn about how valuable we are to you. May we understand that you never stop loving us even though we may stop loving you. Help us to know that when we are lost, you will search high and low until you find us and once we are found you will rejoice. In Jesus' name. Amen."
- *Review the theme, memory verse, and lesson learned from yesterday's parable.*
- *Present today's theme and help the students practice today's memory verse Luke 19:10. Teach them that "The Son of Man" refers to Jesus.*
- *Tell the students:* Today we are going to learn that because God loves us so much, even when we sin, God helps us repent and do the right things. And when we do, God is so happy, there are parties in heaven to celebrate!
- *Ask the students to share a time in their lives when they lost something that meant a great deal to them. Perhaps it was something that was very important. Maybe the lost item had*

sentimental value such as a wedding ring or something that belonged to a loved one. How did this loss make you feel? What did you do to try to find it?

Studying the Bible passage

- *Begin with prayer asking God to open our eyes that we may see wonderful things in his Word (Ps. 119:18). Tell the students that the lesson today is the parable of the lost coin and have them open their Bibles to Luke, Chapter 15.*
- *This parable is one of three in this chapter, beginning with the parable of the lost sheep and ending with the story of the Prodigal Son. Jesus told these parables in answer to the Pharisees and scribes who were offended and critical of him for talking and eating with tax collectors and sinners (vs. 1 & 2). The self-righteous religious leaders had a knowledge of the Law but not a heart for the lost, not realizing that they themselves were lost. (Here you may want to have someone read Luke 18:9-14, a parable which illustrates this point.)*
- *Now let's look at the parable in Luke 15. Ask one of the students reads verses 8-10, listen for key words in the scripture.*
- *After reading the story, ask the students what words stood out to them and write the words on the board. Make sure the three words lost, found, and joy or rejoice are included in the list.*
- *What are some common elements found in the Prodigal Son and the Lost Coin?*
- *What is Jesus trying to teach his audience?*

❖ Optional Material:

Read the following poem by Mary Stevenson:

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was only one set.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord, "You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, "The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

Discussion Questions:

- *What does this poem say to you?*
- *Do you see similarities from this poem and the passage from Luke?*
- *Have you ever felt like God has left you alone?*
- *What helped you see that God had never left you?*

Reflecting on the Bible passage

Let's look at three of the key words that we listed from this passage and see what God wants us to learn and apply.

- **Lost** - What was Jesus saying in this parable as well as in the parable of the lost sheep? He was saying that God searches for the lost sinner. The sinners with whom Jesus was associating were looked down upon by the Pharisees but were extremely valuable to God. Although we may know God in this way, some of Jesus' listeners - particularly the legalistic scribes and Pharisees - would have found this surprising. They had forgotten that God was like a father who pitied his wayward children. Here you might want to read Psalm 103:8-14.

What does it mean to be lost?

1. To be lost means to be out of place. The coin was not in her purse where it was supposed to be. A lost sinner is not in fellowship with God where he/she belongs.
 2. To be lost means to be out of service. The coin had no value to its owner while it is lost (that is, a "lost coin" can't buy you groceries at the market). The lost sinner does not know or care that God has a purpose for his/her life and cannot experience the abundant life that he/she can have in Jesus or the fulfillment found in serving God.
- **Found** - Just like the shepherd searches for that one lost sheep until he finds it and the woman searches for one lost coin, so Jesus searches for the lost sinner. God does not want anyone to perish, but He desires that everyone come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).
 - **Joy** - The parable of the lost coin teaches that the angels in heaven rejoice over every single sinner that repents. Rejoicing in heaven and in the presence of the angels are ways of saying that God rejoices and God's people share in the joy of the lost who has been found. We are important and valued, and the salvation of a single sinner brings great joy to God and to those who share God's heart of love.

Applying the Bible passage to our lives

Where do you see yourself in Jesus' parable of the lost coin?

- Maybe you feel lost like the coin - out of place and in need of reconciliation with God or out of service and looking for God's purpose and plan for your life.
- Maybe you are like the woman - searching for that which is lost. God loves all people and everyone is valuable in God's sight. We are the Body of Christ on earth - Christ's hands and feet, eyes and voice. Is there someone who needs to receive the love of Jesus through you today? "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).
- Few joys equal the joy of finding the lost and bringing them to Jesus. Like the woman's neighbors and the angels in heaven, we can rejoice together over one sinner that repents.

John Wesley once said, "The church has nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work."

- ❖ *Optional Activity: Review the passages from the list of biblical verses on repentance and choose a few to share and discuss with the group.*

Conclusion

Challenge the class to practice this: whenever they see another person, even a stranger on the street, have them say in their minds, "You are important to God and God seeks you out." Whenever you look at yourself in the mirror, say in your mind "I am important to God, and God seeks me out."

Review today's memory verse Luke 19:10 and close with a brief prayer.



I trust in God's unfailing love. Psalm 52:8 NIV
Yo confío en el gran amor de Dios. Salmo 52:8 NVI

REPENTANCE / ARREPENTIMIENTO:

1. INSTANCES OF – EJEMPLOS » Joseph's brothers, of their maltreatment of Joseph (Genesis 42:21;50:17,18)
2. INSTANCES OF » Pharaoh, of his hardness of heart (Exodus 9:27;10:16,17)
3. INSTANCES OF » Balaam, of his spiritual blindness (Numbers 22:34; with 22:24-35)
4. INSTANCES OF » Of worshiping the golden calf (Exodus 33:3,4)
5. INSTANCES OF » Of their complaining because of lack of bread and water, when the plague of fiery serpents came upon them (Numbers 21:4-7)
6. INSTANCES OF » When rebuked by an angel for not expelling the Canaanites (Judges 2:1-5)
7. INSTANCES OF » Of their idolatry, when afflicted by the Philistines (Judges 10:6-16; 1 Samuel 7:3-6)
8. INSTANCES OF » In asking for a king (1 Samuel 12:16-20)
9. INSTANCES OF » In the time of Asa, by the preaching of Azariah (2 Chronicles 15:1-15)
10. INSTANCES OF » By the preaching of Oded (2 Chronicles 28:9-15)
11. INSTANCES OF » Under the influence of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30:11)
12. INSTANCES OF » Achan, because of his theft (Joshua 7:20)
13. INSTANCES OF » Saul, at the rebuke of Samuel for not destroying the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:24; with 15:6-31)
14. INSTANCES OF » David, at the rebuke of Nathan, the prophet, for his sins of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 12:11,13; with 12:7-14)
15. INSTANCES OF » Rehoboam, when his kingdom was invaded, and Jerusalem was besieged (2 Chronicles 12:1-12)
16. INSTANCES OF » Hezekiah, at the time of his sickness (2 Chronicles 32:26)
17. INSTANCES OF » When reproved by the prophet Micah (Jeremiah 26:18,19)
18. INSTANCES OF » Ahab, when reproved by Elijah for Ahab's idolatry (1 Kings-Reyes 21:27; with 21:17-29)
19. INSTANCES OF » Jehoahaz (2 Kings-Reyes 13:4)
20. INSTANCES OF » Josiah, when he heard the law of God which had been discovered in the temple by Hilkiah (2 Kings-Reyes 22:11-20)
21. INSTANCES OF » Manasseh, when he was carried away captive to Babylon by the king of Assyria (2 Chronicles 33:12,13)
22. INSTANCES OF » At the dedication of the second temple (Ezra 6:21)
23. INSTANCES OF » Because of their idolatrous marriages (Ezra 10)
 - a. Attributed to God – Atribuido a Dios (Genesis 6:6,7; Exodus 32:14; Deuteronomy 32:36; Judges 2:18; 1 Samuel 15:11)
 - b. Exhortation to (Proverbs 1:23-33; Jeremiah 7:3,5;26:3; Hosea 14:1-3; Amos 5:4-6;)
 - c. Condition of God's favor (Leviticus 26:40-42; 2 Chronicles 7:14)
24. INSTANCES OF » Because of their oppressive usury (Nehemiah 5:1-13)
25. INSTANCES OF » After hearing the law expounded by Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1-12;9:1-3)

26. INSTANCES OF » By the preaching of Haggai (Haggai 1)
27. INSTANCES OF » Jonah, after his punishment (Jonah 2:2-9)
28. INSTANCES OF » The Ninevites, by the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3:5-9)
29. INSTANCES OF » The Jews, by the preaching of John-Juan the Baptist (Matthew-Mateo 3:6)
30. INSTANCES OF » The woman who anointed Jesus with oil (Luke 7:37-48)
31. INSTANCES OF » The disobedient son (Matthew-Mateo 21:29)
32. INSTANCES OF » The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17-21)
33. INSTANCES OF » Peter, because of his denial of Jesus (Matthew-Mateo 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62)
34. INSTANCES OF » Judas (Matthew-Mateo 27:3-5; Acts-Hechos 1:16,18)
35. INSTANCES OF » The Ephesians, by the preaching of Paul (Acts-Hechos 19:18)

Information Source / Fuente de Información:

Nave's Topical Bible

Found in / Encontrada en www.biblegateway.com

Stories of God's Love

The Sower

Day Five

Adults

THEME:

"The Love of God Grows in My Heart"

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

MEMORY VERSE:

"The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the [Good] News and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams." Matthew 13:23 (The Message)

Objective

The student will know the story and will understand that God wants us to grow spiritually and bear fruit.

Preparation

- Prepare and study the class carefully, reading the Bible passage several times.
- Prepare and have ready all the material you will use, so that you might be able to make the best out of the time allocated for the lesson.
- Always have your Bible in your hand so that the students will know and understand that all they are going to learn is coming from the Word of God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to meet the lesson's objective so that the lesson might be a great blessing for the children and may touch the hearts of those in need.

Material

- Pictures or illustrations where people are evangelizing.
- Visual aids to tell the Bible story
- Cups filled with dirt where different kinds of seeds are growing: beans, linseed, birdseed etc.
- Cards with the following Bible texts: John 4:37 and 1 Corinthians 3:6
- Memory verse printed out on paper to post on the wall.

Introduction

- *Welcome the group, making them feel comfortable and happy to be with Jesus and other friends to learn more about God.*
- *Offer up a prayer thanking God for the day, asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the lesson may go according to God's will*
- *Ask the adults if they have ever faced a challenge. Allow them to give you some examples and tell you how they felt.*
- *Show them the seed cups and explain to them the challenge that a sower faces when he/she plants that seed.*

- *There are many people around us who share the Word of God and with love and patience they want to see those people accepting Christ in their heart and they don't get tired of sowing the seed of God's word, even if they are rejected*
- *Introduce and practice the memory verse Matthew 13:23. You may want to have them look up the passage in their Bibles. Print the memory verse and post it on the wall. You may want to cover it (partially or completely) when working on memorizing it.*
- Today God's Word will show us the parable of the sower who one day went out to sow his seeds

Studying the Bible passage

Have all the students find the passage in their Bibles. Have them take turns reading a verse of the passage until they've read the entire story

- As he was sowing the seeds, some of them fell by the road and were eaten up by the birds.
- But some of the seeds fell among stones where there wasn't enough soil; when the sun came out, it burned them up, and since they had no root, they dried out.
- The ones that fell among the thorns were able to grow, but then the thorns crowded them out and the seeds died out.
- But the seeds that fell on the good soil grew up and produced fruit.

When we share the word of God with other people something happens, that is, we don't know which types of hearts are receiving the seed of God's Word.

Only the Lord truly knows our heart. But we are sure that today you are like the good soil which will bear a lot of fruit.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

The Lord sends us out as his ambassadors, as it says in Matthew 28:19 (*invite them to find the verse in their Bibles*) "Go and make disciples of all nations..."

This commandment represents the seed which you must sow in your neighbor's heart and that only God will know how it will come to bear fruit.

The Bible gives us confirmation of that in John 4:37 and 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 (*use the cards you had prepared beforehand*)

Ask them the following questions to help them understand the meaning of the Bible story

- What kind of soil does your heart represent?
- What does it mean to bear fruit?
- Is it a heart that has allowed good fruits to come from it?
- Are you willing to be like the sower in the parable and go out and sow God's seeds?
- What would your character show?
- Would you share with friends and neighbors the message that you have felt in your heart?

Applying the Bible passage to our lives

What we learned today is part of how we live out our Christian life.

There are times we think it's not worth it to tell people about Christ as our only Lord and Savior for fear that they'll reject us or, to the contrary, that they mock us.

Or maybe we think that's the job of evangelists, missionaries and pastors. We can also participate in the great commission by getting involved in one of our church's ministries.

However, it is a commandment from God and we must faithfully obey it.

Ask the students:

- Who teaches you about God's love?
- What kinds of things help your faith in God grow?
- Think about how the people who teach you about God's love do it. What are some things they do or say that help you learn about God? Let's practice sharing our faith in God with others (*have them brainstorm statements they've recalled their teachers using to learn about God. You may want to add things like "Jesus loves you," "God listens to us when we pray," "God speaks to us through the stories in the Bible," etc. Then have them practice saying those phrases to each other*). *Have the students take turns role playing being the person who is sharing their faith and the person listening.*
- What happens when that seed of faith we've planted, that seed of the growing awareness of God's love, begins to grow? How do we help it grow healthy?
- *You may want to take this opportunity to share your testimony with the students, about how you have come to believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and how people in your life have nurtured that belief. Review with the class how this whole week we have studied stories of God's love for us, and the greatest proof of God's love for us is that Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to redeem God's people, to grant us forgiveness for our sins. God did this through Jesus' teaching, life, death on the cross and his resurrection. Tell the students how important it is to have that relationship with God, to have that seed of faith grow in our hearts. Maybe someone has planted that seed in the past, or maybe it's been planted this week. But what is important is that God wants that love, that faith, to grow in us. Tell the students that you are going to lead them in prayer, and in that prayer, those who feel God is touching their heart, may pray for God to plant and help grow that seed in their hearts. Invite the students to close their eyes in prayer and then pray asking God to lead these students to a closer relationship with Jesus (you may use this prayer or one you create):*
 - "Lord God, we thank you for these your sons and daughters who have come to church to learn about your love and grow in their faith. Lord God, you know their hearts, and they feel you working in their lives, they sense that you touch their hearts. Loving God. They want to be closer to you. They know that Jesus died for our sins and that you raised Jesus from the dead to give us new life. Loving God, while the rest the class has its eyes closed, if anyone here wants to tell you God for the first time that he/she wants to give you thanks for your grace, to accept the gift you have given us in Jesus, that they want to proclaim that Jesus is their Lord, then I invite those people, while all have their eyes closed, to raise their hand for just a moment so I may be able to pray for them as this seed grows in their heart. Hear them Lord, as they pray this prayer silently in their hearts:

- << Lord, I know that you love me and that you want the best for me. I believe in my heart that it is because you love me that Jesus came to earth to teach us, to show us the way to you, to die for our sins, and to be raised so we could have new life. I pray that you forgive my sins and that you let this be the day that I open my heart so this seed of your love, of faith may grow, so that Jesus will be in control of my life, helping me serve you and be obedient to you. In the name of Jesus our Lord we pray. Amen. >> "
- *Be sure to follow up with those who raised their hands during the prayer (either during the next activity or following class). Encourage them, pray with them, point them out to the pastor or leadership team so they may help them grow in their faith in the days after VBS. You may want to give them a token of encouragement to help them remember this day (a bookmark, a little gift, a certificate, a Bible, etc.)*

❖ *Optional Activity*

Have the students find and read one or several of the following passages. Discuss as a class what things the persons sharing their faith have in common, what the persons hearing the word of God have in common. Discuss what are some things which would help us be able to share our faith with others:

Acts 2:14-24, 37-42

Peter's Pentecost speech

Acts 8:26-40

Phillip teaches the Ethiopian eunuch

Acts 10:34-48

Story of Peter and Cornelius

Conclusion

Sharing the gospel with other people is something that pleases and glorifies our Heavenly Father.

God's will is that people will rejoice in him and glorify him forever through their life.

So, people show their love and faith by fulfilling God's commandments as a sign of spiritual growth and maturity.

Thank the students for their participation throughout the week. Invite them to keep coming to the church. Offer a closing prayer, asking God in prayer to teach you where you must bear fruit (some neighbor, friend or co-worker) and ask that God's will be done.