

**Focus:** Always Forgiven

**Materials:**

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD-Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 2
- Bible: The Beginner's Bible
- Book: 100 Bible Songs and 100 Bible Stories
- Sheep and Sheep Pen

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

*Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about what we can do to be better followers of Jesus. This week we will learn what happens when we aren't such good followers of Jesus. When we make a wrong choice, if we tell God we are sorry, he will always forgive us and welcome us back to him with open arms.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

*Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*God our Father, you want us to live as your children. Help us to ask for forgiveness when we make choices that turn against you. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.*

*Amen..*

**Song/Movement**

*God is So Good*, track: 2, from Bible Songs for Kids - Vol 2

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

*God is so good.*

*God is so good.*

*God is so good.*

*He's so good to me.*

*He cares for me.*

*He cares for me.*

*He cares for me.*

*He's so good to me.*

*He's all I need.*

*He's all I need.*

*He's all I need.*

*He's so good to me.*

*God is so good.*

*God is so good.*

*God is so good.*

*He's so good to me.*

**Memory Verse**

*Say: Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*Jesus loves the lost sheep.*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *We know that Jesus loves us, we should also remember that Jesus loves us when we make the wrong choice. He will come after us and love us and help us turn back to God.*

*God wants us to do what is good and right. He knows that we'll be happy only when we follow what he teaches us, but his love doesn't depend on what we do. It depends only on the goodness of God, which lasts forever. God always loves us, no matter what. God's love never ends.*

### Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: The Beginner's Bible, pp. 412-426, *The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Son*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

### Discussion Starters:

☞ The proclaimer may want to break up the stories and ask the questions pertinent to each story after the reading and the reflection, then continue with the next story.

- *The Lost Sheep:*
  - ◆ *What does Jesus ask us to pretend to be?*
  - ◆ *What does a shepherd do for his flock?*
  - ◆ *How does the shepherd feel when one of his flock is missing?*
  - ◆ *How does the shepherd feel when he finds the missing sheep?*
  - ◆ *How do you think God feels when we decide to make good choices?*
  
- *The Lost Coin:*
  - ◆ *How would you feel if you had lost something important?*
  - ◆ *Would you just forget about it or would you search for it?*
  - ◆ *How hard would you work to get it back?*
  - ◆ *How happy would you be when you found it again?*
  
- *The Lost Son:*
  - ◆ *What did the young son want from his father?*
  - ◆ *Why did the young son want his share of the money?*
  - ◆ *What did the young son do with the money?*
  - ◆ *What happened to the young son to make him want to return home?*
  - ◆ *How did the father feel when the son came home?*

**Reflection on Reading:**

*The three parables we heard today teach us about the love and forgiveness of God. Jesus tells stories to help his listeners learn about God. Today's parables teach that God rejoices when sinners ask for forgiveness.*

*In the first parable about the lost sheep God is like the shepherd who goes after his lost sheep until he finds it. When the sheep is found, the shepherd carries it tenderly on his shoulders back home. This story shows that God is tender and loving.*

*In the second parable about the lost coin, God is like the woman who searches for the lost coin until it is found. When the coin is found she is happy and joyful. This story reveals how God rejoices in the return of those who have been lost.*

*The last parable of the Prodigal Son shows how the father is happy and filled with joy because his son came home. God is like the father in this parable.*

*In all three parables Jesus teaches about God's love. God rejoices over the return of sinners. It is the Church's mission to welcome home those who have been lost.*

**Gospel Activity**Activity 1:**100 Bible Stories-100 Bible Songs**

David's Shepherd-Page 94-Disc 1 Track 43

Read the story and play the song, lead the kids (or choose volunteers to lead) around the room. Stopping along the way to do different motions, pray, sign of the cross, raise arms in praise etc.

Activity 2:**Find the Sheep**

- ☞ BEFORE MASS: Place the sheep around the room in places that are fairly easy to find if they are looking.

Review a short Alleluia verse with the children. The usual one from Mass is fine.

*Say: Jesus said God celebrates when someone who has wandered from him is found and brought back. There are some sheep around the room, when someone finds a sheep, they are to hold the sheep high and the we all sing "Alleluia". Then place the sheep back in the pen.*

When all the sheep are home again, explain that Jesus is not the only one who looks for lost sheep. The Church is made up of followers of Jesus who are called to help him shepherd his people.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

**Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who is always ready to forgive?*

*Do you believe in Jesus, who seeks those who are lost until they are found?*

*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength to turn back to God when we make wrong choices?*

**Sending Forth**

*Say: Remember that God always loves us. He loves us from his goodness. When we go back into church, take a quiet time and say a prayer to thank God for all he gives to us, especially his love and his son, Jesus.*

**Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "*Fairest Lord Jesus*" track 19 from Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 2 while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.