

The Story of the Lost Coin

The Point: God wants you—a lot!

Scripture Connect: Luke 15:8–10

Supplies for all Session 4 activities options: pencils, prepared poster, 1 quarter, electrical or duct tape, 1 bucket, several trays of ice cubes, newspapers, paper towels, Bibles, paper, 10 pennies (kids will keep these)

The Basics for Leaders

Religious leaders in Jesus's day were upset to see Jesus hanging around with people who had bad reputations—including tax collectors.

Tax collectors at that time deserved their bad reputations. They worked for the Romans, the army that had conquered their country. Tax collectors made money by taking more money from citizens than Rome required.

The result: tax collectors got rich—by stealing.

Jesus told this story about a lost coin to make a point: that he came to seek and save lost people, even terrible sinners like tax collectors. And when a sinner came to God, there was a celebration just like when the woman found her lost coin.

That's how much your kids are worth. That's what you're worth. Help each of your children hear this message loud and clear: God wants us—a lot!

OPENING ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

HOWZITGOIN'

Time: about 5 minutes, depending on attendance

Supplies: pencils, prepared poster

Before kids arrive, draw a line on a poster. Write a 1 on the left end of the line, a 10 on the right, and a 5 in the middle. As kids arrive, ask them to pencil in their initials on the line.



Say: If this past week was so awful you wish you'd slept through it, place your initials by the 1. If it was a great week you wish you could repeat, put your initials by the 10. Place your initials anywhere on the line that shows how you feel about this past week—except exactly on the 5. Because there's no such thing as a week that's exactly half good and half bad!

After kids have signed in, give them 30 seconds each to explain why they placed their initials where they did. Be sure to include your own initials and explain your placement on the line. Kids will begin to express themselves more over time, and hearing their stories will help you adapt this lesson to make it relevant to your kids' lives.

OPENING ACTIVITY—OPTION 2

HOTTER-COLDER RESCUE MISSION

Time: about 5 minutes, depending on attendance

Supplies: 1 quarter, electrical or duct tape

Before children arrive, tape a quarter to the bottom of your shoe using electrical or duct tape. Be careful not to let children see the sole of your shoe or discover that you've taped something there.

Ask kids to stand in a circle facing outward. Then ask them to link elbows so that every child has both elbows linked.

Say: In a few moments you'll move around, but you'll do so as a single unit—as one group. I've hidden a coin in this room and as you move together, I'll tell you if you're getting hotter or colder in finding the coin. Your job is to rescue the coin. There are three rules:

1. You can't unlink elbows.
2. I'll only say *hotter* or *colder* once every 15 seconds.
3. It's not enough to guess where the coin is. You have to actually pick it up to rescue it and set it free—without unlinking elbows.

As children move around the room in response to your prompts of hotter/colder, feel free to move too. Be helpful by joining the children as they search in a closet or check under a rug.

Once kids have caught on and cornered you so you can lift a foot to have them remove the tape, ask them to sit in a circle on the floor, facing inward. Ask children to discuss:

- **What kept you looking for the coin so you could rescue it?**
- **Why do you think Jesus keeps looking for people to rescue them?**
- **In what ways has Jesus looked for you?**

Say: **Today we'll dive into a story Jesus told about a lost coin. There's a message in this story for us. Let's see if we can find it!**

Cool Stories Game

DONE LOST IT!

Time: 10 minutes or more, as desired

Supplies: 1 bucket, several trays of ice cubes, 1 quarter, newspapers, paper towels

Place several trays of ice cubes in a bucket and set the bucket on newspapers in the playing area. In this game, you'll hide the quarter in the bucket each round, so plan on some frosty fingers.

Form children into pairs. Tell kids the goal of the game is for them to each scrounge around in the bucket to retrieve a shiny quarter. The challenge: they have to find the quarter in the midst of a bunch of ice cubes while someone else is trying to find it too—and all without looking!

As the ice melts, you may wish to add more to the bucket. The more ice you add, the harder it is to find the quarter.

Give each pair up to 60 seconds to find the coin before moving to the next pair. Give every pair a few paper towels to dry their icy fingers!

After each pair has taken a turn (or more than one—it's up to you), have children sit in a circle and discuss:

- **What made finding the quarter difficult or easy?**
- **What do you think makes it difficult for Jesus to reach others?**
What makes it easy for him to reach them?

Say: We'll explore a story today about a woman who didn't give up when she was searching for a lost coin. She looked everywhere in her home until at last she found it. There's a message in this story for us to discover too! Let's take a look!

Cool Bible Story

MONEY MUSIC

Time: about 20 minutes

Supplies: Bible, 1 sheet of paper and 1 pencil per child

Even if you're not a musician, you can sing the ever-popular ditty "My Bonnie." Admit it: you know the tune and, more importantly, so do your kids.

Today you'll please the more musical among your kids as they pair up to write a new verse called "My Money."

Ask children to form pairs. Give each child a sheet of paper and pencil.

Say: **Jesus told a story about a woman who lost a coin—a silver coin—one of only ten she had. The value of the coin, which was a drachma, was high: about a full day's pay for a worker. Let's see how she reacted to her loss.**

Ask a capable reader among your children to read aloud Luke 15:8.

Say: **There are two clues that this woman was poor. First, she had just ten coins. Second, she had to light a lamp to find her coin. That meant her house had no windows or natural light, which a more expensive house would have had.**

So what did she do? She looked for the coin! Let's write some coin-hunting music for her.

Ask children to sing with you the first verse and chorus of "My Bonnie." Then sing the following sample verse and chorus of "My Money."

**My money lies under the sofa,
My money went straight down the sink.
My money is missing, so tell me,
Where is my money, you think?
Bring back, bring back,
Bring back my money to me, to me!
Bring back, bring back,
Bring back my money to me!**

After singing, give pairs several minutes to work together writing their own verses and indicating where they'd look for a coin in their houses. Then ask children to share their verses. No verses written? Ask children to just tell where they'd look.

Continue by reading aloud Luke 15:9–10. Ask writing partners to discuss:

- **Why did Jesus tell this story?**
- **Why do you suppose angels are happy when people come to God?**
- **Why do you think God wants a friendship with us?**

Say: **God gave us his laws. He sent prophets to tell us what he wanted. He sent his Son to save us. He left his Holy Spirit to help us. God wants us—a lot! The question is, do we want him too? Of course we do!**

CLOSING PRAYER

HIDE-AND-SEEK PRAYER

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Ask each child to hide someplace in the immediate area. As you call each child's name, ask that child to join you in the middle of the room. Thank God for choosing to find and love him or her. Then offer each child a chance to add their own thank-you prayers to God, if desired.

If you're in a room where there's no place to hide, do this: Stand in the center of the room and close your eyes. Invite children to each take a spot in the room and then, as you sweep the room pointing, offer a series of short prayers.

AGE-ALERT TIPS

Let **younger kids** draw simple pictures of where they would look for the lost coin.

AGE-ALERT TIPS

Both **younger** and **older kids** are often too shy to pray aloud in a group. If your kids are too shy to pray aloud, ask them to join you in the center of the room as you call their names. Then finish by having everyone hold hands as you offer a prayer.

The child nearest to where you're pointing each time can consider himself the one being prayed for.

Close by thanking God for seeking and finding you too.

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

42-SECOND TREASURE HUNT

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: 10 pennies (kids will keep these)

Before kids arrive, hide ten pennies in the room where you'll be meeting. Tell your children about the ten pennies. Explain that they'll have exactly 42 seconds to find the coins. What they find, they can keep. Tell kids that if they move something to look beneath or behind it, they must return that item to the original position.

After the treasure hunt, say: **You worked hard looking for just one penny. The woman who lost her coin in our Bible story had a coin worth far more—about a day's pay—so imagine how hard she looked!**

Here's good news: you're more precious to God than that coin was to the woman in our story. God wants a friendship with you so much that he sent Jesus to help bring you close to him. God wants you—a lot!

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 2

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: 1 Bible for every 2 children

This activity works best with older elementary children who find it easy to read, but if you use a kid-friendly version, these passages are also appropriate for younger children. With younger children, plan to read the passages aloud and discuss the meaning as a group.

Form children into pairs and give each a Bible. (If you have just a few children, each child can look up a passage.) Have pairs find and read these passages: Luke 19:10; John 3:16–17; 2 Peter 3:8–10; Romans 8:38–39. Help children use the table of contents in their Bibles to find the passages.

After children read, have them summarize what they read in their own words for the larger group. Then discuss:

- **What does this passage tell us about Jesus wanting us?**
- **What does Jesus want to do with us? How do we feel about that?**
- **What happens if we accept Jesus's work and believe in him?**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 3

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

Time: 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Gather kids in a circle. Ask: **What possession, if you lost it, would you turn your house upside down to search for? Why is the item worth so much to you? Why do you think we are so precious to God?**