

Word One Bible Study

From the Wilds into the Fold

By Jill Hartman

Text: Luke 15:1-10 for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary Series C

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Recognize that we are all lost until Jesus comes to find us.
2. See the importance of going out to search for those who are lost or have gone astray.
3. Rejoice with Jesus at the return of sheep to the fold.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Large sheets of paper and markers for each small group

Bibles

Pencils for each individual

GROUP GUIDELINES

Break your larger group into smaller groups of 3-4. Choose as the leader of each group the person whose birthday is closest to Jesus' birthday. The leader should help the group follow through the study and encourage individuals to participate as they feel ready.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. Each group should have a large sheet of paper and several markers. The leader will begin by drawing on the paper, a stick person with the head bowed. This person represents a sinner. Each participant will add one item to the stick person to help others recognize him as a sinner. (Example: One person might add some thoughts coming from their head, etc.)
2. How do you feel about the sinner? Is this a person you would associate with? Why or why not? How does Jesus feel about sinners? Read Luke 15:1-2

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Luke 15:3-7. Who do the 99 sheep represent? the lost sheep? When do you feel like the lost sheep? How difficult is it to bring back a sheep who is lost?
2. Does it seem fair to you that there is more rejoicing over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent? Why or why not? How did Jesus feel about the lost? (Luke 19:10)
3. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16. How might the parable of the lost sheep be considered a fulfillment of this prophecy? How do you feel, knowing that God has promised to search for the lost and to bring back the strays?
4. Read Luke 15:8-11. Name a time when you have either lost something or have helped someone search for something that was lost. How did you feel while looking? How did you feel when you found it? Did you ever find it? How persistent was the woman in searching for the lost coin?
5. Who helped the shepherd and the woman rejoice? How do you feel when someone new joins your church? becomes baptized? rededicates themselves to God?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. List three ways that your church could celebrate the entrance of a new person into your congregation.
2. Finish the following statements:
 - a. I feel lost when . . .
 - b. I discovered that . . .
 - c. Because Christ found me, I will . . .

CLOSING

Read together Psalm 23 as your closing prayer.

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