Until He Finds It

LUKE 15:1-7 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

God’s goodness and mercy pursue us, like a shepherd after one lost sheep.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 14): Mark 16:1-8, He Is Going Ahead of You. Its big idea: Because the tomb is empty, the house of the LORD is home forever.
- After this passage (day 16): Revelation 7:9-17, He Will Wipe Away Every Tear. Its big idea: Every line of Psalm 23 comes true when the Lamb shepherds his people home.

Open

Recall last time (Mark 16:1-8): the tomb is empty, and the Shepherd has gone ahead. Today: “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” Ask: What has ever chased you? Read Luke 15:4. Big idea: God’s goodness and mercy pursue us, like a shepherd after one lost sheep. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. Chased by Goodness (Psalm 23:6, about 8 min)

The one thing: God’s goodness and mercy do not trail behind his people; they chase them down.

Ask: What difference does it make that the verb is “pursue,” not just “follow along behind”?

2. The Grumblers (Luke 15:1-3, about 8 min)

The one thing: The grumblers saw bad company; Jesus was the Shepherd out looking for lost sheep.

Ask: Why did eating with someone matter so much in that world?

3. The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7, about 14 min)

The one thing: The Shepherd pursues the lost until he finds them, and brings them home rejoicing.

Ask: The sheep does nothing except get found. What does that say about repentance?

Close (never cut it)

Read Luke 15:4-5, then Psalm 23:6. The Shepherd goes after the lost until he finds them. Say together: “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.”

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, read v4-7 and go to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 1, 3, 4, 2, 5 (top to bottom) · Feelings: The lost sheep worried, The shepherd looking sad, The shepherd finding it happy, The friends at the party happy · Code: FOUND AND CARRIED

Act it out: One child is the lost sheep and hides. Another is the shepherd and searches until he finds the sheep. Then everyone cheers and says, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!”

1. Chased by Goodness

PSALM 23:6 · ABOUT 8 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- “Follow” is radaph: pursue, chase, hunt.
- David was hunted by Saul for years (1 Samuel 26:20), yet he says goodness and mercy are what pursue him.
- “Goodness and mercy” are tov and chesed, God’s goodness and covenant love.

Psalm 23:6: goodness and mercy pursue. Luke 15:4: the shepherd goes after the one that is LOST.

“Until he FINDS it.” The pursuit does not stop.

Discuss: What difference does it make that the verb is “pursue,” not just “follow along behind”?

God’s goodness and mercy do not trail behind his people; they chase them down.

MUST COVER

- Psalm 23:6: “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.”
- 1 Samuel 26:20: “like one who hunts a partridge,” the same verb.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Proverbs 13:21: “Disaster pursues sinners.” Psalm 23 says what pursues God’s people is goodness.

Illustration idea: A parent running after a child who has wandered off in a crowded store.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: Pursued by kindness.
- Listen for: Every day of my life.

If it drifts: If the talk turns to whether God’s goodness means an easy life, return to “all the days”: the valley days are included.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Goodness and mercy chase God’s people every day of their lives.

Short on time? Drop Proverbs 13:21. Keep 1 Samuel 26:20.

Bridge → Jesus tells a story that gives that pursuit a face.

2. The Grumblers

LUKE 15:1-3 · ABOUT 8 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Tax collectors and sinners gather to listen to Jesus.
- Pharisees and scribes grumble: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”
- Jesus answers with a parable.

“This man WELCOMES sinners and eats with them.”

“Then Jesus told them this PARABLE.”

Discuss: Why did eating with someone matter so much in that world?

The grumblers saw bad company; Jesus was the Shepherd out looking for lost sheep.

MUST COVER

- v1-2: sharing a table meant accepting someone.
- v3: the parable is told to the grumblers.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Tax collectors were seen as collaborators with Rome who enriched themselves.

Illustration idea: Neighbors complaining that a doctor spends all her time with sick people.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: He welcomes sinners.
- Listen for: The meals were the search.

If it drifts: If people start criticizing the Pharisees at length, ask where the same grumbling shows up in us.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

At those tables, the Shepherd was looking for his lost sheep.

Short on time? Drop the tax collector background. Keep v2.

Bridge → Then Jesus asks, “What man among you?”

3. The Lost Sheep

LUKE 15:4-7 · ABOUT 14 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one.
- He searches until he finds it, and carries it home on his shoulders.
- Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents.

“He joyfully puts it on his SHOULDERS, comes home.”

“REJOICE with me, for I have found my lost sheep!”

Discuss: The sheep does nothing except get found. What does that say about repentance?

The Shepherd pursues the lost until he finds them, and brings them home rejoicing.

MUST COVER

- v4: “until he finds it”: no deadline but finding.
- v7: repentance is what being found looks like; Psalm 23:3 “He restores my soul” uses shuv, to bring back.

IF THERE'S TIME

- Ezekiel 34:16: “I will seek the lost, bring back the strays.”
- Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Illustration idea: A search party that finds a lost child and walks her home on someone’s shoulders, everyone cheering.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: He never gave up.
- Listen for: Joy, not a lecture.

If it drifts: If someone asks who looked after the ninety-nine, admit the story does not say; it keeps its eyes on the one.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

God’s goodness and mercy pursue us, like a shepherd after one lost sheep.

Short on time? Drop Ezekiel 34:16. Keep v4-5 and v7.

Bridge → So hear the psalm line again beside the parable.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Start with a chase. Ask: What has ever chased you?
2. Read the psalm. Read Psalm 23:6. “Follow” means pursue.
3. Read Luke. Read Luke 15:1-7 together.
4. The pursuit. The shepherd goes after the one lost sheep until he finds it, and carries it home rejoicing.
5. Leave the question. Ask: Jesus said, “What man among you?” Where do you see yourself in the story? Leave it with them.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

“What does “follow” mean in Psalm 23:6?”

The Hebrew radaph means pursue or chase. God’s goodness and covenant love chase his people.

“Who looked after the ninety-nine?”

The parable does not say. It keeps its eyes on the one lost sheep.

“What does repentance mean here?”

Turning back to God. In the story it is what being found looks like.

“What does this mean for me?”

No one is too far for the Shepherd to pursue, and heaven rejoices when the lost are found.

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).

If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.

If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.

If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.

If you've taught for years: Don’t lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.

If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.

If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn’t serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).

If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?

If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Make it concrete

Jesus uses ordinary shepherd life.

If you're new: Count out a hundred small objects and take one away. Ask who would notice.

If you've taught for years: Then read v4.

2. Let the Bible do the talking

Jesus’ own story carries the passage.

If you're new: Read v4-6 aloud without comment.

If you've taught for years: Then read Psalm 23:6.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

It ends in a party.

If you're new: End on joy, not on a task.

If you've taught for years: Read v7 last.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you’ll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: What has ever chased you?

- use an object: Hide a toy sheep in the room before the class starts, and let the group find it.
- raise a problem: Is it reckless to leave ninety-nine sheep to look for one?

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: God’s goodness and mercy pursue us, like a shepherd after one lost sheep.
- call back to the opening: Return to what chased people, and read Psalm 23:6 beside it.
- pray the text: Pray for those who are lost, and thank God for pursuing each of us.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone has a family member who has wandered from faith.: Point to v4: the Shepherd goes after the lost until he finds them. Encourage them to keep praying and keep the door open.
- Someone feels they are too far gone.: The sheep in the story did nothing to earn being found. The Shepherd went after it. That is how far his pursuit reaches.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: “Thanks. Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.” Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can’t answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: “Great question. Let’s catch it after class so we can finish the passage.”

READ THIS WEEK

- Luke 15:8-32
- Ezekiel 34:11-16
- Psalm 119:169-176

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/luke/15-1-7/lesson

Until He Finds It

LUKE 15:1-7 (BSB) · THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life” Psalm 23:6

THE BIG IDEA

God’s goodness and mercy pursue us, like a shepherd after one lost sheep.

1. CHASED BY GOODNESS · PSALM 23:6

- “Follow” is radaph: pursue, chase, hunt.
- David was hunted by Saul for years (1 Samuel 26:20), yet he says goodness and mercy are what pursue him.
- “Goodness and mercy” are tov and chesed, God’s goodness and covenant love.

Psalm 23:6: goodness and mercy pursue. Luke 15:4: the shepherd goes after the one that is _____.

“Until he _____ it.” The pursuit does not stop.

Discuss: What difference does it make that the verb is “pursue,” not just “follow along behind”?

2. THE GRUMBLERS · LUKE 15:1-3

- Tax collectors and sinners gather to listen to Jesus.
- Pharisees and scribes grumble: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”
- Jesus answers with a parable.

“This man _____ sinners and eats with them.”

“Then Jesus told them this _____.”

Discuss: Why did eating with someone matter so much in that world?

3. THE LOST SHEEP · LUKE 15:4-7

- The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one.
- He searches until he finds it, and carries it home on his shoulders.
- Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents.

“He joyfully puts it on his _____, comes home.”

“_____ with me, for I have found my lost sheep!”

Discuss: The sheep does nothing except get found. What does that say about repentance?

Read this week: Luke 15:8-32 · Ezekiel 34:11-16 · Psalm 119:169-176

For Kids: Until He Finds It

LUKE 15:1-7 · NAME: _____

Big idea: Jesus looks for us until he finds us.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

☐ A shepherd has a hundred sheep.

☐ He looks until he finds it.

☐ He carries it home on his shoulders.

☐ One sheep gets lost.

☐ He has a party with his friends.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

The lost sheep: happy · sad · worried

The shepherd looking: happy · sad · worried

The shepherd finding it: happy · sad · worried

The friends at the party: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

H L B S U S H P U
O O Y H U H S R S
M S V E O O O E E
E T O P H U G J A
S G N H B L F O R
S H E E P D O I C
N K C R G E U C H
C V G D B R N E K
G N V R O S D G R

SHEEP · LOST · FOUND · SEARCH · SHOULDERS · HOME · REJOICE · SHEPHERD

4. SECRET CODE

1=A 2=C 3=D 4=E 5=F 6=I 7=N 8=O 9=R 10=U

___	___	___	___	___		___	___	___		___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5	**8**	**10**	**7**	**3**		**1**	**7**	**3**		**2**	**1**	**9**	**9**	**6**	**4**	**3**

5. DRAW IT!

Draw a shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulders, smiling.

6. MEMORY VERSE

“Surely goodness and mercy will follow me” Psalm 23:6 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

Jesus looks for me until _____. _____