

Parable of the Lost Sheep

Bible Lesson: Luke 15:1-7; Malachi 1:11

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand that God searches for people to worship him from every nation, just like a loving shepherd searches for his lost sheep.

Outcomes

1. Students will understand that God wants people to know him.
2. Students will memorize Malachi 1:11a and understand that, in the end, people from all nations will worship God.

Memory Verse

Malachi 1:11a “My name will be great among the nations.”

Directions

1. Cut the “Sheep Chain” pattern on the dotted lines and fold according to the small diagrams at the top of the pattern.
2. Tape the ten chains of sheep together to make a long chain of 100 sheep.



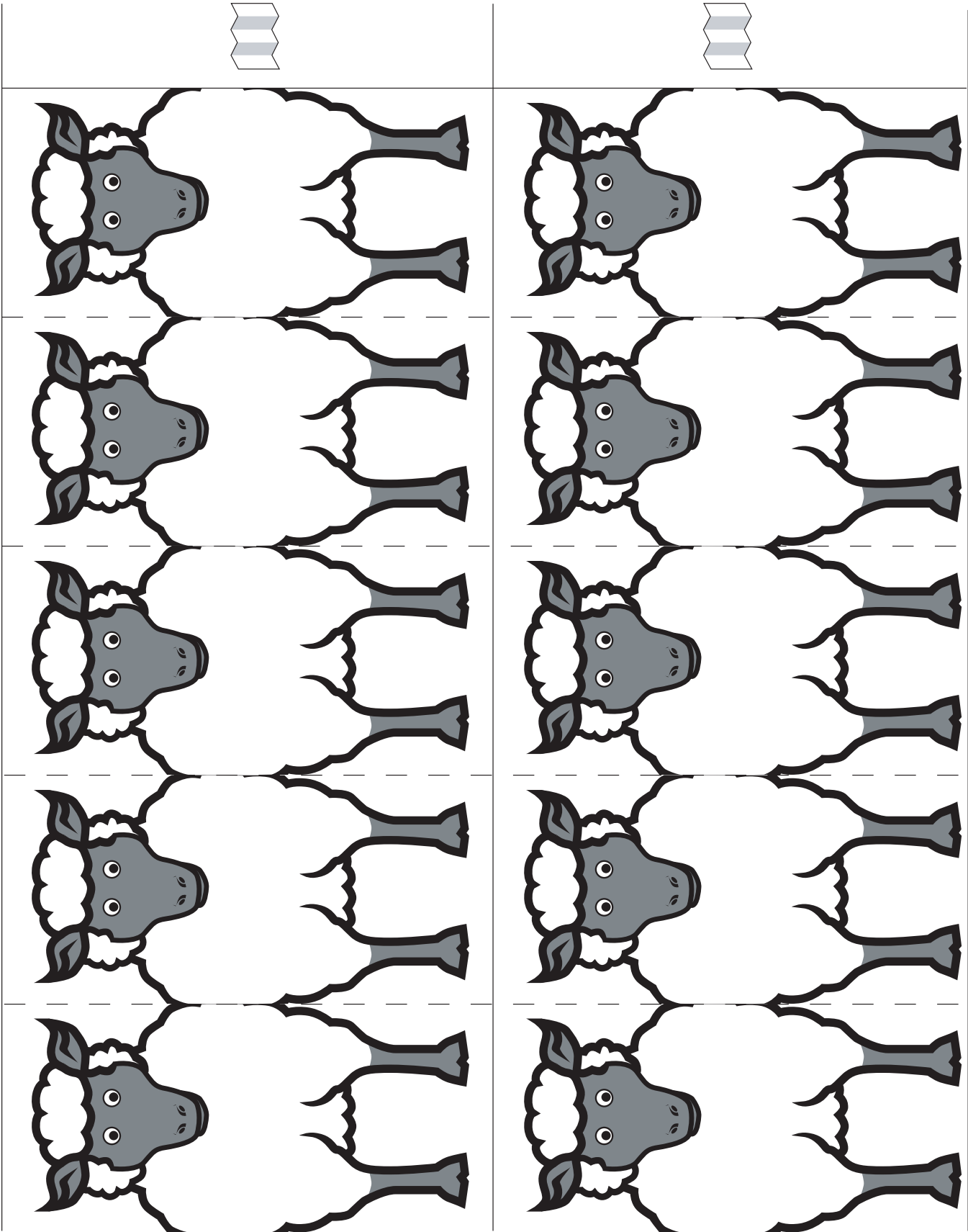
PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- Bible
- wall map or globe
- “Two Little Hands” finger play (AS)
- “My Name Will Be Great” song (MS)
- TV/DVD player
- 10 copies of “Sheep Chain” pattern (p. 2)
- scissors
- scotch tape

Sheep Chain



TEACHING (CORE)

FINGER PLAY: TWO LITTLE HANDS

Directions

1. Practice ahead of time so you can lead the students.
2. Move to the area where the group will hear the Bible lesson each week.
3. Have the children stand in a circle.
4. Play the DVD and have the students watch the “Two Little Hands” finger play.
5. As you say each line, have the students do the motions with you.

BIBLE LESSON: GOD’S BIG SEARCH

Directions

1. Ask seated students, *“Have you ever lost something and you had to look, and look, and look for it? Did you ever look for that thing and have to finally give up? Maybe you still haven’t found it today. In one word, tell me what you lost.”* Let several students tell you how they felt when they were looking for it. Then tell the students, *“Today our story is about God’s big search.”*
2. Ask the students, *“Did you know that God is searching for something? Now, what could God be hunting for, that he does not already have?”* Let students offer some ideas. Feel free to offer some ridiculous suggestions from which they can choose: water, a cheeseburger and fries, aliens from another planet, a new coat, or a computer game.
3. Open your Bible to Luke 15:1-7. Then tell the students, *“The Bible says that God is on a big search. I want you to listen carefully to God’s Word in the book of Luke. See if you can figure out what God is searching for. After the story, I’ll ask you again.”*
4. Say, *“One day, when Jesus was here on earth, he started talking to a group of really bad people. The Bible calls them sinners. Some of these people, called tax collectors, stole money from everyone. They stole so much money from people that many families didn’t have enough to buy food for their little boys and girls. Many families could not even buy enough clothes to keep their children warm. Some of the other bad people in the group told lies all the time. Some got into fights and hit people. Now, you and I might be afraid to talk to such bad people, but not Jesus!”*
5. Divide the circle of students into two smaller semi-circles. Point to one group of students and say, *“You are going to pretend to be the sinners Jesus talked to, way back in Bible times. Put frowns on your faces, hunch forward, and look really mean. You don’t need to say anything. Just use your actions to look like mean, unhappy sinners.”* Demonstrate how the students should look.
6. Ask the students, *“You already know there were bad people listening to Jesus, sinners, as the Bible says. What other kinds of people do you think came to listen to Jesus?”* Let students share some ideas. (nice, kind, honest, people who obey God)

Materials

- “Two Little Hands” finger play (AS)
- TV/DVD player

Materials

- Bible

7. Walk over by the second group of students. Then say, *“The Bible tells us that some important religious teachers and leaders listened to Jesus. They thought of themselves as very godly because of all the rules they kept. Even though the leaders and teachers thought they were practically perfect, were they, really?”* (No) *“The Pharisees and teachers may have looked good on the outside, but on the inside they were sinful, too.”*
8. Continue, *“The religious leaders and teachers thought they were better than everyone else. They stayed as far away from the bad people as possible. They did not eat with them or visit in their homes. They did not try to help them. They did not try to teach them about God’s love.”*
9. Direct the second group of students by saying, *“You are going to pretend to be the religious teachers and leaders. Sit up very straight and tall, raise your chin up in the air a little higher than usual, cross your arms across your chest, and use your faces to look like you are better than everyone else.”* Demonstrate what the students should do. Then say quietly, *“Now whisper to the person next to you, ‘I am practically perfect.’”*
10. Go over to the first group of students and say, *“Let’s see those mean faces again.”* Allow the students to assume their pose.
11. Then say, *“I will pretend to be Jesus. Watch me.”* Step into the middle of the semi-circle. *“Can you imagine Jesus, right in the middle of the sinners, talking to them about God? That is exactly what he did.”*
12. Point to the second group and say, *“In the meantime, the religious leaders and teachers stood far away and watched Jesus talk to the sinners. They started whispering behind Jesus’ back.”* Direct the second group to pretend to whisper. *“They did something much worse than whispering behind Jesus’ back, though. They accused Jesus of bad behavior, saying, ‘This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them’ (verse 2). They accused Jesus of being a bad person himself, because he spent time with sinners.”*
13. *“Jesus knew what the religious leaders and teachers were whispering and thinking. To help them understand why he talked to sinners, Jesus told them this story about a lost sheep.”*
14. Stretch out the paper chain of sheep so all the children can see it and say, *“Imagine this is the shepherd’s great, big flock of sheep.”*
15. Tear off one sheep from the end of the chain. Choose one student and give him the one paper sheep. Tell this student. *“Pretend you are a little lost sheep. While I turn my back, you wander off, like sheep often do. Go hide somewhere in the room and begin crying ‘baa-a-a-a’ very, very quietly.”*
16. Turn your back while the student hides. Then turn around and begin the story. *“Jesus said, ‘Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them.’”*
17. Begin searching around the area, as if looking for the hiding child. *“Won’t he leave the 99 sheep in the open country? Won’t he go look for the one lost sheep until he finds it?”* Encourage the “lost sheep” to cry a little louder by saying, *“Little, lost sheep, you are getting cold and scared and hungry. Now you are really crying loudly, hoping the shepherd will find you.”*
18. Find the student who is playing the lost sheep and take his hand. Say,

“You can stop crying now because you are safe.” Walk the student back to sit with the rest of the group while saying, “When the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders and go home. Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, ‘Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.’”

19. Look back and forth slowly between both groups, gesturing toward each group as you speak to them. Say, *“I tell you, it will be the same in heaven. There will be great joy when one sinner turns away from sin. Yes, there will be more joy than for ninety-nine godly people who do not need to turn away from their sins.”*

REVIEW: QUESTION AND ANSWER EXERCISES

Directions

1. Help the students get back into one large circle. Make sure they have enough room between them move their arms and legs without bumping into each other.
2. Tell students, *“We are going to play a short game to see what you remember from our story. Listen carefully.”*
3. *“Do you remember how the religious teachers thought Jesus should not be talking with sinners? If you think the teachers were wrong about Jesus, stand up.”*
4. Say, *“If the Bible says that a shepherd will search and search for his one lost sheep, reach your arms high in the sky.”*
5. Say, *“If the Bible story says the shepherd will be angry at his lost sheep and yell at it when he finds it, sit down.”* Remind them, *“The shepherd was happy and called all his neighbors to tell them the good news. He loved his sheep very, very much.”*
6. Tell students, *“Squat down low for ‘No,’ and jump up high for ‘Yes,’ to answer the next questions. Do sheep sometimes wander off and get lost?”* (Yes, jump up high.)
7. *“Can sheep usually find their way home alone?”* (No, squat down low.)
8. *“Do people sometimes wander away from God and get lost?”* (Yes, jump up high.)
9. *“Are some people like sheep?”* (Students will probably respond yes.) Tell students, *“Ha! That last one was a trick question. The Bible says that all of us are like sheep, not just some of us. Each of us wander away and go our own way. We are all like lost sheep.”*
10. Then say, *“Let’s try another question. Are all people like sheep?”* (Yes, jump up high.)
11. *“Yes, you’re right. God’s big search is all about seeking for all of us. He is searching for people from all nations, to come worship him.”*
12. Tell the students, *“The Bible story we just heard said that something would cause great joy in heaven. I will tell you three different answers. Touch your knees when you hear the right answer: There will be great joy in heaven when a sheep gets lost; There will be great joy in heaven when a sinner gets*

Materials

- wall map or globe

lost; There will be great joy in heaven when a sinner turns away from doing wrong." (The last choice is the correct one and students should bend and touch their knees.)

13. Tell students, *"When you hear the correct answer, stand up and twist side to side. A shepherd searches for sheep but what is God searching for in his big search? Hundreds and hundreds of sheep? (No.) People to worship him? (Yes, stand and twist from side to side.)"*
14. Move to the wall map or globe so you can point out each of these areas during the last question and answer time.
15. Say, *"Last of all, when you hear a statement that is not true, freeze like a statue and stand really still. When you hear a statement that is true, march in place."* (Students will be marching to all of these questions except for the very last one.)
16. *"God is searching for people to worship him in our town."*
17. *"God is searching for people to worship him in North and South America."*
18. *"God is searching for people to worship him in all of Africa."*
19. *"God is searching for people to worship him in all of Europe."*
20. *"God is searching for people to worship him in all of Asia."*
21. *"God is searching for people to worship him in Australia."*
22. *"God is searching for people to worship him in all the earth."*
23. *"God wants you to be like the Pharisees and teachers and stay completely away from sinners who do not worship God yet."* (Teacher should freeze and students freeze, too.)
24. Conclude the activity by telling students, *"God is searching for people to worship him from every nation, and he wants us to be searching right along with him. Our memory verse tells us what will happen in the end, when God's big search is done."*

IN CLOSING: MY NAME WILL BE GREAT

Malachi 1:11a "My name will be great among the nations."

Directions

1. Move the students to a wall map and explain, *"On this map of the world, the different colors stand for different countries."* Ask the students, *"Can any of you name places on the map?"* Have the students share countries they know.
2. Point out how the sun comes up in the east and goes down in the west.
3. Open your Bible and say, *"In the book of Malachi, God says, 'My name will be great among the nations. They will worship me from where the sun rises in the east, to where it sets in the west.'"*
4. First sing the "My Name Will be Great" song through twice before adding motions. Explain the motions as you add them, as needed. Have the students point at a map or a globe when they say "nations."

Materials

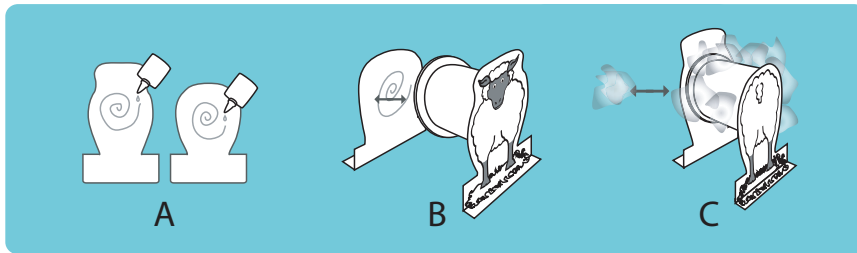
- Bible
- wall map or globe
- TV/DVD player
- "My Name Will be Great" song (MS)



CRAFT: WOOLLY LAMBS

Directions

1. Copy “Woolly Lambs” pattern onto cardstock.
2. Cut out “Woolly Lambs” on the solid blue lines.
3. Give a “Woolly Lambs” pattern (one front and one back) to each student.
4. Pass out scissors and have the students cut out the front and back pieces of their lambs on the solid lines.
5. Pass out glue and one spool to each student.
6. Demonstrate how to glue the front and the back pieces of the lamb to the ends of the spool. (See A below.)
7. Help the students to fold up the bottom of each piece on the dotted lines to form a base for standing. (See B below.)
8. Hand out cotton balls and show the students how to pull off small pieces of the cotton to make wool for the lamb. (See C below.)
9. Have the students put glue on the head and tail pieces of the lamb and attach bits of cotton. Advise them not to cover up the face with cotton.
10. Then show the students how to put small dots of glue on the spool and attach cotton to make the body of the lamb.



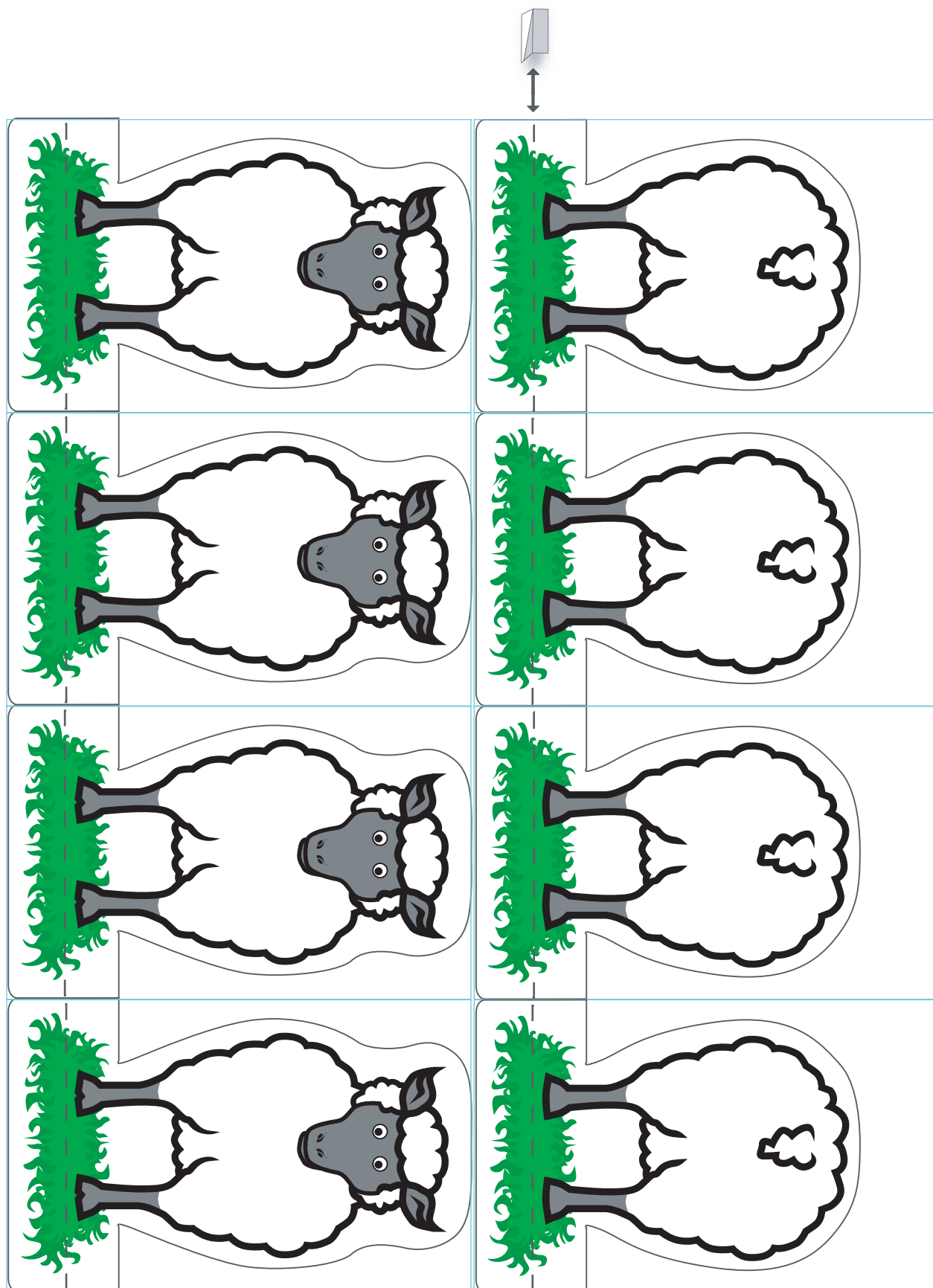
PREPARATION: 20 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- white card stock
- “Woolly Lambs” pattern (p. 8)
- large empty thread spool for each student
- cotton balls
- scissors
- white glue

Woolly Lambs





GAME: THE LAMB GAME

Directions

1. Say, *"In our Bible story, the shepherd loved all of his sheep. When one lamb wandered away, the shepherd looked and looked until he found it. The shepherd was very excited to find his sheep and bring it back to a safe place."*
2. *"A pen is the place where sheep stay when they are not in the fields. It has a fence or walls around it to protect sheep from wild animals that might attack them. The pen also keeps the sheep from wandering away to a dangerous place where they might get hurt. In this game, some of you will be sheep and some will be the pen, a safe place for sheep."*
3. Choose about one-quarter of your group to be sheep. Say, *"You are the sheep."*
4. Say to the remaining students, *"You are the shepherd's pen."* Direct them to make a circle and join hands.
5. Have the sheep spread out around the outside of the circle. Say, *"Right now, the sheep are out in the field."*
6. Have a teacher or helper blow the whistle or ring the bell. Say to the students forming the pen, *"When you hear this sound, raise your arms while still holding hands."*
7. Say to the sheep, *"When you hear this sound, start moving in and out of the pen by going under the arms of the boys and girls."* Demonstrate how to weave in and out of the circle, going under the upraised arms of the students. Sheep may walk, skip, or gallop.
8. Say to the students forming the pen, *"When the whistle blows (or bell rings) again, lower your arms, but keep holding hands."* Practice this.
9. Take two of the sheep for demonstration. Put one inside the circle and one outside. Say, *"Sheep, if you are inside the pen when the children's arms come down, you are safe."*
10. *"If you are outside the pen when the children's arms come down, you are in danger. You need to choose someone in the circle to trade places with you. You will become part of the pen. The boy or girl you choose becomes a sheep."*
11. You may wish to play a practice round.
12. Play as many rounds as time allows.



PREPARATION: 5 min.

TEACHING: 15 min.

Materials

- whistle or bell



SNACK: "FIND THE M&M®" CUPCAKES

Makes 24 servings (one serving = one cupcake per student)

Directions

1. Follow cake mix directions for mixing ingredients.
2. Pour cake batter into muffin tins lined with cupcake papers.
3. Insert one M&M® into the middle of each cupcake.
4. Bake at the specified temperature and time.
5. Cool and frost.
6. Pass out the plates, napkins, and cupcakes.
7. Remind the students that the shepherd looked for his lost sheep just like Jesus seeks sinful people. Challenge them to find the lost M&M® inside their cupcake.



PREPARATION: 45 min.

TEACHING: 10 min.

Materials

- cake mix
- cupcake paper liners
- one can of frosting
- small paper plates
- small bag of M&Ms®
- napkins
- muffin tins



PRAYER ACTIVITY: HIDE, SEEK, AND PRAY

Directions

1. Before class, hide the six “Lost Children” pictures in the area where you will do the prayer activity.
2. Remind that students that in the story of the lost sheep, the shepherd looked and looked until he found it. Tell them that you have hidden six pictures around the room. These are not pictures of sheep, but of children who need to learn about Jesus.
3. Divide the students into six teams. Tell them that each group will get to find one picture and then you will pray for that child.
4. Send the first group to look for a picture. When they find one, direct them to bring the picture back to the large group.
5. Read the name of the country where the people live and find it on a map.
6. Use one of the following prayer prompts for each group of “Lost Children.”



Here are some suggested prayer prompts. Insert the country name on the blank.

- Pray for children in _____ who are your age to hear about Jesus.
 - Pray for children in _____ who are in your grade to trust in Jesus as their Savior.
 - Pray for children in _____ who do not have the chance to go to school.
 - Pray for children in _____ who have the same number of people in their family that you do. Pray that family members will love each other.
 - Pray for street children in _____ or those who do not have parents.
 - Pray for children in _____ who don't have enough food or clean water to drink.
7. Then send a second group of students to find another picture. Pray for that group.
 8. Continue until all groups have had an opportunity to find a picture and pray.



PREPARATION: 5 min.

TEACHING: 10 min.

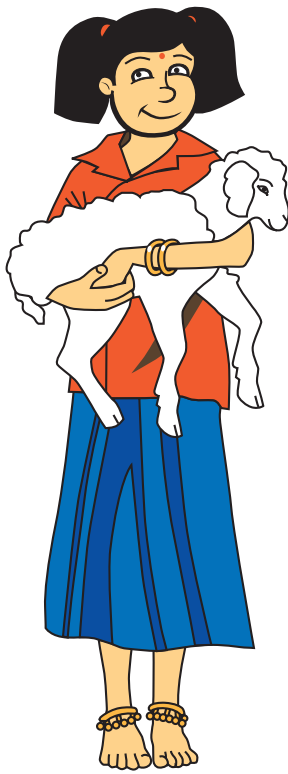
Materials

- one copy of “Lost Children” pictures (p. 12), cut apart
- tape or sticky tack
- world map or globe

Lost Children



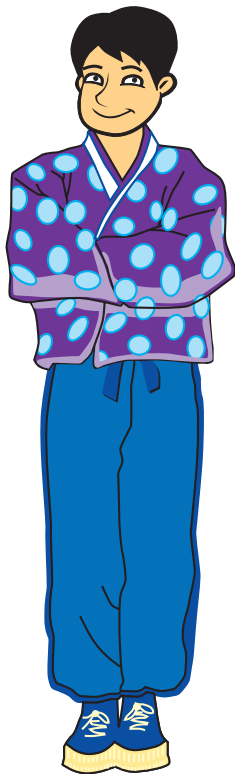
CAMBODIA



INDIA



MONGOLIA



NORTH KOREA



NORTH VIETNAM



TANZANIA