

**II. Group discussion** *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Luke 15:1-7 aloud.

1. Why did Jesus tell this story? What was going on?

Why did the Pharisees object to Jesus associating with sinners?

What are some places in our society where a Christian might be criticized for associating with the wrong people?

2. What does the shepherd do with the sheep who did not wander?

Why does the shepherd leave the 99 sheep in the open country? Isn't that like punishing the ones who did the right thing?

How do you process the thought of God abandoning 99 sheep in the open country?

Who represented the Pharisees in this parable? *The 99.*

What was wrong with the way the Pharisees saw themselves and the world?

*They saw themselves as the 99 faithful ones, but they were also the lost lamb at times.*

3. If you were this shepherd, what would have been some reasons to forget the lost lamb?

*It is just one lamb, it is likely dead already, I should take care of the 99 who are still with me, searching is risky and tiring.*

Kevin's sermon talked about the advantages of "sticking with the 99." How important is it to you to feel safe? What are some ways we limit risks and threats to our safety?

How could avoiding risks cause us to miss out on God's calling in our lives?

When have you taken a risk because you felt like it was the right thing to do? How did it turn out for you?

4. What could cause a lamb to get lost?

What are some ways that you have gotten lost spiritually in the past?

How did God help you when you were lost? Who or what did he send your way to find you?

5. What was the shepherd's motivation for going after the one lamb?

What would happen to the flock if the shepherd lost just one lamb per month?

6. What is the message of this parable for lost people?

What is the message of this parable for the saved?

What does this story say about God?

7. Who are some sheep that our group could encourage?

*Maybe they are not lost, just in need of a strong flock like your group!*

What is keeping us from including others in our group?

*Use an empty chair as a visual image for "room for more."*

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

In this story, who is most like your situation— the lost lamb, the 99, or the shepherd? What is the call of this parable for your life?

### **III. Other resources**

**The point** – God loves every person on the planet, and he is working to bring them into his loving arms. How big of a help are we for God reaching his goal?

#### **Prayer ideas**

Include an empty chair and pray for someone to fill that empty chair. Thank God for seeking us when we were/are lost.

Pray for God to give us hearts that love lost people as much as he does.

Ask God to bring revival to the church.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning whom he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

**Kid-friendly activity.** *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Arrive early and hide something valuable – maybe your Bible (I can't start our group!) or some goodies. Make it difficult to find.

Gather the kids to sing a song & take prayer requests.

Act confused & ask the group to help you find your lost item.

Read a story about God searching for something – Luke 15:3-7.

Who or what was lost? What did the shepherd do?

Who is God in this story and who are we?

When have you been lost? How did it feel?

What does this story say about how God feels about us?

How does this story help us live godly lives?



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## **LIFE Group Guide**

### **Luke 15 – Lost lambs**

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

**The theme: We serve a God who seeks us when we are lost and then invites us to help him find lost lambs.**

Kevin Owen's Sunday sermon related to Luke 15, particularly the shepherd who takes outrageous risks because he loves the lost lamb. This passage invites us to join the shepherd in bringing lost lambs home. While this passage focuses on verses 1-7, reading the entire chapter would help you prepare for the discussion.

Next Sunday evening would be a great time for your group to host a bring-a-friend event. Super Bowl night is a natural event to gather with friends and make new friends. The Farrar-Reynolds group will host a worship service at the building at 6 if your group would be more blessed by that.

**Leadership tip:** This discussion leads naturally into a conversation about your group's focus on outreach. Wear your gold name tag every week, and pray for God to lead you to people who are in need of a supportive group like your LIFE group.

**I. Relate** *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Include a prayer seeking wisdom for Kevin Owen and our congregation.
- ❖ What was helpful about this morning's sermon?
- ❖ When did you get lost as a kid? How did that feel?
- ❖ When have your kids gotten lost? Which is a worse feeling – to be lost or to lose one of your kids?