

southpoint community christian church
BiG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

2.21/22.09

It's All About Helping People Find Their Way Back to God

BiG IDEA: Our most urgent mission is to help people find their way back to God.

// Ice Breaker _____

Option 1: What was the last thing that you lost? Did you ever find it?

Option 2: Where was the weirdest place you've ever found your TV remote or car keys after they were lost?

// Questions for Discussion _____

Read Luke 15: 1-7 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

What are the different groups of people in Jesus' audience? If you were to put some modern labels to these groups today, what groups of people would be comparable?

Do you regularly and purposefully welcome the "sinners" in your neighborhood, in your office, or in your family into your home or spend quality time sharing a meal with them? Are there certain "sinners" you might associate with and other "sinners" that you would never associate with? Why or why not?

Why do you think Jesus spent so much time with the "sinners" of his day?

In the area of Palestine in Jesus' day, the average sheep flock ranged between 20 to 200 animals. The shepherd in Jesus' story must have been moderately wealthy to have 100. At the end of the day, before bringing the sheep in from the pasture (open country) to the sheepfold, the counting would occur. Jesus does not mention how the 99 are looked after, but the hearer of the story assumes maybe a neighbor or other family member watches over them while the lost sheep is searched for. What type of danger might the lost sheep be in? Why would the shepherd leave the 99 to search for just one?

It is easy to think of God offering mercy to those who beg Him for it. It is much harder to understand the type of love God has for us, who tenaciously seeks to save us while we are still sinning and unrepentant. In your own journey toward or away from God, what

role have other Christians played in helping you accept God's grace and make Him the leader of your life?

Have you ever found it difficult to rejoice over someone who finally makes a commitment to follow Jesus Christ and claims forgiveness in His name? Explain.

Read Luke 15:8-10 The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Hebrew women of Jesus' day received ten silver coins as a wedding gift. In addition to the monetary value of the coins, they also had special significance like a wedding ring. Have you ever lost something of special one-of-a-kind significance? Share a story.

This second parable highlights that searching for a lost treasure often requires diligence and persistence. How much effort should we be putting toward helping the lost find their way back to God?

// Application_____

To God, we all are unique, and have a one-of-a-kind significance to Him. Take a moment of silence and think of the people in your life that might be far from God, and make a short list. Commit to pray for them (you can do this in small groups of three people, in pairs, or as an entire group), commit to include them in your life in a welcoming way, and commit to invite them to church where they can hear the good news of God's love for them and the adventure awaiting them if they choose to follow Christ.

// Prayer_____

Pray for those who are far from God.
Pray for Southpoint's mission of Winning Downriver to Christ.
Pray that we will reproduce disciples, campuses and churches.