

dwell®



Dear Family,


Lost sheep, lost sons, sumptuous banquets—the stories Jesus told are full of images and discovery. They were told to men, women, and children a few thousand years ago. But their meaning is as rich and meaningful for us as it was for those first listeners.

During the next six weeks, take time to marvel at these stories with your child, to wonder what they mean for your lives, and to live into them together. Your set of God’s Big Story cards will help you to do that together.

This is what our schedule looks like:


Date: _____ The Lost Sheep 

Date: _____ The Lost Son 

Date: _____ The Great Banquet 

Date: _____ The Rich Fool 

Date: _____ The Ten Bridesmaids 

Date: _____ The Wicked Tenants 

During these six weeks, we’ll also be memorizing Psalm 23 together. You may want to make that a challenge for your whole family!

P.S. Check out the great tips about growing faith at home on NurtureKidsFaith.org. Also consider purchasing a copy of the Dwell Year 1 CD, available from www.faithaliveresources.org, or download the songs from www.dwellcurriculum.org/music. It contains a great rap version of Psalm 23, the memory challenge for this unit.

Yours in Christ,

Memory Challenge

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

—Psalm 23, NIV

Memory Challenge

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

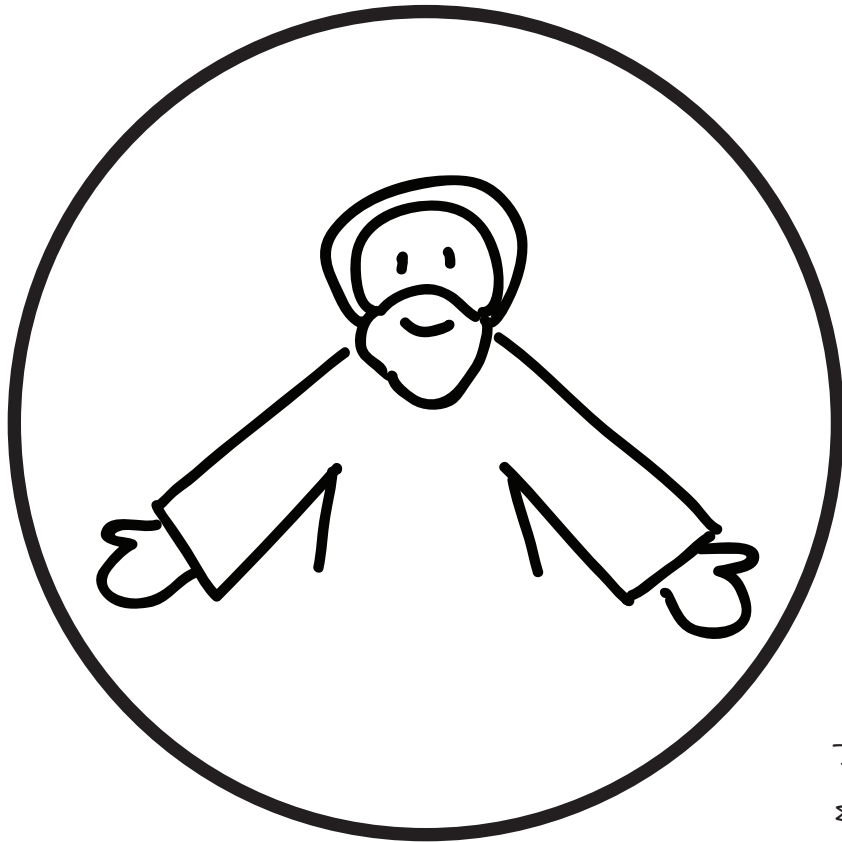
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

—Psalm 23, NRSV



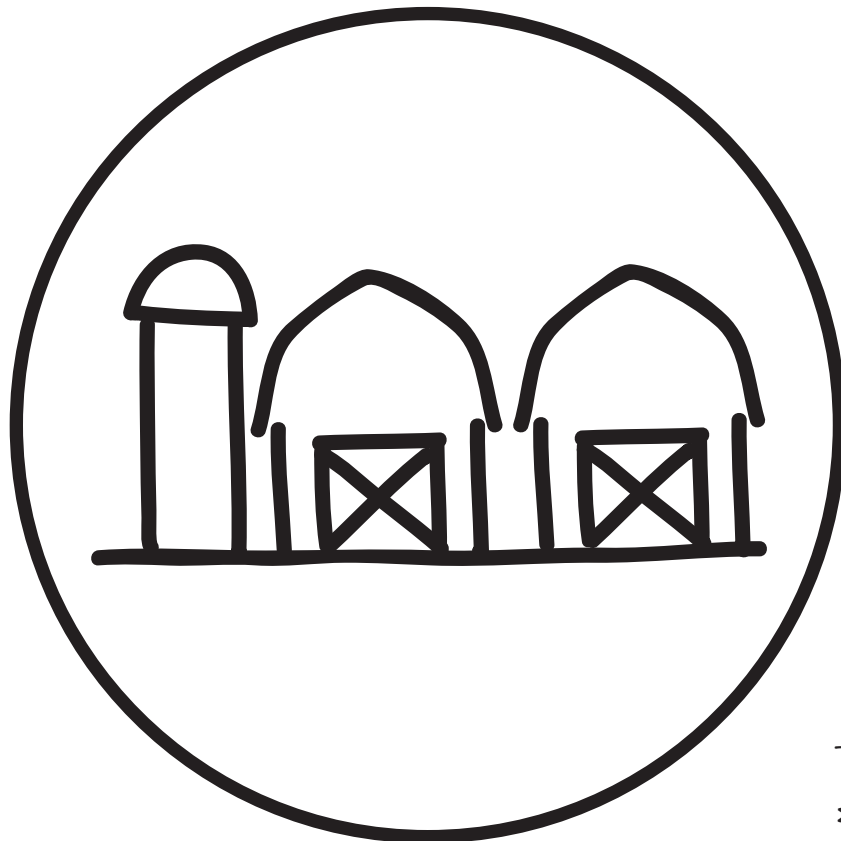
Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 1



Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 2



Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 3



Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 4



Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 5



Marvel
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 6

The Lost Sheep

From Luke 15:1-7 and John 10:2-5, 11-15

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One day a crowd of tax collectors and “sinners” gathered around Jesus to hear him teach.

The Pharisees, the religious leaders, looked at what was happening and muttered, ‘Jesus is always hanging out with ‘sinners’— he even eats with them!’”

Jesus didn’t agree with their attitude, so he began to tell them a story. It started with a good shepherd and his flock of sheep.

The Lost Sheep

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This shepherd took very good care of his sheep. The sheep loved their shepherd and followed him.

But one day a single sheep wandered away without the shepherd realizing it.

As the shepherd was getting ready to take the flock back home, he realized that one sheep was missing. It was getting late, but he didn't want to leave that sheep behind.

The Lost Sheep

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So he had his other ninety-nine sheep lie down in the field, and he went off in search of the one missing sheep.

He searched and searched for his lost sheep, looking everywhere and listening for the sheep's cry.

Finally the shepherd heard the sheep and ran to the place where his lost sheep was lying. He tended the sheep's wounds and then lifted it onto his shoulders.

The Lost Sheep

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Then the shepherd gathered the rest of the flock and took them all back home. He was overjoyed to have his lost sheep back!

When he had all his sheep safely back in their pen, he threw a party for his neighbors to celebrate that his lost sheep had been found!

When Jesus finished telling this story, he told the crowd that God celebrates more over one sinner who comes back to him than over ninety-nine people who never went astray!

Spontaneous Drama of The Lost Son Parable

(adapted from Luke 15:11-32, The Message)

Jesus told this story to a big group of people that included Pharisees, tax collectors, and sinners: There was once a father who had two sons.

The YOUNGER SON said to his FATHER, **“Father, I want what’s coming to me right now.”** *(Pause and invite actor to repeat lines.)*

The FATHER was very **sad**. But he **divided the property between his two sons, giving half to one and half to the other.**

It wasn’t long before the YOUNGER SON **packed his bags and left home for a distant country.**

While he was there, the YOUNGER SON made some FRIENDS who **partied and lived the wild life with him, spending money and having fun.**

When the YOUNGER SON’S money was all gone, these new FRIENDS **left him.**

After the YOUNGER SON had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country, and he had no money to buy food. **He was very hungry.**

The YOUNGER SON **begged** a FARMER for work.

The FARMER **sent the YOUNGER SON out into the field to feed the PIGS**

The YOUNGER SON **was so hungry**. He wanted to eat the corncobs he was feeding the pigs. But when **he tried to grab some**, the FARMER **said no.**

That brought the YOUNGER SON to his senses. He said, **“All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day . . .** *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and here I am starving to death. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I’m going back to my father. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I’ll say to him, Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

The YOUNGER SON **jumped up and started walking** the long way back to his father.

When the YOUNGER SON was still **walking** a long way off, his FATHER **saw him.**

The FATHER’S **heart was pounding.** *(Give actor a chance to dramatize by pounding fists against chest or something.)*

The FATHER **ran out and embraced** the YOUNGER SON.

The YOUNGER SON started his speech: **“Father, I’ve sinned against God . . .**
(pause for actor to repeat)

I’ve sinned before you; *(pause for actor to repeat)*

I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

But the FATHER wasn’t listening. He was **calling to the SERVANTS:**

“Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! *(pause for actor to repeat)*

My son is here—given up for dead and now alive!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

All this time his OLDER SON was out **working in the field**

When the day’s work was done the OLDER SON **approached the house and heard the music and dancing.** He **called over** to the SERVANTS and asked them what was going on.

They said **“Your brother came home.** *(pause for actors to repeat)*

Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!” *(pause for actors to repeat)*

The OLDER BROTHER **stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in.**

His FATHER **came out and tried to talk to him,** but the OLDER BROTHER **wouldn’t listen.**

The OLDER BROTHER said, **“Look how many years I’ve stayed here serving you . . .**
(pause for actor to repeat)

but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money shows up . . . *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and you have a feast!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

The FATHER said, **“Son, you’re with me all the time . . .** *(pause for actor to repeat)*

and everything that is mine is yours . . . *(pause for actor to repeat)*

but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. *(pause for actor to repeat)*

This brother of yours was dead, and he’s alive! *(pause for actor to repeat)*

He was lost, and he’s found!” *(pause for actor to repeat)*

Character Nametags

Father	Older Son
Younger Son	Servant
Servant	Servant
Friend	Friend
Friend	Pig
Pig	Pig

Excuses

I bought a piece of property,
and I need to look it over.
Send my regrets.

I just bought five teams of oxen,
and I really need to check them out.
Send my regrets.

I just got married and need
to get home to my wife.
So I can't come.

I just got a new bike.
I need to test drive it.
Sorry!

I need to clean my room.
Send my regrets.

I have homework to do.
So I can't come.

The Interview

Interviewer: Hello, _____. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today about your wonderful dinner. It's been the talk of the town!

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: So what did you do to get ready for this awesome dinner?

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: That's amazing. Sounds like you put a ton of time and effort into making this the best party ever. So how did you feel when the guests you invited didn't come?

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: I heard that some of them came up with some crazy excuses for why they weren't going to show up. What were some of their excuses?

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: Hmmmm. How disappointing! Who did you decide to invite after that?

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: I see. Do you think *they* enjoyed coming to your banquet?

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

Interviewer: Well, thanks for your time and for being willing to talk to us about the amazing banquet. Have a great day!

Party Host: “ _____
_____.”

The Invitation



When: When Jesus returns to earth

Where: God's Kingdom, the new earth

Why: Because God loves you!

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”
(John 3:16, NIV).*

Please accept this invitation
to join God's family!

Mr. Rich Man

Jesus was talking to a crowd of people when one man interrupted him, calling out, “Jesus, tell my brother he needs to share his inheritance with me.”

Jesus’ answer surprised the people. He said, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; our lives are made up of more than the amount of things we own.”

Then he told this parable:

There was a certain rich man whose fields produced an abundant crop.

(Pretend to lug a large sack on your back. Put it down with a sigh and wipe your forehead.)

Wow, I’ve got a *huge* crop this year! I’ve got so many sacks of grain I don’t have enough space to store them!

(Look around at your crops and nod in satisfaction.)

Yep, I bet I’ve got enough food here to last me the next five years—no, maybe the next ten!

(Talking to himself):

You’ve done it again, Mr. Rich Man—you’re a genius!

Now what should I do with all this food? Like I said, I don’t have any spare room in my barns . . .

(Slowly pace the room and hold chin as though in deep thought.)

Hmmm . . .

I’ve got it! I’ll tear down my old barns and build *bigger* ones that will hold all of my grain! What a great idea! Then whenever I need more food, I can tell my servants to take some grain from my new barns! I won’t have to work another day in my life!

I’ve got to call my servants and get them started on this project right away.

(Take out pretend cell phone and dial.)

Hello, Caleb?

Yes, Mr. Rich Man here. I need you and a dozen of my other servants to tear down my barns and build bigger ones, right away.

(Pause)

Yes I know my barns are already the biggest in town, but they need to be even bigger—and there's no time to lose.

Thank you.

(Hang up phone.)

Ahhh, now I'll be able to take it easy, eat, drink, and be happy.

What a great life! Just a second . . .

(Take out phone again.)

Hello, Caleb?

Yes, will you bring me an ice-cold lemonade? I'd like to sit and relax by the pool for the rest of the day—in fact, for the rest of my life! Ha ha!

Life doesn't get any better than this!

(The Voice of God):

You foolish man! This very night your life will be taken from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?

(Mr. Rich Man looks around with a start, as though he has heard something.)

Hmmm, I thought I heard a voice. Must be my imagination!

(Rubbing head)

Boy, I sure don't feel so great all of a sudden! Maybe I should go lie down by the pool for a little while.

The Three Bridesmaids

Bridesmaid #1: I'm so excited for the wedding to start! I can hardly wait!

Bridesmaid #2: Me either! My cousin Deborah is so lucky to be marrying Joshua—they were made for each other!

Bridesmaid #3: I just can't wait to eat all that great food too. It'll be like an all-you-can-eat buffet for the next seven days... I'm getting hungry right now just thinking about it!

Bridesmaid #2: The music and dancing are my favorite part. I just *love* to dance the night away under the moonlight!

Bridesmaid #1: I can't wait to light my lamp and lead the procession with the groom. It's so pretty to see all of the lamps lit together. Being invited to be part of the parade makes me feel really special. When do you think the groom will come?

Bridesmaid #3: Who knows? I hear he's still meeting with Deborah's father to discuss the best bride price for her.

Bridesmaid #2: Well *that* could take a while.

Bridesmaid #1: Good thing I brought my oil jar in case my lamp goes out—I don't want to miss any of the action! Did you ladies bring extra oil?

Bridesmaid #3: Nah, I figure the groom will be here in no time. Plus I was in such a rush to finish hemming my dress this afternoon I didn't even think about bringing my oil jar.

Bridesmaid #2: Yeah, I think our lamps have plenty of oil to last us until the groom comes. I'm not worried about it.

Bridesmaid #1: Well, I sure hope he comes soon . . . I think I'll rest awhile as we wait. (*lies down to take a nap*)

Bridesmaid #3: That's not a bad idea.

Bridesmaid #2: Yeah, we could definitely use a little extra beauty rest.

(*All bridesmaids lie down to sleep.*)

(Loud noise—trumpet if possible—wakens bridesmaids.)

Bridesmaid #1: Wake up—the groom is almost here! Let’s get ready to begin the procession!

(dips her lamp in her jar and lights her lamp)

Bridesmaid #2: Oh no, my lamp is completely burned out—and I don’t have any more oil!

Bridesmaid #3: Mine is out too! *(to Bridesmaid #1)* Can we borrow some of your oil so we can join the procession?

Bridesmaid #1: Sorry! I only brought enough for myself. Look! Over there is a merchant—maybe you can buy oil from him. Hurry though! The groom is almost here.

(The two bridesmaids run off the stage.)

Bridesmaid #1: I hope they make it . . . but wait . . . I see the groom! He’s here! I’m coming! *(holds up lamp and exits scene)*

(Bridesmaids #2 and 3 come rushing back with oil jars.)

Bridesmaid #2: Oh no, we’re too late!

Bridesmaid #3: They’re gone! We missed the celebration!

Both Bridesmaids: We should have been ready!

(Both sit down, looking sad.)

Ready or Not Action Cards

Praying	Bullying someone	Going to church	Writing a mean note to someone
Pushing someone on the playground	Reading the Bible	Giving food to someone who is hungry	Yelling at someone
Inviting someone who is lonely to play with the group	Cheating on a test	Fighting with someone	Sharing a snack with someone
Comforting someone who is sad	Laughing at someone who has tripped	Helping someone in a wheelchair	Building a house for someone

The Wicked Tenants

Characters:

Narrator

Owner

2 Tenants

Servant

Owner's Son

Narrator: There once lived a man who planted a vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some tenants and went away on a long journey.

Owner (*to the tenants*): I've got to go away on a business trip, and I'm trusting you to take good care of my vineyard. Enjoy as many grapes as you'd like—I'll send one of my servants to collect some of the fruit for me at harvest time.

Tenant 1: No problem—your vineyard is safe with us!

Tenant 2: Don't worry about a thing. Enjoy your trip!

(Owner exits.)

Narrator: So the vineyard owner went away to another country and was gone for a long time. The grapevines grew and produced beautiful grapes—the best in the land.

Tenant 2 (*eating grapes*): Wow, these grapes are delicious!

Tenant 1: Yeah, I've never tasted anything sweeter! I hope the owner forgets all about sending a servant to collect his share of the grapes—then maybe we could keep them all for ourselves!

Servant 1 (*knocks on a door and enters*): Hello. I'm here on behalf of my master to collect his portion of the harvest.

Tenant 1: Oh yeah? Tell your master that *we're* in charge now—and we're not about to give you any of our harvest! Now get outta here!

(Tenants beat up the servant; servant cries out in pain and exits.)

Narrator: The vineyard owner was shocked when he heard what happened.

Owner (*to the servant*): They did *what*? I thought I could trust them with my vineyard! Don't worry, I'll send another servant. They must have been out of their minds to treat you that way!

Narrator: So the owner sent a second servant, and then a third—but each time the wicked tenants beat the servants and sent them away empty-handed.

Owner: I can't believe this! Who do these guys think they are? I'll have to send my only son—surely they'll respect and listen to *him*.

Narrator: When the tenants saw that the owner had sent his son, they schemed together.

Tenant 2: Look, here comes the owner's son. He's the one who'll get the vineyard when the owner dies. Let's kill him and keep the vineyard for ourselves!

Owner's Son (*knocks on door*): Hello. My father owns this vineyard, and he has a right to the harvest of his property. Please hand over his share of the harvest.

Tenant 1: Not a chance! Do you think we're going to listen to you because you're his *son*? Ha! We don't care who you are—we run things around here!

Owner's Son: No wait, please!

(Tenants grab the son and kill him; all actors exit scene except for narrator.)

Narrator: At the news of his son's death, the owner was deeply grieved. Filled with anger, he immediately went to his vineyard and had the wicked tenants put to death for their vicious crime. Then he gave his vineyard to trustworthy farmers who would care for it with love.



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Year 1

Unit 1 Marvel . . . at God's Love

Unit 2 Marvel . . . at God's Mercy

Unit 3 Marvel . . . at the Holy Spirit's Power

Unit 4 Marvel . . . at the Holy Spirit's Work

Unit 5 Marvel . . . at God's New Beginnings

Unit 6 Marvel . . . at God's Protection

Year 2

Unit 1 Marvel . . . at God's Faithfulness

Unit 2 Marvel . . . at God's Wisdom and Strength

Unit 3 Marvel . . . at God's Message

Unit 4 Marvel . . . at God's Staying Power

Unit 5 Marvel . . . at God's Persistence

Unit 6 Marvel . . . at God's Plan



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