

Day 1: Lost to Found

Teacher: Can you help me call for Paddy? Here we go. *Do so.*

Puppet: *Come up.*

Teacher: Hi there, Paddy.

Puppet: *Wave.* Top o' the mornin' (evenin') to ya!

Teacher: What have you been up to today?

Puppet: Well, I've been out in the fields trying to find a sheep that got separated from me.

Teacher: Oh no! That's too baa-d!

Puppet: I know. I had a whole pasture full of sheep, and I had to leave them to go look for the one that strayed away.

Teacher: Did you find him?

Puppet: I sure did. He was down in the valley near the Emerald Crossing bridge.

Teacher: He'd still be lost if you hadn't found him.

Puppet: That's for sure.

Teacher: You know, that reminds me of a story Jesus told about a lost sheep.

Puppet: Oh yeah?

Teacher: Yeah. Right here (*point to Luke 15:3–7*), it says there were 100 sheep, and then 1 wandered off. The shepherd left the 99 and went to find the lost 1.

Puppet: I hope he found him.

Teacher: He did. Just like you found your sheep, the shepherd found his lost sheep.

Puppet: Then what happened?

Teacher: Everyone was so happy. It was a celebration. Let's do a happy dance! *Do so with the kids and have the puppet do a silly dance too.*

Puppet: I'm so glad they found him!

Teacher: This reminds us that *we* are like sheep who are lost and wandering from our Good Shepherd, Jesus. We need to decide that we're going to follow him.

Puppet: How do we follow Jesus?

Teacher: Remember how we said everyone sins (*Romans 3:23*)? Everyone does wrong things—everyone. We sin every day when we say or do or even think things that don't please God. God is truth. Can you think of a time you told a lie? *Pause for responses.* God is kind. Can you think of a time you weren't kind? *Pause.* God is caring. Can you think of a time you thought a mean thought about someone? *Pause.* Those are all examples of sin. *Uncover the word Admit on the GOSPEL POSTER.* God wants you to admit you do wrong things—admit you're a sinner. You need to tell him you know you don't obey all the time and you're sorry for it and want to turn from it (*Mark 1:15*).

Puppet: Then what?

Teacher: *Uncover the word Believe on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Then you must believe what the Bible says, that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins (*Romans 10:9–10*). But then, he rose from the dead. This shows us God was pleased with his payment.

Puppet: Admit and believe. Anything else?

Teacher: *Uncover the words Forever Receive on the GOSPEL POSTER.* Yes. Forever receive Jesus by asking him to forgive you and make you part of his family. You aren't automatically part of God's family. You aren't born belonging to the Good Shepherd. But you can become one of his sheep—one of his children—by admitting, believing, and forever receiving (*John 3:16*). If you do, you'll not only be part of your family here on earth, but you'll have God as your heavenly Father, and you'll be part of *his* family.

Puppet: I hope every person here believes in Jesus and wants to be his child!

Teacher: I do too! If you want to be a child of God, make sure you talk to your leader or parents or me today. And remember—the most important question you can ever ask yourself is this: Is the Lord *my* shepherd?

Puppet: I hope they can say yes!

Teacher: I hope so too! Well, bye for now, Paddy. See you tomorrow!

Day 2: Bible Boxes

Teacher: *Have the kids help you call for Paddy to come up.*

Puppet: *Stay hidden and say: Just a minute! Teacher looks behind the hill, wondering what's taking so long, and then Paddy arrives.*

Teacher: Hey, what were you doing?

Puppet: Working on a puzzle.

Teacher: Fun! How many pieces?

Puppet: 40.

Teacher: That's a lot of pieces.

Puppet: Yeah, it is. It's gonna make a picture of the Bible when all the pieces are in place.

Teacher: You know, that's cool because the Bible's kind of like a puzzle.

Puppet: I know it's a special book—the most special in the world—but what do you mean it's kind of like a puzzle?

Teacher: Well, the Bible isn't like any other book ever written because it was written by God!

Puppet: God? He wrote a book?

Teacher: Yep. He wrote the Bible.

Puppet: Did he get out a pen and write it?

Teacher: He chose some men and helped them know what to write. And of course, since God is perfect, his book is perfect. We can completely trust the Bible to lead and guide us through life.

Puppet: Kind of like how a shepherd or a border collie leads and guides the sheep?

Teacher: Right!

Puppet: But I still don't get how the Bible's like a puzzle.

Teacher: Well, God wrote the Bible over many, many years—1,500 years! That's a really long time. In fact, the men who wrote the first part had died long before the men came along to write the last part.

Puppet: Wow that is a long, loooong (*exaggerate*) time, all right.

Teacher: *Refer to the BIBLE BOXES POSTER throughout the next paragraphs.* And the men God chose to write his words lived all over the world, spoke different languages, and had different jobs like fishermen, kings, doctors, and shepherds, and yet, it all goes together perfectly like a beautiful puzzle.

Puppet: That's amazing.

Teacher: It is. And another reason we know God wrote the Bible and that it can be trusted is that there are promises or predictions made hundreds of years ahead of time that certain things would happen. And then, hundreds of years later, they did happen! God always keeps his promises, so we know we can trust every word of the Bible.

Puppet: You mean it would be like me promising that a specific baby was going to be born 700 years from now, and then it actually happens?

Teacher: Right! There were lots of predictions of Jesus' birth long before it happened. But of course, God keeps his promises, and Jesus was born exactly as predicted. That prediction coming true is basically impossible from a human point of view. It would be like hiding one red quarter in a sea of quarters that cover the whole state of Texas three feet deep—and then finding that one red quarter on the first try, blindfolded! It just wouldn't happen. But God's prediction about Jesus' birth DID happen—just as predicted. All of God's predictions have happened or *will* happen just as written!

Puppet: Wow! It's like magic.

Teacher: No—not magic. It's God! And not only that, but when we read about people and places in the Bible, we need to remember they're real! We've even found some of them!

Puppet: Found them? How? What? Where?

Teacher: Well, for instance, the Bible talks about a place called Jericho where the walls came tumbling down. Archaeologists have found those tumbled down walls. The Bible talks about a man named Gideon, and a small jar with his name has been found. Many objects and places have been found that confirm what the Bible says.

Puppet: That's sooo cool! The Bible really is an amazing book!

Teacher: It sure is. God will never let it be destroyed from this planet. People have *tried* to destroy it, burn it, and outlaw it. But it will never work because God will never let that happen (*Matthew 24:35*).

Puppet: I loooove my Bible!

Teacher: You should! It's not like any other book. It's completely true because God wrote it and God can't lie. It's a supernatural book that changes people's lives, and people have even been willing to die for it.

Puppet: I don't think any other book is important enough to die for!

Teacher: I agree. And it even talks about topics like science at times. Since it's 100% true, if it talks about science topics, then you know it's right in what it's saying! And how about this? *Read John 10:27*. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." Anyone who belongs to the Good Shepherd knows God's Word is true. Do you believe God's Word is true? I sure do! It's God's voice speaking to me from the pages of the Bible. The God of the universe is talking to me! How incredible is that?! I should never forget about it but should read it, study it, and talk to God about it. He'll lead and guide me through his Word so I won't be on the wrong path (what the world says to do) but will be on the right path (what God's Word says to do).

Puppet: Thank you for reminding me of how great the Bible is!

Teacher: You're welcome! And always remember to let God—through his Word—lead and guide you. Learn the Bible, love the Bible, and obey the Bible.

Puppet: For sure! I want to always treasure God's Word, the Bible! In fact, I'm going to go listen to it right now.

Teacher: That's awesome! Bye! *Have everyone wave goodbye*. And kids, I hope you listen when you hear the Bible too. It's God's special words that lead and guide you through life!

Day 3: Think on Such Things

Teacher: Kids, let's talk a little more about this with Paddy. Help me call for him. *Do so.*

Puppet: Yell, "Eeek!" and come up shaking and hopping around.

Teacher: What happened?!

Puppet: A huge spider just ran up my leg!

Teacher: Yikes! That's scary.

Puppet: Yeah, it is. But that's nothing compared to some of the other things I'm scared of.

Teacher: Like what?

Puppet: Oh, I get scared and worry about the dark and bad guys and monsters under the bed and being separated from my parents and bad storms and having to get up on stage all by myself. You know, stuff like that.

Teacher: I understand that. We all feel scared sometimes, just like David did when Saul was chasing him. But did you know God talks to us in the Bible about what to do when we're scared?

Puppet: Really?

Teacher: Yep! The kids and I were just talking about what Philippians 4:6–8 tells us to do when we feel scared or worried.

Puppet: What's it say?

Teacher: Instead of being anxious, talk to God and thank him for his goodness. Then tell him what you're scared about.

Puppet: So I shouldn't focus on worrying, but instead, I should pray to God?

Teacher: Right! Don't worry . . . just pray.

Puppet: What else does the Bible say?

Teacher: God will help us go from being fearful to peaceful. He can help us have peace when we trust in him.

Puppet: I need to talk to God more and let him know what worries me.

Teacher: Yes, talk to God first. And we also need to think about God more.

Puppet: How does that help?

Teacher: *Show the* PHILIPPIANS 4:8 VERSE SHEET. The Bible says to think about things that are true and lovely and good. Instead of thinking over and over about scary stuff, think about how good and kind and loving God is.

Puppet: So I shouldn't be thinking about monsters under my bed when I'm in the dark?

Teacher: When scary thoughts pop into your head, start thinking about how great God is and about all the things you can thank him (praise him) for.

Puppet: Can you give me an example?

Teacher: Let's say you get in bed and it's dark and you start to get scared.

Puppet: *Shudder.* Ooo . . . creepy.

Teacher: So start talking to God! Tell him some good things you're thankful for, like the yummy food you ate today and the hugs you got and the fun you had and anything else good you can think of. You could even quote Psalm 23!

Puppet: Today I had pizza—yum!—*and* I had fun running around in the yard with my dog.

Teacher: Terrific! Think about those good things and thank God for them! And think about the Good Shepherd himself. He's right there with you in that dark bedroom. In fact, he's always with you, wherever you are.

Puppet: That's comforting. I'm not ever really by myself.

Teacher: God's always with you. So remember—don't worry . . . just pray. And think on good things *and* on the Good Shepherd. And one other thing: It helps to think of others, too, and how we can help them and pray for them.

Puppet: I will. I'm going to go think of lots of good things I can thank God for today.

Teacher: That's fantastic! And if you get anxious tomorrow, think about God and good things again. And do it again the next day . . . and the next . . . and the next. Always go to God for help. Well, we'll see you tomorrow. Let's say bye to Paddy, everyone. *Do so.*

Day 4: God's Goodness

Teacher: Boys and girls, help me call for Paddy. *Do so.*

Puppet: *Come up with an empty cup that supposedly had popcorn in it. Be mumbling and grumbling about it all falling out.*

Teacher: Whoa! Whoa! What's going on here? What are you grumbling about?

Puppet: Well, I wanted some popcorn. I wanted *a lot* of popcorn. So I filled my cup to overflowing.

Teacher: How high was it? Like this? *Puppet indicates even more. This? Keep getting higher. Well, that sure was overflowing! But you know, that reminds me of Psalm 23.*

Puppet: *Say incredulously. Psalm 23 talks about popcorn?*

Teacher: No, it talks about our cup overflowing.

Puppet: Why would it say that?

Teacher: Because it's showing that God not only provides good things for us, but he gives us an *overflowing* amount of goodness.

Puppet: But don't people go through hard times sometimes? It doesn't feel good then.

Teacher: This verse doesn't mean we never have a hard time. In fact, if we live on this planet, we *will* have hard times once in a while.

Puppet: Then how does that work?

Teacher: Well, even when we go through hard times or have enemies or hard people in our life, God is still God, and God is still good. As long as we're his children, we have *God*. That's the best *good thing* we can ever have!

Puppet: You mean it's like that prayer that says: God is great, God is good, Let us thank him for our food?

Teacher: Yes. God *is* great, and God *is* good. And God *is* kind. And God *is* gentle. And God *is* caring. And . . .

Puppet: You could probably go on forever with those.

Teacher: I could because God is everything good. And he shares his goodness with us. Sometimes it's in wonderful things he gives us, like food and a bed and a pet. And besides those good things, anyone who's part of God's family has the Lord himself for his very own.

Puppet: Being a child of God seems like the best gift God gives us.

Teacher: It is! *Review the gospel here if time.*

Puppet: But what about this question: Is it always God who gives us good things, or is it sometimes because of "good luck"?

Teacher: It's always God. There's no such thing as "good luck"!

Puppet: But what about pots of gold at the end of rainbows? And lucky horseshoes? And wishing wells?

Teacher: There are lots of things people do to try to get "good luck." *Show the "GOOD LUCK" OR GOOD GOD? POSTER and mention all or some of the following. People may kiss the Blarney Stone*

*in Ireland or try to find a four-leaf clover or a penny facing up in hopes of having “good luck.” They may hang up a horseshoe to keep from having “bad luck.” They may throw a penny in a wishing well, thinking the spirits in the well will grant them the wish. They may look for pretend creatures like leprechauns and fairies to bring them both “good” and “bad luck.” Two people may each grab a side of a wishbone and pull. Whoever gets the bigger side is supposed to get their wish granted. We can enjoy these and have fun with them, but we have to remember something important: They’re *just pretend*! If we find a four-leaf clover or make a wish when we throw a penny in the wishing well—we’re *not going to get “good luck.”* God is in control of everything, and *he* is the giver of all good things.*

Puppet: Are you sure that none of these bring “good luck”?

Teacher: I’m sure they don’t! We already talked about who gives all good things, and it’s who, kids? *Pause.* Right, God! God is not a magical, make-believe character. He’s a real being who really exists. Remember: God is in control of everything. Nothing happens by chance, or luck. So remember the next time you’re tempted to say “good luck!” to someone, there’s no such thing. We should instead thank our good Creator, God, for all good things.

Puppet: Good to know! Good to know! But even with all those good gifts God gives us, it’s still so easy to grumble about stuff, like when my popcorn spilled.

Teacher: You can either be on the complain train or have an attitude of gratitude (thankfulness). It’s all in what you think about. God tells us to think about whatever is lovely and good and beautiful and true, not about stuff that’s frustrating or annoying.

Puppet: It sure is easy to think about what bugs me, though.

Teacher: It is. But try to start thinking about the good things of *God* rather than the frustrating things of *life*.

Puppet: Gotcha! I will start thinking more about God.

Teacher: Well, it’s time to move on, so maybe you can go make yourself some more popcorn.

Puppet: I think I’ll do that. And I’ll thank God for it too.

Teacher: Sounds good, Paddy. See you tomorrow. Let’s say bye, everyone. *Do so.*

Day 5: Promise Keeper

Teacher: *Have everyone help you call for Paddy.*

Puppet: *Come up with a block taped to your hand.*

Teacher: Looks like you've got a building block there.

Puppet: Yeah, I was just gathering my blocks to see if I had enough to build a house.

Teacher: That sounds like King David.

Puppet: You mean the guy who wrote Psalm 23?

Teacher: Yep, the same one.

Puppet: Did he want to build a house out of blocks?

Teacher: Actually, he wanted to build a real house—a house for the Lord. It was going to be a really special place for God and his people.

Puppet: Like a church?

Teacher: Kind of. It was called a temple. *Show the DAVID GETS SUPPLIES POSTER.* David wanted to build this special place for God, but God let him just gather all the supplies. His son Solomon would actually build it.

Puppet: Is that what happened?

Teacher: Yep! David got everything ready, and Solomon built God's house. So when David was writing Psalm 23:6, he was probably thinking about that.

Puppet: After the goodness and mercy part, it does say, "I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Teacher: Right! After Solomon built it, there was a house of the Lord here on earth, the temple. But something that's cool is . . . there's even *another* house of the Lord.

Puppet: Where is it?

Teacher: It's in heaven. When the psalm talks about dwelling in the house of the Lord forever, it means I'll live in heaven with God forever—if I'm in God's family.

Puppet: Wow! Is that for sure?

Teacher: It's for sure. God said it, so that settles it because God is a promise keeper. He even put a big rainbow in the sky to remind us that he keeps his promises!

Puppet: When was that?

Teacher: Do you remember hearing about Noah building a big ship called an ark?

Puppet: Yes! Then God sent a huge flood all over the earth.

Teacher: Correct. Well, after the flood, God promised Noah he would never send another global flood again.

Puppet: Did he keep that promise?

Teacher: Yes. God keeps every promise. He never sent another global flood that covered the whole world. The rainbow reminds us of that.

Puppet: Rainbows also remind us that there are pots of gold at the end of them.

Teacher: Hold on a second. Where'd you get that idea?

Puppet: I see pictures of rainbows with pots of gold all the time.

Teacher: *Show the RAINBOWS POSTER.* There are real rainbows in the sky, but sometimes people use rainbows in ways that have nothing to do with God. Rainbows with pots of gold aren't for real.

Puppet: They aren't?

Teacher: Nope, the pictures you see of rainbows with pots of gold are just pretend, even if they're fun to look at. But what's more, sometimes people use rainbows in ways that are against God's design for rainbows.

Puppet: Well, I'm glad the ones in the sky are God's! They're so beautiful!

Teacher: They sure are. When you see a rainbow in the sky, let it remind you that God is a promise keeper, and you really *will* live with him someday if you are his child!

Puppet: Admit, believe, forever receive. That's how we're part of the Good Shepherd's flock, God's family. Well, I need to be off, so thanks for all the great talks. It's been an amazing week at *Emerald Crossing*!

Teacher: It sure has. Take care. Let's wave goodbye to Paddy, everyone. *Do so.*