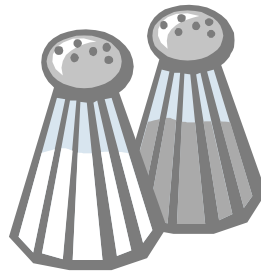


SPICE

RACK®

E-Curriculum



by Mark DeVries

“LOST?”

Matthew 18

I. To the Classes (Attendance, Announcements, First-Timers)

I. Engaging the Brain

A. Oh Why Not? (But You’re On Your Own With This One—If you are discovered, the Agency will disavow all knowledge of this instruction)



1. If you’re looking for a way for the group to remember at least one thing that happened in class this week, go ahead and bring a live sheep to class.
2. After introducing the group to the sheep (in the classroom, of course), take the sheep outside and ask the class to make their own observations about how sheep normally act.

3. Or, if you're feeling a bit more adventurous, make a field trip of it, and take your class to a sheep farm somewhere and have class beneath a tree (watch for errant sheep patties—actually even inerrant sheep patties could be a problem).
4. If you are going to take the “off campus” option, your team will need to call all the kids in the class to ask them to come prepared to stay a little longer than normal (give a departure and an arrival time for the unspecified “on-site” Sunday School).
5. Process Questions
 - **What do you know about sheep (either from observation or general knowledge)?**
 - **What does the Bible have to say about sheep?**
 - **What kinds of things would make a sheep wander away from the shepherd?**

2. Lost and Found Auction

1. Sometime this week, stop by the youth room or the church office and ask for a few long-term lost and found items to auction off.
2. It would be great if you could come up with items that people in your class have left in class or on trips recently. If you want to take it one step further, you could scheme with a few parents from the group to provide unimportant items from their children's rooms for the auction.
3. When the group gathers, announce that you want to begin class today with a “lost and found auction,” that will help raise money for the Indigent Sunday School Teachers' Lunch Fund.
4. Auction the items off one at a time, starting the bidding for each item at 10 cents or so.
5. Auction off 5-10 items in this way, the more detail you can give about whom the item belonged to, the more fun the auction will be.
6. Process Questions
 - **Can you remember any places in the Scripture where someone or something is lost?**
 - **What is the most expensive thing you have ever lost?**



3. Shouting Losers

1. Ask for three volunteers to help the class with an experiment.
2. Take the three volunteers out of the room.

3. Give the following assignments to the group:
 - a. Explain that you are going to give the three contestants a challenge to find a dollar bill (or some other semi-valuable item) placed in the room.
 - b. Take the dollar (or other item), and put it in the hand of one of the students near the back of the room.
 - c. Ask one half of the room to be prepared to shout directions to the contestant, directions that will send him or her in the opposite direction of the money.
 - d. Ask the other half of the room to be prepared to shout nonsense directions, some pointing the right way, some simply saying foolish things.
 - e. Select one person to sit in the back of the room and give accurate instructions.
4. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
5. Bring in the first contestant, and explain to him or her that his or her mission is to get the dollar bill that has been hidden in the room.
6. Blindfold the first contestant, and explain that he or she has 1 minute to find the dollar and that there will be at least one person in the room who will be helping her find the dollar.
7. Invite the contestant to ask questions to clarify the instructions, and then begin the first round.
8. Once a minute is up, thank the contestant and have him or her sit down. Give these instructions to the group for the next contestant.
 - a. Half the room will shout correct instructions.
 - b. Half the group will shout opposite instructions.
 - c. The person giving the accurate instructions will be nearer to the front this time.
9. Once the group has clarified the instructions, bring in the second contestant, and give him or her the same instructions as contestant one.
10. After one minute (or after the dollar is found), have contestant two sit down.
11. Before bringing in contestant three, ask the person giving the accurate instructions to come to the front and be prepared to coach contestant three from up close.
12. Explain that the coach can come right next to the contestant but may not touch him or her. Explain that it is the coach's goal to get the contestant to the dollar.
13. Give the rest of the group the same instructions as before.



14. Bring in contestant three, and repeat the process, this time with the coach.

15. Process Questions to the Contestants

- How did it feel being blindfolded and having instructions shouted at you?
- How easy was it to decide whom you would trust?

16. Process Questions for the Whole Group

- What observations can you make about that process?
- Based on what you saw, what would you say is the best way to get “unlost”?

4. The Standard Go Around

1. Starting with the person who was lost the most recently, go around the group, asking each person to answer this question: ***When was the last time you were lost and how did you handle it?***
2. Alternative Question: ***When was the last time you lost something and how did you handle it?***
3. Process Questions
 - Who do you think tends to get lost more—men or women?
 - Who do you think tends to admit they are lost more easily—men or women?
 - Who do you think tends to lose things the most—men or women?

E. Bonus Idea (just in case every other opening was just too nutty for you): Hide and Seek



1. If the weather permits, send the group outside for a five-minute game of hide and seek.
2. If you don't remember the exact rules, ask the group to make them up.
3. After you call the group back together, ask these process questions:
 - In this game, whom do you think is more like God—the hider or the seeker?
 - Can you think of any stories in the Bible in which God is the seeker?

II. Igniting the Heart

1. Putting the Puzzle Together—Matthew 18:10-14

1. Copy the text for today's lesson, and cut the verses into small enough segments that there will be one segment for each person in the class. You'll want to cut the segments at random places, making it less obvious which parts go together.
2. Alternative: If your class responds better to competition, copy the text twice, and cut the text into segments small enough that each team has one segment for each person.
3. Make sure you distribute the texts out of their normal order.
4. Ask the group to move as quickly as possible into the order they think the verses fit together.
5. Once the group (or groups) has gotten the text in order, have the entire group read the text, segment by segment, on person at a time. Check the order against the order actually found in the Bible to make sure the teams have put it in the right order.
6. Process Questions
 - **What is the one word that appears most frequently in this text? (Wander) You may need to read through the text aloud one more time for them to catch this detail.**
 - **What might cause a person to wander away from God?**
 - **In your experience, do most non-believers make an intentional decision to reject Christ or do most simply wander on their own, indifferent to God?**
 - **Can you think of any songs on the radio that talk about being lost?**
 - **What does this text teach about angels? (Again, you may need to read through the text again for them to catch this detail)**
 - **What does it not say about angels? (For example, does it say that each child has a guardian angel, specifically assigned to him or her? [not explicitly]).**
 - **Who are the "little ones" Jesus speaks about here? Are they just young children?**
 - **What does it look like when God finds a person?**

B. Testimony Time

1. Invite someone from the church (or outside the church) to come to class today to take 5 minutes to tell about how God "found" him or her when he or she was lost.
2. After the guest tells his or her story, invite the class to ask any follow up questions they might have.

C. Wagon Wheel Journal Time

1. Distribute journal sheets and pencils.

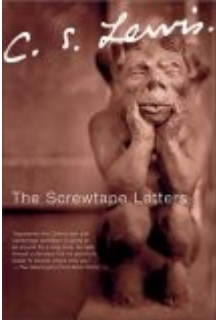
2. Give the group three minutes to complete their journal sheets.
3. Once they have finished their writing, move the group into a wagon wheel configuration:



- a. Two concentric circles.
 - b. The same number of chairs in the center as there are on the outside.
 - c. The inside chairs are facing out. The outside chairs are facing in.
 - d. Place half of the class in the center circle and half of the class in the outside circle.
 - e. Include as many adults in the wagon wheel as you can.
4. Explain to the group that you want them to chew on the text in a little different way today.
 5. Have each person shake hands with the person across from him or her, making sure that everyone has only one partner. Also make sure everyone knows his or her partner's name at this point.
 6. Explain how the wagon wheel process will work.
 - a. Starting with the first question on the journal sheet, each person is simply going to share his or her response to the question with his or her partner.
 - b. In order to decide which partner goes first, the pairs will do "rock, paper, scissors." The person who wins, goes first.
 - c. After a few seconds, you (the participants) will here "SWITCH!," which will give you the clue that it is time for the people in the outside circle to move one chair to the right.
 - d. You'll shake hands with your new partner, play a little rock, paper, scissors to see who goes first, and the partners will share their answers to question two.
 7. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
 8. Have the group start with question one. After $\frac{1}{2}$ of the group has finished, call "SWITCH!" If the other half of the group is saying, "Wait! We're not done!," you are doing it right.
 9. Go through the wagon wheel repeating this process until all 7 questions have been answered.
 10. Process Questions
 - Is this a helpful way to talk through your answers to the journal sheet with lots of different folks?
 - Were there any questions that were more difficult to talk about?
 - Is there another way you'd rather discuss things in our group?

D. Screwtape Letters: The Devil's Strategist

1. If you are familiar with C.S. Lewis' book Screwtape Letters, you know that Screwtape is the fictional master devil character, writing coaching letters to his young apprentice Wormwood about how best to keep his human "subject" off track.
2. Introduce this concept to the group. You may want to read a brief Screwtape letter from the book to give the group a feel of what you are talking about.
3. Ask the group to write their own Screwtape letter, with each of them as the human subject that Wormwood is trying to wander from God.
 - a. Have the group turn over the journal sheets and start writing at the top, "Dear Wormwood, if you want to keep _____ wandering away from our enemy above, here's what I'd advise..."
 - b. Like all the exercises, it is best if the adults in the class, complete the exercise as well.
 - c. Assure the group that the point of this exercise is not to argue about whether there is a devil or not. It is to get the group thinking about the ways they are most likely to be tempted to wander from God.
 - d. Once everyone has written this much, invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
4. Give the group three minutes to write their own letters.
5. Process Questions
 - Does anyone feel like reading what they wrote?
 - How helpful was this exercise in getting you to see yourself and God more clearly?



IV. Taking It Home

A. Cotton Ball—Don't Forget You're a Sheep



1. As you wrap up the class today, give each person (including the adults) a cotton ball, as a reminder that we are sheep that tend to wander from God.
2. Ask the group to carry the cotton ball in their pocket or purse this week, and each time they see it to ask themselves, "Am I wandering from God?"

B. Close the class in prayer.

↓ JOURNAL SHEET BELOW ↓

JOURNAL SHEET

Matthew 18

Lost?

1. How do you normally react when you are lost?
 - I get mad.
 - I just enjoy the adventure.
 - I stop and ask for directions.
 - I blame someone else.
 - I just keep going and guessing until I get to where I want to be.
2. How do you feel when you have lost something?
 - stupid
 - ticked off
 - curious
 - fearful
3. In your life, what is the most influential cause of you getting lost?
 - I follow the wrong person.
 - I just follow my desires and it gets me in trouble.
 - I ask someone in authority for directions, and I get bad ones.
 - I don't take enough time before starting out to really know where I'm going.
4. What do you think of the shepherd's strategy of leaving the 99 on the hill to go look for the one?
 - He's an idiot—while he's gone the other sheep will wander away.
 - He loves each of his sheep irrationally
 - If I had been the shepherd, I would have given up long ago.
 - Other:
5. What does this story tell you about the character of God?
 - No matter how far I wander away, God will always come after me.
 - God has assigned legions of angels to me.
 - God gets excited when I am "unlost."
 - God doesn't just keep his distance from me; He seeks me out like the "Hound of Heaven."
6. Tell about a time in your life when you felt lost from God.
7. Where are you right now in this story?
 - I'm in the fold, being a good sheep.
 - I've wandered off and left the shepherd.
 - I've been lost, but I've started to hear the shepherd's voice. I'm hoping he'll find me soon.
 - I know God is looking for me, but I'm hiding, hoping He won't find me.