

for the one

Leader's Guide – What About the 99?

Luke 15:1–7 | Pastor Dave Bennett | February 22, 2026

Session Overview

This session explores Jesus' parable of the lost sheep and the heart of the Good Shepherd. While ninety-nine sheep remain together, one wanders into the hills, and the shepherd pursues until it is found. Participants will reflect on God's pursuit, heaven's celebration, and how we join His mission to seek and restore people.

Session Flow (60–75 minutes)

1. Welcome and Icebreaker (10 min)

Example Question:

“Have you ever gone out of your way to help someone who felt overlooked or forgotten? What made that moment meaningful?”

Purpose:

To connect the group emotionally to the idea of being the one pursued by the Shepherd.

2. Scripture Reading (5 min)

Read Luke 15:1–7 aloud.

Optional: Invite participants to picture the wide pasture at sunrise described in the sermon — mist over the grass, ninety-nine sheep together, and one set of footprints leading away.

3. Discussion (40–50 min)

Use 6–8 of the following questions depending on time and group size.

Encourage personal reflection more than theological debate.

Leader Coaching Sidebar: Keeping the Focus on Rescue, Not Religion

- Keep the tone welcoming and grace-filled. **(no politics; no “correcting”)**
- If conversation becomes critical of others, redirect toward personal reflection.
- Encourage stories of restoration rather than arguments.
- Remind the group that everyone is both rescued and sent.
- Celebrate vulnerability and honesty.
- End by pointing back to the Good Shepherd’s heart.

Discussion Questions

1. In the story, the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to search for one. What does this reveal about God’s heart?

Leader Note: Help the group notice posture differences between humility and religious pride.

2. Why do you think heaven celebrates so deeply when one person turns back toward God?

Leader Note: Emphasize value, not efficiency.

3. Many of us would stand with the ninety-nine. What attitudes or assumptions can develop when we feel ‘safe’ spiritually?

Leader Note: Keep tone compassionate, not judgmental.

4. What are some modern paths people wander down that seem good at first but lead away from God?

Leader Note: Highlight Jesus’ individual care.

5. The shepherd searches until he finds the lost sheep. What does persistence look like in our relationships today?

Leader Note: Invite testimony but never force sharing.

6. Why might some people struggle with the idea that God prioritizes the one who is lost?

Leader Note: Explore shame, doubt, or performance mindset.

7. How does our church reflect heaven’s celebration when someone returns or takes a step toward Jesus?

Leader Note: Connect heaven’s joy with church culture.

8. Who might be a 'one' in your life that God is inviting you to pray for or pursue with compassion this week?

Leader Note: Move toward personal application.

4. Application and Prayer (10–15 min)

Invite each person to consider where they see themselves — among the ninety-nine, as the wandering sheep, or joining the Shepherd's mission.

Ask: "What is one step you can take this week to follow the Shepherd more closely or help someone else encounter Him?"

Closing Prayer Suggestion

Good Shepherd, thank You for pursuing us when we wander. Help us reflect Your heart for the one and celebrate every life restored. Lead us to follow You faithfully and to love people with Your compassion. Amen.