**LEARNING FOCUS 1:** Everyone is loved by Jesus.

**CONTENT**

Read the story about the lost sheep from *God’s Story 3* page 104 *The Good Shepherd* based on Luke 15:3-6,7 (see attachment)*.* In a reflection situation, help the children to imagine themselves as a lost sheep. They hear Jesus calling them; they come out from a hiding place where they have gone because they know they have done wrong. Like the lost sheep, they allow themselves to be led home.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation brings us back to God, who forgives us and absolves us from our sins. God’s mercy and love is like the tenderness shown in the story. We can be sure God loves us.

**SOME KEY QUESTIONS**

* How did you feel during the reflection?
* What did the story of the ‘lost sheep’mean to you?
* Did it surprise you that the shepherd would go to find the one lost sheep?
* When are the times you might see yourself as the lost sheep?
* What does this story tell you about God?

**LEARNING FOCUS 2:** Sin and Examination of Conscience.

**CONTENT**

People get lost when they deliberately do something wrong, hurting others, themselves or the world they live in. That is what is called ‘sin’. It is anything deliberately chosen – to think, say or do. It is also anything you choose to do or not to do that spoils or breaks the friendship with God and with other people. Sin is anything which breaks bridges of love.

*When Jesus was teaching, someone came up to him and asked him what he thought was the greatest commandment of all. This is what Jesus replied: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second most important commandment is this: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment more important than these two.* Mark 12: 30-31

Christians try to build bridges towards one another every day. They ‘examine their consciences’ to see how they have kept these two commandments. Our conscience is like a voice or feeling inside us. This is the Holy Spirit helping us to respond to God. If we pay attention to the Holy Spirit, it will help us to know if something is good or bad. It is good to think every evening, before you go to bed, about how you have built bridges of love and friendship or, perhaps, broken them through sin. We remember if we have done something that hurt someone else or if someone else has hurt us. We can thank God for all the good and say sorry for the bad and know that God, like the good shepherd, cares about us and loves us. We also must try to forgive those who have hurt us.

**SOME KEY QUESTIONS**

* What does “examine your conscience” mean?
* When is it good to think about it? What will it lead us to do?
* Which is easier – to love God or to love your neighbour? Is there a difference?
* Why do you think love of God and love of our neighbour is so important?
* What would be another commandment?
* How would you define ‘sin’?

**SOME SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

* Remember a time when you have reached out to someone you have hurt or offended. Describe how the bridge was broken and give reasons for how you rebuilt the bridge.