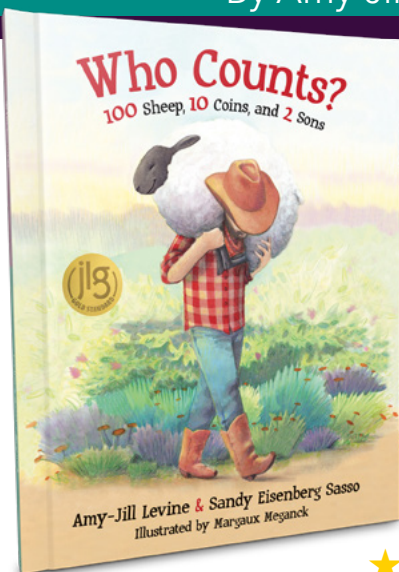


READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons

By Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, & Margaux Meganck



Before you read the story with your child, read “A Note to Parents and Teachers” at the back of the book. The authors explain what a parable is and emphasize the double meaning of the word “counts,” both as an action with numbers and an expression of value. *Who Counts?* is a creative retelling of three of Jesus’ parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son from Luke 15. These stories teach that every one of us counts in God’s eyes and that everyone should feel counted.

Children are concrete thinkers and will understand being lost literally, which can be a quite fearful experience for both parent/caregiver and child. The nuances of separating oneself physically or emotionally from one’s family, as in the third parable, may not be understood as being lost. The important message is that each one of us matters—to our families, to one another, and to God.

★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- What is your favorite part of these stories? Why do you think Jesus told these stories?
- If you were in one of these stories, who or what might you be? Find a page and picture yourself there. What are you feeling?
- When has something important to you gone missing? How did that make you feel? What did you do to find it? When you found it, how did you feel?
- *With Older Children:* In the final story, how do you think the younger brother was lost? How do you think the older brother was lost? How did the father show each of them that they counted?
- *With Older Children:* When do you feel like the lost one, or that you might not matter? What helps you feel “found” and important?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Play a counting game. First, collect a group of objects to count and then take turns removing an object without others seeing and have them guess what is missing.
- Wonder about the people in your child’s school class or people at church who are not there on a particular day. What do you miss about this person when you don’t see them?
- *With Younger Children:* Count! Count sheep. Count coins. Count sons. Count other objects in your home. Count people in your family.
- *With Younger Children:* Look at the pictures in the story of the coins. Have your child find the lost coin in each picture when the woman is searching for it.

PRAY

Loving God, when we feel that we have lost our way or don’t matter to anyone, you always count us and show us that we are important to you. You rejoice that we are part of your big family. Help us to show others that they count too. Amen.



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Thinking about who counts touches on issues we face in society and our lives every day. Who is in and who is out? Who matters? Some ideas to explore this further with your child include:

- Have your child think about the children in their class, school, or neighborhood. Wonder together what they can do to help people who feel left out be noticed and feel important.
- Read together [The Coat](#) by Séverine Vidal (Flyaway Books, 2022) or [Crocodile's Crossing: A Search for Home](#) by Yoeri Slegers (Flyaway Books, 2020) and imagine what it feels like to be both lost and not matter to others, and then found, seen, and appreciated.
- *With Older Children*: Choose a topic that interests your child and do some research together about issues in which people are discounted and shown they don't matter. Systems of discrimination by a dominant culture are perpetuated against people whose skin color is different; women and their right to make decisions about their healthcare; people who immigrate from other countries and who may look different or speak another language; people who are LGBTQ; people who experience homelessness, hunger, and poverty; people who have different physical and/or intellectual capabilities; and other people that your child may identify. As you research and discuss, consider this question: how can we make a difference?
- *With Older Children*: This story provides a good opportunity to help your child learn about advocacy as well as action.
 - Learn how to contact your elected officials by going to <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials/>. Help your child write a letter to an elected official expressing their concerns and what they would like to see happen.
 - Determine one practical way you can take action together.

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCE FOR *WHO COUNTS?*

- Download the [three coloring sheets](#) - one for each story!

ADDITIONAL BOOKS BY AMY-JILL LEVINE AND SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

- [Who Is My Neighbor?](#)
- [100 Sheep: A Counting Parable](#)
- *Who Counts?* - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)
- *The Marvelous Mustard Seed* - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)
- [The Good For Nothing Tree](#)
- [A Very Big Problem](#)

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](#)" (pcusa.org/aroundthetable).



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