



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Luke 15:1-6 The lost sheep.

Theme: The story of the caring shepherd.

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	1
Experience	3
Explore	3
Express	6
Handouts	10

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Luke

The book of Luke was written by Luke, a doctor by profession and later one of Jesus's disciples. It is one of four gospels and chronologically retells the life of Jesus, what he did and said and how others reacted to him. Many of Jesus's stories were in parable form, a story with a meaning. Today's parable explores the role of the shepherd as he cares for his sheep and looks at what it means to be cared for and to care for others. Some people's experience of being cared for may be of a positive nature but for many this isn't the case. Therefore be aware of this session being a possible trigger for looked after children. Others may find themselves as young carers themselves. The role of caregiver looks different depending on the individual, what works for one may not for another so your group may have wide ranging answers and thoughts on this subject. It is good to focus on holistic care, not just the human basics of food and water but also spiritual, emotional and loving care. Caring for someone includes being alongside them when good things happen as well as in the sad times.

Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

**Jesus, our friend**

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game – circle of sheep

Once everyone is stood in a circle representing a circle of sheep, then choose one child to be the shepherd. Ask them to stand in the middle of the circle of sheep. A leader will walk around the outside edge of the sheep circle and pat each sheep on the back and will "secretly" place a sticker on the back of one child without anyone knowing who she picked for the one sheep that the shepherd will find. Then the shepherd will guess who has the sticker – that sheep will turn around and let the shepherd see if the sticker is on his back; if not, the shepherd will continue to look for his sheep with the sticker. If the sheep with the sticker is found by the shepherd, the shepherd should shout "found you" and then race the person with the sheep sticker round the outside of the circle and back to the space where the sheep was standing. If the sheep wins, then the game begins again. If the shepherd wins, then they take the sheep's place and the person who had the sheep sticker then becomes the shepherd. (Make sure to take the used sticker off before continuing to play the game).

Alternative game – Blind Leading and caring

This is a great way to develop trust and communication, sometimes called Trust Walks, but it is also about the care we take in leading people around the space. We should make sure they do not bump into objects, trip over wires or collide with other pairs.



One person is blindfolded and their partner takes the other for a walk by holding their hand or arm and talking to them as they go. Make a route with turns and twists. Low level obstacles to step over can be incorporated such as paper markers. The contact between the partners can be reduced by, for example contact only with one finger or perhaps verbal communication only.

The sighted partner is there to provide safety support and care for the person ensuring that they follow a safe route.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Good News Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2015%3A1-6&version=GNT>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Max 7 The Lost Sheep

<https://www.max7.org/en/resource/lostsheep>

Over fives: Crossroads Kids club – God's story

<https://youtu.be/smvcsgMv6Dw?si=n7gCYEPwGul35eLK>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Lost is found Sovereign Grace Music

https://youtu.be/K4blzUNcl_I?si=yTi1mBxuCOdc05Ha

Five to elevens: I've Lost My Sheep Derek Walmsley

https://youtu.be/SSyHow_RK7A?si=KI0iBOER9EoKNZmE

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the passage

The Shepherds' Care

Everyone sits in a circle.

Each child is given a character or object to represent as you tell the story as each object or character is read, the children stand up and perform the action.

Jesus – the person/people who are Jesus stand up and pretend to talk, using gestures.

The shepherd – the people who are the shepherds stand up.

The sheep – everyone say "baaa".

Danger – the people/person who are 'danger', stand up and pretend to be scary.

Watch – the person/people who are 'watch' stand up and pretend to watch by putting a hand to their eyes like binoculars.

Sheep fold – the people/person who are the sheep fold stand up and pretend to encircle the sheep.

Counting – the people/person who are 'counting', stand up and count to five.

Thorns and bushes – the people/person who are the sheep, stand up say "ouch".



Celebrate – everyone cheers and celebrates.

Change – everyone stands up and change places.

In the days of **Jesus**, the life of a **shepherd** was a hard one. **Jesus** told some stories about being lost and found. One of them was about a **sheep** and their **shepherd**.

Early in the morning the **shepherd** set out with the **sheep**, leading them until they found green fields where the **sheep** could eat.

They **watched** the **sheep** constantly in case they wandered off.

The **shepherd** had a hard job, they watched out for **dangerous** wild animals, and **dangerous** paths with **thorns and bushes**.

CHANGE

Some **sheep** had been with the **shepherd** for many years and so the **shepherd** gave them names, Dolly, Larry the lamb, Shaun, Timmy and Maa, when the **shepherd** called they would come running.

CHANGE

The **shepherd** guided the sheep from the front, to make sure that the path to the fresh green grass was safe, and the **sheep** would follow him.

On some paths, the **sheep** walked in a long single file and sometimes got scared, the **shepherd** banged a stick against the stones, the **sheep** heard it and knew they were safe even if they couldn't see the **shepherd**.

CHANGE

When they arrived in the new place the **shepherd** made sure it was safe, **watching dangerous** things.

They broke down any **thorn bushes**, and would clear away any **danger**, making the field safe to eat from.

The **shepherd** dug a hole in the fast-flowing river to give the **sheep** water to drink.

CHANGE

At the end of the day the **shepherd** called the **sheep** by name, Dolly, Larry the lamb, Shaun, Timmy and Maa into the **sheepfold** for the night. Ready to **watch** over them all night long.

The **shepherd** stood in front of the **sheep fold** and put a stick across the entrance. the **sheep** passed beneath it and as they did, the **shepherd counted** them, checking to see if they were hurt from any **thorns and bushes** or rocks on the path. Caring for any wounds, putting oil on cuts to help them get better quickly.

The **shepherd** counted all the sheep 1,2,3,4,599, "there is one **sheep** missing"!

CHANGE



“I can't settle down for the night until I have found it”. The **shepherd** called the **sheep** by name. “Timmy, Timmy where are you?”

The **shepherd** looked and looked, **watching** for movement in the **bushes**.

Until they saw Timmy caught up in a **thorny bush**.

“Come on I'll carry you home”, **the shepherd** says, lifting the **sheep** carefully up and carrying Timmy home.

CHANGE

When they arrived back at the **sheep fold**, the **shepherd** checked the **sheep** over, tended the cuts with gentle oil. The **sheep's** every need was taken care of by the **shepherd**.

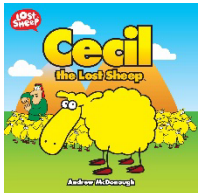
Having got all the **sheep** safely into the **sheep fold**, the **shepherd** laid down across the opening to stop the **sheep** wandering in and out, and to protect them from any **danger**.

They were all safe and we **celebrate** with the **shepherd** the joy in finding the one who got lost.

THE END

Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'Cecil the lost sheep' by Andrew McDonough

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofcZ3p-4B6s>

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- What does it mean to care for someone? How are you cared for?
- What does this story tell us about how God cares for us?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder how we care for people differently?
- I wonder what happened to the 99 sheep when the shepherd went looking for the one lost sheep?
- I wonder how God cares for you?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing “what's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag” (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.



This week's box could include:

- Toy dressed as a shepherd – to help act out the story.
- Toy sheep – to help act out the story and to take care of using the other bits in the box.
- Lego to make a pen – to help act out the story.
- Rough material, soft fabric – as well as using it in the story it could be used to chat about how to look after the sheep in those different situations (the rough and the smooth).
- Party hat – when discussing celebrations.
- First aid box – to discuss how we might care for others.
- Tea set – to show we care for others and can be hospitable.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (A cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (eg stones, felt, twigs etc)

Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Those who care prayer cards



Print out the cards, each displaying an image representative of some sort of caring, which can be found in the appendix and spread them around the room. Explain that there will be a time of prayer. That, as the music plays, everyone is to walk round the room, stop at a picture, think about what it shows us about caring and say a quiet prayer to God. For those that are younger or unsure you could either go round with them, or as a whole group. Alternatively they could pick up the picture and say thank you God. Finish by saying

Thank you God for all those who care for us, help us to be just as caring to others.
Amen



Spoken prayer – Acrostic prayer.

Read out the prayer below together. Each line begins with a letter from the word CARE. See if you can come up with actions together for each of the lines.

Caring God,
Always supporting us.
Remind us to be kind and caring.
Every day, help us love. Amen.

Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.



However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Well Being boxes

You will need:

- A box
- Gift wrap
- Tissue paper
- Some items to go inside the box e.g. Chocolate, biscuits tea bag, lavender bag, pocket heart
- A card
- Ribbon

What you do:

Decorate the box by wrapping it in gift wrap or decorating it with hearts.

Fill the box with some tissue paper and then add in the items you have chosen to put into it.

Write the card, with some words to show the care given to that person.

Put the card into the box and tie the box up with some ribbon.

Pebble pet – it is sometimes useful to have an inanimate object to care for. It gives us an opportunity to practice 'caring'. Take your pebble pet everywhere you go, think about what it might need – sunlight, food, water, etc. What sorts of things might you need to do to ensure it isn't lonely?

You will need:

- Pebble
- Marker pens
- Googly eyes



What you do:

Decorate your pebble with eyes and any other features you'd like.

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Keep a caring diary for the week noting in when others have cared for you and when you have cared for others. At the end of the week take a look and see what you have noticed. Is this something you can keep doing?
 - What other stories are in the Bible about caring for others and being cared for?
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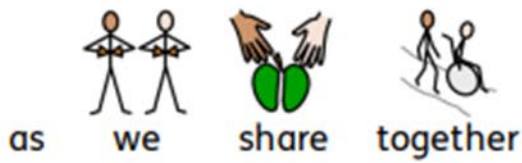


We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **the lost sheep** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing
lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **2 Peter 1**





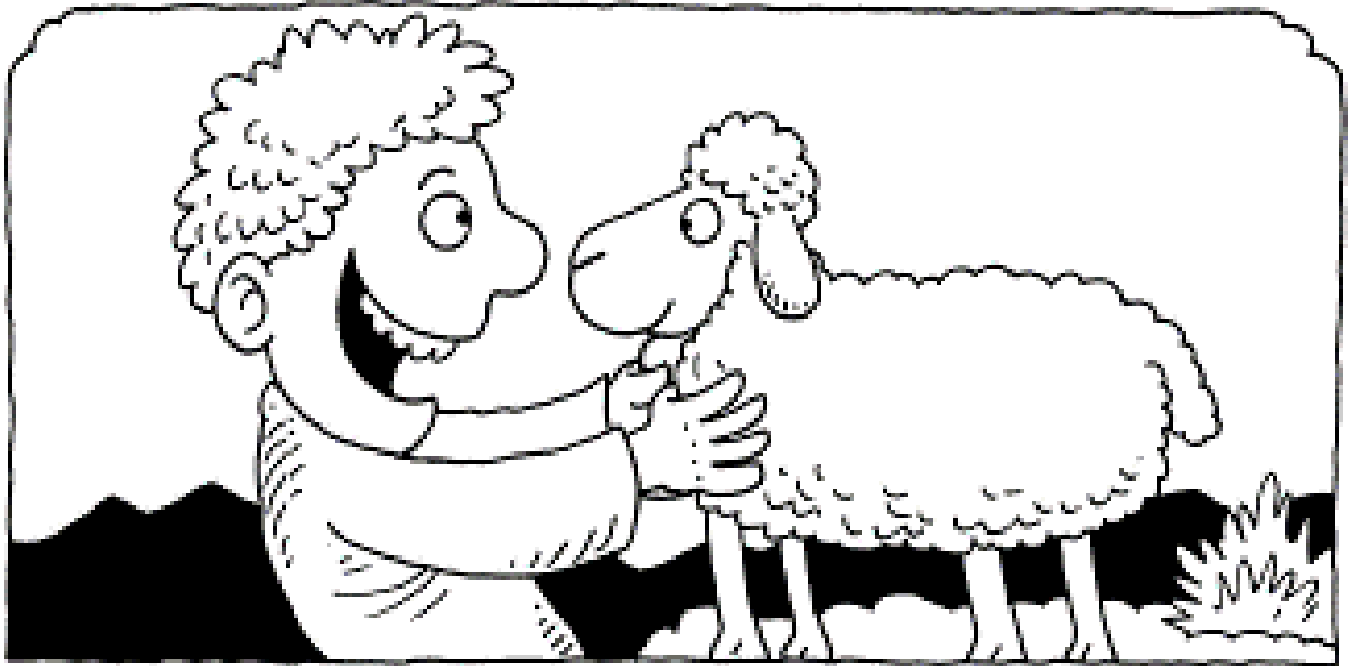
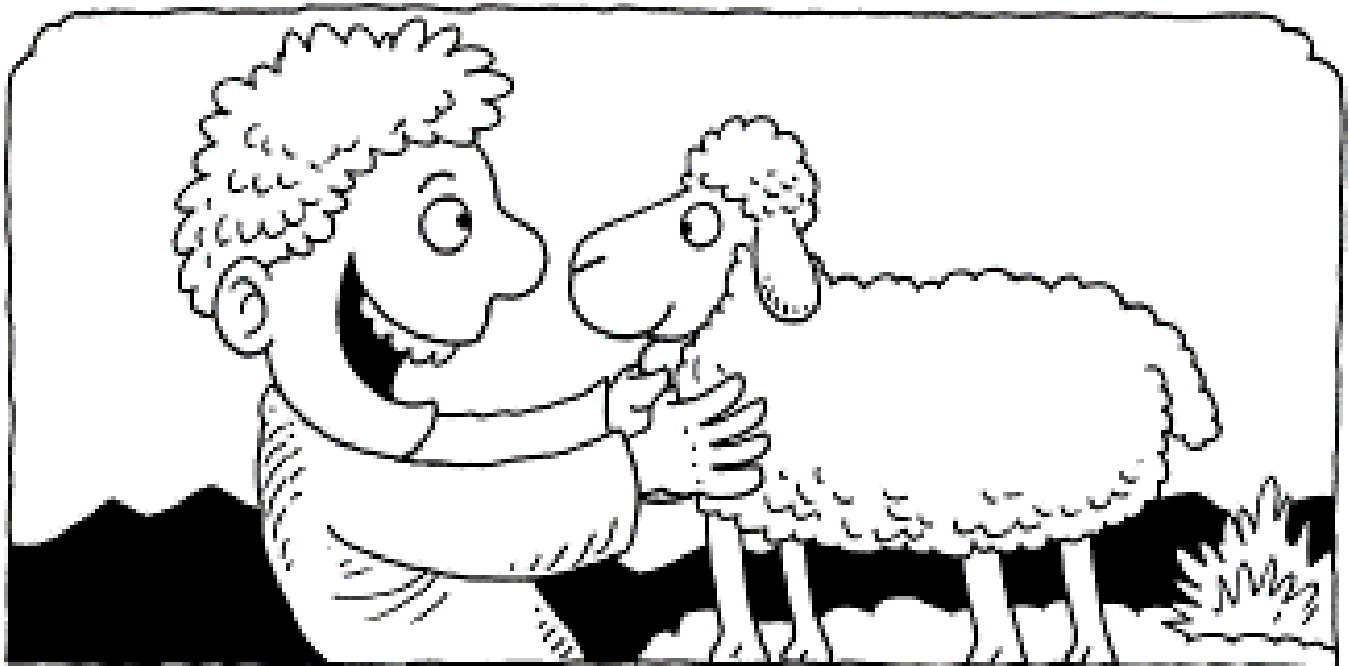
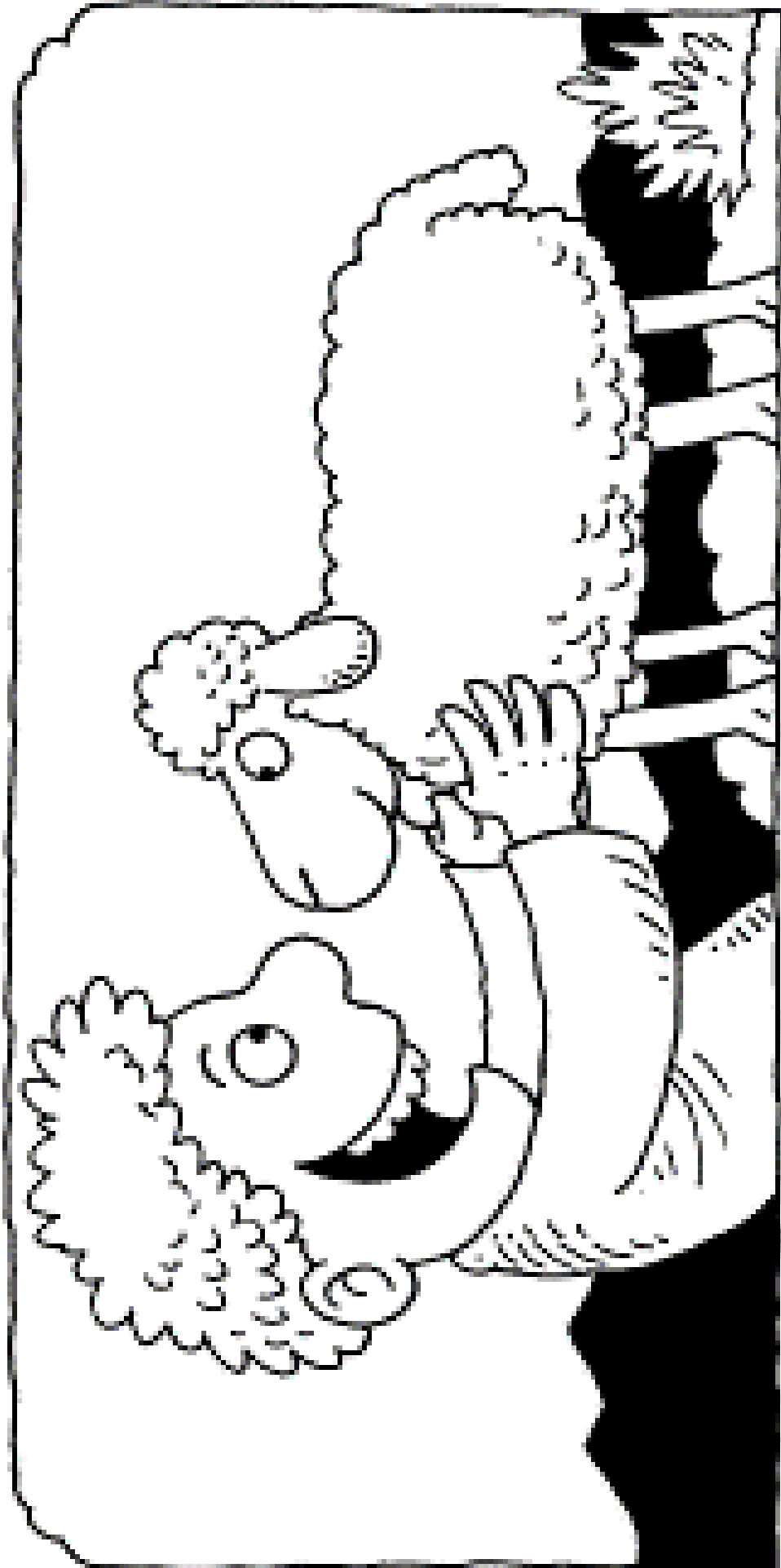


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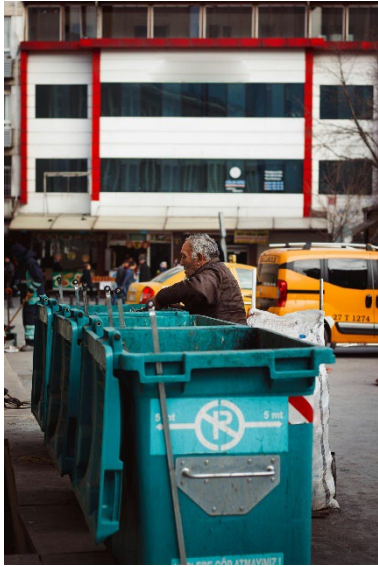
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