

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

FAMILY CELEBRATE LOST SINNER DISRESPECTFUL HONOR FOUND PRODIGAL FATHER SON

BIBLE REFERENCE

Luke 15:11-32

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn the meaning of the parable of the prodigal son.

MEMORY VERSE

"Then he told them many things in parables" (Matthew 13:3a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

This parable is the last of the three that are written in Luke 15. The three parables refer to something that is lost and then found. However, it is different from the others because it was a person who was lost. This parable not only tells us about how God responds to lost sinners, but how he responds to those who refuse to celebrate when something that was lost is found. The central character of this story is not the prodigal son, but the father who unconditionally loves his son. In addition, he emphasizes the love that the father felt for both children.

The behavior of the youngest child in demanding his inheritance was inappropriate and disrespectful. He disobeyed the command to "honor thy parents" (Exodus 20:12). However, the eldest son also disobeyed this command with his inappropriate conduct.

The father's response was forgiveness and an invitation to be part of the family again. Some details of this story show us how the father completely restored the place that the youngest son had within the family: the best robe reserved for special guests, the ring that represented authority, and the sandals that showed that he was not a slave or servant.

The father forgave his son from his heart and rejoiced at his return. Likewise, God rejoices when people repent and return to him.

ADAPTATION

Most young children receive love easily. Unless they suffer from certain problems, they expect to receive and give love to others. A child who receives love at home will have no difficulty in recognizing a father's love for his child. But, maybe there are preschoolers who do not get the love they need at home. Therefore, we suggest that you be sensitive to them and give them an extra dose of affection to begin to understand God's love for them.

Preschoolers have an amazing ability to forgive even if they do not really know what it means. Guide them through the study of this parable so that they learn that forgiveness is an attitude that comes from a heart that loves.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Choose some activities to capture the attention of your children and prepare them to study the lesson. Modify or add activities that fit your group's particular needs.

Welcome hugs

As the children enter the room, say: "Welcome to _____ (your group name)! I'm very happy to see you. Today I am giving welcome hugs, do you want one? (Allow them to respond.) If they say yes, hug them; If they say no, just smile and shake their hand."

TEACH THE LESSON

The baggage

For this activity, you will need a large bag, a set of clothing, personal items and paper or buttons that represent money.

Keep all items in the bag and place it in front of the children. Sit with them and ask them: "What do we use suitcases for?" Listen to their answers, and allow them to look inside the bag.

Show them the fake money and tell them: "In today's story we will learn about a person who went on a trip and kept a lot of money in his suitcase."

Illustrate this story using such items as a wallet and fake money.

Welcome home!

There was a man who had two children. One day the youngest son told his father: "Please, give me the part of the money that is mine."

Then the father divided the inheritance between his two sons. (Keep the money in a wallet.)

Soon, the youngest son took everything he had and went away on a road that took him to another country. There he spent his time going to parties, doing bad things and spending a lot of money on bad things. (Drop the money from the wallet.)

After awhile he had no money or food, and no friends. He was completely alone and poor! (Show the empty wallet.)

In addition, there was not much food in that country and the young man was hungry. Then he looked for work. The man who employed him sent him to take care of pigs at his farm.

The young man was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food for the pigs, but no one gave it to him.

One day the boy thought, "My father's workers have all the food they want, and here I am dying of hunger. Maybe my father will allow me to work for him."

So he started on his way back home. When he was still far from the house, his father saw him and, full of happiness, ran to embrace him.

"Father, I have behaved very badly. Please forgive me," the young man said, feeling very sorry. But, before he finished speaking, the father called his servants and said, "Bring the best clothes and dress my son. Put on a ring and be happy that my youngest son has returned home!"

Jesus told this story so that the people would learn that God is a loving father who forgives his children and wants them to be close to Him.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The prodigal son returns

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #65-A and help the children cut out the picture of the pig.

Give them Student Activity Sheet #65-B. Ask them to trace over the word of faith of unit: PARABLES. Then they should write their name on the activity sheet and color the pictures from the story.

Then help the children number the drawings in order according to the story. Help them cut out the four boxes in Student Activity Sheet #65-B, following the dotted lines, and then help the children stick the boxes together on a piece of cardboard with the title and the word of faith.

Tell them to take home their finished work and tell their family and friends what they learned in the Bible story.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Since it is the last session of this unit, bring prizes for those who learned the memory verse. Give time for all those who wish, to be able to repeat the verse. You can hand out Bible cards or bookmarks with the verse written on them.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Conclude with prayer for the children and their families.

Encourage

Thank those who faithfully attended the lessons and hand them the work they completed to take home. Encourage the children to love and respect their families.

Invite

Remind the children that in the next session they will begin the study of a new unit. Create simple cards to send to children who were absent or visit them to invite them to the new series.