

Jesus story of the prodigal son - Luke 15:11-32



FOR YOU

Jesus often answered questions with a story, many of which the gospel writers wrote down – stories that contained truths about God and how he wants us to live. The audience of this story would have been deeply shocked that father ‘ran’ to meet his son. This was not respectable in those days, but Jesus wanted them to realise just how deep God’s love for us is and how much he wants us to be ‘at home’ with him. What this re-telling of the story doesn’t explain is that the money the son spent was his inheritance so his actions made the whole family poorer. It also doesn’t mention the jealous older brother who resented the father’s welcome and forgiveness of the younger son - a reminder of our own forgetfulness of our need for God’s mercy and forgiveness.

STORY



Ready-steady

Ask everyone to suggest what makes a good parent

In reality there is no such thing as a perfect parent - we are all human and make mistakes or get grumpy when we are tired and things are tough. God however, is the perfect parent and loves us way beyond what we can imagine. Jesus told today’s story to help us to understand just how much of a loving parent God is.



Read-tell

Read ‘A loving father’ (p191)

The text of this story asks whether the characters are happy or sad. Encourage everyone to put their thumbs up when they think someone is happy and their thumbs down when someone is sad. It doesn’t matter if people get it wrong that just reinforces the wonder of the story.

You may want to emphasise just how irresponsible the son had been with the family money.



Wonder together

*I wonder how long the father waited for his son to come home?
I wonder how I would feel if someone wasted all my money on having a good time?
I wonder if God loves me as much as this father loved his son?*



Additional ide-

Read ‘Jacob’s Journey’ page 23 in Bob Hartman’s Play Along Bible

MAKE & PLAY



- Make up a runny mixture of cornflour and water and pour it into a deep tray. The consistency should be enough or you to write something in it with your finger that slowly disappears. Make sure you have lots of wet cloths and towels ready for mucky hands when they have finished playing with it!
- Talk about how when we are angry and hurt or feeling guilty for hurting someone else we can feel yucky in our tummy. Teach each other the Makaton sign for 'sorry'



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo5bXfxUjXI> and think about how the sign shows those feelings that can get better when we say sorry or forgive someone else

- If you have enough space encourage grown ups and the children they have brought to run and hug each other just like the father and son in the story

PRAY

Thank you God that you are the perfect parent

Thank you that you love us more than we can ever imagine

Thank you that when we wander away from you, you never stop looking out for us

Thank you that you love it when we run back to you and welcome us with a big hug

Help us to love others like you love us, even when they hurt us and let us down

Amen

SONGS

- Jesus love is very wonderful

@HOME

Encourage everyone to name some of the hugs they have at home as 'big hugs from God' to remind them how much God loves them