

Teaching Plan: The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Hook (Lesson Introduction): Have 2 adults or draw 2 people.

Say: *“The first child is named Kyra and she never follows rules. Many people call her a bad kid. The other is named Amy and she always follows rules.”*

Ask the children to make up different good and bad things these two different pretend children might do. After each suggestion, have the adult helpers act out that behavior. Here are some examples.

- Kyra throws fits, but Amy always uses good manners
- Kyra steals, but Amy always share her things
- Kyra calls people bad words, but Amy always says nice things
- Kyra is lazy at school, but Amy always works very hard
- Kyra thinks church is dumb, but Amy loves going to church

Ask the children: *Who do you want for a friend? Who does God like more?*

Say: *Jesus liked to teach people that God really does love everyone, but many times the “church-people” would get upset and think they were better than the “sinners.” This is a story that Jesus told them to show that both kind of people need forgiveness and that God wants to save everyone.*

It’s a special kind of teaching story called a parable. The Father in the story shows us what God is like. The brothers in the story show us what we are like. The point is that God wants to save both people who follow the rules and people who break all the rules.

Active Listening: Call on three children (if possible) to act out the Bible story while you tell it. Use everyone in your family if you need to. Acting it out makes it stick better for kids. Say:

In this Bible story, we’re going to hear about two brothers that seem very different, but really have a lot in common. We’re also going to hear about their dad who is keeps loving his children even when they treat him very badly. I want you to listen carefully to the way each brother treats the father and the way the father responds.

Read Luke 15:11-32: Be sure to engage the children with good story telling. Ask unscripted questions to clarify points in the story. The questions under “review” below are the key points for them to understand from the lesson, so be sure to emphasize them as you read.

Optional Video: If you have internet, consider showing one of these videos as a review of the Bible story. I like to challenge the kids to watch carefully if the video follows the real Bible story we just read. Video link – [God’s Story: Two Sons and a Father \(good for all ages\)](#) {Crossroads Kids’ Club on Youtube}

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True / False Review: Ask the children to choose which of the following statements are correct. If the statement is correct they should stand, if it is false they should remain seated.

- The brothers in this story were named Bob & Joe. **{False}**
- The Father in this story helps us to learn about God **{True}**
- Sin can be an action or an attitude. **{True}**
- The brothers in this story honored their father. **{False}**
- People who break rules need Jesus to save & forgive them. **{True}**
- People who follow rules need Jesus to save & forgive them. **{True}**
- Some people are too bad for God to love. **{False}**
- People who follow rules need Jesus to save them. **{True}**

Compare Two Sons: Use the following questions to help the children

Young Brother (ran away)

- How did this brother dishonor his father?
- How did the Father respond to this bad behavior?
- What do you think it would take to make the Father stop loving this Son?
- What do you think the Son will do next?

Older Brother (stayed home)

- How did this brother dishonor his father?
- How did the Father respond to this bad behavior?
- What do you think it would take to make the Father stop loving this Son?
- What do you think the Son will do next?

Test: Ask follow up questions to ensure they understand the objective of the lesson.

- Which brother do you think Jesus wants us to copy?
- Which brother do you think deserved to be forgiven by the Father?
- What does this the Father in this story show us about God?
- According to this story, what kind of people does God not love?

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Look / Took: Ask the children to think about one real person they know, or have heard about that seems like a very “bad” person. Then ask the following questions:

- How does God feel about that person?
- How does God want you to feel about that person?
- Ask them to begin to pray for that person and to ask God to help them love that person better.
- Make a plan to do that tonight.

Game Ideas:

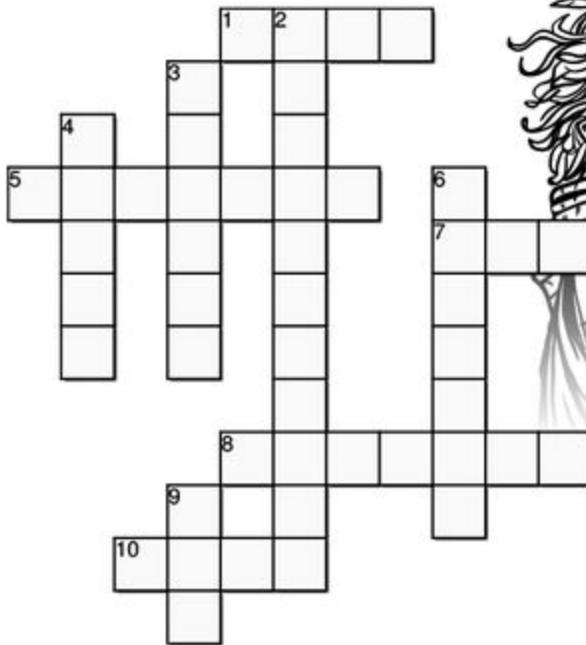
Lost son – print a picture of the prodigal or use a small doll and hide it in your room. Have the children search for it. Once they find it ask them how they wish to celebrate. Use the picture or doll and build a small party for it.

Pig food – This game is ideally played small balls; like those you’d find in a ball pit. Pigs naturally root for their food using their snouts (noses) and having kids do this to find hidden objects would imitate that action. Split the teams into 2 and have one from each team root for at object at a time. If you want to incorporate a message in this game, I’d recommend laminating words to build it.

Obstacle course – The Prodigal son must have returned with many stories of his adventurous travels. Travel your kids through an obstacle course using whatever you have on hand. Which obstacles are hardest? Which prevent you from returning to the start?

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32



Across

1. When the son lost all his money, he got a job feeding _____.
5. The young son wasted all his money on girls, drinking and _____.
7. The father lavished his son with fine shoes, clothes and a fancy _____.
8. His job was embarrassing because doing it made him _____.
10. After losing all of his inheritance and working a dirty job, where did the son decide to go?

Down

2. When the youngest son left home, what did he ask his father for?
3. Who ran to the son on the path?
4. When the son returned, the father decided to throw a huge _____.
6. Who was not happy about the son's return?
9. In the story Jesus is comparing ____ to the father, and us to the son.



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