

# Jesus Tells the Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32

One of the most important things for children to learn about relationships is that friends may not always agree. In fact, friends can often hurt one another unintentionally, through words or actions. Help your students discover the importance of forgiveness in their relationships. Teach them that forgiveness is a choice and not a feeling, and help them to make the choice to forgive.



### ► Bible Point

God will forgive us when we sin.

### Key Verse

“But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Nehemiah 9:17).

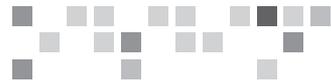
### Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will ask for forgiveness when they sin.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>1</b> Getting Started	<b>Finding the Lost</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Search for hidden photos and return them to the collection.	tray, 5 or 6 family photos	Put the photos on the tray.
<b>2</b> Bible Exploration	<b>Prodigal Pennies</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Pretend to be the lost son receiving his inheritance and spending it all.	Bible, My Bible Fun, magazines, scissors, tape <b>Teacher Pack:</b> “The Lost Son Returns” poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Fun student book. Choose 3 corners in your room to be the stations. In the first corner, set up a table with magazines, scissors, and tape.
	<b>I'm Sorry</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Reflect on a time they sinned.	Bible; crepe paper; markers; large pillows; soft, reflective music; CD player	In the second corner, set out large pillows and a CD player playing the music. Put the crepe paper and markers in this area.
	<b>Welcome Home</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Celebrate the return of the lost son.	Bible, party hats, balloons, mini-pretzel rings, bathrobe, slippers, plastic tablecloth, bowl, streamers, CD player <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	In the third corner, lay the tablecloth on the floor. Set out party supplies, a bowl of mini-pretzel rings, a bathrobe, and a pair of slippers.

*Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.*



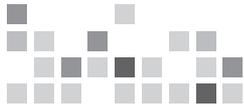


LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>3</b> Weaving Faith Into Life	<b>Balloon Rally</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Learn the Key Verse while playing a game with balloons.	Bible, balloons	
	<b>Rings of Forgiveness and Love</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Make rings and play a game of being welcomed home.	CD player, scissors, 1 chenille wire per 3 children, yarn, snack <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	
<b>4</b> Lasting Impressions	<b>Daily Challenges</b> <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	My Bible Fun	
	<b>Weaving Faith at Home</b> <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

***Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.***







### Finding the Lost Supplies

tray  
5 or 6 family photos

### Finding the Lost Easy Prep

Put the photos on the tray.

## 1 GETTING STARTED

### Finding the Lost

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather everyone together. Then tell children that today they're going to celebrate while they play a game. Have children gather around you on the floor.

Say: **I want to show you all some pictures of my family! I love these pictures because when I look at them, I remember all the wonderful memories I have of each person. Take a good look at all the people in my family for a few moments, and try to remember which ones are on the tray.**

Give children approximately 15 or 20 seconds to study the photos, and then choose one child to take the tray from the group's view. Have the child remove one photo and then hide it somewhere in the room as the other kids close their eyes. Then have the child return with the tray.

Say: **Oh, no! One of my family members is lost! Take a good look at the tray, and see if you can figure out which person is missing.**

Give children a chance to figure out which picture is missing. Then send children on a search throughout the classroom to recover the missing family member. Once the picture has been found and returned to the tray, celebrate and play again. Play several rounds, and then have children sit in a circle.

#### Talk With Kids ■■■■

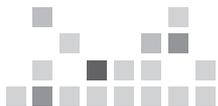
Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Have you ever lost something important? What was that like?**
- **How did you feel when you found it?**
- **What was it like when we celebrated finding the missing family member?**

Say: **Today's Bible story is all about how God reacts when he loses one of his children and how he feels when the lost child returns to him. The father in today's story had a son who only wanted to do things for himself instead of obey his father. But the son soon discovered that living life his way wasn't all he thought it would be. Then he wanted to come home. He learned that it was better to obey and love his father than to sin against him. Let's learn from our story that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**





## 2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

# Prodigal Pennies

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Show "The Lost Son Returns" poster. Say: **Today we're all going to be part of the story that Jesus told about a father and his son. The story begins when the son decides that he no longer wants to work on his father's farm. He wants to do things his own way. He asks his father for his inheritance so that he can go live on his own. Let's pretend you are the son. Go to our first story station to get your inheritance.**

Lead the children to the first story station, and have them sit in a circle. Open your Bible, and read Luke 15:11-13. Then have children turn to the "Prodigal Pennies" section in their My Bible Fun pages.

Say: **The young son spent all his money on all the things he ever wanted. Let's pretend that each of you has been given your inheritance. Take a look through these magazines and catalogs, and cut out pictures of things you would spend your money on. Then tape the pictures onto your coins.**

Encourage children to cover all of their coins as they search through the magazines and catalogs to find things they would buy.

Say: **Now look at your coins. What do you see? Nothing. There's no money left. And that's exactly what the young son in our story saw, too. He spent everything he had on things he wanted.**

Read aloud Luke 15:14-16.

Say: **The young son was tired and hungry. But he didn't have any money to buy food or pay for a place to sleep!**

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How would you feel if you were tired and hungry but didn't have any way of getting any food and didn't have anywhere to sleep?**

After children have answered, lead them to the second story station.



### Prodigal Pennies Supplies

- Bible
- My Bible Fun magazines
- scissors
- tape

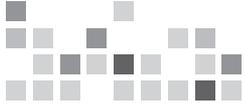
### Teacher Pack

- "The Lost Son Returns" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)

### Prodigal Pennies Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Fun student book. Choose 3 corners in your room to be the stations. In the first corner, set up a table with magazines, scissors, and tape.





## I'm Sorry Supplies

Bible  
crepe paper  
markers  
large pillows  
soft, reflective music  
CD player

## I'm Sorry Easy Prep

In the second corner, set out large pillows and a CD player playing the music. Put the crepe paper and markers in this area.

# I'm Sorry

## What You'll Do

Read Luke 15:17-21 aloud.

Say: **The young son realized he didn't have anywhere to go and knew that he had made a big mistake! He wanted to go home, but he didn't think there was any way his father would ever forgive him and take him back as his son. However, maybe, just maybe, his father would at least let the young son work for him so he wouldn't starve to death. The young son knew that he didn't deserve anything, but he was sorry for the way he had behaved.**

Instruct children to tear off a piece of crepe paper, approximately 12 inches long. While soft music is playing, have children reflect on a time they did something wrong. Have them think about how they felt in the situation.

Say: **We have all done something at one time or another that we know was wrong. We're all sinners. When we sin, we walk away from God, just as the young son walked away from his father. It's important to tell God we're sorry for what we've done wrong, just as the young son was ready to apologize to his father. Our Bible Point tells us that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**

On one side of their crepe paper strips, have children draw pictures of times they sinned. Then, with dark markers, have them scribble all over their crepe paper strips on both sides, making them ugly.

## Talk With Kids

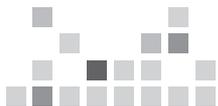
Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like making a perfectly good piece of crepe paper all ugly and messy?**
- **How is the nice, clean crepe paper like us before we sin?**
- **How is this dirty crepe paper like us after we sin?**

Say: **Before we sin, God sees us as clean and perfect. Sin is like the dark markers; it makes us dirty and ugly. But when we say we're sorry for what we've done and ask God to forgive us, we become clean again!** Have each child crumple up his or her dirty crepe paper and throw it in the trash. As children throw their papers in the trash, encourage them to silently ask God to forgive them for their sins. When children have finished, give them each a new piece of crepe paper.





# Welcome Home

## What You'll Do

Say: **Now that you have asked God to forgive you of your sins, you're like this new, clean crepe paper! And just as you threw your dirty paper in the trash, God threw away your sin. Let's finish our Bible story and see what happened to the lost son.**

Lead children to the next station. Have children sit around the tablecloth.

Ask:

- **What do you think the father did when his son went home and apologized to him?**

Say: **Let's find out.** Read aloud Luke 15:22-27.

Say: **The father not only forgave his young son but also threw his son a party—a huge feast with music and dancing! And the special robe, the ring, and sandals, saved only for special guests, were brought out and placed on the young son!**

Have children take turns putting the bathrobe and slippers on one another. Then have them pass around the bowl of mini-pretzel rings. Each child should place one pretzel on a finger of the person on the right.

Play "Confess With Your Mouth" (Romans 10:9) (track 3 on the CD) and allow children to move with the music, using crepe paper streamers and the balloons in a celebration dance.

Say: **That's right! There was a huge party for the return of the lost son. They ate the best foods! They wore their best clothes! Everyone was so happy for this special occasion!** Stop the music abruptly as the children are dancing. **Except for the older son.**

Have children sit on the floor as you read Luke 15:28-30.

Say: **The older son was angry!**

## Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How would you feel if you were the older son?**
- **How would you feel if your brother or sister did something wrong and then your parents threw a big party for him or her?**
- **How would you feel if you did something wrong and then your parents threw a big party for you?**
- **Why do you think the father in this story made such a big deal out of his son's return?**



## Welcome Home Supplies

- Bible
- party hats
- balloons
- mini-pretzel rings
- bathrobe
- slippers
- plastic tablecloth
- bowl
- streamers
- CD player
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Confess With Your Mouth" (Romans 10:9) (track 3)

## ALLERGY ALERT

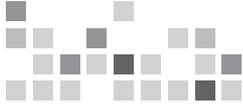
## BALLOON WARNING

To avoid choking hazards, be sure to pick up pieces of any broken balloons promptly. Balloons may contain latex.

## Welcome Home Easy Prep

In the third corner, lay the tablecloth on the floor. Set out party supplies, a bowl of mini-pretzel rings, a bathrobe, and a pair of slippers.





### Balloon Rally Supplies

Bible  
balloons

#### **! BALLOON WARNING**

To avoid choking hazards, be sure to pick up pieces of any broken balloons promptly. Balloons may contain latex.

Read Luke 15:31-32. Say: **The father in this story was so happy that his son had returned; it didn't matter what had happened in the past! That's the way God is with us! When we say we are sorry, God forgives us and rejoices, no matter what we've done! He is a loving and forgiving Father, just like the father in our story. Our Key Verse today tells us about how loving God is. Let's take a look at what it says.**

## **3** WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

### Balloon Rally

#### **What You'll Do** ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to Nehemiah 9:17, and show children the verse. Read the verse aloud, and then have children repeat it with you a few times: **“But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Nehemiah 9:17).**

Have children form pairs and then form a line on one side of the room.

Say: **We're going to learn this verse in a way that will require us to be forgiving the way God is. The first two in line will walk across the room with a balloon between their hips. Once they get to the other side, they must say the first word of the verse. If they drop their balloon, they must go back to the starting place and try again. The second pair in line will do the same thing except they will say the second word in the verse. Let's see how fast we can say the whole verse in this way. Remember to be gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love with your teammates.**

Instruct the first pair to begin. Stand on the other side of the room so that you can help children with the verse as needed. When children complete the game, have them answer the following questions.

#### **Talk With Kids** ■■■■

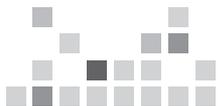
Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Did you ever feel frustrated with your teammates?**
- **How can we follow God's example of being slow to anger and forgiving when we're frustrated?**

Say: **It's good for us to remember that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN. Let's learn more about that.**





# Rings of Forgiveness and Love

## What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Distribute scissors and chenille wires. Instruct children to cut small sections of chenille wire to form rings for their fingers. Help kids twist the ends together to form the rings.

Say: **Just like the father in Jesus' parable celebrated when his son returned, God rejoices when we return to him. When we "repent," we tell God how sorry we are for making him sad. ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN. It doesn't matter what we've done—we will always be forgiven when we return to God.**

Have children place their rings on a table or desk, and have them stand in a group next to the table.

Say: **We're going to pretend that each one of you is the lost son. When it's your turn, you will walk to the other side of the room and turn to face the group. Then the group will say, "Look, it's [child's name]!" Then you will run back to the group and the group will say, "[Child's name], you have come home!" They will all hug you, and then one person from the group will find your ring and put it on your finger.**

Choose a volunteer to be the first lost son. Encourage the other students to be really excited when he or she returns, offering hugs and pats on the back. After each child has had a turn to be welcomed home, distribute lengths of yarn. Show kids how to thread the yarn through the rings so they can wear them as necklaces.

Play "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (track 8 on the CD). Let the children have their snack as they listen.

## Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to have your name called out and have everyone get excited that you were coming?**
- **How would you feel if God were on the other side of the room, calling your name and waiting to hug you and put a ring on your finger?**

Say: **That's how it is when we sin and then ask for forgiveness. God is there—waiting with open arms. Take these rings home as a reminder of God's great love for you. Now let's each choose one Daily Challenge to remind us that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**

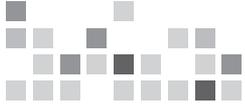


## Rings of Forgiveness and Love Supplies

- 
- CD player
  - scissors
  - 1 chenille wire per 3 children
  - yarn
  - snack
  - 1 copy per child of the lyrics page (at the end of the lesson)
  - Teacher Pack**
  - CD: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (track 8)

**! ALLERGY ALERT**





## Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Fun

# 4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

## Daily Challenges

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think about how ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges in their My Bible Fun pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Each morning, pray and ask God to help you that day.**
- **Find an adult you can talk to about sin. When you're tempted to do something wrong, pray with that adult.**
- **Play a game of 20 Questions with a friend. Then tell your friend that when we ask God to forgive our sins, he will.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **Let's remember that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN by following through on our Daily Challenges.**

## Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about God forgiving us. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their My Bible Fun pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at [group.com/digital](http://group.com/digital).

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids.