



Jesus Tells the Parable of the Lost Son Luke 15:11-32

Fifth- and sixth-graders often say, “I’m sorry” with little meaning behind their words. They may think forgiveness means getting away with offending someone and that by apologizing, the offended person will forget about it and move on. But they’re old enough to understand that forgiveness begins in their hearts. You may want to lead them in a discussion about the difference their attitude makes when asking for forgiveness from their friends and from God. Your example in this area will help them understand more clearly.



► 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 seek God for love and forgiveness when they are tempted to sin.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	A Stained Heart <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Make stains on white fabric hearts and talk about how that compares to sin in their lives.	markers; paintbrushes; scissors; food coloring, cans of tomato sauce, or anything that will make a good stain; newspaper Teacher Pack: white fabric	Spread the white fabric on the floor. Use scissors to cut out a fist-sized heart shape for each pair of students you expect. If you have a large table for kids to work at, cover the entire table with newspaper. If not, spread newspaper on the floor.
2 Bible Exploration	Option 1: Running Away <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Decide the best way to spend their money in a game in which the winning teams throw a party for the losing team.	Bible Buzz; streamers, hats, noisemakers, and treats for all students; CD player; 1 copy per person of the “Piggy Bucks” handout (at the end of this lesson); small objects to use as game pieces, scissors Teacher Pack: “Piggyland” game board, Question Cube, CD 	Cut out the individual bills from the “Piggy Bucks” handout. Punch out the Question Cube shape, fold it into a cube, and secure it with tape. Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.
	Option 2: Family Counseling <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Create a profile of either the prodigal son, the father, or the older son, and explain their profiles to one another.	pens, Bible Buzz	Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	I Promise <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Fill in and decorate a contract with God, naming a sin and promising to try to avoid that sin.	markers, pens, CD player, Bible Buzz Teacher Pack: CD	
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Buzz	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





A Stained Heart Supplies

markers
paintbrushes
scissors
food coloring, cans
of tomato sauce, or
anything that will
make a good stain
newspaper

Teacher Pack

white fabric

A Stained Heart Easy Prep

Spread the white fabric on the floor. Use scissors to cut out a fist-sized heart shape for each pair of students you expect. If you have a large table for kids to work at, cover the entire table with newspaper. If not, spread newspaper on the floor.

**! ALLERGY
■ ALERT**

1 GETTING STARTED

A Stained Heart

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went. Have students form pairs, and give each pair a white fabric heart. If you don't have enough fabric hearts, have kids form larger groups.

Say: **I have a challenge for you today! I want you to take the fabric heart I have given you and work with your partner to make it the dirtiest and most stained heart in the room.**

Supply pairs with markers, paintbrushes, food coloring, opened cans of tomato sauce, or anything else that will make a good stain, and have the students stain their fabric hearts. After they have finished and have cleaned up, allow them to compare hearts and see whose is the most stained.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **If you had to make your fabric heart clean again, how would you clean it?**
- **Would it be hard to completely remove the stain? Explain.**
- **Was it hard for you to make the stain? Explain.**

Say: **When we stain our clothes, we must treat the clothes specially with stain remover or bleach in order to remove the stain. The same thing is true with our lives. All of us do wrong things, and these things make stains on our hearts. We can't do anything to remove these stains—God must treat our hearts specially. Today we will explore this idea as we learn how ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**





2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Option 1: Running Away

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Ask:

- Have you ever wanted to run away? If so, why?

Say: **Today we're going to read a story about a boy who took his inheritance early and ran away from home. Not long after, he spent all of his money and wished for the good life he once had at home.**

Have students form four teams. Ask teams to read together Luke 15:11-19. Then give each team \$500 of Piggy Bucks. Have team members work together to decide the best way to spend their money. When teams are ready, have them share their decision with the whole group.

Say: **Great ideas on how to spend your money! But before I can allow you to spend your money, you first have to play this game. The goal of the game is to not lose your money before the other teams do. The game is over when one of the teams loses all of its money.**

Have each team choose a small object to use as its game piece, and then choose a team to go first. Have the team roll the Question Cube and move its game piece the same number of spaces as the number on the Question Cube. (Ignore the questions on the Question Cube for this activity.)

Allow teams to take turns rolling the Question Cube and moving their game pieces around the board. You can act as the bank. The team that runs out of money first loses the game.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why is this game so frustrating?
- How is that like the frustration of trying to live without God in your life?
- In the Bible story we read, how do you think the son who ran away from home felt after he had lost everything?
- Have you ever felt like the son who ran away? Why or why not?

Say: **When the son lost everything, he thought about the people who worked for his father. They were treated better than he was. So he headed home.**

Send the losing team out of the room with an adult helper. Once they leave, say: **We're**



Option 1: Running Away Supplies

- Bible Buzz
streamers, hats,
noisemakers, and
treats for all students
CD player
1 copy per person of the
"Piggy Bucks" handout
(at the end of this
lesson)
small objects to use as
game pieces
scissors
Teacher Pack
"Piggyland" game
board
Question Cube
CD: "Party Music"
(track 4)

! ALLERGY ALERT

Option 1: Running Away Easy Prep

Cut out the individual bills from the "Piggy Bucks" handout.

Punch out the Question Cube shape, fold it into a cube, and secure it with tape.

Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.





going to throw a party for the losing team. Here are some treats, hats, streamers, and noisemakers for you to use. Let's make them feel loved and accepted even though they lost the game.

Have the losing team return, and start the "Party Music" (track 4 on the CD). Give students about five minutes to party, and then gather them in a circle.

To the party throwers, ask:

- How did it feel to throw a party for people on the losing team when they really didn't deserve it?

To the losing team, ask:

- How did it feel to have a party thrown for you when you didn't deserve it?

Read aloud Luke 15:20-24.

Ask:

- How did the father respond to his son's returning home?
- How is that similar to what God does when we sin?

Say: **The father threw a party for the lost son even though he didn't deserve it. The son had wasted all of the money his father had given him and had taken his father's love for granted. But the father loved his son so much that he forgave him and accepted him back. When we ask God to forgive us for the wrong things we do, he holds out his arms to us and accepts us and loves us just like the father in this story did. ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN—what a loving God!**

Have students read aloud the Key Verse on their Bible Buzz: "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love" (Nehemiah 9:17).

Ask:

- What do you notice about God in this verse?
- What does God do when we sin?

Say: **God never will desert us even when we turn away from him. He loves us and is waiting for us to turn to him and ask for forgiveness.**

Option 2: Family Counseling

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids form three groups. Distribute pens, and assign each group one of these three characters to examine: the father, the older son, and the lost son. (For a larger class, form six groups and assign two groups to each category.)

Say: **You're a family counselor who has been hired to reunite three family members and help restore their relationships. As you uncover facts about everyone, be sure to keep track of what you discover in the "Family Counseling" section of Bible Buzz.**

Option 2: Family Counseling Supplies

pens
Bible Buzz

Option 2: Family Counseling Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.



Assign the Lost Son group Luke 15:11-19, the Father group Luke 15:20-24, and the Older Son group Luke 15:25-32. Instruct all groups to read Luke 15:11-32, concentrating on their assigned portion of the passage. Give them 10 to 15 minutes to work in their groups.

After groups have gathered all of their facts, have kids form trios or groups of at least three that include at least one person from the Lost Son group, the Father group, and the Older Son group. Have kids work together in their trios to discover how this family can be reunited and restored. Use these questions:

Ask:

- In what ways did the younger son sin? the older son?
- What did the father do when his sons sinned?
- How can this family be reunited and restored?
- Are you more like the lost son or the older son? Explain.
- What does God do when we sin?

Have students find the Key Verse in Bible Buzz, and ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud: “But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Nehemiah 9:17).

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- How does it make you feel to know that God is a forgiving God? that he is “slow to anger and abounding in love”? Explain.

Say: **God loved the people of Israel even though they sinned against him. God didn’t desert them—he remained faithful to them. When we stray from God, he remains faithful to us and waits for us to turn back to him. If we ask, ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

I Promise

What You’ll Do ■■■■

Have students find a place in the room where they can sit alone. Have them take a pen, a few markers, and their Bible Buzz with them.

Say: **God has promised that he will love us and forgive us for our sins when we go to him in humility and ask for forgiveness. As you work, think about the lost son and the Key Verse.**



I Promise Supplies

- markers
- pens
- CD player
- Bible Buzz
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: “If We Confess” (1 John 1:9) (track 5)





Instruct kids to turn to “My Contract With God” in Bible Buzz. Have them use this time alone to think of one sin for which they need to ask God’s forgiveness. Have each student write that one sin on the contract, asking God for forgiveness and promising to try not to sin in that way any longer. After they complete the contract, have them use the markers to decorate the contract in a way that is meaningful to them and expresses their commitment to God.

While kids work, play “If We Confess” (1 John 1:9) (track 5 on the CD).

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does God do when we sin?**
- **How does it feel to know that God has forgiven you for the sin you wrote about?**

Have someone read aloud the Key Verse, Nehemiah 9:17, again.

Ask:

- **If you break your contract with God, do you think he will be willing to forgive you again? Why or why not?**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You’ll Do ■■■■

Say: **Let’s each choose a Daily Challenge for the week to help us remember that ► GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN.**

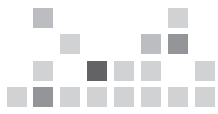
Have kids find this week’s Daily Challenges on the Bible Buzz pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Think of a way you disobeyed this week, and ask God to forgive you.**
- **Tell a friend about God’s forgiveness, and ask if he or she would like to pray with you.**
- **Create a picture montage of things that tempt you, show it to a family member, and then crumple it up, praising God for his forgiveness and grace.**

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

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Buzz



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: ► **GOD WILL FORGIVE US WHEN WE SIN. Let's seek forgiveness by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

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

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Have students gather in a circle. Lead them in a time of prayer, thanking God for forgiving them. Give students the opportunity to pray aloud if they wish. Close the prayer by praising God for his faithfulness and forgiveness.



Piggy Bucks



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Spring Quarter

Lesson 2

Grades 5 & 6

