

Jesus Tells the Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32

When you respond to a child’s expression of negative emotion with loving patience, you are showing a tangible form of forgiveness. Your calmness helps a child to regain composure. The child receives the powerful message, “I will care for you no matter how you act.” As little ones mature, your positive response can help children learn to accept the forgiveness that Christ offers.



► Bible Point

God is loving and forgiving.


Key Verse

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

Weaving Faith Into Life

Children will begin to learn that God is loving and forgiving, regardless of our actions.

INFANT


LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	God Loves Us Hear the story of the lost son and learn how the father loved him.	toy man and boy figures (from a toy farm or toy bus) Teacher Pack: heart stickers 	
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	A “Pick-Me-Up” Experience a loving action rhyme.		
	Where’s My Son? Look for the lost son.	toy boy figure, 3 foam cups	
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their “Growing With Jesus” pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the “Growing With Jesus” page (at the end of the lesson)	Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





TODDLER



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to or sing praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	Lost in the Pigpen Hear Jesus' story of the lost son.	Bible, scissors, tape, cotton balls, large sandwich bag, red food coloring, box with lid, CD player Teacher Pack: CD, Prodigal Son finger puppet (from the teaching picture set) 	Place cotton balls in a large sandwich bag. Add several drops of red food coloring, and shake the bag until the cotton balls turn pink. Remove any pieces that have become too saturated with the food coloring. Put the pink cotton balls in a box with a lid. Cut out the Prodigal Son finger puppet.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Father's Love Begin to understand the father's love through a song.		
	Cleanup Work Finger-paint, and then clean up a "boy."	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Prodigal Son" page (at the end of the lesson), whipped topping, cocoa powder, paper towels	Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



2-YEAR-OLD



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to or sing praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	Tale of Two Farms Hear sounds from the story.	Bible, CD player, several 50-cent coins, unbreakable bank, glue, confetti or bits of paper Teacher Pack: CD, party horn, "Lost Son Returns" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	Put several coins in an unbreakable bank. Fifty-cent coins are safest around children.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Hide! Hide from the teacher, and come "home" to receive "forgiveness."	several large boxes Teacher Pack: heart stickers 	Place several large boxes around the room.
	A Loving Hug Stamp a heart on a picture to show the father's love.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Prodigal Son" page (at the end of the lesson), shallow bowl of red washable paint, newspaper, potato, knife	Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book. Cut a potato in half. Carve a heart shape in each half, and then cut away the outer edge so the heart stands out. Set out a shallow bowl of red washable paint and copies of the "Prodigal Son" page. Cover the work space with newspaper.
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Jesus Tells the Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32



BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

The Younger Son Demands His Inheritance

In Jewish law, the oldest son received two-thirds of the inheritance, and the rest was divided among the other children. Since it appears that there were only two sons, the younger would have been entitled to one-third of the father's holdings. However, Jewish law did not allow a person to sell his father's land inheritance because it had been given by God. So in asking his father to give him the land early, the younger son was maneuvering against the law. Any Jew would have seen what the son was doing and would have refused to buy the land. It was also against the law to sell such land to a Gentile. Since that must have been what the younger son did, the Jews listening to this story would have been appalled.

The Son Squanders His Inheritance

The next part of the story isn't hard to predict. The younger son foolishly spent his inheritance and was left with nothing. At that point, he realized how wrong he had been and decided to return to his father, hoping only that the father would accept him back as a hired hand. He was convinced that he had sacrificed his right to be his father's son. He now decided to do what he knew was right.

The Humiliated Father Forgives the Son

Because a family would not normally forgive a son for such a sin, Jesus' listeners would have been extremely surprised and angry to hear that the man ran out to meet his returning son. What Jesus described was a father intent on getting to his son before the neighbors did. Even though the son had turned away, sinned willfully, and disgraced the family name, the father was waiting to forgive his

son and save him from the death he deserved. What a wonderful picture of our God, who watchfully waits, ready to forgive us when we return to him in repentance!

The Jesus Connection

Picture a God anxious to meet you even when you feel ashamed. Know his love for you, and cherish the relationship you have with Jesus.

Who in your life doesn't "deserve" mercy? "They are just out of options." "They've made their bed..." "This change of heart won't last." Reach out to these people in kindness and joy. Pray for them right now. You can write your prayer here.



INFANT

1 GETTING
STARTED

Sing and Celebrate

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Sing "God Still Loves Me" (track 4) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me" to the babies anytime during the lesson. Sing as you rock, feed, or play with the infants.

♪ God still loves me when I sin,
No matter how wrong I've been.
God wants me to choose his way.
God forgives me when I pray.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me
Because he loves me so.

Sing "When I Sin" (not on CD) to the tune of "Frère Jacques" to the babies anytime during the lesson. Sing it as a lullaby to calm a fussy baby.

♪ When I sin, when I sin,
God forgives, God forgives.
He will always love me.
He will always love me.
God forgives, God forgives.

2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION

God Loves Us

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Seat a baby on your lap, and set the toy man and boy figures nearby. Hold up the figures.

Say: **This is a daddy, and this is his boy. One day the boy decided he didn't want to listen to his daddy anymore, so he left home. Move the boy figure far away. The daddy was very sad. He cried and cried that his boy wasn't home.** Frown and then



**Sing and Celebrate
Supplies**

CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: "God Still Loves
Me" (track 4)

**God Loves Us
Supplies**

toy man and boy figures
(from a toy farm or toy
bus)
Teacher Pack
heart stickers





pretend to cry. **When the boy finally came home, the daddy was happy.** Bring the boy figure back to the man figure.

The father forgave his boy and gave him lots of love and a big party. Hug the baby. Let's help the father show his boy love. Help the baby place a heart sticker on the boy figure. Keep the sticker out of baby's mouth. **God is like that daddy. ► GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

A "Pick-Me-Up"

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Seat a baby on your knees facing you as you do the following action rhyme together.

There was a little boy (*place baby's hands on his or her knees*)

Who would not do right. (*Shake head, and wave baby's hands.*)

He said "no" to his dad and ran into the night. (*Gently bounce baby on your knees.*)

The boy felt sad.

The boy felt low. (*Gently lay baby on his or her back.*)

But his daddy soon forgave (*raise baby to sitting position*)

'Cause he loved his boy so! (*Hug baby.*)

Say: ► **GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING, too.**

Where's My Son?

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Cover a toy boy figure with an upside-down foam cup. Set two more cups upside down next to the first cup.

Ask:

- **Where is that lost boy?** Point to one of the empty cups. **Do you think the lost boy is here?** Let the baby pick up the cup. Repeat until the baby finds the figure.

Say: **The father was so happy when he found his son. He forgave his son for running away. God is like the daddy. ► GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.**

Where's My Son? Supplies

toy boy figure
3 foam cups



Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their “Growing With Jesus” pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

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


TODDLER

1 GETTING STARTED


Sing and Celebrate

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Sing “God Still Loves Me” (track 4) to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me” anytime during the lesson. Let a toddler stand on your feet as you move with the music. Sweep the toddler into a hug during the last line of the song.

 **God still loves me when I sin,
No matter how wrong I’ve been.
God wants me to choose his way.
God forgives me when I pray.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me
Because he loves me so.**

Sing “When I Sin” (not on CD) to the tune of “Frère Jacques” to toddlers anytime during the lesson.

 **When I sin, when I sin,
God forgives, God forgives.
He will always love me.
He will always love me.
God forgives, God forgives.**



Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the “Growing With Jesus” page (at the end of the lesson)

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

Sing and Celebrate Supplies

CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: “God Still Loves Me” (track 4)





Lost in the Pigpen Supplies

Bible

scissors
tape
cotton balls
large sandwich bag
red food coloring
box with lid
CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Pig Sounds"
(track 5)
Prodigal Son finger
puppet (from the
teaching picture set)

Lost in the Pigpen Easy Prep

Place cotton balls in a large sandwich bag. Add several drops of red food coloring, and shake the bag until the cotton balls turn pink. Remove any pieces that have become too saturated with the food coloring. Put the pink cotton balls in a box with a lid. Cut out the Prodigal Son finger puppet.

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Lost in the Pigpen

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Shape the Prodigal Son finger puppet around your index finger so a different picture is on each side of your finger. Tape the edges. Open your Bible to Luke 15.

Say: **What do you think is in my box? Listen for a clue.**

Play "Pig Sounds" (track 5); then open the box.

Say: **There are little pink pigs! Our story today is about a boy who found himself living with pigs. Show the "clean boy" side of the finger puppet. This boy had a daddy who loved him very much. But the boy didn't want to obey his daddy, so he left home. The daddy couldn't find his son. Hide the finger puppet.**

Ask:

- **How do you think the daddy felt?**

Say: **For a while, the boy was happy. But then he ran out of money. He didn't have enough food to eat or a place to sleep. Show the "dirty boy" side of the finger puppet. He decided to go work for a pig farmer.**

Play the "Pig Sounds" again. Encourage the children to make pig sounds. Place the finger puppet in the box with the pink cotton balls, and then shake the box to cover the puppet.

Say: **Poor boy, lost among the little pink pigs! How do pigs smell? Was that a nice place to live? Can you find the boy? Let a toddler dig through the cotton balls to find the puppet. That boy decided to get out of the pigpen and go home. His daddy ran out to meet him. The daddy forgave him for running away. He gave his son clean clothes and good food. The boy was happy again. God is like that daddy. ► GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING when we make bad choices.**



3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Father's Love

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Encourage one toddler at a time to hide from you as you "seek" him or her. Sing the following song to the tune of "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?" (not on CD).

♪ Oh where, oh where did my little boy go?
Oh where, oh where could he be?
He did something wrong,
And doubts he belongs.
Oh where, oh where can he be?

Oh there's my boy! Have you come home?
How happy we will be.
I'll give you a hug and all my love.
How happy we will be!

Say: **God is like that father!** ► **GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.**

Cleanup Work

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Give each child a copy of the "Prodigal Son" page. Put about two tablespoons of whipped topping on the boy in the picture, and encourage toddlers to "finger-paint" the boy.

Say: **At home the boy was clean. When he went away, he got dirty from his bad choices. Remember how he lived in the dirt with the pigs?** Sprinkle some cocoa powder over the top of each picture. **Yucky! When the boy went home, his daddy forgave him and cleaned him up. Can you clean up the boy?** Give each child a paper towel, and help him or her wipe the handout clean. **God is like that daddy.** ► **GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING. God cleans us up when we ask him to.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

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



Cleanup Work Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Prodigal Son" page (at the end of the lesson)
whipped topping
cocoa powder
paper towels

! ALLERGY ALERT

Cleanup Work Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)





Sing and Celebrate Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "God Still Loves
Me" (track 4)

Tale of Two Farms Supplies

Bible

CD player

several 50-cent coins

unbreakable bank

glue

confetti or bits of paper

Teacher Pack

CD: "Pig Sounds"

(track 5)

party horn

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

Tale of Two Farms Easy Prep

Put several coins in an
unbreakable bank. Fifty-
cent coins are safest
around children.


2-YEAR-OLD

1 GETTING STARTED


Sing and Celebrate

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Sing "God Still Loves Me" (track 4) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me" anytime during the lesson. As you sing, encourage your twos to hold hands with a partner and move around in a circle, hugging each other at the end of the song.

 **God still loves me when I sin,
No matter how wrong I've been.
God wants me to choose his way.
God forgives me when I pray.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me.
Yes, God forgives me
Because he loves me so.**

Sing "When I Sin" (not on CD) to the tune of "Frère Jacques" anytime during the lesson.

 **When I sin, when I sin,
God forgives, God forgives.
He will always love me.
He will always love me.
God forgives, God forgives.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Tale of Two Farms

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to Luke 15. Say: **Jesus told a story about a father and a son. The father loved his son very much. He took very good care of his son.**

Ask:

- **How do your parents take care of you? What are some rules at your house?**

Give twos time to respond.



Say: **The son did not want to listen to his father's rules. He decided to leave home. The father gave him a lot of money** (shake the bank) **and let him go, even though it made the father sad. Let's run like the son who ran away from home.** Let the children run in place as you remove all the coins from the bank and place them out of the children's reach.

Shh! Listen! What's in the bank? Shake the bank. **Nothing! The son lost all of his money. He sat down and cried.** Have the children sit down and pretend to cry. **Wait! I hear something else.** Turn on the CD to "Pig Sounds" (track 5). **What's that sound? The son had no money, no food, and no place to live. He was so poor that he had to live with pigs!**

Ask:

- **How would you like to live with pigs?** Give twos time to respond.

Say: **The son was sorry he left home. He decided to go back home and ask his father if he could work on the family farm. While the son was still walking, someone came running to him. It was his father! He wanted to have a party because he was so glad to see his boy.** Blow the party horn.

Spread the "Lost Son Returns" poster on the floor.

Say: **Let's put some party confetti on this poster to show that the father wanted to throw a party when his son came home.**

Place several dots of glue on the poster, and give each child a few pieces of confetti or bits of paper. Help kids put their confetti on the glue to decorate the poster.

Say: **The father forgave his boy and hugged him tight. God is like that father. When we do bad things, God wants to forgive us because he loves us. Let's make some party noises to celebrate that ► GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.** Blow the party horn, and encourage the twos to shout and clap.

3 WEAVING FAITH
INTO LIFE

Hide!

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Gather the children.

Say: **The boy in the story did something wrong. The boy knew he was in big trouble, so he stayed away from his father for a long time. You can hide from me in one of the boxes while I count. I'll be waiting for you. When you're ready, come to me so I can show you how the father loved his son.**



Hide! Supplies

.....
several large boxes
Teacher Pack
heart stickers

Hide! Easy Prep

.....
Place several large
boxes around the room.





A Loving Hug Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the “Prodigal Son” page (at the end of the lesson)

shallow bowl of red washable paint
newspaper
potato
knife

! ALLERGY ALERT

A Loving Hug Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 2 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book. Cut a potato in half. Carve a heart shape in each half, and then cut away the outer edge so the heart stands out. Set out a shallow bowl of red washable paint and copies of the “Prodigal Song” page. Cover the work space with newspaper.

Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the “Growing With Jesus” page (at the end of the lesson)

Count to 10 while the children hide, and then ask the children to “come home.” As each child approaches you, place a heart sticker on him or her.

Say: ► **GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.** God is always ready for us to come to him.

A Loving Hug

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Work with one or two children at a time. Demonstrate how to dip the potato stamp in the bowl, wipe the excess paint on the rim of the bowl, and stamp a heart shape on the boy. Explain that the heart reminds us of the love of the father.

Say: **God forgives just like the daddy in the Bible story did.** ► **GOD IS LOVING AND FORGIVING.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their “Growing With Jesus” pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

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



Growing With Jesus



Your child learned God is loving and forgiving (from Luke 15:11-32). Your child participated in one of the following activities today. You can use these activities with your child to help your child grow with Jesus throughout the week.

INFANT

Pick-Me-Up

.....

Seat your baby on your knees, facing you, as you do the following action rhyme together.

There was a little boy
(place baby's hands on his or her knees)
Who would not do right.
(Shake head, and wave baby's hands.)
He said "no" to his dad and ran into the night.
(Gently bounce baby on your knees.)
The boy felt sad.
The boy felt low. *(Gently lay baby on his or her back.)*
But his daddy soon forgave *(raise baby to sitting position)*
'Cause he loved his boy so! *(Hug baby.)*

TODDLER

Father's Love

.....

Play Hide-and-Seek with your toddler, and then sing the following song to the tune of "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?"

Oh where, oh where did my little child go?
Oh where, oh where could he [she] be?
He [She] did something wrong,
And doubts he [she] belongs.
Oh where, oh where can he [she] be?
Oh there's my child!
Have you come home?
How happy we will be.
I'll give you a hug and all my love.
How happy we will be!

2-YEAR-OLD

Counting on a Caring God

.....

Cut a potato in half. Carve a heart shape in each half, and then cut away the outer edge so the heart stands out. Set out a shallow bowl of red washable paint and some white paper. Cover your work space with newspaper. Show your child how to dip the potato stamp in the bowl, wipe the excess paint on the rim of the bowl, and stamp a heart shape on a piece of paper. Explain that the heart reminds us of the love of the father.

Say: **God forgives just like the daddy in the Bible story did. God is loving and forgiving.**



Loving Patience

.....

When you respond to expressions of negative emotions with loving patience, you are showing a tangible form of forgiveness. Your calmness helps your child to regain composure and to receive the powerful message, "I will care for you no matter how you act." As little ones mature, positive responses can help them learn to accept the forgiveness that Christ offers.



Use these ideas to help your child become a FaithWeaver:

- Play a game of Hide-and-Seek. When you find your child, remind him or her that the father was happy when he found his lost son and that he was waiting to forgive the boy. Hug your child, and tell him or her how happy you are to see good choices.
- Take a trip to a farm or a zoo. Show your child the pigs. Remind him or her how the lost son lived with the pigs and got all dirty, but the father forgave his son for leaving home and gave him new, clean clothes.

OK TO COPY



Prodigal Son



**OK
TO COPY**

Illustrated by Nancy Munger.

