

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-24



New Testament 2
Part 2: Jesus the Master Teacher

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 2 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 15:11-24; 2 Peter 3:9; Luke 17:3-4; 1 John 1:9

MEMORY WORK:

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” (Ephesians 4:32).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“The Prodigal Son”](#)
- [“The Parable of the Prodigal Son”](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be scriptural.]
- [Miracles & Teachings of Jesus](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 2 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- “Summary of the Bible” from “[Kids Prep](#)” CD by Jeff Miller
- “Matthew Chapter Summary” from “[Kids Prep](#)” CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- [“Map of New Testament World”](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- [“Map of Palestine”](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- Animated New Testament Stories, Video #3
- Sandbox with chenille wire figures, spool “pigs”
- In Parables of Jesus flannelgraph

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Since God is willing to forgive me when I do bad things (if I say I'm sorry and try to do better—i.e., repent), I should be willing to do the same for others.



LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we talked about Zacchaeus. Who can tell me about him? (Review last week’s lesson.) Have you ever made a bad choice, and then had to say you were sorry for what you said or did? (Allow children to talk about this for a few minutes.) Today, we are going to learn about a parable, or story, that Jesus told about a boy who left home and made some bad choices. We will learn about how God forgives us and wants us to do what is right, and how we should forgive others that want to make things right..

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review the story of Zacchaeus, re-emphasizing what Zacchaeus did to show he had repented. Have you ever made a bad choice and then got into trouble for what you did or said? What did you have to do to try to make it right? (If they are willing, have students share.) Today, we are going to learn about a boy who left home and made some very bad choices. Through this lesson, we will learn how God forgives us and always loves us.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. The Jewish scribes and Pharisees criticized Jesus all the time, largely because they thought He spent too much time with “sinners.” They considered themselves to be very religious and, therefore, better than other people. In Luke 15, Jesus told three **parables** to teach them that (a) all men need forgiveness; (b) God is willing and ready to **forgive anyone** who **repents** (asks for forgiveness and tries to do better); and (c) we should not have an attitude like the older brother, who was jealous and resentful of his brother, rather than rejoicing over his repentance. The third parable in Luke 15 is often called the Parable of the **Prodigal Son** (or the Lost Boy); sometimes it is called the Parable of the Loving Father.

Parable: “a short story that teaches a lesson” (*Basic Bible Dictionary*, Standard Pub.Co., 1984). Commonly called “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”

Forgive: to let go of some hurt or wrong that someone has done to you; to stop being angry or resentful about something wrong someone has done to you; to erase a debt that someone owes you.

Repent: to be sorry for doing wrong and change the ways you think and act; to turn away from wrong choices and turn back to God.

Prodigal: wasteful



2. Jesus said a certain man had two sons. The younger son decided that he didn’t want to stay at home and follow his father’s rules. He knew that he and his brother would get a lot of money (inheritance) when his father died, but he didn’t want to wait. He wanted his share of his father’s money right then.
3. This son went to “a far country,” where he probably did not know anyone, and more likely, where nobody knew him. He wanted to be free—free from rules and responsibilities, free to do what he wanted. He apparently thought there would be no consequences for any of his bad choices. But the young man made a lot of bad choices about friends and about how to spend

his money. Bad friends, bad activities, and wasted money put him in dangerous situations. When the son ran out of money, his “friends” left him. They were not really friends at all; they pretended to be friends only as long as the younger son could do something for them or give them things.

4. He was hungry and suddenly poor, and he couldn’t find a job—until he found a man who would pay him to feed pigs! The son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food that the pigs ate (mostly garbage). His “riotous living” cost him much more than money. It cost him his self-respect. The Old Testament law said that Jews could not eat pork or have anything to do with pigs, and the Jews took that law to heart. In this parable, Jesus described a young Jewish man not only taking care of pigs but wanting to eat the same garbage that they ate. This would have been completely disgusting to the Jews listening to Him.
5. The son was homeless and hungry. He finally “came to his senses” and remembered that even the servants in his father’s house had good food to eat and a comfortable, clean place to live. He decided to go home and beg his father to forgive him. As he traveled back home, he had plenty of time to think about what he would say to his father. He decided that he would tell his father he had sinned and was not worthy of even being called “son” anymore. He was determined to make things right with his father and change his life.
6. In His story, Jesus didn’t say how long the son was gone from home, but He did say that the father watched for his son. When the father saw the boy coming from a distance, he ran to meet him. He had not forgotten about his son or given up on him. Instead, he had been watching in the distance, hoping his son would return.
7. The son had disgraced his father and his family name. He asked his father to forgive him and asked to work as one of the servants. According to the Old Law, he could have been stoned to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Even though the father had been very hurt by the son’s behavior and choices, he was more than willing to forgive the son and take him back into his house as part of the family due to his repentance. He hugged his dirty, tired, ragged son and kissed him. He was so excited and happy that he threw a big party to celebrate the son’s return, and gave him a special ring, new clothes, and new sandals for his feet.
8. The father in Jesus’ parable treated his son like God will treat us when we ask for forgiveness, change mind about misbehaving, and make things right. God loves us when we are good, and He loves us when we don’t do our best. He wants us to make good choices, but He knows that we will make mistakes. We can be sure that if we are willing to repent, God will forgive us and welcome us back. There is nothing wrong we can do that God can not forgive.
9. Make a practical application with a story about a young child running away from home because he thought it would be a lot of fun to be on his own without his parents telling his what to do or because he got mad at his parents. Describe the first hour away from home; near mealtime—hungry, without money, lonely, etc. Ask how they would feel. Would they want to go home? What would they do? How would they want their parents to welcome them?



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Hate Your Parents—
or Love Them?](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the charge that the Bible contradicts itself in its teaching regarding showing respect to parents.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Keys](#).

Ages 2-5:

- [“The Prodigal Son Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have special “rings” for the children: Open long paper fasteners (brads) and bend prongs into a ring shape. Put a dot of hot glue on the head of brad and cover it with glitter or a “jewel.”
- [“Shoes for Memory Verse Game”](#) cutouts (provided in activity sheets): Write the memory verse on each cutout, leaving two or three words in the verse blank for the kids to fill in (copy from what you write on the board).
- [“Pigs for Pigpen”](#) cutouts (provided in activity sheets): Make a pigpen from craft sticks. Have the students cut out pink pigs that you’ve drawn/copied onto construction paper (or printed from the curriculum site). (You may need to cut these out for the kids.) Use strips of brown paper for straw. Label each pig with a sin that led the young man to the pigpen.
- Review game: make one corner of the room the “house” and make a path or road out of masking tape around the room that leads to the house. Have the children stand at the beginning of the path, and ask them review questions. Each time they answer correctly, they take a step toward the house.

1st-2nd Graders:

- [“Shoes for Memory Verse Game”](#) cutouts (provided in activity sheets): Write the memory verse on each cutout, leaving two or three words in the verse blank for the kids to fill in (copy from what you write on the board).
- Read statements like the following to describe the prodigal son. Ask the children to agree or disagree, and to make changes in the sentence if they disagree. (He was happy. He was respectful to his father. He used his money wisely. He decided to stay away from home forever. He loved his father. He loved pigs.)
- [“Pig Faces for Team Game”](#) cutouts (provided in activity sheets): Divide the class into two teams, and divide the chalkboard into two sections. Ask each team questions about the lesson. If they answer incorrectly, put a pig face or pig cutout on their side of the board. If they answer correctly, put a ring (or a coat or shoe) cutout on their side of the board ([shoe cutouts](#) provided in activity sheets).
- [“Pigs for Pigpen”](#) cutouts (provided in activity sheets): Make a pigpen from craft sticks. Have the students cut out pink pigs that you’ve drawn/copied onto construction paper (or printed from the curriculum site). Use strips of brown paper for straw. Label each pig with a sin that led the young man to the pigpen, or have the students write the memory verse on their pig.
- Review game: make one corner of the room the “house” and make a path or road out of masking tape around the room that leads to the house. Have the children stand at the beginning of the path, and ask them review questions. Each time they answer correctly, they take a step toward the house.
- [“The Lost Son Maze”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - Zonderkidz “I Can Read!” Series: *The Prodigal Son*
 - *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* Arch Book (DISCLAIMER: On the second to last page, the paragraph starting with “When God made,” change all the verbs from past tense to

present tense, e.g., “made” to “makes.”)

- *Mad Maddie Maxwell*—book

3rd-4th Graders:

- “[The Prodigal Son](#)” word search (provided in activity sheets)
- Write on the board the following scriptures: Ephesians 4:32; Romans 1:16; John 1:1; Genesis 1:27; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 5:43-44; Colossians 3:13; 1 John 1:9. Divide the class into pairs or groups of three. Give the children a certain amount of time to look them up and find which ones mention forgiveness.
- “Prodigal Son Pizza”: Make two large cardboard circles. Cut two “pizzas” the same size from poster board then cut those into “pizza slices.” Divide the class into two teams. For every review question they answer correctly, they can add a slice to their pizza. The first team to have a complete pizza wins.
- “[The Lost Son Code Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[The Lost Son Maze](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - *Discovery* magazine issue (NOTE: [Advanced Bible Reader](#) quizzes exist for many issues of *Discovery* magazine): “The Lost Son” ([April, 2018](#))
 - Luke 15
 - [A Son Who Ran Away](#) book by Kyle Butt, Apologetics Press
 - *The Good Samaritan and the Boy Who Left Home*—Enid Blyton book
 - *The Other Brother*—book

SONGS:

“THE PRODIGAL SON” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

The Prodigal Son came home. The Prodigal Son came home.
His daddy ran to meet him, when the Prodigal Son came home.

“THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross”)

VERSE 1:

Jesus told about a man, who had riches plenty.
With his sons he shared his wealth, for he loved them dearly.

CHORUS:

O he loved! O he loved! His two sons, he loved them.
And our Father up above loves us as His children.

VERSE 2:

One dear son went far away and wasted all he’d been given.
Became so hungry he ate with pigs. No one there would help him.

2nd CHORUS:

He returned! He returned! And his father forgave him;
God our Father loves us, too, and will gladly forgive us.

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE
CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-24



New Testament 2
Part 2: Jesus the Master Teacher

WEDNESDAY EVENING

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

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MEMORY WORK:

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” (Ephesians 4:32).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY’S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Since God is willing to forgive me when I do bad things (if I say I’m sorry and try to do better—i.e., repent), I should be willing to do the same for others.



INTRODUCTION:

- Briefly review Sunday morning’s lesson (see [N.T. 2 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
- [N.T. 2 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under “N.T. 2 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

With OLDER CHILDREN, continue the story about the older brother.

The older brother didn’t want to forgive, and he refused to welcome his brother back. He shamed his father, too—not by wasting money and being “wild,” but by his unforgiving words and actions. In this parable, Jesus wanted the scribes and Pharisees to see that they could repent and come back to God, like the younger son. But He also wanted them to see that they must not be like the older son, refusing to forgive those who repented, ignoring the needs of others, and being too proud to see their own need for forgiveness.

With YOUNGER CHILDREN, tell the following story (“Mother Owes Billy”) with pictures or puppets—

BILLY: Let’s see. If only I had five dollars and fifty cents more, I could get that soccer ball I want. What can I do? Oh, I have an idea! (*Gets pencil and paper and pretends to write.*) There! I’ll leave it right here on the kitchen table so Mother will be sure to see it. (*Billy leaves*)

MOTHER: Bye, Billy. Have a good day. What’s this? (*Picks up paper and reads aloud*)

Mother owes Billy:	For brushing his teeth	\$1.00
	For picking up his clothes	\$1.00
	For eating all his supper	\$1.50
	For doing his homework	\$2.00
TOTAL:		\$5.50

(*Sad faced Mother takes pencil and writes on back of paper, then gets money and leaves it beside the paper on the table. He leaves.*)

BILLY: (*comes in happily and calls out*) Mom, I’m home! (*Sees money and gets very excited*)

Wow! My idea worked! She gave me the money! Now I can get that new soccer ball. Hmmm. What’s this? (*Picks up his mother’s note and reads aloud*)

Billy owes Mother:	For washing his clothes	nothing
	For taking care of him when he’s sick	nothing
	For preparing his food every day	nothing
	For helping with his homework	nothing
	For loving him no matter what	nothing

(*Sad-faced Billy begins to cry as Mother comes back in*)

BILLY: I’m so sorry, Mom. I’m so ashamed of myself. Can you ever forgive me?

MOTHER: Of course I can forgive you, Billy. I love you! I sometimes do things for which I need forgiveness, too. I have to ask God to forgive me. I know He will because He loves me—just like I love you!

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning's lesson

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