

A story of forgiveness

**Bible verses:**

Luke 15:11-32

The son who left home

**Aim:**

To learn how God forgives

**Today's fruit:**

Kindness



In today's session we will dive into the story of two very different brothers.

One brother was hardworking and loyal to his father. The other brother liked to do whatever he wanted and loved spending his dad's money. How did their father deal with them both, and what does this story teach us about God's love and kindness?

Kindness is shown by the welcoming father.

Each child will need:

- *Memory verse wristband*
- Pens/pencils and paper
- Resources to create a puppet play based around the parable of the prodigal son – see Action it
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- Ten pieces of paper, each with a letter from the phrase: THE LOST SON. Because there are duplicates, ensure each letter is a different colour. Hide these around the room in advance.
- Today's fruit sign: *Kindness*
- Flip chart displaying the key parts of the story – see Action It
- *Memory verse poster*



Start it

Give each child a piece of paper and pencil and ask them to find, and write, the letters hidden round the room. Bring the group back together and, with the help of a few clues, see if they can work out the title of our Bible story for today.

Sing it

Say:

One of our Bible characters today makes many mistakes, which leave him feeling alone and hopeless. Today's song reminds us that when we feel that things seem hopeless, God is with us and always faithful.

Song

'Something good' by Gateway Kids (3:30)

Tell it

Say:

In our Bible story today we meet two brothers who are very different, and their dad. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened.

Video

Two Sons and a Father (Prodigal Son) God's Story by Crossroads Kids' Club (4:06)

Watch: 0:00-0:54 'Kids, remember, this is a parable. I wouldn't try that at home.'

Ask:

- What is a parable? **A pretend story that teaches us a lesson.**
- Who are the three main characters in the story?
- How are the older and younger brother different?

Read:

'Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided the property between his two sons."'

(Luke 15:11-12 ICB)

Ask:

- Why do you think the father was willing to give the son what he wanted?
- What do you think happened next?

Watch: 0:54-1:37 'No friends, no home and no food.'

Ask:

- What did the younger son do with all his money?
- What happened to all his friends? Why do you think they left him on his own?

Watch: 1:37-2:20 ‘So he decided to go back to his dad’s house.’

Ask:

- Have you ever done something and felt sorry about it later? You don’t have to share the details of what happened, but how did it make you feel?
- How do you think the younger brother was feeling as he sat with the pigs with no money and no food to eat?
- The younger brother started to think about returning home. What was his plan?
- How do you think he was feeling as he made the long journey back home?

Watch: 2:20-3:34 ‘And that’s the story of the prodigal son.’

Say:

The younger son may have been anxious about seeing his dad again, but he had nothing to worry about.

Read:

‘While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. He felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him, and hugged and kissed him. The son said, “Father, I have sinned against God and have done wrong to you. I am not good enough to be called your son.” But the father said to his servants, “Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get our fat calf and kill it. Then we can have a feast and celebrate! My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!” So they began to celebrate.’

(Luke 15:20-24 *ICB*)

Ask:

- How do you think the younger son felt when he was greeted like this by his father?
- Do you feel sorry for the older brother? If so, why?
- In what ways do we act like the younger brother?
- In what ways do we act like the older brother?
- What does this story teach us about the love of God for us, his children?

Say:

We love a forgiving God who is willing to welcome us back when we have made mistakes and when we are jealous of others.

Display the *Kindness* sign.

Ask:

- How did the father in the parable show kindness to his two sons?
- How can we show kindness to others in the same way?

Action it

The final part of the *Two Sons and a Father* clip gives a quick recap of the story. Jot down the main events of the story on flipchart paper as a reminder for the children.

- There were two brothers.
- One loved buying stuff.
- He asked his dad for money.
- He ran away.
- He spent the money.
- He felt sorry.
- He went back home.
- His dad threw him a party.
- The older brother got mad.
- The dad loved both sons.
- No matter what, God loves us too.



Watch 3:34-end.

Puppet show

For this activity, the children need a selection of puppets. The puppets can be as fancy or as basic as your resources allow. The children could use home-made sock puppets; or cut the fingers off plastic gloves and decorate; or download images from online.

Possible puppet resources

- **Print, cut and glue to a lollipop stick:** by Jesus-without-language.net
- **Print, cut, decorate and glue finger puppets:** by Lilcountrylibrarian.com

Ask the children to retell the story of the prodigal son. They can do this as a whole group or in smaller groups. Encourage them to add sound effects and get creative with their puppets. Give them time to practise and then perform their final puppet show. Adapt this activity according to the resources you have available.

Pray it

Say:

Our prayer times this month will help us to remember and understand our memory verse.

Display the *Memory verse poster* and share it together.

Memory verse

‘Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God.’

(Romans 15:7 *ICB*)

Ask:

What do you think our memory verse is trying to teach us about living like Jesus?

Say:

To help us learn our memory verse this month, we have a special song that we will use each week.

Song

‘Bible Memory Verse Romans 15:7’ Kids Sing-along by Kingdomcity Kids (1:11)

Ask:

- There were lots of moments in today’s Bible story where the characters showed love and acceptance to each other. What examples can you think of?
- How could you show love and acceptance to the people around you?

Prompted by the children’s discussion, bring the session to a close in prayer. Pray that God would help the children to love and accept each other, just as Jesus loves them.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Luke 15:11-32



Aim:
To learn how God forgives



Today's fruit:
Kindness



Create

To help you remember this month's memory verse, create your own version to put up on your wall at home. Each day, think about the people you could show love and kindness to.



Watch

Spend some time with the people at home watching this fun version of the prodigal son's story. Discuss what this story teaches us about God's love and kindness.

Kids Tell Bible Stories: The Prodigal Son
by First Baptist Church of Temple



Song for the week

'Something good' by Gateway Kids



Memory verse

'Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God.'

(Romans 15:7 ICB)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children
& Youth

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Memory verse

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Start it

Today we are going to hear the story of a young man who thought he knew best. He let down his father but was welcomed with a big party when he came back home.



Tell it

Watch the clip that tells the story of the lost son.

The Prodigal Son (wordless) God's Story
by Crossroads Kids' Club (2:52)

Ask: What do you think happened in the story?

Share a child-friendly version of Luke 15:11-32.

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- What did the son do when all his money had run out?
- How did his father welcome him back home?
- How do you think the son felt when he was safely back home with his family?

- What does it mean when we forgive someone?
- How did the father show kindness to his son?
- How can we show kindness to other people?



Sing It

'If I were a butterfly' (lyrics and music)
'The butterfly song' by Brian Howard,
uploaded by Unreached Corners (3:09)

'Wonderful Lord' (official video) by Doug Horley (3:13)



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Hide objects for the children to find, perhaps with a theme like a colour, material, clothes, or images.
- Draw a picture of the welcome home party you would have for someone you love.
- Act out the scene from the story when the lost son decided to come home and saw his father again.
- Name three things that you could do this week to show God's love to other people.