

LESSON 10



THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that we are special children in Jesus' eyes.
2. To understand that Jesus is patiently waiting for us to come to Him.
3. To remind students that Jesus will forgive our sins if we repent.

MEMORY VERSE

"A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident."

(Proverbs 14:16)

PRAYER

1. We thank You, God, for gathering us here so that we can worship You and learn more about Your words.
2. Lord, please forgive us of our sins. Please also forgive us of the sins we don't know we have committed, and please reveal them to us.
3. Please also help us to forgive others as well.
4. May You help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. The Parable of the Lost Son

- a. The Lost Son and Us

2. Linking to the Basic Beliefs—Jesus is the one true God

3. Life Application—The Heart of God

4. Activity—Letter to God



Background Knowledge for Teachers

Jesus told the story of a rebellious son to help listeners understand God's love. In those days, a father could distribute his inheritance before his death, but the father would usually be the one to decide when to give it to his sons. This was normally done only when he could no longer manage his estate well. It was very unusual for any son to request his portion early. Nevertheless, the father in this story knew that his youngest son had a strong will of his own, so he granted his son's request.

While the young son went off to spend his inheritance, the father waited patiently for his rebellious son to come to his senses. After the son had squandered all of his money, he became so desperate that he had to find a job feeding pigs. This job was the ultimate indignity for a Jewish person because pigs were "unclean" animals (cf. Lev 11:7-8). He had to hit rock bottom before he came to his senses. It often takes great sorrow and tragedy to cause people to return to God for help. When the son finally realized how much better life had been in his loving father's home, he decided to head back. When the son returned home, the forgiving father welcomed and honored him with a feast. The son represents sinners who have repented, and are forgiven and welcomed into God's heavenly kingdom.



Reaching Out to Your Students

After listening to this story, your students may find it easy to see how the prodigal son was negatively affected after leaving his father. Unfortunately, your students may not easily see the correlation between the story and their relationships with their heavenly Father. Approach this topic in two distinct sections by making the first section about parental love and the second about God's love. Discuss and list, as a group, ways in which parents love and provide for their children. Then, list instances when children sadden their parents and take their parents for granted. Afterwards, brainstorm ideas of what would happen if their parents did not love them anymore or were no longer there for them. Next, list ways the children seek forgiveness from their parents and turn the situation around.



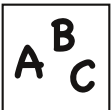
Opener

5 Minutes

In today's story, we will learn about a son that leaves his family and wastes all his inheritance money, only to realize that life back at home had been much better than life on his own. Upon this realization, he decides to return home. How do you think his father received him? Was his father happy, angry, sad, or something else?

We will learn later how his father receives his son upon his return home, but first, let us share our own testimonies. Does anyone have any stories to share about when you made your parents angry or sad, but apologized for it later? How did your parents react after you apologized? Were they still mad or sad?

[Ask the students to share their stories with the class. If they are reluctant to share, try to encourage them by sharing a story of your own first.]



Vocabulary

inheritance: the portion of possessions (in the form of money, land, or goods) that a child receives from their parents, normally when they pass away

famine: a shortage of food (normally due to drought) that causes people to experience severe hunger and starvation

prodigal: recklessly wasteful



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

FOR TEACHERS

The Bible Discovery worksheet is simply an activity where the students illustrate the parable as a group. Please make sure you have pencils, papers, and markers/colored pencils for the students to use.

Today, we're going to learn the parable of the lost son, sometimes also called the parable of the prodigal son. First, let's open our Bibles to Luke 15:11-32.

Now, before we read the parable, there are a few things we need to learn. First, does anyone know what the word "inheritance" means? An inheritance is what children receive from their parents, usually when they pass away.

This inheritance can be in the form of money, land, or goods, such as a house or jewelry. Normally the oldest child—the firstborn—received more than the other children. This was because the firstborn also received the greatest responsibilities of the household—they had the duty of continuing the family name and increasing the wealth and property that they owned.

Second, the story that we're about to read mentions pigs. Now, we all probably know what pigs are! But do we know exactly how the Jewish people viewed pigs? Well, according to the Mosaic laws, pigs were considered unclean animals, which meant the Israelites couldn't eat anything with pork in it. Since pigs were unclean, anything

or anyone that touched them was also unclean. If a person had to take care of pigs, they were cast out from the rest of the community, because if anyone interacted with this person, they would also become unclean!

The last thing we need to learn before we read the story is the word "famine." Does anyone know what a famine is? A famine occurs when there is an extreme shortage of food in the region. For example, in the Old Testament, Joseph's family experienced a famine when there was no rain for seven years—this meant that their crops couldn't grow, and their animals couldn't eat, which meant that they couldn't eat either!

The Parable of the Lost Son

Okay, now that we learned these things, we can finally read the parable! Let's read the Bible text together, starting with vv. 11-16. Now, what happened in this section? Let's figure out the key scenes together.

FOR TEACHERS

Help the students pick out the key scenes. Allow students to tell the story back to you through this. After they have listed out the key scenes, ask them to pick one of the scenes and illustrate it, and then write a caption below. Try to remind them to keep their drawings quick and simple to speed the lesson along. You may want to give them some extra time at the end of class to polish up their pictures.

Key scenes (sample):

1. The younger son took his inheritance and left.
2. He spent all of his wealth recklessly.
3. A famine occurred, and he had no food or money.
4. He had to feed pigs to stay alive.

Let's put our illustrations aside and move on to the next part of the story. Let's read vv. 17-24. Just like we did for the first part, let's figure out the key scenes again.

FOR TEACHERS

Once again, help students review the story's key scenes and pick one for a second illustration.

Key scenes (sample):

1. In his sadness, he remembered his father.
2. He returned home, and his father ran to him.
3. He repented.
4. His father gave him a robe, a ring, and sandals, and declared a feast.

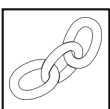
The Lost Son and Us

Now that we've learned the parable, what does this have to do with us? Jesus was telling us this parable because He wanted to teach us about **repentance** and **God's forgiveness**.

Although the younger son was irresponsible and spent all of his belongings, the moment he came back, his father was not only actively looking out for his return, he was willing to forgive him completely for his mistake. His son wasted so much money, but he didn't reprimand him at all. Why do you think he did this? Let's read verse 21 again. "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'"

The son came back and acknowledged his mistake, and then even offered to become a servant in repayment. This is what it means to repent. It was because of this willingness to return and try to amend his mistake that his father forgave him.

If the father represents God, why do you think he allowed the younger son to leave with his inheritance? God gives us the choice to follow our own wishes, even if He knows that they aren't the correct choice. He knows that if we choose not to listen to Him, rather than forcing us to follow His guidance, letting us make mistakes is the only way we will learn. But even if we make mistakes, the most important thing is **coming back to Him and repenting**. Whenever we make a mistake, such as lying to someone or disobeying our parents, God is waiting for us to come back and repent so that He can forgive us.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True God

Our God is the forgiving Father who eagerly waits for each of us to accept His love and His will for our lives so that we don't have to struggle on our own. We should continually reflect upon the unconditional love, care, and forgiveness God has displayed throughout our lives, and thank God for the love and care that He provides us.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. What did the son do that was foolish and rebellious?** He asked for his inheritance money early and left home. Then, he wasted the money.
- 2. What kind of job did the son find during the famine?** A job feeding pigs in the fields.
- 3. What finally caused the son to make the wise decision to return home to ask for his father's love and forgiveness?** The son was hungry while feeding the pigs and realized how much better off his father's servants were. Still, he was probably unprepared for the great love and forgiveness his father displayed upon his return.
- 4. What did the father do after his son repented?** The father was so happy that he ordered his servants, "Bring the best clothes and shoes! Put a ring on his hand! Bring the best calf we've been fattening up for a feast!"
- 5. What is the meaning of this parable?** God loves us and is willing to forgive us if we repent of our bad deeds. The son represents those of us who are rebellious and often turn our back on God.



Life Application

10 Minutes

[Hand out the Life Application worksheet to the students. Ask students to take turns readings the scenarios. Then, discuss as a class how and why the character did the right thing and did not grieve the heart God.]

The Heart of God

Objective: To understand why we shouldn't grieve the heart of God.

The meaning of "grief" is "a mental suffering or pain over trouble or loss, a feeling of sorrow, or a painful regret." Whenever we sin, we grieve both the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, meaning that they feel great pain when we stray from God's word. But this means that the Spirit is also overjoyed when we return to His path, just like the father in the parable was so happy to see his lost son return.

We need to remind ourselves on a daily basis that Jesus is always watching us and waiting for us to return to Him. We need to do our best to be aware of what kind of actions we take, and think about whether or not something we do will "grieve" God.

Take turns reading each scenario below. At the end of each one, discuss as a class how and why the character did the right thing and did not grieve the heart God.

Scenario 1

Discussion Questions

- 1. What commandment would Jonas have broken if he had not done his chores and had just gone out to have fun?**
He would have broken the the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother."
- 2. Would it have grieved God? Why or why not?**
Yes, because God's heart is grieved any time we do not listen to His word. He also wants us to obey our parents.
- 3. How did he do the right thing and not grieve the heart God?**
He realized that arguing was not the right thing to do and went to do the chores his parents had asked him to do.

Scenario 2

Discussion Questions

- 1. What commandment would Lily have broken if she had listened to her friends about the money?**
She would have broken the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal."
- 2. Would it have grieved God? Why or why not?**
Yes, because stealing is against His commandments.
- 3. How did she do the right thing and not grieve the heart God?**
She suggested a compromise with her parents by asking for more allowance in advance and agreeing not to receive anymore until she paid off the bracelet.



Activity

Letter to God

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To understand how to repent.

Materials

- Pens
- Plain or construction paper
- Markers

Instructions

1. Ask the students to think of something they have done wrong (e.g., disobeying their parents, cheating on a test, etc.) and something they have done right (e.g., cleaning their room, being friendly to a rejected classmate, etc.). They also need to think of some sort of "repayment" for what they did wrong.
2. Fold the paper in half to form a greeting card. Inside, help the students to write a note to God in which they apologize for their sin and thank Him for giving them the strength to do what is right. Students can also write how they will "repay" God for their mistake. If they are stuck, help them out by pointing out how the lost son in the parable repented of his wrongdoing.
3. The students may illustrate their card as they wish. If they're stuck, they can use a scene from the parable of the lost son to remind them of the lesson.
4. On the back, ask them to write the memory verse.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. inheritance
2. feast
3. A
4. The son was hungry while feeding the pigs and realized how much better off his father's servants were.
5. The father is like our God who loves us and is willing to forgive us if we repent of our bad deeds. Likewise, the son represents those of us who are rebellious and often turn our back on God.
6. He loved his son dearly and forgave him after he repented.
7. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son."
8. He put a robe, a ring, and sandals on his son, and ordered that the fatted calf be prepared for a great feast.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

Instructions: Read the following passages along with the teacher, and then list out the key scenes in each passage. After you have listed out the key scenes, choose one to illustrate and write a caption below the illustration.

Luke 15:11-16

Key Scenes



Blank space for drawing or illustration.

Caption: _____

Luke 15:17-24

Key Scenes



Blank space for drawing or illustration.

Caption: _____

THE HEART OF GOD

Objective: To understand why we shouldn't grieve the heart of God.

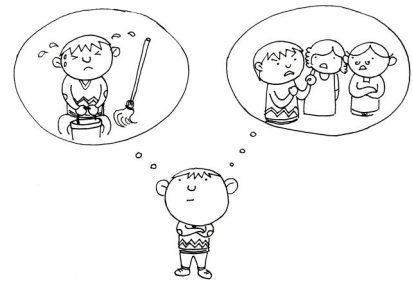
Instructions: Read the following scenarios and answer the questions that follow.

Scenario 1

Jonas wants to go to a New Year's gathering just three houses down from his house. A lot of his friends from his neighborhood will be there. His parents tell him that he must finish his chores first—take out the trash and finish cleaning the windows in his own room. But the party is going to start in thirty minutes, so Jonas tells them that he'll do the chores after the party. But his mother says, "You can't go until you finish these chores. It won't take you that long, Jonas." Jonas opens his mouth to argue, but then realizes that the longer he spends arguing, the longer he will be at home cleaning. So instead of arguing against their wishes, Jonas gets his work done and goes off to see his friends in no time at all.

Discussion Questions

1. What commandment would Jonas have broken if he had not done his chores and had just gone out to have fun?
2. Would it have grieved God? Why or why not?
3. How did he do the right thing and not grieve the heart God?



Scenario 2

Lily and her two friends have made a plan to spend some time shopping for friendship bracelets. A lot of their other friends at school have them, so she and her friends want them, too. Their parents agree to bring them to the mall and let them shop on their own, but each of them must pay for their own bracelet using their own allowance. But Lily and her friends don't actually have enough saved up and they know their parents will not give them more. So, Lily's friends come up with a plan to take some money from their parents when they're not looking. Lily's not too sure about that. It's stealing; even though it's from their parents, she knows that it's still wrong and dishonest. Every day at school, her friends keep asking Lily if she has the money yet, so Lily decides to pray about what she should do. When the shopping day nears, an idea occurs to Lily: why not simply ask for some allowance in advance, and agree not to receive any more until she has "paid off" the bracelet? Thankfully, her parents agree to the compromise she suggests and she doesn't have to do anything dishonest.

Discussion Questions

1. What commandment would Lily have broken if she had listened to her friends about the money?
2. Would it have grieved God? Why or why not?
3. How did she do the right thing and not grieve the heart God?



E2 Year 2 Book 1 Lesson 10—The Parable of the Lost Son

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (**Proverbs 14:16**)

Fill In the Blank

1. The younger son took his share of his _____ and left home.
2. When he eventually returned, his father prepared a _____ for him.

Multiple Choice

3. _____ : After the son's money ran out and there was a famine, he ended up feeding _____.
 - a. Pigs
 - b. Dogs
 - c. Ducks
 - d. Sheep

Short Answer

4. What finally caused the son to make the wise decision to return home to ask for his father's love and forgiveness?
5. What is the meaning of this parable?
6. What are some reasons the father did not punish his son?
7. What did the son say to his father upon returning?
8. What did the father do after his son repented?