Scripture Reference:

Luke 15:11-24

This session is part of Unit 5:
What Did Jesus Say?

Other sessions in this unit include:
The Unforgiving Servant
The Good Samaritan
The Wedding Feast

Foundational Biblical Concept:

God loves and values all people.

Bible Verse:

For great is His faithful love to us; the LORD’s
faithfulness endures forever. Hallelujah!
Psalm 117:2
The Lost Son
Prepare It!

Study Luke 15:11-24. Practice telling the Bible story in your own words. Provide pencils and Bibles. Gather needed supplies for each activity listed below:

Introduce It!

Guide the Activity
Welcome the children as they arrive. When the group has gathered, say: “If you can tell what a parable is, raise your left arm straight out in front of you. If you can name one of the three parables of Jesus we have already learned about, raise your right arm straight out in front of you.” Ask a volunteer to tell what a parable is and ask other children to name the three parables of Jesus they’ve learned.

Show It!

Show the Bible picture. Ask: “What is happening in the picture? (A father is hugging his son.) The servants seem to be busy. What are they doing?” (One is putting shoes on the son’s feet; the other is putting a robe on him.)

Say: “As I tell this Bible story, listen for answers to these questions: What did the son ask for? Why did he do it? What words describe the father in the story?”

Tell It!

Say: “The title of this Bible story is ‘The Lost Son.’ However, a better title might be ‘The Loving Father.’ Listen to the Bible story to discover why. Remember that this is a story Jesus told to teach a lesson.”

Open your Bible to Luke14 and tell the Bible story in your own words.

The Lost Son

A man had two sons. One day, the younger son said, “Father, give me my share of the family money.”

The father gave the money to his son even though he did not have to. Not long after that, the son packed his things and left home. He went to a far away country where he wasted his money on wild living.

Soon his money ran out. Then the whole country ran low on food. The son didn’t have what he needed, so he found a job feeding pigs. He was sometimes so hungry that he wanted to eat what he was feeding the pigs. But no one gave him anything.

One day the son began to think clearly. “My father’s servants have more than enough to eat,” he thought, “but here I am dying from hunger! I will go home to my father. I’ll say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.’ ”

So the son set out for home. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him. The
father ran to his son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him.

The son started telling his father what he planned to say. But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Prepare a big dinner to celebrate. For my son who was dead is alive again.”


Remember It!

Ask these questions: What did the son ask for? (his share of the money) Why do you suppose he did this? (He wanted to live his life to please himself.) What does this Bible story tell us about the father? (He was giving and forgiving; he loved the son very much.) Why might this Bible story be called “The Loving Father”? (because the father showed love to the son) In what ways did the father show love for his son? (He gave him the money when asked; he forgave the son for his wrongdoing; he ordered the servants to bring sandals, a robe, and a ring for his son; he ordered a party to celebrate the son’s return home.) What lesson did Jesus want His followers to learn from this Bible story? (that God is loving and forgiving; that we can show God-like love to others)

Learn It!

Get Ready
Make a poster of today’s memory verse on heavyweight paper or poster board.

Guide the Activity
Show the memory verse. Lead the group to read the verse together. Then remove the verse and ask the children to say the verse from memory. Ask the children to read the verse together. Discuss the meaning of the verse. Read the verse again. Guide the boys and girls in looking up the verse in their Bibles. Read the verse from several versions of the Bible if available. Call on several children to read the verse again from the focal wall. Cover the verse or take it down. Play “Pop Up.” As you point to a child, the child will quickly stand and give the first word of the verse and sit down. Point to another child who will give the second word, and so forth, until the verse is complete. Help the children understand that God loves us so much, He even loves us when we do wrong. He wants us to have a relationship with Him.

Help the children find Luke in their Bibles, either by using the table of contents or by finding Psalms in the middle of their Bibles, Matthew in the middle of the last half, and turning two books past Matthew. Remind the children that this is the third Bible story they’ve learned from the Book of Luke. Ask volunteers to name the other stories. (The Wedding Feast, the Good Samaritan.)
Use It!

Activity 1: Fun Page

Get Ready
Photocopy the Younger and Older Children’s Fun Pages. Gather Bibles, pencils, and lapboards if you do not have tables.

Guide the Activity
Younger Children: Give each child a pencil and a copy of the Fun Page. Talk with the group about each picture. Lead the girls and boys to find in the word box the name of each picture and print that name under the picture. As each picture is identified, ask: “What part does this play in the story Jesus told?”

Older Children: Give each child a pencil and a Fun Page. Guide the children to work the code, either individually or in pairs. When everyone has finished, ask volunteers to take turns reading aloud the eight sentences.

Activity 2: Scuttle Sticks

Get Ready
Gather poster board, yarn, hole punch, washable markers, and one drinking straw for each child. Cut yarn into 18-inch lengths. Cut enough 4-inch circles for each child to have three circles.

Guide the Activity
Tell the children they can make scuttle sticks. The sticks can have words about God. Demonstrate how to punch a hole on opposite sides of the circles. Guide the children to print each of the listed ideas on a separate circle.

When the circles are complete, show how to tape one end of the yarn to the straw. To make threading the circles easier, wrap tape around the free yarn end. Weave the yarn through the holes of the circles. Tie a knot in the free end to secure the circles. When children wave the scuttle sticks, the circles should gently flutter in the wind.

Remind the children to read God’s Word each day so they will know right from wrong. Encourage them to pray, thanking God for His love and asking Him for forgiveness when they do wrong.

The Lost Son
Apply It!

Share these points in your own words: Tell the group that Jesus used the father in the story (parable) to show us what God is like. The father in the story is like God in showing kindness. The son did not deserve such kindness and compassion. We do not deserve the kindness God shows us. The father in the story shows us how we are to forgive other people. We are to be kind even to people who do not deserve it.

Ask the kids to bow their heads, close their eyes, and follow these directions: “Think of a person who has done something wrong to you. Now think of one specific way you can show kindness and forgiveness to that person.”


Craft

Coasters

Get Ready
Gather for each child four plastic snap-on lids, each three to four inches in diameter. Provide jute, scissors, glue, and baby wipes. Make a sample coaster.

Guide the Activity
Show the sample coaster you made. Give each child a plastic lid. Lead the kids to spread glue over the surface of the lid. Show girls and boys how to coil the jute around and around in the glue, starting at the outside and working to the inside. When a child has covered her lid with glue, lead her to trim the jute and tuck the end under to hide it.

Lead each child to repeat her actions with three additional plastic lids to create a set of four coasters. The boys and girls may cut an additional piece of jute to use to tie the coasters together in a set. Let the kids wipe their hands with the baby wipes.
Recreation

U-Turn

Get Ready
Gather masking tape or cones. With tape or cones mark off 4 lines, 2 for each team. The back lines are safety zones, about 20 feet apart and any width. Put the other 2 lines in the middle of the safety lines about 5 feet apart.

Safety Line
20 feet
Starting Line
5 feet
Starting Line
20 feet
Safety Line

Play the Game
Play a game called “U-Turn.” As the children arrive, group them into two teams, side by side. Guide each team to sit on its starting line and face the other team as you give instructions. The teams will take turns leading, but pick one team to get things started.

The starting team meets at its safety line and decides on an action to do, such as ironing, mopping, vacuuming, driving a truck, playing a video game, and so forth. Once the team decides what action to do, it goes to its designated starting line, and the other team comes to its. On the count of three the starting team begins acting. The opposing team tries to guess what they are doing. As soon as the opposing team guesses correctly, the acting team makes a U-turn, running back to its safety line. The guessing team chases the other team, trying to tag players. The members who make it back to the safety line without being touched are safe and remain on the team. If the guessing team tags someone, he becomes part of the guessing team. Now it is the guessing team’s turn to act out something and be chased. The teams take turns acting and guessing. Play the game until everyone is on one team or until time is up.
Pigs in a Pen

Get Ready
Choose an area outside where the children can hide behind objects. Designate a small portion of the area to be a pigpen. Define the boundaries.

Play the Game
Remind the children of the Bible story “The Lost Son.” Talk about the lost son’s experience of taking care of pigs. Say: “The lost son might have had to gather the pigs in from outside. Right now we are going to play a game where the pig keepers must gather their pigs from outside.”

Show the children where the “pigpen” is located. Choose two players to be the pig keepers; tell the others they have now become the pigs. For fun, encourage them to squeal and oink like pigs. Place all the “pigs” in the pen.

Explain that when the signal is given, all the pigs can escape from the pen and hide. If the pig keeper catches a pig’s eye and calls his name, the pig must return to the pen and stay in the pen until he sees another pig wave at him. At that time, the pig can leave the pen again and hide. The game ends when all the pigs are captured. If the pig keepers are having a hard time capturing all the pigs, choose one or two more pig keepers to help them.

Bible Skills

Look It Up!

Get Ready
Write the following statements on individual cards. Add additional statements as needed:
- How many chapters are in Luke?
- Locate John 13:35.
- Which book is located in the middle of the Bible?
- Find a book of Law.
- Find the first book in the Bible and read the first verse.
- Look up Psalm 23.
- Find and read the last verse of the last book in the Bible.
- Locate each of the four Gospels.
- How many chapters are in the book of 2 Samuel?

Guide the Activity:
Mix the cards and place them in a small bag. Allow each child to select a card and use his Bible to complete the assignment.
Look at these pictures. Write the correct word under each picture. Tell how each picture relates to the Bible story.

Word Box
- money
- robe
- ring
- pigs
- father
- shoes

The Lost Son
Secret Facts

Use the code to discover words to complete the sentences.

The son wanted his share of the father’s  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____.

The son went to live in a distant  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____.

When the son’s money ran out, he got a job feeding  _____  _____  _____  _____.

The son returned home and asked to be treated as a  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____.

The father hugged and  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____ his son.

The father asked that his servants bring a  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____, a  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____.

and  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____ for his son.

The father  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____ his son just as God  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  us.

The father  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____ his son just as God  _____  _____  _____  _____  us.

The Lost Son