



# 3<sup>RD</sup>-5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

October 27/28, 2012

DATE

A Journey Home Week 4—Return Home

LESSON TITLE

Luke 15: The Prodigal Son (Pg. 1147-1148)

WHERE TO FIND IT

We have all run from our Father, but he is waiting for our return.

MAIN POINT

## schedule

Hang out with kids (10 minutes)  
Large Group (30 minutes)  
Small Group (20 minutes)  
Video/Song Review (10 minutes)

## tips

When you first arrive in the room set up each table with a different activity. Then, as kids come, help them find something that they will enjoy. This cuts down on the chaos of “free play” at the beginning of the hour, and feels much more inviting to new families.

## check-in/out

During check-out, take the time to follow up with any kids who seemed quiet or disconnected during small group. Sometimes more introverted kids will have a difficult time engaging with their peers in a small group. But, they could really open up one on one.

## large group heads up

Today kids will identify with the younger brother in the story. No matter what they have been like (running away from God) we want kids to know that God is ready to welcome them back.



## instructions

Start with the **CONNECT** questions. These are a great way to check in with the kids. You never know what you may discover about their life until you take time to listen.

Practice repenting by using the **REPENTING ACTIVITY**. Emphasize that when we repent, we turn our heart toward God again.

Kids may need several reminders that God is full of love, so we can always go to him when we have done wrong things. This is opposite of the way many kids feel.

## QUESTIONS

### CONNECT

- What was the best part of your week?
- What was the worst part of your week?
- What are you excited about?

### REVIEW

- What was the dad like in the story?
- What is God like?  
(The Lord is tender and kind. He is gracious. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Psalm 103:8, Pg.669)
- What does it mean to repent? (To turn around and ask God for help)

### RELATE

- Can you think of anything in your life that you want to repent for? Anything that God could help you with?
- Sometimes we get stuck with our backs towards God. That means, we keep moving away from him and can't see a way out. Bullies are one example of that.
- Are you stuck with your back toward God in any way (bullies, gossiping, lying, stealing)?

## REPENTING ACTIVITY

- **Supplies:** each kid will need a piece of **dissolving paper** (about 2"x2") and a pen.
- Have each kid think of something in their life that is keeping them from being close to God. This could be gossiping about other kids, bullying others, or being disobedient to their parents.
- **Ask** kids to write or draw a picture of that thing on their piece of dissolving paper.
- **Say:** Do you remember the Father in the story today? He represented God. Is he the kind of Father you can go to if you need to admit that you've done something wrong? Remember that Psalm 103:8 (Pg. 669) says "The Lord is tender and kind. He is gracious. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love."
- Today we are going to practice turning towards God by repenting. Here are a few things that are important to know about repenting:

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## QUESTIONS

Blank area for writing questions.

## ACTIVITY

- First, you need to know that everyone has done wrong things in our lives. The Bible even says so. Romans 3:23 (Pg. 1242) says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
- So, because we know that everyone has done wrong things, you don’t have to feel all terrible and ashamed, that will not feel good. Instead, tell God what you did, and ask for his help. Remember, He is the loving father who is waiting to welcome you back, just like the story.
- Everyone take the paper that you wrote on. We are going to take turns dropping the paper in this ***bowl of water***.
- When you drop it in, make sure to tell God that you **repent**. That’s an important word to say as you let go of the wrong things that you have done, and you ask for God’s help.
- **Group Leader: Go first.** Repent by saying something like “I repent for looking to other people to tell me I’m valuable instead of you, God. I need your help.” Then, drop your paper in the water and watch it dissolve.
- **Explain to kids** that just like the paper, once we repent and ask for God’s help, the thing we did is gone, it no longer separates us from God.
- **Have the kids take turns repenting and putting their paper in the water.**
- **At the end of your group, pray for the kids in your group.** You can say something like this: God, I pray that you will show each of these kids how much you love them. I ask that they would always know that you are waiting with open arms to welcome them back close to you.

## special notes

**Repenting gets a bad wrap because of religious connotations of confession and shame.** Today we are trying to show kids that repenting is to be celebrated, because turning toward a loving Father is what is best for us.

## presenter tips

**Having trouble keeping their attention?** Try getting kids to engage with movement. Saying things like, “if you are ready to listen touch your ears” may work a little better than “be quiet”.

## script

### WELCOME

Hello friends! It's great to have you here today. We've been looking at some things that happened in our family, God's family, a long time ago. I don't know about you, but there are things in my mom and dad's family that affect how I live now. For example, someone in my family was the first person to come to America a long, long time ago. If they hadn't come, I could be living in another country right now. The same thing is true with God's family. We have a family history, and the more we discover about God's family, the easier it is to understand ourselves. Let's take a look at a video to see what we can discover.

### VIDEO

#### Play Attic Video: Week 4 (about :30)

Kid in the video finds old money, old overalls, possibly something related to a pig. Kid finds a ring, robe, an old party hat, and a house key.

What interesting items to find from our family history. I love that we are all part of one big family—God's family. Does your family have any special keepsakes? Like old pictures or a book that was your grandfather's in school? My family has \_\_\_\_\_. I love looking at old things because it reminds me of our family story.

### REVIEW GOD'S STORY

**(Use items pulled from the prop suitcase/trunk on stage.)** God started his story by creating a wonderful, amazing home for his family. **(Pull out pressed leaves, dried flowers.)** It was an incredible garden that could feed God's children without them doing any work! God really loves his family, so he made their home wonderful with oceans and rivers and lakes and trees. Now that's a Father who loves to give his kids good things! God spent lots of time with his kids in their new home. I imagine it felt like being on vacation every day.



## script continued

**(Pull out snakeskin.)** Then something terrible happened. God had an enemy that was jealous of how much God loved his children. The enemy did something super sneaky and terrible. He convinced Adam and Eve, God's first kids, that God didn't really love them. He convinced them to disobey God. Ugh! That was a terrible decision!

Everything changed from good to bad. God had to send his kids out of their wonderful home, and they were separated from him. It was terribly sad. Now, don't you think that would be a terrible end to the story? It would be. I'm so happy that God didn't want his story to end like that, either. No way, He loves his kids too much to leave them.

## RESCUE PLAN

**(Pull out some rope.)**

So, God's family was in danger. What was dangerous? Well, everything about living life without God is dangerous—never asking for God's help, making more bad choices, and being mean to each other. That is not the way that God designed our family to work! So, there was a Rescuer that God sent to bring all of us back home. Who is the Rescuer? **(Let kids answer at once.)** Right, it's Jesus.

One day Jesus told this story:

## THE PRODIGAL SON

**Play God's Story: Two Sons and a Father (Time: 4:06. [Watch it here.](#))**

Now, when Jesus was talking he was using this story to teach us something. Remember, it's called a parable. A parable is a story that teaches a lesson.

Now, who in the story is like God? We even call God by this name sometimes. (Let the kids answer.) That's right, it's the father. (Show **picture of the father** from the video.) The father is like God.

Who in the story is like us? (Let the kids answer.) That's right, the younger brother.

## REPENTING DEMONSTRATION

The younger brother decides to leave his bad choices and go back home to the father. Guess what? We can do that, too. And when we repent (that means go back to God), God our Father is excited to see us. He welcomes us back, every time, no matter what.

Everyone stand up, and take a few big steps backwards (you want to have room in front of the screen, so that kids can hop towards the father without running out of space).

We are going to learn what the word "repent" means. (Leave the picture of the father from the video back on the screen.)

Okay, to learn what repent means I need all of you to listen carefully. This picture on the screen is like God, who always loves us, just like the father in the story. God is always full of love and he is very patient with us. He can help us with anything.



## script continued

Sometimes, we all make bad choices that separate us from God. Repenting means to make a turn, return to God, and ask for his help. This game should help us all remember how good it is to repent. After all, who wouldn't want to be close to a dad that is full of love and wants to throw a party when we come back to him?

For this game, I'm going to give an example of things we all do. If what I say seems like something that would make God happy, everyone take one hop toward the screen. If it seems like it would make God sad, turn your back toward the screen. Let's try that part now.

- I helped a friend who was sad. (Everyone hop towards the screen.) Good job!
- I cheated to win a game. (Everyone turns his or her back toward the screen.) That's right, it's a choice that would separate us from God.

But you do not have to stay that way! You can repent and get close to God again. So, when I say "repent", you will say "I repent". Then you can turn back around. And next, you can say, "I need God's help." Then you can take one hop towards God, the Father. You see, when we repent, we turn back towards God and ask for his help with that situation. And God is the PERFECT one to ask for help, because of this (***verse adds to picture of the father***):

***The Lord is tender and kind. He is gracious. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Psalm 103:8***

Now that's a Father that I'm excited to run home to. Let's start the game. (Read the statement out loud and then give the kids time to react, coach them if needed.)

- I ignored my mom when she asked for help. (Turn from God.) All right, repent! ("I repent", turn around. "I need God's help", hop towards God.)
- I encouraged my little brother when he was learning something new. (Hop towards God.)
- I made my friend feel left out. (Turn from God.) All right, repent! ("I repent", turn around. "I need God's help", hop towards God.)
- I gave my friend a high five when she won a game and beat me. (Hop towards God.)
- I prayed for my grandmother when she was sick. (Hop towards God.)
- I told another kid that they couldn't be in my club because I don't like them. (Turn from God.) All right, repent! ("I repent", turn around. "I need God's help", hop towards God.)
- Now this is an interesting one, listen closely, and think about if this gets you closer to God, or separates you from him: I worry that I will not be taken care of, I don't trust God. (Turn from God.) All right, repent! ("I repent", turn around. "I need God's help", hop towards God.)



### script continued

- I told God how great he is by singing songs and dancing. (Hop towards Father.)

### **WORSHIP**

Great job everyone! I hope that you'll always remember what it is like to repent. Repenting is a great thing. It gets us closer to God, and he can help us when we come to him. We're going to sing a few songs now to worship God together. Worship is just a fancy word that means telling God how great he is.

**Song: BRAVE-A-REE**

**Song: Home**

### **PRAY**

Invite a kid to come up front and pray for the group today.

name





# PREP needs



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## small group supplies

- A 2"x2" square of dissolving paper for each kid
- A pen for each kid
- A small, clear bowl of water for each small group
- Water pitcher for sites that don't have a sink

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## large group supplies

- One old suitcase/trunk on stage with the following items:
    - Pressed leaves
    - Dried flowers
    - Snakeskin or snakeskin fabric
    - Piece of rope
- Adventure Bible

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## a/v needs

1. Attic video week 4 (PROVIDED)
2. God's Story: Two Sons and a Father [LINK HERE](#), also available on iTunes (PROVIDED)
3. Picture of the father from video (PROVIDED) that adds this verse: The Lord is tender and kind. He is gracious. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Psalm 103:8 (Picture should appear, THEN verse appears on same slide on click)
4. Song: BRAVE-A-REE (PROVIDED)
5. Song: Home (PROVIDED)

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## special room set-up

None

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## connect questions

- What does it mean to repent?
- How does God feel when we come back to him?

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## parent page

Today kids discovered that God is waiting for all of us to return to him, even if we have really messed up. We watched a great video that told the story of the Prodigal Son. (You can watch the video by going to [vimeo.com](http://vimeo.com) and searching for Crossroads Kids' Club—the video is called God's Story: The Prodigal Son.) Kids used dissolving paper to repent and ask for God's help.