

# Middle School

November 3-4, 2012



Title: A Journey Home: Week 5 (Place at the Table)

Series: A Journey Home

Series Description: Something incredible happens when we feel at home. We know we belong. We let our guard down and put up our feet. We know we're loved and we are brave—terrifically brave. But home doesn't come from a street address, kind group of friends or even a good family. The direct source of home is God—the perfect dad who treasures his children. Because no matter our history or family of origin, we can all feel abandoned and alone. So we can either default to living as emotional and spiritual orphans or live in our true identity as sons and daughters.

Objectives:

Know: God wants to adopt all of us as sons and daughters, and he's made it possible through the sacrifice of Jesus. All we must do is receive his love. God is a good Father who desires to give what is best to his children. We just have to receive. Through the eyes of the Father in the Prodigal Son story, we'll be looking at how the Father really sees us.

Do: Receive your adoption into God's family and the lavish love of the Father.

Where to find it: Luke 15 (Pg. 1031-1032), Romans 8:15-17 (Pg. 1116-1117)

Schedule for all Sites:

Hang time	(10 minutes before service begins)
Worship and Teaching	(at the start of the service hour, 25-30 minutes)
Small Groups	(last 35 minutes of the service)

Leader Notes: Today is in some ways a continuation of last week. **Large Group could be a little longer than usual today—that's ok.** We'll be watching a video together in large group that will help set up the small group portion.

# Large Group Teaching Script

**Presenter Notes:** Large group might be a little longer than usual today—that’s ok. We want to leave as much time as possible for groups to meet at the end though, so watch the clock. Also, we’re going to be passing out **envelopes** at the end of Large Group as a part of the Receive video. Make sure you work out a distribution plan prior to the beginning of Large Group. Make sure volunteers can quickly distribute envelopes!

To see the contents of the envelope, see the last page of this document.

**Kids enter large group with “Home” playing in the background. (It’s in the Keynote)**

**Video: Phillip Phillips’ “Home”** [youtube.com/watch?v=HoRkntoHkIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoRkntoHkIE)

## Songs

### Welcome

How’s it going? Welcome to Middle School! I’m \_\_\_\_\_ and we’re going to be hanging out together for the next few minutes. We’re beginning to wrap up our Journey—A Journey Home—where we’re learning to find our true home in God’s family. We’ve been exploring what it means to believe that God receives us as his treasured children instead of believing we are orphans without a Father. Today is about receiving gifts from our Father.

*(Hold **wrapped gift box** as you walk through the next section.)*

As we get started, let me ask you a quick question: “What’s the greatest gift you’ve ever received?” *(Pause for a moment.)* Got that in your brain? Now tell your answer to the person sitting next to you. *(Give kids a chance to talk to their neighbor and **then briefly share your personal answer.**)* Let me ask you another question—except you can just answer this one in your head: How easy is it for you to receive a gift? It might be something as seemingly small as a compliment or it could be a gift that is worth a lot of money. How easy is it for you to receive gifts? *(Pause a moment for kids to consider.)*

### Receiving

For many of us, receiving anything—compliments, gifts, whatever—might be hard. For others of us, receiving might be easier to do. Either way, if we’re going to find our place in God’s family as his treasured child, we’re going to have to receive from God. The Bible says it like this: *(SLIDE)*

***Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 (NIV)***

What does God give to those who receive him? *(Pause for answers.)* Yes—the right to be his children. He adopts us into his family. But receiving can be hard for us for a couple of reasons:

1) **We’re living in a place of trying to do what’s fair.** We might think that if we can’t pay back someone for their kindness to us, then we can’t receive the kindness they want to give us. We think it has to be fair—or that we have to pay them back in some respect.

OR

2) **We're being independent and not willing to lean into others for support and help.** Some of us can't receive because we're too proud. Putting ourselves in the place of the one receiving the kindness somehow seems to rob us of our prized independence. But receiving from God requires us to learn to be dependent on him.

### **God's Goodness**

Part of the challenge in receiving from God is that we're not sure that God is really good or that God wants to give good gifts to us. We spent time a couple of weeks ago talking about God's goodness, but sometimes we think God is like these parents:

**Video: Jimmy Kimmel - I Gave My Kids a Terrible Present** PART 2\_Journey Home Version (3:30)

Here's what the Bible says about the way God gives us gifts as our Father: (SLIDE)

***“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him? Matthew 7:9-11***

You may not have asked your parents for bread or fish lately, but Jesus is just saying that good parents give their kids what they need and give their kids good gifts. And if God is the Best Father Imaginable, he knows how to give good gifts to his kids. He's really not like those parents in the Jimmy Kimmel video. Instead, he's like the Father in the story we talked about last weekend.

### **Luke 15 Introduction**

Last week we spent time looking at a story Jesus told about 2 sons and a Father—you probably know it as the story of the Prodigal Son. We spent most of our time looking at the sons in the story, so today we're going to look at the story from the Father's perspective. Right now I want you to close your eyes and imagine this story unfolding as I read it to you. If this is a familiar story for you, try to imagine you've never heard this story before. Try to put yourself there—What do you see? What can you smell? What do you hear? Imagine you're the Father in this story—what reaction would you have if these were your sons?

(NOTE: Read the story from The Message—text below. If you're not a great reader, enlist another volunteer who is. It's important that this be read well.)

***Then Jesus said, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.’ “So the father divided the property between them. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad***

***famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.'***

3 Quick things I want us to notice about this story:

1. The Father in this story is God. So the way you see this Father acting towards his sons is the way God acts toward us. Really, that's the way God responds to us when we run away from him and return. Got that? Seriously—God runs to each of us—to you—to me—when we return to him.
2. Notice that the Father runs with open arms toward his kids. God does not make demands of us or force us to negotiate a deal. He simply runs with open arms to his kids who return home and receives them just as they are—even if they smell like pigs.
3. Can anyone remember what gifts the Father gave the younger son? (*pause for responses*) The Father gives amazing gifts to the son who returned home. Here's what the gifts mean:
  - a. Ring: the signet ring was the symbol of the authority of the family. Having that ring meant that the son could make decisions on behalf of the Father and of the family. It would be like if you had the right to walk into a bank and had the right on your own to make financial decisions for your family—like to buy a house or a car.

God was saying that this son was a true son and had full authority as a member of the family. He could carry on business in the name of his father.

- b. Robe: the robe pictured the way the son received the Father's identity. This son was not going to dress like a servant or a hired field worker. Instead, he was going to dress like a son. A full member of the family.
- c. Sandals: Like the robe, the sandals were a reminder that the son was going to dress like a son. Not everyone had sandals and he was a son, not a slave!

This really is an amazing story. As we look at the Father's response we begin to really understand just how God deals with us. Just like the younger son, we get God's restored Identity and Authority when we return home. God literally gives us full rights as his children—we are heirs in the same way Jesus is an heir as God's Son. This is how the book of Romans puts it: (SLIDE)

***“So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs.” Romans 8:15-17 NLT***

### **Will We Receive It?**

The question for us is whether or not we'll really believe that God wants to receive us. If so, will we receive God's Identity and Authority as a child of his? Will we receive our place in his family? God is a giver of good gifts to his kids—the greatest compliment we can pay to God is to receive all the gifts he has for us. And that's the only way we become treasured children.

### **Receive Video & ENVELOPE Distribution**

For the next few minutes I want you to try as best as you can to get ready to receive something from God. We're going to watch a video together and as we watch, try to get alone with God. Clear out space in your mind so you can hear from him. We're going to pass out envelopes right now, but don't open it until your prompted to do so. So just sit back, imagine you are riding along in this car with God and receive:

***Video: Journey Home Receive Experience*** (approx. 10:00)

NOTE: If your large group environment is not dark already, turn down the lights for this video. Help kids get alone with God by giving them an environment where this is easier to do.

### **Dismissal to Small Groups**

We're now going to spend some time in Small Groups where we're going to explore specific ways to receive from God this week.

# Small Group:

## Instructions:

Small group will likely be shorter than usual this week (depending on how large group goes).

### Part 1: Discussion Questions—Large Group Recap

- How are you at receiving? Easy for you? Difficult?
- What part of the Prodigal Son story is hard for you to accept/believe?
- As you think about God being the Father in that story, what surprised you about the Father's response to the younger son?
- What does it mean that God gives us his Identity and Authority when we return home?

### Part 2: Write it Down

Pass out the **"Small Group" Page** from your small group supplies to each student. Then have everyone take 3 minutes to write down the following:

Something I heard about God:

Something I want to receive:

Something I heard about myself:

Then Ask:

- Anyone want to share something you wrote down?
- Anyone want to share what you received from God today during the receive video?
- Anyone not sure if what they heard was actually from God and would like to get some feedback from us?

## (CONTINUED)

### Part 3: Receive from God this week

SAY: As we get to our challenge this week, we need to spend some time thinking about what it looks like for us to receive something from God—how that probably looks different for each of us. God wants to give good gifts to his kids and he wants us to receive them gladly. Take a look at this weekly challenge sheet and let's brainstorm some ideas together since some of these ideas might not pertain to us specifically. What would it look like for you to receive something from God this week—to do something that fills you?

DO: Lead your group to identify specific ways they want to be filled and then pray together.

# Prep Needs

## Small Group

- 1 “Small Group” page per kid (Page 75 of the Adult Guide PDF version)
- 1 Weekly Challenge page per kid (Page 76 of the Adult Guide PDF version)
- Pens

## Large Group

- Live Bible
- Wrapped gift box (just a prop)
- Envelopes per kid each filled with verses (see last two pages)

## AV/Tech

1. Phillip Phillips’ “Home” video (In KC Tech Multimedia Folder already)
2. A Journey Home Series Slide
3. Verse: Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 (NIV)
4. Video: Jimmy Kimmel - I Gave My Kids a Terrible Present PART 2\_Journey Home Version (Edited version in the KC Tech Multimedia Folder. The original video can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWXKUpt7a-U>)
5. Verse: “You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. Matthew 7:9-11
6. Verse: Luke 15:11-32 from The Message. Note—we don’t want verse numbers listed, so it should look like it does in the script above.
7. Verse: “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs.” Romans 8:15-17 NLT
8. Video: Journey Home Receive Experience
9. (Small Group Resource for this week)

You don't need to be a slave to anything in your life. You are my child—and I promise you a generous inheritance.

GALATIANS 4:7

I discipline you out of love, because I consider you my very own child.

DEUTERONOMY 8:5

Think of me as a father who wants to lavish great love upon you.

1 JOHN 3:1

I've made great plans for you. Plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.

JEREMIAH 29:11

It was my pleasure and my choice to adopt you as my child.

EPHESIANS 1:5

Angels literally celebrate when you let me adopt you.

LUKE 15:8-10

I loved you first, before you even decided what to do about it.

1 JOHN 4:19

I'm watching you, because I love you so much.

PSALM 33:18

I hear your cries of pain. I'll encourage and defend you from people who want to hurt you.

PSALM 10:17

It's my pleasure to give you my kingdom.

LUKE 12:32



Let me show you how to rest.  
Unload your burdens, and learn  
the unforced rhythms of grace.

MATTHEW 11:28-29

I will not abandon you; instead I'll  
give you peace. So don't be upset  
or distraught.

JOHN 14:27