

Bible background

Luke 15

Aim of lesson

To teach the children that God loves them and will forgive whenever they sincerely ask him.

Preparation required

Cut out the house, inn, pigs, father and two sons from your activity book. Stick the house, inn and pigs in different corners of the classroom. The figures would be better if backed by card. Cut a new coat out of bright coloured cloth, or use the cut-out coat in the activity sheet.

You will need scissors, colouring materials, coloured paper and glue.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Introduce the character and tell the story that Jesus told, having the children take the son from home to the inn. Show that he was selfish, spending everything on what he wanted, and not thinking about anyone else; not thinking about the father who had worked for the money he was spending and who might be worried about him. Have him buy a new coat from one of the children.

As you continue the story, have him sell the coat and move to the pigs. Ask the children how they like the job.
2. When he comes back home, ask the children why the father accepted him back. Have them think as much as possible about the how father had felt while he was away, and how glad he was to see him.
3. Stress that Jesus said God is like this father. He loves us just like that. He is sad when we go away from him and glad when we come back and say sorry.
4. Teach the song 'God, Our Father' from Lesson 110.
5. The elder brother's reaction can be brought in here. Use it to teach that God wants us to learn to forgive too.
6. Let the children colour and cut out their own activity sheets. If there is time they could stick them on the coloured paper to form a scene.

Alternative activities

1. Make a set of picture cards for the children to sequence. Let them retell the story.
2. Give each child a bag of money. They can pretend to buy and dress up in some fine clothes and jewels. Throws and curtains make good cloaks. Make some cardboard crowns. Use old beads for jewels, or help the children thread large wooden or plastic beads. Always ensure young children are carefully supervised if they are putting anything around their necks. They can also buy lots of food (Plasticine or playdough, plastic toy food, or some empty boxes), set it out on some paper or plastic plates and have a party. The class could also role play feeding the pigs, travelling home and being welcomed home by Dad. They can then get the robes and food out again and have another party!
3. Make some pig masks from circles of card or paper plates. Stick on some big floppy paper ears and a snout.

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children if they forgive people who say sorry to them, or do they grumble and complain about what the person has done.

Prayer

Ask the children what the son might have prayed on getting back home. Ask who would like to say a prayer to thank God for forgiving us.

Verse

'I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.' Psalm 116:1.