

Children's Ministry Lesson June 14, 2020

Good Morning Children! We made it through another week. The weather is getting warmer, things are finally opening up, and we made it to Stage 2! I hope you are all taking advantage of the sunshine and riding your bikes/scooters, picnicking and parks! These are strange times – yes. Look on the bright side – look how much time you get to spend learning with your family 😊 Look at how connected we've become. Be optimistic. Be safe...but remember to still be children. Ask questions, challenge yourself, and explore! I miss you all!

The Lost Son

This week's lesson is about the lost son. This story is also called "the prodigal son". Prodigal means to spend a lot of money on things you don't need and being very wasteful with what you have. You will see that, that is exactly what this son does.

This is the parable that Jesus told:

There once was a father that had two sons. One day the younger son said to his father, "Father, could you give me my inheritance?" (Inheritance is money the father would give his children after he had died.) So the father thought about it and decided his sons could have the money now, and he split it evenly between them.

Very soon after the younger son received the money, he decided that since he had so much money he would move to a different country and have some fun with it.

When he left, he left for good. He took every last thing he had and didn't plan on returning. He wanted to be grown up and spend all his money how he wanted with no one to tell him what to do.

So he just left. He left a big farm with many hired men with everything he needed, he left his family, and more importantly he left his father who trusted him enough to give him the money. This probably made his father very sad and I'm sure he missed him very much.

While the son was gone he spent all the money he had right away. He didn't think to save any of it. He ate out every meal every day, he bought fancy cars, he threw wild parties and spent money on many other things that God wouldn't be happy with.

After he had spent all his money, the country he was living in became very poor and they hardly had enough food for everyone. It was even worse for people who had no money because food became even more expensive, so it was very hard for poor people to get any food.

The son was in trouble. He had no money, no place to live, he had nothing to eat, so he had to get a job. The only job he could find was feeding pigs. He was so hungry he tried to eat the food that the pigs were eating but his boss caught him and told him if he ever saw him doing that again he would lose his job.

That night as the son was walking home his stomach wouldn't stop growling, he was so hungry. He saw some people walking towards him and he asked them if they could give him any money for food, but no one would give him anything. Everyone was so poor it was hard to share with anyone.

The son went to bed hungry and when he woke up he realized something. When he lived with his father even the hired men had more food than they needed, and now he was starving to death. At that moment he made a plan. He would go back to his father's house and say to him, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I don't deserve to be called your son, so hire me and I will work for you.'

He knew that if he became like a hired man on his father's farm he would still be better off than he was right now. He would always have a warm place to stay and food to eat. So he headed for home.

It took the son a long time to get home, he was just hoping that his dad would let him work at the farm and let him be a hired man. The son was walking up the farm but while he was still a long way off and he could see someone notice him and start to run towards him. He was sure that they must have been expecting someone else, no one would be excited to see him.

As the person got closer he realized it was his father and he was yelling, "My son! My son! You are finally home!" He couldn't believe it. His father threw his arms around him and kissed him. But the son quickly said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I don't deserve to be called your son..." The son wanted to continue but the father said to one of his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the biggest calf and kill it. Let's have a party and celebrate because my son was lost and is found!"

A little while later, the older son was working in the field and heard music and dancing. So he called to one of the servants and asked what was going on. "Your brother has come home and your father is having a party for his return."

This upset the older brother and he refused to go join the party. The father heard that he was upset, so he went to talk to him and invited him to join the party. But the son refused saying, "Look! I have been working for you all these years and I've never disobeyed you. Yet you never had a big party for me to celebrate with my friends. But now my younger brother has come home, spent all the money you gave him, and you kill the biggest calf for him!"

"But, my son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was lost and now he is found."

In this parable the father in the story is just like God. This is how God would be if we ran away from him and we started doing things we shouldn't. He doesn't give up on us when we do things that are wrong, and he will always forgive us if we've truly changed and repent for what we've done.

Now the older brother in this story just shows how most of us would act if this happened to us. I think we would all be upset if our younger brother or sister ran away for a long time and did a whole bunch of bad things and then came home and your parents threw a big party for him.

The father who had been wronged, was forgiving. But the eldest son, who had not been wronged, was unforgiving. In this parable Jesus gives a clear picture of God and what God is like. God is truly kinder than us.

Questions:

Why did the youngest son leave his family?

What did he do with his money?

Did he feel sorry for what he did?

This parable clearly shows the difference between God and humans, and how much God loves us, and how he doesn't hold a grudge. God's grace is so great and so hard to believe compared to the life we live on earth.

Who wouldn't react like the older brother in this parable? Yet the brother wasn't the one who was wronged, it was the father who was wronged but he still chose to forgive his son easily and wholeheartedly.

Ask the children if they have ever asked Jesus for forgiveness?

Was it hard?

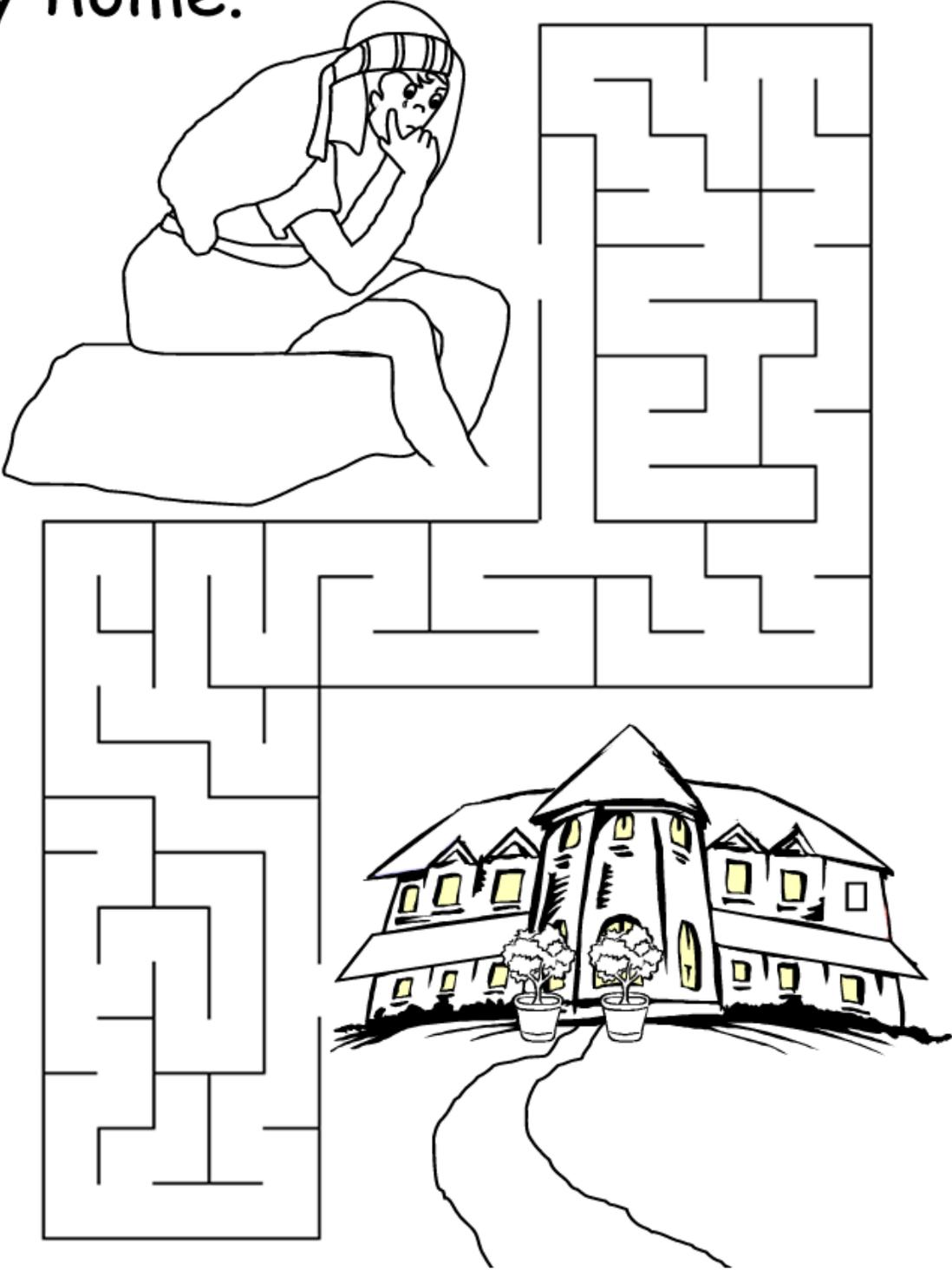
What did they do?

Were they forgiven right away and how did they know they were forgiven?

Encourage the children to ask for forgiveness and remind them that he promises to forgive us of our sins if we ask.

Family Fun: This week we learned how amazing God's love is for us, greater than all of ours put together. Do something special for each of your family members this week. Offer to help set the table or help clean up, give them a big hug and tell them that you love them, or think of something yourself.

Help the prodigal son find the way home.





THE PRODIGAL SON WORD SEARCH

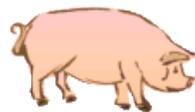


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ANGER
 FATHER
 MONEY
 SERVANTS
 SON

BROTHER
 FORGIVENESS
 PIGS
 SIN
 STARVING



CELEBRATION
 GRACE
 PRODIGAL
 REPENTANCE



For the Younger Kids:

Paper Bag Pig Puppet

Materials:

- printer
- paper
- paper bag
- pink paint or construction paper
- glue
- something to color with
- scissors

Instructions:

- Print out the template of choice.
- Color the pieces as appropriate and cut them out. (Cutting may require adult assistance and can be pre-done).
- See the picture above for how the puppet should look when complete.

GET FAMILIAR WITH YOUR PAPER BAG:

- I'm going to walk through this slowly. Look at your paper bag.
- It should be closed and flat like a piece of paper. Just like when they are brand new.
- On one side, it's all smooth. This will be the **BACK** of your puppet
 - It's important that all the kids get the back and front straight at the beginning!

- On the other side there's a flippy tab (which is typically the bottom of the bag when you're carrying your lunch around...)
 - This flippy tab will be the **HEAD**
- Lift the flippy tab up a bit. Underneath of the tab will be the mouth,
 - When the child put's her hand in the bag, she'll be able to make the puppet talk.
- Look at the rest of the front of the bag. (The 3/4 or so of the bag below the part with the flippy tab) This will be the **BODY**.
- Look at the sides of the bag. There should be a **FLAP** of paper.
 - We'll be slipping the arms into this flap, though it isn't a big deal if they glue them right to the front of the body.
- OK, now that we're comfy with our bags, let's craft!

PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

- Print the template of choice and color in the pieces, as necessary.
- If desired, take a piece of pink construction paper and cut it out to be the size of the body and glue it onto the paper bag.
- Cut another piece the size of the head and glue it onto the bag.
- You can also cut a third piece the size of the back and glue it onto the bag.
- Alternatively, you can paint your whole bag pink
- Lift the flap and glue the mouth on underneath it.



- Glue the eyes, snout, ears and moustache (if you want one) onto the head.
- You could put a cotton ball under the snout to make it stand out a bit from the head.
- Lift the side tab and put on a spot of glue. Attach the arm (or just put the arm on the front of the bag).



- Do the same with the other arm.
- Glue the bow onto the head (girl) or on the body (boy).
- Make the eyelashes. There are instructions on the template for how to do this.
 - Basically, just cut down the dotted lines.
 - Use a pencil to curl them a bit and fold the tab to make it easier to glue the lashes to the pig.
 - You can color the back side with a black marker before you start cutting, if you like.

Cut the tail out in a spiral (follow the template dotted lines).



Turn the bag over and glue the center of the spiral to the bag. Glue the memory verse onto the tummy or in one of the hands. You can decorate your pig further if you like.

Some ideas are

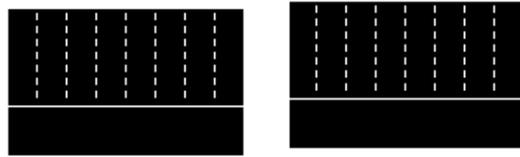
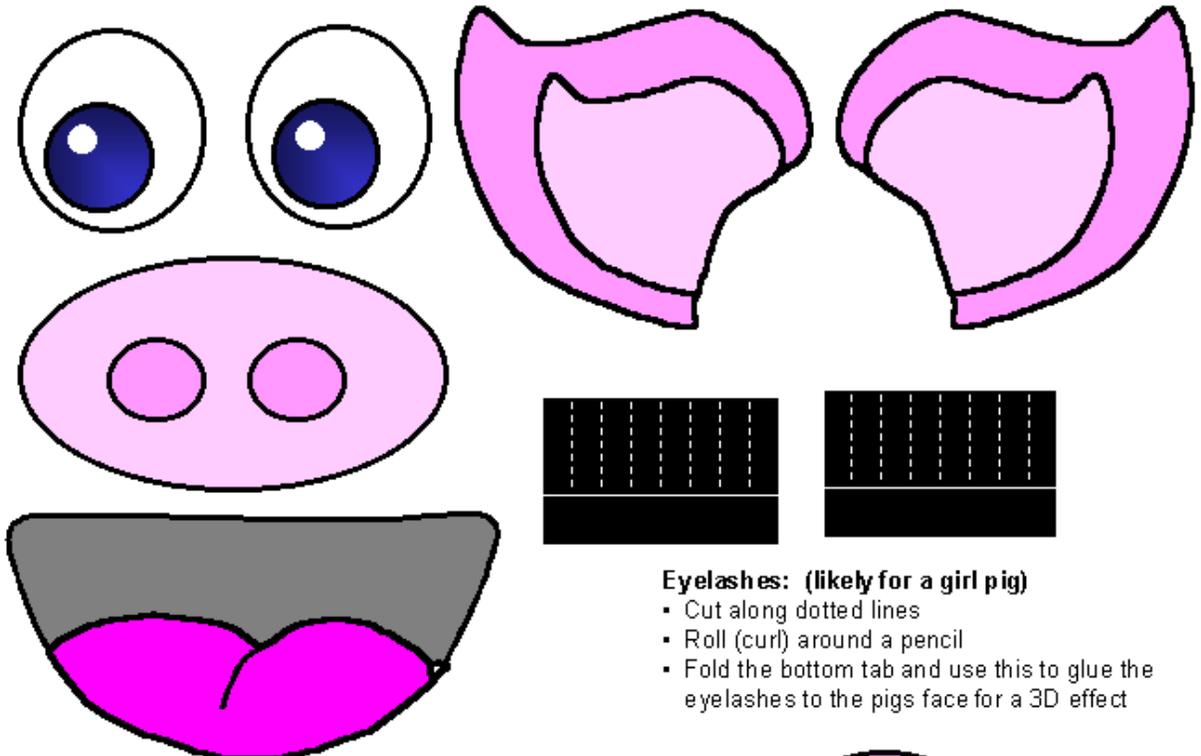
sparkles/sparkle glue (I know you guys love sparkles!!)

bits of lace or ribbon,

buttons glued down the front, or

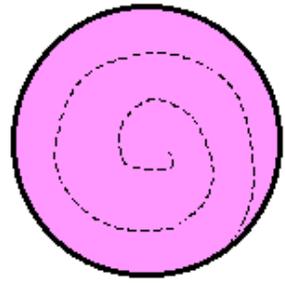
older kids might like to "dress up" their pig with clothes they draw/cut out of construction paper (overalls and a top hat for the boy, a dress and fancy shoes for a girl).



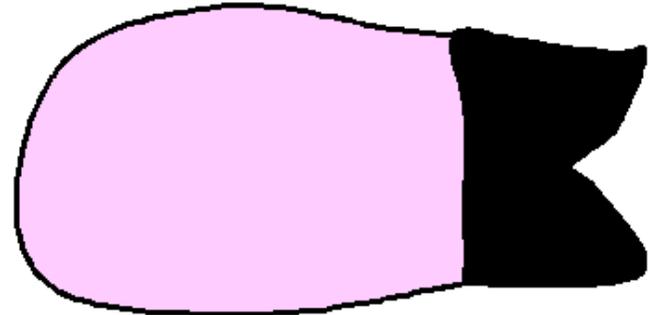
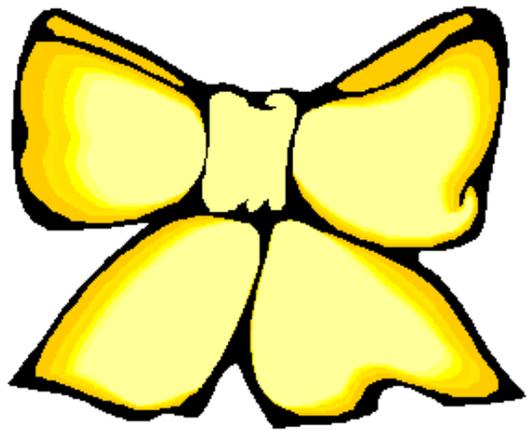
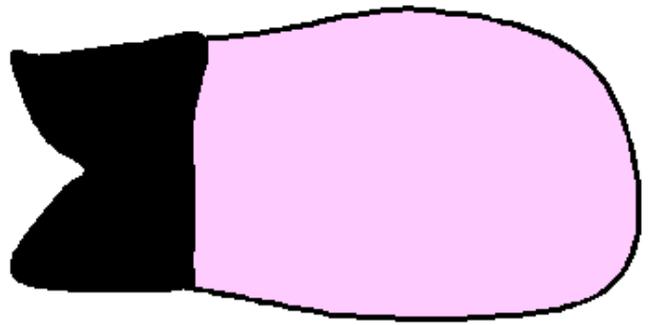


Eyelashes: (likely for a girl pig)

- Cut along dotted lines
- Roll (curl) around a pencil
- Fold the bottom tab and use this to glue the eyelashes to the pigs face for a 3D effect



Cut along dotted line to make a spiral tail



Bow:

- under chin for boy
- in "hair" for girl