

Saying 'sorry' and saying 'that's alright'

Ages 8-11

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Lightlive.org

AIMS

- to help children understand forgiveness
- To encourage children to say 'Sorry' when necessary
- To help children explore the how Jesus was using this parable to highlight how God loves and forgives.

RESOURCES

- A copy of the Picture Sheet for everyone
- Bible Timeline and/or Bibles (contact the AMD team for bible timelines)
- Paper and pens.

1 Find families

Say that today's story is about a family. Challenge the children to use the Bible Timeline (or a Bible) to find as many families in the Bible as they can and note them down. They could work in pairs and make this into a competition. See who can find the family with the most people in it. Find out if any of the children included the family where the younger brother left home. See if they can work out where it would come on the Bible Timeline.

2 Read

Give out Bibles and get everyone to find Luke 15:11–32. Help those who may have difficulty finding it. Say that this is a story Jesus told. People often call this sort of story a parable as it's a story which helps people to think about what it means to belong to God, or to be part of God's kingdom. Choose one or more confident readers to read the Bible verses, encouraging everyone to follow the words and listen carefully.

3 Reflect

Give everyone a copy of the Picture Sheet. Find out from the group what they know about each of the three main characters. Get them to work out who is who and fill in the names on their sheet. Which is their favourite character, and why? Explain that Jesus told stories to help us understand what God is like. Ask the children which character reminds them of God. Get them to fill in that section on the page. Ask them in what ways the father is like God. Take time to let the children's thoughts range widely over possible answers.

Discuss the feelings of the people in the story, such as the shock of the father when his younger son asked for his money; the fun of the parties (until the money ran out);

the despair while the son was working with the pigs; the father's joy as he welcomed his son back home and the elder brother's jealousy. Then get the children to fill in some of the details on their sheets.

4 Mime

Encourage the children to act out the story using the Bible verses as narrative. Choose children to play the parts of the father, the son and the elder brother. If you have a larger group, others can be the servants, friends and pigs!

First rehearse the whole group in the following scenes:

- The son requesting his inheritance from his father.
- The servants working and waving goodbye (at the start of the story).
- The 'friends' partying.
- The pigs eating.
- The father welcoming his younger son home.
- The servants celebrating at the final party.
- The elder brother's reaction to the celebration.

Organise which parts of your room you will use for each scene. Everyone can act out all the group scenes in the same place. In this case the son will need to act out the travelling scenes, returning to the same place he started from.

One or two children might like to be the narrator. Ask the children to make sure they show the feelings of the characters by their acting and facial expressions, especially the father's welcome and the older brother's reaction.

Allow time for the children to present their mime

Gather the children together and ask the following questions, tell them you just want them to think about their answers in silence.

- Why is it important to say sorry?
- Why is it important to forgive other people?
- Who do I need to forgive?

Encourage them to thank God for being like the loving father in the story who was ready to welcome his son back, out loud.