



## Jesus Is Our Teacher – The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

### Jesus is Our Teacher

KEY VERSE:

**“With God, all things are possible” Matthew 19:26, NIRV**

## CHECK-IN

**(until 15 minutes after the start of each service)**

*Purpose: To build relationships with families and help parents feel comfortable leaving their child.*

*As parents check-in their child at your classroom, try to welcome them by name to help them feel secure in leaving their child in your care. Once you’ve completed each of the check-in procedures, welcome the child into your classroom and encourage him/her to play with the classroom toys and activities. If you have LITs in your classroom, this is a great time for them to help engage with the kids while you continue checking in the kids.*

*If a child is upset or reluctant to enter the room, encourage him or her by offering toys, books or other fun items. If a child is still upset, let the parents know that we will text them if their child continues to be upset. Then, offer to carry the child into the classroom and try to calm the child with toys or other activities.*

*Use the “Connect” reminder (listed below) to help kids feel comfortable and safe in your class!*

## CONNECT WITH KIDS

*Purpose: Building relationships & prioritizing safety for our youngest children.*

Our goal, first and foremost, when serving babies and young toddlers is to prioritize building trusting relationships and the feeling of safety. We build trust with our littlest kids by meeting needs and helping them learn that church is a secure place where they are loved, known and safe.

**The 4 Ss are a simple way to keep our hearts and minds focused on this:**

When a child feels...*(most of the time)*

**SAFE:** physically and emotionally

**SEEN:** known and understood

**SOOTHED:** calmed and supported

They can become **SECURE**.

## EXPLORE ACTIVITY

**(10 minutes)**

*The Explore Activity is a chance to get the kids thinking about the upcoming Bible story for the day. Encourage your kids to engage with the activity as they prepare for the lesson.*

### Discuss: The Prodigal Son

In today's lesson, we are going to learn about how a son ran away from home and then came back.

**Say:** Today, Jesus is going to teach us a lesson! We're going to hear about an unhappy boy. Let me see your unhappy faces! Oh! those are pretty good. Today we are going to learn about a boy who was unhappy. He wanted to run away from home and find a better life.

**Say:** That made his dad very sad. Let me see your sad faces! When the boy came back, his dad ran to meet him and gave him a big hug. Give yourself a big hug!

### PLAY: Run Away

**Supplies:** none

**Directions:** Have all the kids make a line, and leaders stand with the kids. Then, pick one kid to run away. Tell the kid running away to say bye and run to the other side of the room. Then, call the child back by saying, "\_\_\_\_\_, come home!" Child should walk quickly back to the leader. As the kid comes back to the line, all the class can say, "Welcome home!" and teacher can give the child a big hug. Repeat until each child plays.

**Say:** *I am so glad you came to church today. We're going to play a little game to help us learn our story for the day. I need everyone to line up together, and we're going to take turns pretending to be the "prodigal son". That's a big word, let's say that together – prodigal son. Ready? prodigal son.*

## CLEAN UP

**(5 minutes)**

*Have the children begin cleaning up as you transition into Large Group time. All the toys should be put away by the end of clean up time.*

Try singing: “Clean up, clean up, everybody do your share. Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere.”

## LARGE GROUP

(15 minutes)

After clean up, have your class gather around the story time rug/blanket/squares and Hamilton’s house for Large Group time. .

### WELCOME & PRAYER

Tell the kids you are so excited to have them joining you this morning and give them a brief explanation of Large Group and the expectations of them during this time. After going over the expectations, pray to open large group time.

## WORSHIP

*Purpose: Engage our youngest children through the power of music!*

Use the Little Kids music videos on Plex (Miss Mindy) to sing some simple songs with your class. To access these videos, go to Plex > Videos > EC > 2s/3s folder.

- *My God is so Big*
- *Jesus Loves Me*

## READ A BIBLE STORY

*Purpose: Engage our youngest children in a meaningful way by teaching God’s word!*

This week, read about a story about The Prodigal Son in *Jesus Calling Bible Storybook pages: 172-173*.

### **BIG IDEA:**

**Jesus is our Teacher. God loves us so much, and He is so happy when we return to Him!**

As you read, try to engage the child(ren) even more by pointing to the pictures as you read, allowing the kids to turn the page or repeating key words and phrases. It’s ok if you don’t read every word on the page! Kids have very short attention spans (1 minute for each year of age) so try to keep your interactions short and don’t get discouraged if a child loses focus!

**BIBLE STORY (5-7 minutes)**

**THIS WEEK'S LESSON: The Prodigal Son**

Using the props and Hamilton puppet, tell the story for the day. Make sure to keep it brief and engaging by asking the kids questions throughout and using Hamilton to keep their attention.

**Invite Hamilton to come out and see the class. Put a small toy behind Hamilton before class or hide it somewhere in the classroom. Hamilton is shaking his head and looking around.**

**Say:** What's wrong Hamilton? *He whispers in your ear.* Oh no, you lost your favorite toy? What does it look like? **Hamilton whispers to you.** Now you describe the "lost" toy. Hamilton, would you like us to help you find your lost toy? **Hamilton nods energetically.** Friends, stay seated and look with your eyes. Do you see Hamilton's lost toy? **Send an LIT or one of the children to retrieve it. Hamilton runs to the toy and gives it a big hug. They dance around for joy. Put Hamilton and his toy away.**

**Say:** Friends, that reminds me of a story that Jesus told. He is our teacher and teaches us things through the stories He tells.

**Read the story, The Prodigal Son in Jesus Calling Bible Storybook, pages 172-173.**

**Say:** The son ran away. He made lots of wrong choices. He did bad things, but then he decided to go home again.

**Say:** That dad missed his son every day. When he saw his son coming home, he RAN out to meet him. He gave him good food and had a party for him. Everyone danced and was happy. You know, that is how God is. Like the dad in our story. He is so happy when we come to him. He loves us so much.

**Say:** Let's have a dance party now! **Choose a peppy happy song and dance along with all the kids.**

**SAY IT OUT LOUD! (30 seconds)**

*This is the opportunity to remind the children of the God Statement for the day. Even if they struggle to pay attention during the lesson, this part is important to do every week.*

We are learning that **Jesus is our Teacher.** (Have the kids shout it out together multiple times).

**WORSHIP RESPONSE (2 minutes)**

Worship Response is an opportunity for the kids to apply what they just learned and to respond to what God is doing in their life. *Have the kids sit in a place where they can be still and reflect independently.* Then read through the Worship Response prompts below as you lead the kids through the time.

**Encourage class to sit quietly.**

**Say:** We all do wrong things and make bad choices. What should we do when that happens?

**Say:** We run to God! We tell Him we are sorry. He is so happy when we do that. Can you think of a time when you made a bad choice and did something wrong? You can tell God sorry right now. Let's do that together:

*I'm sorry, God.*

**Say:** Let's sit for a moment and feel God's happiness. He loves you so much.

## **BLESSING (1 minute)**

*Read the verse and blessing over the kids before closing Large Group. Encourage the kids to stand and open their hands to receive the blessing as a truth that they can take with them this week and hide in their hearts.*

***Say:** Friends, always remember that we all do wrong things and make bad choices. You can tell God right away that you are sorry. He forgives you. He loves you!*

## **CLOSING ACTIVITIES**

**(Until parents pickup)**

### **MAKE: Coloring Sheet**

***Supplies:** coloring sheet and crayons*

**Directions:** Encourage the kids to use the crayons to color their pages as bright and colorful as they can. Make sure to send the paper home if they don't have time to color, so that parents can see what they learned from the day.

***Say:** Let's color this picture to help us remember the story!*

**While you are working with each child, ask:**

- Who is this? Yes, that's the son! He made bad choices.
- Who is this? Yes, that's the father. He loves his son so much!
- God loves each of us so much too! Show me with your arms how much you think God loves you.

## **PLAY!**

***Purpose:** Engage our youngest children by playing games and having fun!*

While your class can participate in free play for most of the remaining classroom time, please try to

lead at least one structured activity with your class. This is a great opportunity to introduce kids to classroom games and encourage interaction and participation with others.

**Suggestions of activities:**

- Hide an object and let kids find it
- Name and count parts of the body
- Discuss colors & numbers
- Turn on music and play freeze dance
- Have kids follow simple instructions (hop, sit down, clap, etc.)
- Read a board book
- Build a tower and let kids knock it down
- Play with a ball

## **CHECK-OUT**

### **(end of service)**

As parents arrive for check-out, the kids can continue participating in free play. Follow the check-out procedures for your classroom, making sure to send all of the child's belongings (diaper bag, bottle/sippy cup, pacifier, blanket, etc.) with the parent.

Give the parent encouragement about how the child did in your class and say "Bye (child's name)!"



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