

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

4 YEAR OLDS

TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 1

The Father



The Father

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that God is truly their Father, and they have all the benefits that come with God being their Father.

Key Verses

Luke 15:11-24—Main Teaching Passage

Luke 11:1-4, 11-13

John 20:17

Romans 8:15

Hebrews 12:4-11

Memory Verse - Psalm 97:9 (July Memory Verse)

"For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods."

Hook

Ask the students why they think God gives us a father. What qualities would make the perfect father? Then ask if they know anyone who has all these qualities. Would they want this perfect father to be their father? Try to be sensitive to the fact that some of the kids might not have a father in their lives.

Inform the kids that there is such a perfect Father: God. And there's even better news: if you are a believer, he is *your* Father!

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray in Luke 11:1-4, He revealed something incredible: we get to call God, “Father”! This reality is again stated in John 20:17, when He refers to the Father as, “My Father and your Father,” and Romans 8:15 says that believers have received the Spirit of adoption, so we can call God, “Father”.

But what kind of Father is God? Luke 15:11-24 shows us. In this passage, Jesus tells a story about a man with two sons. The younger son didn’t want to live with his father anymore, so he asked his father for money and moved far away. There he lived a life of sin and wasted his money on bad stuff. When he ran out of money, there was a famine that left him with nothing to eat, and so he got a job feeding pigs. He was so poor and hungry that he was jealous of the pigs’ slop.

In this sad state of affairs, he decided to return home, apologize to his father, and ask to be a servant in his father’s house. But when his father saw him coming, he ran to greet him. He gave his son his best robe and a fancy ring. He told his servants to make a great feast. He celebrated and rejoiced that his son was home, forgiving him of all he had done! He refused his son’s offer of taking him back as a servant, instead restoring his place as his beloved son.

LOOK

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

A couple of weeks ago, we learned that God’s name is Yahweh. But did you know that the Bible gives God many other names? Over the next few months, we will be looking at some of the many different names of God, starting today with “Father.”

When Jesus was on earth, He often referred to God as His Father. This makes sense, as He is the Son of God. But in the Scriptures we read today, we see an incredible truth: when we get invited into God’s family, and He adopts us as sons and daughters, so we can call God “Father” too! Now it’s important to point out that this adoption is not just a metaphor. God is not just “like a Father to us.” We do not speak “as if God were our Father, though in reality He is not.” God is really, truly our Father, just as much and even more so than our earthly fathers. Just like Jesus prayed, we can call God our Father in Heaven!

But what kind of Father is He? After all, on earth some people have good fathers, and others have not-so-good fathers. But God is the perfect Father! As we saw in our story today, He loves us with an incredible love. He forgives us even when we sin against Him. Even if we turn our back on Him, He will never stop loving us. He is a Father who loves to give good

LOOK (Continued)

gifts to His children (Luke 11:11-13). He takes care of us, protects us, and watches over us. He is the perfect Father!

Because God has adopted us as sons and daughters, we as believers receive the awesome benefits of having God as our Father. As Jesus did (Luke 11:1-4), we can come to God with our prayer requests, knowing that He delights to love and take care of His children. We can trust that He will take care of and provide for us. Being sons and daughters also means that God will discipline us when we need it (Hebrews 12:4-11), but even in that we can rejoice, because God only disciplines His children because He loves us and does not want us to do anything that might hurt us. Finally, as sons and daughters, the Father has given us with Christ all that He has.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking how we know that God is our Father. Ask what it means for us that God is our Father.

Pray: Thank God for being our Father and giving us all the benefits that come with that. Take prayer requests from the students and offer them up to your loving Father, knowing that He loves to take care of His children.

Parent Question: Is God truly our Father? What does that mean for us?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 15:11-24 by David Guzik

1. ([Luk 15:11-16](#)) How the son came to be lost.

Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.’ So he divided to them *his* livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.”

a. **A certain man had two sons:** The majority of this third parable speaks of the younger of the two sons, but the older brother is clearly and importantly addressed at the end of the parable.

b. **Give me the portion of goods that falls to me:** In those days a father could either grant the inheritance before or after his death, but it was usually done *after* (Geldenhuys). The younger son asked for a special exception, motivated by foolishness and greed.

i. The father clearly illustrates God’s love. His love allowed rebellion and in some sense respected human will. The father knew that the son made a foolish and greedy request, yet allowed him to go his course nonetheless.

c. **Journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living:** The son left the area to become independent of the father and lived a **prodigal** (reckless, foolish, extravagant) life. No doubt it was fun while it lasted.

d. **When he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in the land:** The son was completely to blame for the wasteful, foolish living and spending. He was not to blame for the **severe famine**, but was afflicted by it nevertheless.

e. **He began to be in want...he sent him into his fields to feed swine:** Driven by hunger and need, the son accepted work that was unacceptable and offensive to any righteous Jewish person because swine were unclean under the law ([Leviticus 11:7](#)).

f. **No one gave him anything:** The misery of the prodigal son moves our sympathy. Yet his misery drove him to the good resolution described in the following verse.

2. ([Luk 15:17-19](#)) The lost son’s decision to return to his father.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’”

a. **But when he came to himself:** In his misery the prodigal son was finally able to think clearly. Before it

might be said that he wasn't really himself and thought as another man; then **he came to himself**.

i. In his rebellion and disobedience, he wasn't **himself**. "In his years of riot he was not himself. It was not the prodigal who was the real man. The real man was the penitent, not the prodigal." (Morrison)

ii. In his clear thinking he didn't think of how to improve conditions in the pigpen. He didn't blame his father, his brother, his friends, his boss, or the pigs. He recognized his misery without focusing on it, and instead focused on his **father**.

b. **I will arise and go to my father**: Jesus didn't say that the man thought of his village or his home, but of his **father**. When the son returned to the father, he also came back to the village and to the house; but his focus was on returning to his **father**.

i. That is how we need to come back to God – to come back to *Him* first and foremost, before coming back to church or coming back to Christian friends.

c. **Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants**: In his prepared speech to his father, the son showed his complete sense of unworthiness and an honest confession of sin. He would not even ask to be treated as a son, but as a hired servant.

i. **"I have sinned against heaven and before you"** shows a complete change of thinking. He didn't think like this before; now he made no attempt to justify or excuse his sin.

ii. "The ordinary slave was in some sense a member of the family, but the hired servant could be dismissed at a day's notice. He was not one of the family at all." (Barclay)

iii. The lost son *demonstrated* the repentance Jesus specifically spoke of in the previous parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. After his misery, he thought completely differently about his father, himself, and his home. The son asked for two things: First, "Father, *give me*;" then, "Father, *make me*." Only the second request brought joy.

3. ([Luk 15:20-24](#)) The father joyfully receives the lost son.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."

a. **And he arose and came to his father**: The prodigal first *thought*; but he didn't stop at thinking. He didn't just feel sorry and think about repenting; he actually did it.

i. "Some of you whom I now address have been thinking, and thinking, and thinking, till I fear that you will think yourselves into perdition. May you, by divine grace, be turned from thinking to believing, or else your thoughts will become the undying worm of your torment." (Spurgeon)

ii. "He did not go back to the citizen of that country and say, 'Will you raise my wages? If not, I must leave.' Had he parleyed he had been lost; but he gave his old master no notice, he concerned his indentures by running away. I would that sinners here would break their league with death, and violate their covenant with hell, by escaping for their lives to Jesus, who receives all such runaways." (Spurgeon)

b. **But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion:** The father's love waited and never forgot. It was a love that fully received, not putting the son on probation. This was especially remarkable because the son had disgraced the family by his prodigal living.

i. "The depth of the son's repentance is matched only by the depth of the father's love." (Pate)

c. **Ran and fell on his neck and kissed him:** The intensity of the father's reception was indicated by the fact that he **ran** (unusual for grown men in those cultures) and that he repeatedly **kissed him** (indicated by the original grammar, according to Morris).

d. **Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight:** The son began to recite his prepared speech; yet it seemed that the father didn't even hear it. Instead, he commanded that the prodigal youth be treated like a son, and not like a servant.

e. **Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it:** None of the four things brought to the repentant prodigal were necessities; they were all meant to honor the son and make him know he was loved. The father did much more than merely meet the son's needs.

f. **And they began to be merry:** It was a happy thing to find the lost sheep and the lost coin. It was much more happy to find the lost son. They had a wonderful party with special clothing, jewelry, and food. It wasn't just finding a lost son; it was as if he were back from the **dead**.