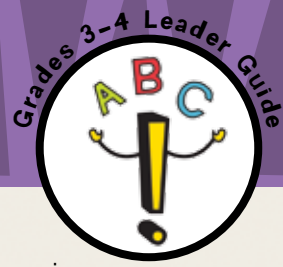


# THE PRODIGAL SON



**God loves us, even when we don't deserve it.**

## KEY VERSE

"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

**Luke 15:24**

## STORY AT A GLANCE

### Father

- His sons will inherit his wealth and property when he dies.
- Runs to greet his son's return, even though running was considered undignified for a patriarch.
- In ancient Jewish culture, a boy who dishonored his family would be shamed in a public ceremony, but this father gives his son a celebration when he comes home!
- Shows his lost son radical forgiveness.



### Prodigal Son

- Acts like he wants his father dead when he asks for his inheritance early.
- Unwisely spends all his money without planning for the future.
- Shames himself and his family with his actions.
- Offers to work as a common laborer when he comes home, but his father gives him gifts (a robe, a ring, and sandals) that show he has been welcomed home.



### Brother

- Has special privileges and will receive a larger share of the inheritance because he is the oldest son.
- Dutifully stays at home to help run his father's farm.
- Resents his brother for running away, and resents his father for not punishing him. Ancient Jewish law says that men of the town could kill rebellious children (Deut 21:18-21).
- Rivalry between brothers is a common theme in the Bible.



### Pigs

- Unclean animals according to Jewish law. Only someone at rock bottom would choose to be a swineherd.
- Owned by Gentiles only. It was taboo for a Jew to work for a Gentile like the prodigal son does.



### Jesus

- Told this parable to illustrate God's forgiveness toward those who rebel and return.
- Speaking to a group of outcasts and sinners. The Pharisees and scribes did not approve of this (Lk 15:1-2).



## Supplies:



Holy Moly DVD



Holy Moly Leaflets



Connect Bibles



Markers



Scissors



Glue Sticks



Wrapped Candy

(10–15 min.)

## DISCOVER

### Get Ready

Bring wrapped candies to share with kids. Ask if they want the treat now or later.

- Why do you want the candy now?
- Why might you prefer to wait until later?
- What does it mean to be patient?
- Why is it hard to wait for something?
- I wonder what might happen if you could take two but could only eat one right now.

### Introduce the Characters

- This is a story about God's kind of love. It's there no matter what you do.
- You'll see a father and two sons.
- One son, who has trouble waiting, moves away with lots of money and comes back with nothing.
- The other son follows all the rules and helps his father.
- The father loves them both the same.



### Play The Prodigal Son Video



**Watch for what the older brother does when the younger brother comes home.**

*If time permits, watch it again!*

(5–10 min.)

## RELATE

### Talk about The Prodigal Son Video

- How did the father feel when the son asked for money and left?
- What happened when he ran out of money?
- I wonder what he thought would happen when he came back to his father's house.
- Why was the older brother angry?
- What does it mean to love someone the same amount but in different ways?
- How is that like God?



(5–10 min.)

## CONNECT

### Open the Connect Bible

Help kids find and mark Luke 15:24 on page 1190.

Luke 15 includes 3 stories, or parables, Jesus told people about things someone lost, but then found. Look for other lost story titles in your Bible.

- What is the most special thing you have lost? How long did you look for it? Did you ever find it?

Do the Luke 15:11-32 Connect Bible activity on page 1191.

- The word *prodigal* is often used to describe the younger son in this story. *Prodigal* means someone who spends money foolishly.
- How do we know if we are spending money wisely or foolishly?
- How might waiting before buying something help you spend wisely?





**PRODIGAL-SON BOOMERANG:** Kids make a boomerang reminding them that with God's love all situations can turn around and boomerang back.

1



Draw or write about times you feel lost and alone.

2



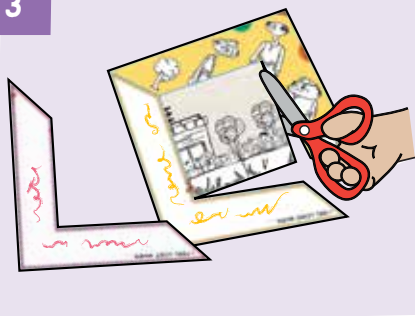
Draw or write about how someone helps you remember you are loved.

### Holy Moly!

The younger brother felt lost and alone when his money was gone. But he discovered his father loved him just as much as before.

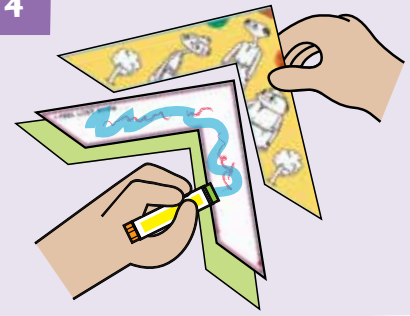
- When do you feel like you're all alone?
- Who or what helps you remember you are loved?

3



Cut out all 3 boomerang pieces.

4



Glue all 3 pieces together so "Lost" piece is hidden in the middle.

5



Put your index finger on center point and thumb on "Left thumb" or "Right thumb" mark. Angle center point upward toward corner of ceiling. Gently flick your wrist to toss like a flying disc.

### Holy Moly!

The boomerang keeps coming back. Like the father forgave his boomerang son, God's love is unconditional. It's always there, no matter what we do.

- I wonder what the son felt ashamed about.
- What are signs of unconditional love in your life?
- Talk about God's unconditional love.

6



Keep trying!

## ACTIVITY TIPS

### Fewer kids?

Ask each kid to talk about a time they made a mistake like the younger brother or were unwilling to forgive like the older brother. Remind kids neither brother does everything perfectly.

### Less time?

Kids trace their finger on the figure-8 pattern on the leaflet to get the feeling of returning back to the starting point. Practice flying boomerangs at home.

### More kids?

Kids work in teams to create a game using the boomerang as a key element.

### More time?

Kids pair up to retell the story using the pictures on their boomerang and on both sides of the square leftover from the boomerang patterns.

## CLOSING PRAYER

**God who loves us always,**

**Like a boomerang returns to the person who throws it, we turn to your never-ending love. Thank you for loving everyone, no matter what they do.**

**Amen!**

