

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Parable Picnic

The Prodigal Son





Welcome!

Friends, we made it! Today is the final session in our online Vacation Bible School series. During the past five weeks, we journeyed across the roads of Israel and Sea of Galilee, learned about prayer and our part in growing the Kingdom of God. Today we wrap it up by talking about the Father's generous gift of mercy.

I hope you have enjoyed these weeks as much I have! It has been a lot of fun to share this time with you learning about Jesus' parables. Thank you for your participation and prayers. You are welcome to print the participation certificate on the next page, fill in your child's name, and hang it on the refrigerator as a reminder of our time together.

This packet provides additional resources to supplement our online events. You are welcome to print these pages and use them within your family. Please note that you do not need to print the pages to participate in the online events. Everything included here is optional and you may use it in the way that best meets the needs of your family. (Tip: If you want to save some ink, just print page 10!)

We invite you to pour yourself a glass of lemonade, serve a plate of juicy watermelon to the kids, and join our parable picnics!

Table of Contents

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Completion Certificate
- 3 Parables of The Prodigal Son
- 4 The Parable in Art
- 5 Extend the Adventure
- 6 Reflections
- 7 Prayer Journal for Kids
- 8 Prayer Journal for Teens
- 9 Prayer Journal for Adults
- 10 Quick Print Page (condensed content, grayscale)



Parable Picnic

Vacation Bible School



Certificate of Participation

presented to

Summer 2020



Hosted by
Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish

Extend the Adventure



Click the underlined links below for additional resources & activities.

Enjoy the free resources provided by [Formed.org](https://www.formed.org).
Books, audio, articles, movies are available on this website.
Parish code: DHDYBY

Seek the Father's mercy in the sacrament of confession. Help your children to prepare with this [5 step guide](#). If anxiety causes your little one to worry about confession, check out [this resource](#).

Help the prodigal son to make his way home with [this maze](#).

Look far and wide to find everything in this [word search](#).

Read Shel Silverstein's book *The Giving Tree* to coordinate with this [activity & discussion guide](#).

Adults can read Henri Nouwen's book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* and listen to the [Abiding Together](#) podcast series of reflections about it.

Create an obstacle course with things you find around the house and yard. The Prodigal Son encountered many obstacles on his journey and probably returned home with many stories to tell. Take your kids through an obstacle course using whatever you have on hand. Which obstacles are hardest? Which prevent you from returning to the start?

Share with us!

Adults can share pictures, completed projects, videos, and your own picnic using the hashtag [#parablepicnic](#) or email a copy to meghan.svatora@gmail.com.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15: 11-32

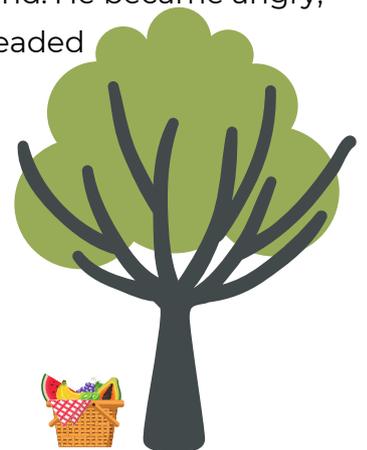
Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'



The Parable in Art



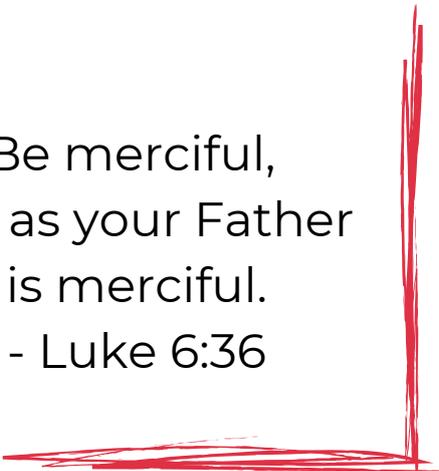
Questions to spark discussion:

The Return of the Prodigal Son
Rembrandt
c. 1661-1669

- What do you notice in this painting?
- What do you think is the most important part of this artwork?
- What do you recognize in this scene?
- How would you describe this artwork to someone who could not see it?
- What title would you give to this painting?
- Pretend that you are inside this painting. How do you feel?
- What do you think is important to remember from this painting?
- How would you describe the lines in this painting?
- What do you think is the most important part of this painting? Why?

Reflections

Be merciful,
just as your Father
is merciful.
- Luke 6:36



Leaving home is, then, much more than an historical event bound to time and place. It is a denial of the spiritual reality that I belong to God with every part of my being, that God holds me safe in an eternal embrace, that I am indeed carved in the palms of God's hands and hidden in their shadows. Leaving home means ignoring the truth that God has "fashioned me in secret, moulded me in the depths of the earth and knitted me together in my mother's womb." Leaving home is living as though I do not yet have a home and must look far and wide to find one.

Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests" - the same voice that gave life to the first Adam and spoke to Jesus, the second Adam; the same voice that speaks to all the children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light.

- *Henri Nouwen, The Return of the Prodigal Son*



In any situation of life, I must not forget that I will never cease to be a child of God, to be a son of the Father who loves me and awaits my return. Even in the worst situation of life, God waits for me, God wants to embrace me, God expects me.

- *Pope Francis, General Audience, 11 May 2016*

Prayer Journal for Kids

"I am beloved."

Draw a picture of yourself in the middle of the page. Around the picture write words that describe how God feels about you.

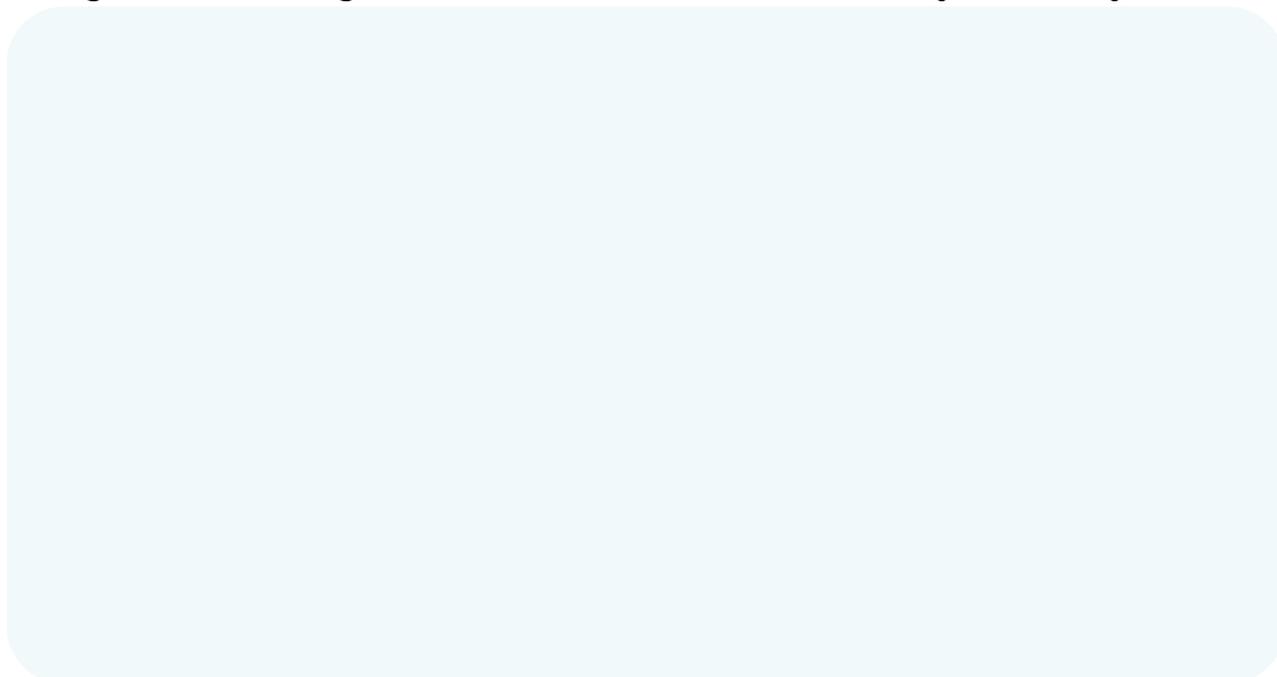
Some of these words may be difficult to accept or we may not see ourselves in the same way that God sees us. For example: loved, strong, creative, forgiven, honest, good character

Prayer Journal for Teens

God Is... Think about the attributes of God that Jesus reveals to us in his parables. Draw or write some of these attributes. What do you love most?

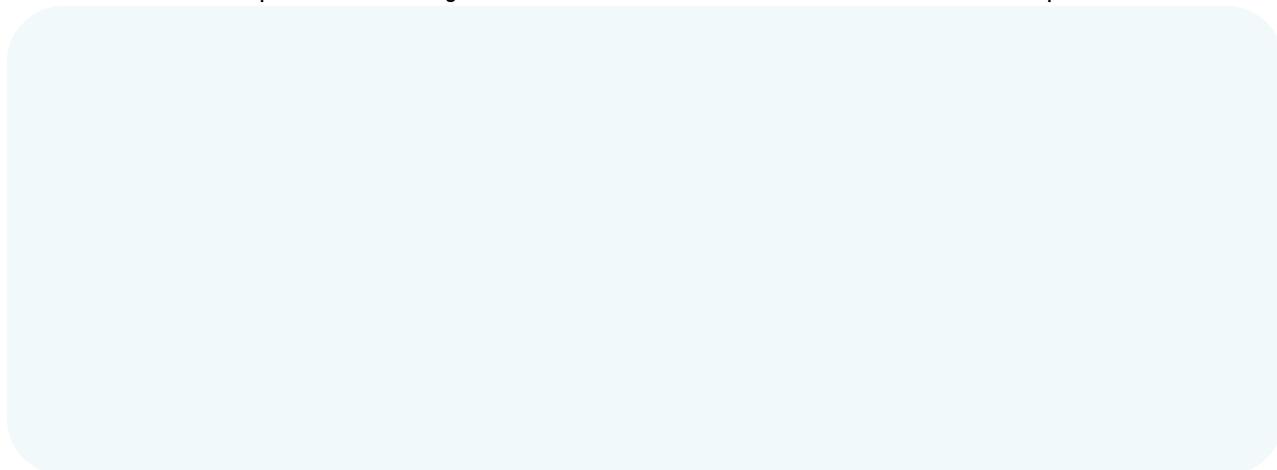


Think of a story you have read that grabbed your attention and changed your way of thinking. What was surprising about it? What beliefs or long-held thoughts did it change? What valuable truths did the story reveal to you?

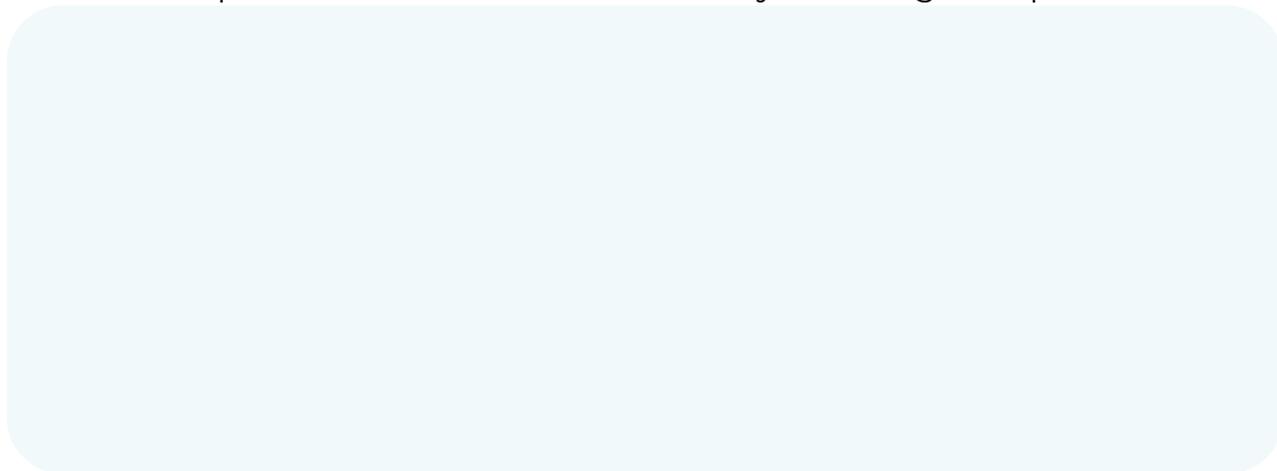


Prayer Journal for Adults

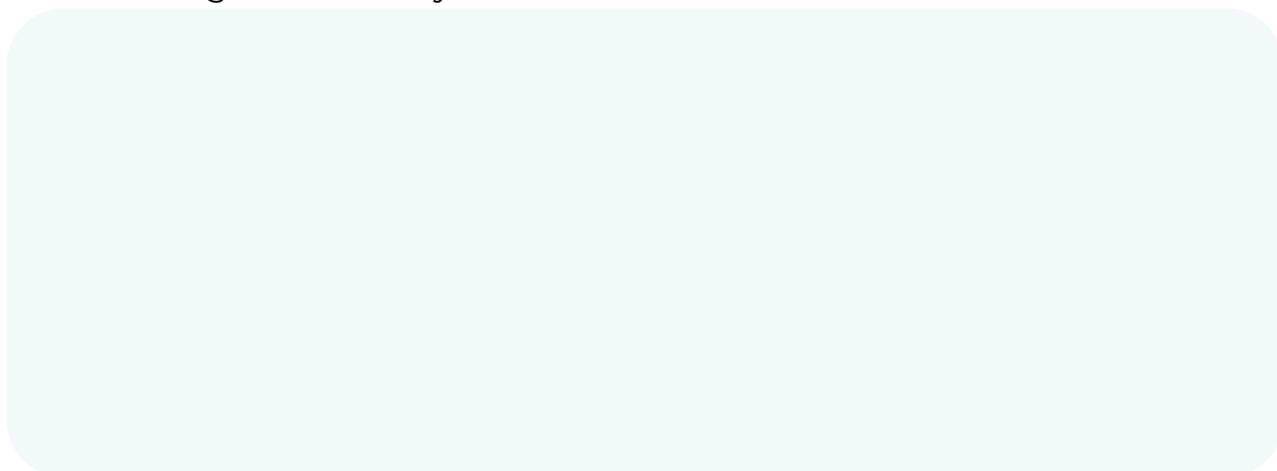
What does this parable tell you about some of God the Father's qualities?



What new aspect of God has been revealed to you through the parables?

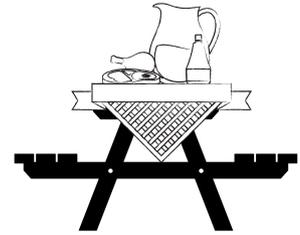


When you think about the parables that Jesus told, which of them grab the attention and tug at your conscience? In what ways do they make you pause and see things more clearly?



Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Parable Picnic



The Prodigal Son

Questions for praying, journaling, & talking around the dinner table:

- I am beloved: Draw a picture of yourself in the middle of the page. Around the picture write words that describe how God feels about you. Some of these words may be difficult to accept or we may not see ourselves in the same way that God sees us. For example: loved, strong, creative, forgiven, good character
- God Is... Think about the attributes of God that Jesus reveals to us in his parables. Draw or write some of these attributes. What do you love most?
- Think of a story you have read that grabbed your attention and changed your way of thinking. What was surprising about it? What beliefs or long-held thoughts did it change? What valuable truths did the story reveal to you?
- What was surprising in this parable?
- What does this parable tell you about some of God the Father's qualities?
- What new aspect of God has been revealed to you through the parables?
- When you think about the parables that Jesus told, which of them grab the attention and tug at your conscience? In what ways do they make you pause and see things more clearly?

Discussion prompts when talking about Rembrandt's painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son*:

- What do you notice in this painting?
- What do you think is the most important part of this artwork?
- What do you recognize in this scene?
- How would you describe this artwork to someone who could not see it?
- What title would you give to this painting?
- Pretend that you are inside this painting. How do you feel?
- What do you think is important to remember from this painting?
- How would you describe the lines in this painting?
- What do you think is the most important part of this painting? Why?