



MARCH THEME

FIX IT UP

BIBLE STORY

Luke 15:11-24 (25-32)

Dude, Where's My Son? | The Prodigal Son

Spark Story Bible | pg. 378-383

BOTTOM LINE

Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me

MEMORY VERSE

"Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive just as the Lord forgave you."

Colossians 3:13, NIV

LIFE APP

Forgiveness | Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **FORGIVENESS** and God's character, as shown through God's big story

This WEEK: We continue our look at forgiveness with one of Jesus' most well known parables. In **Luke 15:11-24 [plus 25-32 to finish out the story]**, Jesus talks about a kid who thinks he's got it all together. He demands half of his dad's money and takes off to spend it on himself. It's only when the money is gone he realizes he's made a HUGE mistake and needs forgiveness. He's got just one hope: that his dad will let him come home and be a servant.

Bottom Line: Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. Realizing one's need for forgiveness is a huge step for anyone. But through Jesus' story, we hope kids realize that everyone needs forgiveness, even them.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to help each of you see where you could ask for forgiveness and that you would have the courage to do so.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: Copy paper, markers

What You Do:

- Hand out copy paper and markers. Ask kids to draw a picture of their home. As they do this, ask the following questions:
 - What does your house look like?
 - Who lives at your house?
 - Do you have any pets?
 - What's your favorite part about your home?
 - What's your least favorite part?
 - What do you like to do at home?
 - Would you rather stay at home or go somewhere else?.

•• EVERYONE!

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Make sure everybody is sitting around the table and remove any extra chairs. Have one person stand up and remove that chair as well.



- Tell the group that you are going to play a game called “Everyone!” The person standing must make an “Everyone” statement that is true of themselves, like “Everyone with sneakers on.” Then everyone who is wearing sneakers must get up and find a new spot—including the person who made the statement!
- The kid left without a seat gives the next statement.
- Kids will probably need help coming up with “Everyone” statements. Be prepared to give them some category hints to help if they get stumped:

Sports (“Everyone who plays soccer” or “Everyone who owns a basketball”)

Hobbies (“Everyone who plays the piano” or “Everyone who loves to dance”)

Food (“Everyone who loves chocolate ice cream” or “Everyone who hates spaghetti”)

Places (“Everyone who has been to Disney World” or “Everyone who has been to the zoo”)

Family (“Everyone with a brother” or “Everyone who has a grandparent living in Minnesota”)

Animal (“Everyone with a dog for a pet” or “Everyone who loves dolphins”)

What You Say: “That was fun! In our game today, everyone who had something in common with the kid standing had to get up and move! But if you didn’t have that in common with the person standing, you had to stay seated. **[Transition] Today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship, we’ll hear/we heard about something that truly is for EVERYONE!**”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Large Group Worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

•• PARABLE IN PICTURES *(application activity / review the Bible story)*

What You Need: “Prodigal Son” activity pages

What You Do:

- Place the activity pages in the center of the table and instruct kids to stand around the table.
- Guide kids to start walking in a circle around the table. Periodically call a kid’s name out and let her pick an activity page.
- Continue until all the papers have been retrieved.
- Work together as a group to put the items in order and retell the story.
 - Money: The son asks his dad for his share of the inheritance.
 - Backpack: The son packs up and leaves for a far-off place.
 - Food: For a while, life is good. He has plenty of food and fun.
 - Empty wallet: Then all the money runs out and he finds himself alone in a far-off place.
 - Pig: Soon he takes a job working for a farmer feeding pigs. Yuck!
 - Cornucopia: He is SO hungry that he considers eating the feed that he’s giving to the pigs. Double yuck!
- Ask the kids to tell you what happens next in the story. Did the young man stay in that terrible situation? What did he decide to do? What happened when he returned home? How did his father react to his return?

What You Say: “In our Bible story today, the young man made some pretty bad choices. But check this out; in Luke 15:20 the Bible says: *“While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20 NIV).* The father forgave his son! Jesus told this story because he wanted us to know that God

is like that father; God always forgives. And trust me, I need forgiveness too.

[Make It Personal] (Tell your group about a time you messed up and needed forgiveness. Remember to keep the example age appropriate.) “You know, **[Bottom Line]** everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. I’m so thankful I was forgiven when I messed up in that story I told. And the truth is, you mess up too. But the good news is you can always count on God because God is just like the Father in our Bible story today. God will always forgive you when you ask. Remember **[Bottom Line]** everyone needs to be forgiven, even me.”

•• **FORGIVENESS Pictionary** (application activity)

What You Need: Copy paper, pens

What You Do:

- Grab a piece of paper and a pen. Ask the kids to quickly name some things they might get in trouble and need forgiveness for and write them down.
- Choose one kid to draw something he might get in trouble and need forgiveness for. Give him a piece of paper and a pen. He can draw an object, a situation, a place, etc.
- Let the rest of the group try to guess the scenario. The person who most closely guesses the object or situation gets to draw next. (If a kid has already had a turn, he can pick someone else who hasn’t had a turn yet.)
- If a kid gets stumped and can’t think of a scenario, select one from the list the group made and whisper it to him.

What You Say: “The point of this activity is to help you see that ALL of us mess up. We all do things that we need forgiveness for because we’re not perfect. **[Bottom Line]** Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. We need forgiveness every day. And I’m SO glad that God knows what we need and that God offers forgiveness when we ask for it!”

•• **DISAPPEARING VERSE** (memory verse activity)

What You Need: “Memory Verse” activity cards

What You Do:

- Look up and review Colossians 3:13.
- Work together as a group to put the memory verse activity pages in the correct order and lay them out on your small group table.
- Read the verse out loud together.
- Have the kids close their eyes and remove one of the cards.
- Ask them to open their eyes and read the verse out loud together again, including the words that have disappeared.
- Repeat the process, removing one card at a time and saying the verse together until you are reciting the verse from memory.

What You Say: “You did a great job remembering all the words that were ‘lost’ each round. I hope this week when someone hurts your feelings or does something that makes you mad, you will remember the promise found in this verse. Everyone needs to be forgiven, including the person who hurts you. But you aren’t perfect either. You will mess up this week too. Because **[Bottom Line]** everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. Remember, we need to put up with one another and forgive one another, just as the Lord forgives us.”

PRAY AND SEND

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask kids to think about something from this past week that they need to be forgiven for.

