

## The story of the lost son

I wonder if you remember reading or hearing this story before? This story that Jesus told was about a man who had two sons, it is sometimes called the story of the prodigal son. You can read the story in the Bible in Luke 15:11-32 or in a Bible storybook.



Here is a link to an animated video <https://youtu.be/DJgROx4wFKM> which you might like to watch.

### Chat together:

I wonder what surprised you most about this story?

How do you think you would have treated the younger son if you were the father?

How is God like the father in this story?

Do you sometimes feel like the younger son or the older son?

Jesus often spent time with people that the religious leaders didn't like, people who had done lots of things that were wrong, so Jesus told this story to them to show why he did that. The father forgave the younger son, not because he deserved it but because he loved his son and wanted to forgive him. God loves us unconditionally too - that means he always loves us even when we get things wrong. When we say sorry and turn back to him, God forgives us too.

### Discover together:

This is a very famous painting of this story, painted by Bartolome Esteban Murillo between 1667 and 1670.

Have a look at it online and study it carefully, can you spot the ring? Do you think the older brother is in the picture too?



How does this painting make you feel?

Maybe you would like to paint or draw your own version of the story or maybe what this story says to you about how much God loves you?

## **Pray together:**

You might like to find some stones and a small bowl of water and a towel. Sit together around the bowl and each hold a stone.

Sometimes we are like the younger son in this story. We do things that are wrong. We start to feel bad. We might think that God will never forgive us. But when we tell God we are sorry he is so happy. Do you think God will love you if you tell him you are sorry for something? Do you need to tell God about something now? If you do, tell God quietly in your head, feel the hardness of the stone (this can represent the 'weight' of the things we have done wrong) and then place the stone in the water. Then dip your hands in the water as a symbol that God has forgiven you. Close your eyes and imagine God giving you a huge hug as you pray *'Father God, thank you that you love us so very much and always forgive us so willingly when we say sorry. Amen'*

## **Activities to try together:**

This week think about this question: How much does God love you?

Look for ways that remind you that God loves you unconditionally. You might like to keep note of them in a notebook, or draw pictures to make a poster and keep adding to it through the week or maybe make a blessings/thankfulness box and keep slips of paper inside to write down the ways.

Make a welcome home poster for someone you love! Or maybe make a card to send to someone to let them know how much God loves them!

