

The Story of The Runaway Son

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Lesson Overview

In today's lesson, we're talking about a parable, or story Jesus told. A rich father had two sons. The younger son went to his father and asked him for his inheritance early. An inheritance is supposed to be the money you get when your parents die. The son was basically saying that his father might as well be dead and he wanted his money now. Even though this made the father sad, he gave his son his inheritance. The son left home and went off to live a crazy life that didn't honor God at all. He ended up wasting all of his money. He was so desperate that he got a job feeding pigs but he was never paid for his work. He was really hungry and really sad. The son realized that he walked away from a really good life with his family and he wanted to go back. But he wasn't sure if his father would accept him after he had turned his back on him. As he walked home, his father saw him off in the distance and ran out to meet him. Instead of yelling at him and telling him to leave, he hugged him and threw a big party. The father forgave his son and was so glad to have him home. This story is really about God's love for us. When we mess up and turn away from God, he is always willing to forgive and welcome us back!

Big Idea

God throws a party when we come home

Key Question

What does it mean to come back to God?

Memory Verse

Luke 15:24 "He was lost, but now he is found." So the party began."

Classroom Agenda

1. (5 min) **Let kids start working on Activity Page #1.**
2. (5 min) **WARM UP: Share a time you were so mad that you wanted to run away from home.** (Tip: Maybe your siblings broke your favorite toy or your parents told you to do chores. Running away is never the answer.)
3. (5 min) **PREVIEW: Write out the Big Idea, Memory Verse, and Key Question on a whiteboard.** Have the kids copy it down on Activity Page #1 (if applicable).
4. (20 min) **LARGE GROUP: Gather for songs and videos with other kids.** Then return to class to finish this guide.
5. (2 min) **RECAP: Read the Lesson Overview (see above).**
6. (3 min) **KQ: Answer the Key Question.** (Answer: **It means we tell God that we're sorry and choose to do what honors him.** (We're not perfect so we will make mistakes. When we mess up, God wants us to come to him and say sorry for what we've done. And, he wants us to learn from our mistakes and choose to do the things that honor God next time. God promises to forgive us every time we mess up and he'll never stop loving us!))
 - **Bonus Questions:** What does God want us to do when we mess up? What does God promise to do when we do that? **4-5th** How have you been like the son in the story who ran away from God?
7. (5 min) **EXPLORE: Read Micah 7:18-19. Pardon is another word for forgiveness. Identify all that this passage says about what God does with our sins?** (Answer: God forgives our mistakes, he doesn't remind us of our past sins, he doesn't remain angry, he's loving and compassionate and he stomps out our sins and throws them away.)
8. (10 min) **PLAY: Choose a group activity from Activity Page #2.**
9. (5 min) **CLOSE: Share prayer requests and pray as a class.** Encourage kids to use the Family Guide at home with their parents - and remind them to go online to PursueGODkids.org to find this week's lesson video.

Teacher instructions: Choose an activity for your classroom.

OPTION 1: LESSON REVIEW TOSS

Instructions:

- Before playing, tape a line on the floor. Then place the pigs (page 5) at varying distances from the line.
- Divide the class into two teams. Give each team 9 small pieces of paper and a pencil. These will be used for writing the answers to the questions.
- Read each question from below and have the teams quietly discuss and write their answer on a piece of paper. After each team has written down an answer, have them share it. A correct answer gives them a bean bag throw for points. Be sure to keep track of the correct answers for each team. Continue doing this until all the questions have been asked.
- Then, have one team line up behind the line. Give them the bean bags they earned for correct answers. (may

need to reuse bags) Have the kids throw the bean bags to land on or near one of the pig faces. Total up their points. Then have the other team go. The team with the most points, wins.

Questions:

1. Who told this story? (Jesus)
2. What did the son want from his father?(inheritance)
3. What is an inheritance? (money from death of parent)
4. What did the son do with the money? (spent it all)
5. What did the son do for a job? (fed pigs)
6. Is this story in the OT or NT? (NT)
7. T or F: The son represents us. (T)
8. How did the dad react when the son returned? (hugged/ threw a party)
9. What does God want us to do when we mess up? (Say sorry)

Supplies needed: Pig template (pg. 5, pre cut, 1 for each pt. value) Tape, Bean Bags, 18 small pieces of paper Pencils

OPTION 2: STORY REVIEW CRAFT

Instructions:

- Give each kid a Pig template (page 6). Have the kids color their pig.
- As they color, read the story from Luke 15:11-24. Then, have them place the boxes of story points out in front of them. As a class, work together to put the points in order to tell the story of the runaway son. Then have them glue each point on the pig in that order.
- Remind the kids that we represent the son in the story and God is the father. When we mess up and run away from God, he is always willing to take us back. We just need to come to him and say "Sorry" and choose to follow God every day.

Supplies needed: Pig template (pg. 6, pre cut, 1 per kid) Glue, Crayons

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When a man's son ran away it taught us a really awesome lesson in how much God loves us.

Key Points:

- One day, a son asked for money from his dad and _____.
- The son lived a _____ life until he had no money left.
- The son finally came to his senses and went back to his _____.
- His dad didn't just take him back; he threw a _____!
- _____ throws a party when we come home.

Memory Verse:

Luke 15:24 'He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

Talk About It

1. *What's your favorite part of the video? What's one thing you learned from it?*
2. *Share a time you were so mad that you wanted to run away from home.*
3. *What did the son want from his dad? Why do you think the dad gave him his inheritance early?*
4. *What did the son do with the money? What happened when the son came home? How is the Dad in the story like Jesus?*
5. *Read Micah 7:18-19. Pardon is another word for forgiveness. Identify all that this passage says about what God does with our sins?*
6. *How will you apply this lesson to your life this week?*

Instructions: Color the picture.

GOD THROWS A PARTY WHEN WE COME HOME

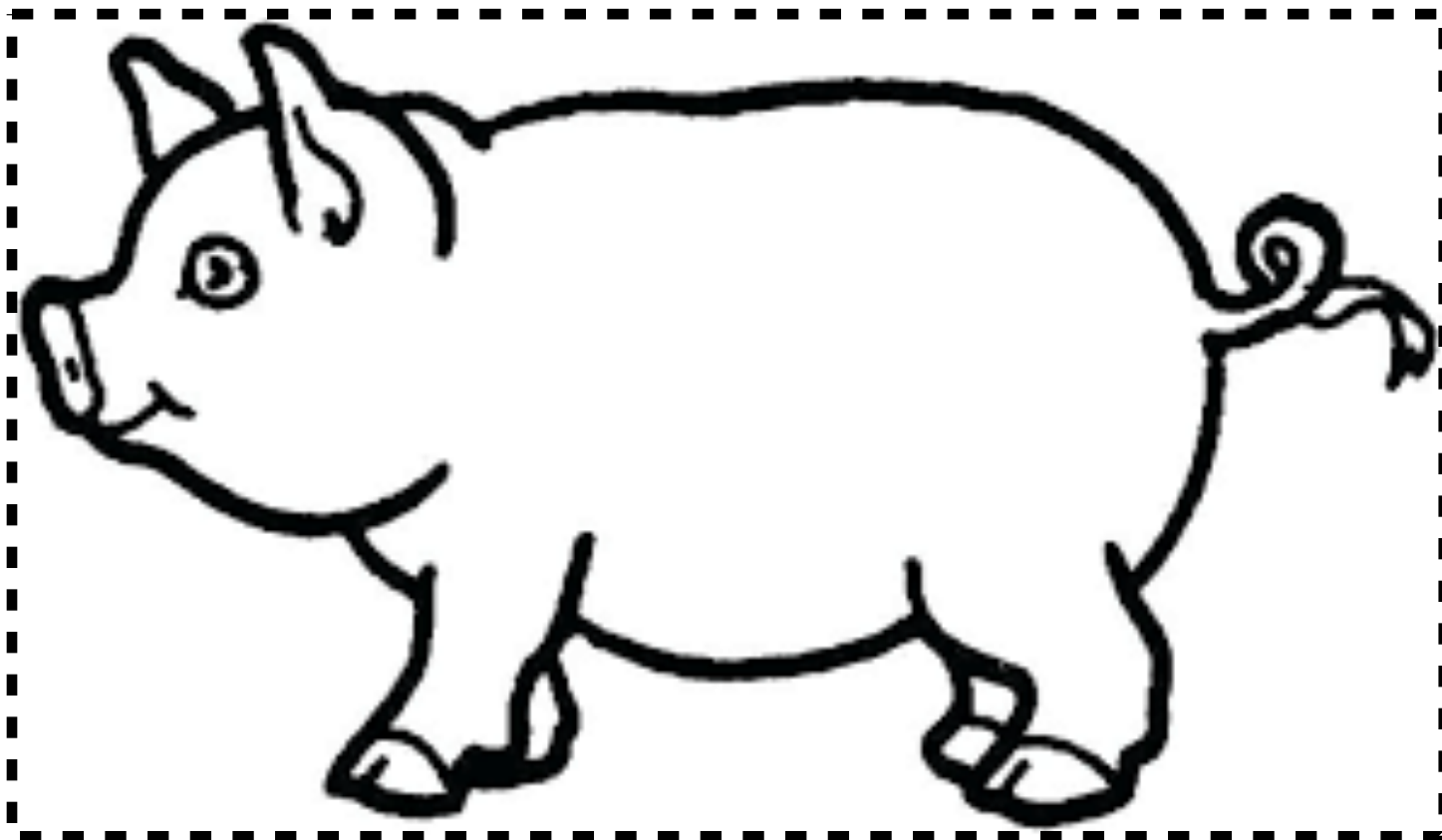
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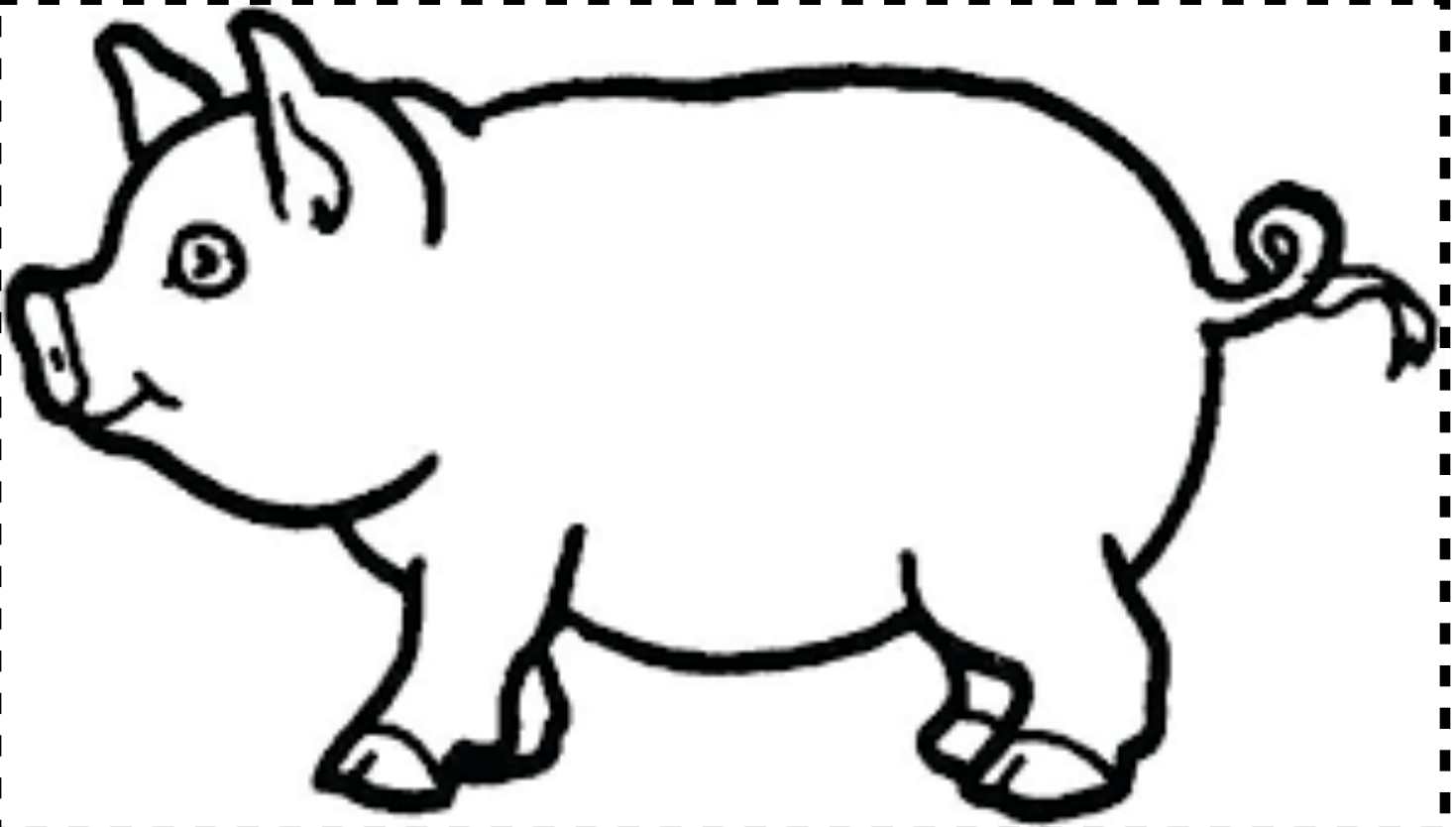
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THE SON GOT A
JOB FEEDING
PIGS

THE FATHER
THREW A PARTY

THE SON
WANTED TO GO
HOME

THE SON ASKED
HIS FATHER FOR
HIS INHERITANCE

THE SON SPENT
ALL THE MONEY