

BIBLE TRUTH 1, LESSON 1: PLANNER/OVERVIEW

GETTING STARTED: Welcome and Opening Songs (*introduce unit and get kids moving with these songs*)

Welcome to Praise Factory: PFI: Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song *PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 1*

Rules to Help Us Worship God and Love One Another: WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song
PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 2

Big Question Under Investigation: Big Question 11 Songs *PFI ESV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4*

Big Question Bible Verse: Romans 6:23 Song: *PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 5*

DIGGING DEEP DOWN: Key Concept and Story (*introduce the Bible Truth and tell the related story*)

Bible Truth 1: God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

Bible Truth Hymn: Beneath the Cross of Jesus, v.2 *PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 6*

Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9

Bible Verse Song: If We Say We Have No Sin *PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 7*
Extra Bible Verse Song: If We Say 1 John 1:8-9 ESV PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 8

Lesson 1 New Testament: The Case of the Ridiculous Runner *Luke 15*

TAKING ACTION: Response Activities (*choose from among these activities*)

Snack and Discussion Planner: Pig Pods and Fattened Calf

ACTS Prayer: Prayer Sheet

Bible Truth Review: Discussion Questions and Game: Menagerie

Bible Truth Hymn: Beneath the Cross of Jesus, v.2 *PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 6*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Big Voice, Little Voice **PFI ESV Songs 11 BOOK or ONLINE**

Bible Verse Review: 1 John 1:8-9 Discussion Sheet and Game: Rush to the Store

Bible Verse Song: If We Say We Have No Sin *1 John 1:8-9 PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 7*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean? **PFI ESV Songs 11 BOOK or ONLINE**

Story Review: Discussion Questions and Game: String Along

Case Replay, Jr: Drama Activity for Youngest Children (children do same story actions together)

Case Replay, Sr: Drama Activity for Most Children (children re-tell story with individual parts)

Craft: The Younger Son's Rags and Robes

VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) Prayer Time: Coloring Sheets (back of book); Game: Ball Roll Review

TAKING IT HOME: Take Home Sheet for Review and Family Devotions

PFI Pronto: Bible Truth 1, Lesson 1 **PFI ESV Prontos 11 BOOK or ONLINE**

The Case of the Ridiculous Runner Luke 15 by Connie Dever**Our story is called:****The Case of the Ridiculous Runner.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who was the Ridiculous Runner? Who thought his running was ridiculous? (Ridiculous means something silly that you wouldn't expect them to do).
2. Why did he run even though it was thought ridiculous? Who did he run to? What does the Ridiculous Runner tell us about God?

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Some men walked together down the street. It was easy to tell: these were important people! What proud long beards, what beautiful robes, and what showy prayer shawls with long tassels they had! Yes, they were important people. They were Pharisees and teachers of God's law. And in Israel, there was hardly anyone more important than them.

As these men walked along, they noticed a crowd of people who were just the opposite of them: very unimportant people. They were what many would call big sinners. Terrible people, like greedy tax collectors. The Pharisees were disgusted by this swarm of disgusting people, but they were also curious as to know why they had gathered together.

Soon they had their answer: Jesus! Oooh! That frustrating new rabbi (teacher of God's law)! They hated how Jesus cared for sinners! He welcomed them. He even ate with them, as if they were friends! "Why does a good teacher like Jesus spend time with sinner?!" the Pharisees grumbled. "Doesn't He know He makes himself unclean before God when He does that?" they exclaimed.

But it was what Jesus taught those sinners that made them even angrier. "It's not the well who need a physician but the sick. The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost. Whoever comes to me I will never turn away," Jesus told these people. Jesus was inviting these sinners to come to God!

"These people are so sinful that they aren't even allowed in the synagogues or the Temple," the Pharisees exclaimed. "They have broken God's laws on purpose. Jesus knows the law offers no sacrifice for people who do that," the Pharisees complained. "Who does Jesus

think He is, to give these sinners the hope of forgiveness! Only God can do that!"

But Jesus knew the Pharisees had something wrong. No one could ever keep God's laws well enough to please God. All people were sinners who deserved God's punishment! All needed to turn away from their sins and confess them to God. All needed a Savior to forgive them of their sins. There were no exceptions! These Pharisees need to hear this message just as much as the tax collectors, though they didn't know it. So Jesus began to tell a story that would make this clear.

"There once was a good Jewish father who had two sons," Jesus began. "The older son was obedient and -the Pharisees as much as these people they called sinners. hardworking for his father as a son should be; but, the younger son was not. He did not want to stay home and did not want to keep his father's rules and way of living. So he went to his father and said, "Father, when you die a part of all your things will be mine. I don't want to wait until then. Give me my share now!"

"What a wicked son! What a sinner he is!" the Pharisees were probably thinking. "Asking for any of your father's things while he's still alive is like saying to him 'I wish you were dead. Give me your money!' That was even worse than what the tax collectors did!"

Jesus continued, "Even though it was terrible of the son to ask his father his share of the property, the father decided to give it to him anyway. The son took all his father had given him and sold it for cash. He took the money, packed his things and left home for a faraway Gentile country where he spent all his money living and wild life doing whatever pleased him."

What a sinner this younger son was! Everyone listening

Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Create story cue cards on index cards (or highlight text).
3. Practice telling story dramatically, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.
4. Decorate area with story props that help bring your story alive.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story. Point to/use props at important points in the story. Include the kids in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
2. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

to Jesus' story could see that! Disgracing his father and brother! Taking all of his father's hard-earned money and spending on a bunch of Gentiles!

Everyone in that crowd knew that the younger son deserved to be cut off from his family and never allowed to return. Perhaps that had even happened to sinners gathered right there at Jesus' feet. Hadn't they embarrassed their families by their big sins?

Jesus went on with the story: "Life got worse for the young man when his money ran out. A bad famine—no rain for a long time—hit the land. Crops and animals died. Everyone was just barely getting by. No one needed extra help or had extra food to share. Finally the young man became so desperate that he got a job feeding the pigs of a Gentile (non-Jewish) farmer!

Feeding pigs for a Gentile farmer might not sound so bad to us, but it was a terrible thing to the Jews listening to Jesus' story. Jews weren't supposed to have anything to do with Gentiles, let alone work for them. They weren't supposed to eat or even touch pigs. Many even believed that a person who raises pigs is cursed by God! "This son is really in trouble with God now!" the listening crowd would have thought.

Jesus went on. "The young man fed the pigs, but even the pigs got more food than he did. He was so hungry he would have even eaten the pigs' dry pods, but nobody even offered those to him.

At last the son began to think: "What a sinner I am! What have I done?! Taken my father's things, runaway from home, spent all his hard-earned money doing all sorts of wicked things! Now look at me: working on a pig farm with not even enough food to keep me from starving. Life is far better than this for my father's workers. He gives them good work and gives them so much food that they have leftovers. I have disgraced my father. I could never be his son again, I know that, But, perhaps if I confess my sin against him and God, he will take me as one of his servants.' So the young man left the pig farm and started the long trip back home."

Everyone was curious to hear what Jesus would say next. This son had sinned terribly against both God and his father! How could he think that either one of them would forgive him after all he's done?! The Pharisees knew that by the law (Deuteronomy 21), that father

even had the right to stone his son to death for such rebellious behavior! Asking to be a servant was even too good for him! But what would the father in Jesus' story do? They all waited and listened.

"As the son walked along, he thought about what he would say when he got home: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be your son. Make me like one of your servants...'"

But to the son's surprise, he didn't have to go home to find his father. His father was coming to him! He had spotted his son coming down the road from a long way off and now he was running straight towards him at full speed--something older men just didn't do! This was shocking and embarrassing!

Why was the father running anyway? No one would have been surprised if Jesus said that the father started yelling at his son to go away and never come back; or even, starting throwing at his son. This was what this son deserved, everyone would have thought. Perhaps some of the sinners listening to Jesus right then knew what this was like. Perhaps this had even happened to them. After all, they had acted shamefully, too.

But the father in Jesus' story didn't do these things. "The father ran until he reached his son," Jesus told the crowd. "He threw his arms around him and kissed him."

Such love the son never expected and knew he didn't deserve! He started his speech: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son....'

But he never got to finish. His father had already forgiven him! This was his son, returned to him! The father was overjoyed! He turned to his servants and said, "Go quickly and bring the best robe in the house... my robe...and put it on my son. Get the family ring and place it on his finger. He will not be some barefooted servant! This is my son. Bring sandals for his feet!" Bring the fattened calf we were saving for a special celebration and prepare it," he ordered them. "We are having a feast to celebrate. I thought my son was lost and dead forever. But he's been found and he's alive! And they began to celebrate.

When the older son came home, his father invited him to celebrate the return of his little brother, but he refused, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you

and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has wasted your money on big parties with sinners comes home, you kill the fattened calf—the best food we have—to celebrate with him!”

“My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

The crowd was shocked with the ending to Jesus’ story. This was not at all the way it was supposed to be. A wicked, younger son forgiven and welcomed back into the family! The older son asked to celebrate!! How could this be?

Yet that was exactly what Jesus wanted them all to see: God is like the father in the story and those listening to his story are like the two sons. Some might be rebellious, law-breakers, like the younger son. Others were proud, law-keepers, like the older son. God wants them all to come to Him, confess their sins and be saved. He wants His people to celebrate every sinner who turns away from his sins and trusts in Jesus as their Savior.

Cracking the Case:

It’s time to answer our Case Questions.

1. Who was the Ridiculous Runner? Who thought his running was ridiculous? (Ridiculous means something silly that you wouldn’t expect them to do). The father of the two young men in Jesus’ story. Everyone in Jesus’ time would think it ridiculous for an honored old man to run. The teachers of the law especially would have looked down on this man for running.

2. Why did he run even though it was thought ridiculous? Who did he run to? What does the Ridiculous Runner tell us about God? He ran because his son was returning home to him when he thought he would never see him again. He was so happy to see him! He ran to his son. That God rejoices over sinners who come to Him, confessing their sins. He loves them and welcomes them into His family.

Something for You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 1:8-9:

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Who are we like? Are we like the tax collectors and other sinners, who know their sins and are afraid they are too bad to receive God’s forgiveness? Then what good news Jesus’ story is! All who come to Him, confessing their sins, turning from them and trusting in Jesus as their Savior, will be saved! No one has been too bad for God to forgive, if they will but turn to Him!

Or are we like the Pharisees? Are we proud about how good we are and look down on others who seem to be bigger sinners than us? We should ask God to work in our proud, hard hearts and help us to confess our sins, turn from them and trust Jesus as our Savior, too. For whether we are the worst of sinners or think we are the best law keepers, we all are sinners who need a Savior!

Let’s praise God for being so merciful to sinners. Let’s ask Him to work in our hearts, that we might see and confess our sins to Him. And, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

A God, we praise You for being so merciful to sinful people. We praise You for being the Savior of Your people.

C God, we confess that we are all sinners who deserve God’s punishment. We all need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that Your forgiveness is so great that even the worst of sinners can be forgiven by You.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

ACTS PRAYER ACTIVITY

Use this sheet to write down your ACTS Prayer

Instructions:

Use this sheet to help the children apply the Bible Truth into a prayer. You can use the ACTS provided or even better, have the kids think of their own applications. Also have the children add their personal requests to the prayer, too. Lead the children in the prayer or let them pray sections, with your help. Never force a child to pray! Non-readers can participate by you whispering a section of the prayer into their ear and allowing them to pray it aloud for the group.

ADORATION:

God, we praise You for being faithful and just and able to forgive our sins.

God, we praise You for being.....

Add your own Adorations:

CONFESSION:

God, we confess that we are all sinners who need You to save us. We can never be acceptable to You on our own. We need Jesus to save us!

God, we have sinned against You....

Add your own Confessions:

THANKSGIVING:

Thank You, God for being willing to forgive all our sins, when we confess them and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

God, we thank You for...

Add your own Thanksgivings:

SUPPLICATION:

God, work in our hearts. Make us aware of our sins and our need of Jesus to save us. Help us to confess our sins to You and repent of them. Help us to trust in Jesus as our Savior. Be our Heavenly Father! Make us Your adopted children who love You and who You will love forever.

God, we need Your help...

Add your own Supplication:

SNEAKY SNACK

Can you figure out how this snack ties in with our case?

Snack: Pig Pods and Fattened Calf

Snow Pea or Sugar Snap Pea "Pig Pods" with Ranch Dressing OR "Fattened Calf" Meatballs and ketchup (Purchase frozen meatballs in freezer section of grocery store and cook ahead of time.)

This is only a suggestion. Feel free to modify. Be mindful of allergy issues among your children!

Case Tie-in: In Jesus' story, life became so terrible for the younger son that he had only pods fed to pigs to fill his stomach. But, when he decided to go home and ask for his father to hire him as a worker, his father took him back as an honored son. He ordered the fattened calf to be cooked to celebrate.

SOUL FOOD

Food for thought during snack time

1. What does the snack have to do with the story?

Choose a few questions from the other activity discussion sheets to talk about during this snack time.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

God is perfectly holy. There is no sin in Him at all. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence. How gloriously magnificent and pure is He!

But we are all sinners. We have all chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Not only can we not live in His presence because of our sinfulness, but we deserve to be shut out of His presence forever because of it. And there's nothing sinful people like us can do on our own to make ourselves acceptable to God.

We would be without hope, except for God's amazing grace and mercy! He, Himself, has done what was needed. He sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and offer it up as the perfect payment for the sins of His people when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing He had beat sin and death. Yes, He had fully paid for the sins of God's people. He has made salvation a gift.

How can we receive this wonderful gift? God offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who confess their sins to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior. When we do this, turning away from living life our own way and living for God instead, He will give us this gift! He will make us His people forever!

Understanding the Bible Truth

1. What is God like? *God is perfectly holy. There is no sin in Him at all. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence.*
2. Are we holy like God? *No, we are all sinners.*
3. What have all people chosen to do? *To rebel against God and His good ways.*
4. What do all people deserve from God? *To be shut out of His presence forever because of our sins.*
5. What can sinful people like us do ON OUR OWN to make ourselves acceptable to God? *Nothing.*
6. Who has done something to make us acceptable to God? *God has.*
7. What did God do so that sinners can be made acceptable in His presence? *Sent Jesus to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect payment for their sins.*
8. Why could Jesus make us acceptable when we couldn't do it ourselves? *Because Jesus lived a perfect life, completely holy.*
9. What did Jesus show when He rose from the dead on the third day? *That He had really paid for the sins of God's people, once and for all.*
10. How can we be forgiven of our sins and receive eternal life? *We can confess our sins to God and trust in Jesus as our Savior, turning away from living life our own way and living for God instead.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does our Bible Truth have to do with our **Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9**: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."?

This verse reminds us that we are all sinners. We deceive ourselves if we think we are not. But, that if we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.

Bible Truth Story Connection Questions

1. How is God the Father like the father in Jesus' story? *Offers to forgive the sins of those who confess their sins to Him and makes them His people even though they do not deserve it.*
2. Why would the tax collectors and sinners listening to Jesus be surprised that they could receive God's forgiveness? *They thought they were too bad to be forgiven.*
3. Would the Pharisees have been surprised that they, too, were sinners who needed to confess their sins to God for forgiveness and to be saved? *Yes. They thought that they were pleasing God by keeping the law as well as they did.*

Life Application Questions

1. What should we do, if we want God to forgive us? *Humbly confess our sins to Him, turn away from our sins, and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*
2. What is something we can thank and praise God for every day, no matter what else happens to us, if we are His followers? *That He has taken care of our worst problem: eternal punishment for our sins. No matter how bad other things are, we know that we have a wonderful eternity with Him to look forward to.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for because of this Bible Truth?
Praise God for being the Merciful Savior of All Who Confess Their Sins to Him, in repentance and faith.
2. What are sins we can confess to God because of this Bible Truth?
Confess ways this week we sinned against God in our hearts, with our words and actions.
3. What is something we can thank God for because of this Bible Truth?
Thank God for the forgiveness we can have through Jesus.
4. What is something we can ask God for because of this Bible Truth?
We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to confess our sins, turn away from disobeying Him and trust in this wonderful Jesus as our own Savior. We can ask Him to work like this in others, too.

The Gospel

1. We are all born sinners. What hope is there for sinners? What is the gospel?
God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Menagerie

Materials

Small Bag/Bowl
Bible Truth Questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Bible Truth Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Write the Bible Truth questions on small thin strips of paper (or make a photocopy of the Bible Truth Discussion Questions and simply cut them into strips) and put them in the bag/bowl.

Playing the Game

Divide the children into three or four teams, depending on how many children you have. Each group of children is given the name of an animal and is assigned a corner of the room. You are "It" and stand in the middle of the room. When everyone is ready, give instructions to different groups of animals, such as "I want the bears to change places with the monkeys." The bears and monkeys when then run to change places. You, as It, will try to tag bears and monkeys. Choose a question from the bag to read to your caught animals. If they get it right, they are released to be back with their fellow animals. If not, they must wait until another, correct answer to be released.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Do not exclude "caught" animals from the game, even if they get the answer wrong. Instead release them back to their fellow animals and put the question back in the bag for review again.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Verse 2

Upon that cross of Jesus
 Mine eye at times can see
 The very dying form of One
 Who suffered there for me;
 And from my smitten heart with tears

Listen to it on PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 6

Understanding the Song

1. What does it mean that "sometimes my eye can see the very dying form of Jesus"? *It doesn't mean that you actually see Jesus, but you imagine in your head what that might have looked like as He was nailed to the cross dying.*
2. Who did Jesus suffer on the cross for? *He didn't suffer for bad things He had done, for He never did anything bad. He suffered for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior, that they would be forgiven their sins and become God's people.*
3. What does it mean to "wait at Jesus' crucified feet"?
It doesn't mean that he is really bowed right in front of Jesus' feet. In his mind he is thinking about how Jesus had to be crucified so that he could be forgiven his sins—the pain of nails in His feet and hands, the pain of suffering in His spirit. He asks and waits to receive the forgiveness of his sins, humbly thinking of this.
4. What does smitten mean? *To feel something very strongly.*
5. What is the singer's heart smitten with?
The wonder of God's love for him by sending His only, beloved Son to suffer and die for him, a sinner who deserves nothing but God's punishment, not His mercy.

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. How does this song relate to our Bible Truth: **God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins?**

God's people are amazed at what God would do to save sinners who confess their sins. They are amazed that He would love them so much that He would send His Son to suffer and die for them on the cross. Their hearts are smitten with the greatness of His love for them, such undeserving sinners.

Story Connection Question

1. How does this song relate to today's story? *The tax collectors and other sinners were amazed to know that God would forgive their terrible sins against Him, just like the father in the story forgave the terrible sins of his son. They wondered at God's love for even them, especially considering how very unworthy they were of it.*

Life Application Questions

1. How can God's people be affected by the message of this song?
They can remember how great God's love is for them, though they are sinners. They can gratefully thank Jesus for His great sacrifice made that they could never deserve.
2. How can we become God's people? *By turning away from our sins, confessing them to God and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

Bible Connection Question

1. What does this hymn have to do with our Bible Verse: **1 John 1:8-9**: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."?

We are all sinners. We are unworthy of God's forgiveness. But God is faithful and just...and oh, so, merciful. He sent Jesus to save all who confess their sins to Him, turn away from their sins, and trust in Jesus as their Savior. God's people know that God has forgiven them and not through any easy way, but through the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. When they think about how Jesus, the very Son of God, died to save them, they wonder at His glorious love and their own unworthiness.

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this hymn?

Praise God for being the merciful God sent His Son Jesus to die for His people's sins.

2. What are sins we can confess to God from this hymn?

That many times we don't marvel at how great God's love is. We don't think much about how Jesus suffered and died, taking God's people's punishment, so that they could be saved.

3. What is something we can thank God for from this hymn?

We can thank God His glorious love that would send Jesus to save His people.

4. What is something we can ask God for from this hymn?

That God would work in our hearts that we confess our sins, might turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. We can ask Him to help us to come to Him and be forgiven. We can ask Him to help us wonder at His glorious love shown through Jesus.

Gospel Question

1. God's people marvel at God's love shown to them through Jesus? What is this amazing good news of God's love? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Song Game: Big Voice, Little Voice

Materials

Song

Sign language signs used in the song printed out onto little cards

Blindfold

Preparing the Game

None.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well. Then tell them: "Children, we are going to hide a sign language sign and see if one of you can find it... with a little help from the rest of us!"
2. Choose someone to be "It" and blindfold them. Choose another child to hide one of the sign language cards. When it's hidden, "It" can remove the blindfold and begin to look.
3. The rest of the children will sing the song in a louder voice when "It" gets closer to the hidden sign and quieter when "It" gets further from the sign.
4. When "It" finds the hidden clue, another "It" is chosen and play begins again.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

choose a FEW questions for discussion, then choose the game and/or music activity

Meditation Version: 1 John 1:8-9

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Alternate Memory/Games Version: 1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Understanding the Bible Verse

1. What does it mean to "claim to be without sin"? *To say that you do not sin.*
2. What does it mean to "deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"? *To fool ourselves into thinking something is true that is not.*
3. *Why do we know that we are deceiving ourselves if we say we are without sin?* Because everyone is a sinner. No one is without sin.
4. What does it mean to "confess our sins"? *To tell our sins to God with a humble heart and with a desire to not do them anymore.*
5. What does God promise to do if we confess our sins? *To forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
6. What does it mean to "purify us from all unrighteousness"? *He will not hold our sins against us and he will work in our hearts so that we sin less against Him while we live here on earth. And, when we die, He will completely change us so that we will sin no more. Then, we will truly be purified from all unrighteousness.*
7. *Why will God do this for us? Because He is faithful: He promised to forgive those who confess their sins, so He will. And because He is just: Jesus gave His life as the perfect offering in the place of all who turn to confess their sins to God. He already paid for their sins, so God is just (that is, fair) to not ask us to pay for them, too.*
8. What did Jesus' story show the tax collectors and other sinners that God would do for even them, if they humbly confessed their sins to Him? *That He would save them, even though they had been terrible sinners.*

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. What does this verse have to do with the **Bible Truth: God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins?**

This verse reminds us that we are all sinners. We deceive ourselves if we think we are not. But, the good news is, that if we admit we are sinners and confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and save us through Jesus.

Story Connection Questions

1. What does the verse have to do with our story? *Jesus gave hope to sinners, even the worst sinners, who confessed their sins to God, as they turned away from their sins and trusted in Him as their Savior. God would even purify them from all unrighteousness.*

Life Application Questions

1. What does God promise to do for us, if we turn away from our sins and humbly confess our sins to Him? *He will forgive us, too, and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible Verse? *Praise God for being the Purifier of Unrighteous of His People.*
2. What are sins we can confess to God from this Bible Verse?
That we are all sinners. We need to be purified of our unrighteousness. We deserve God's punishment! We need a Savior!
3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible Verse?
We can thank God making the promise of purifying from unrighteousness ALL who come to Him, confessing their sins, turning away from them and trusting Jesus as their Savior. There is no one too sinful to be forgiven by God.
4. What is something we can ask God for from this Bible Verse?
We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to confess our sins, turn away from disobeying Him and trust in this wonderful Jesus as our own Savior. That He would work in the hearts of others, in this way, too.

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible Verse? *Praise God for being the Purifier of Unrighteous of His People.*

2. What are sins we can confess to God from this Bible Verse?

That we are all sinners. We need to be purified of our unrighteousness. We deserve God's punishment! We need a Savior!

3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible Verse?

We can thank God making the promise of purifying from unrighteousness ALL who come to Him, confessing their sins, turning away from them and trusting Jesus as their Savior. There is no one too sinful to be forgiven by God.

4. What is something we can ask God for from this Bible Verse?

We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to confess our sins, turn away from disobeying Him and trust in this wonderful Jesus as our own Savior. That He would work in the hearts of others, in this way, too.

The Gospel

1. How did people become sinners in need of God' forgiveness? How can they receive His forgiveness? What is the good news of Jesus? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Rush to the Store

Materials

Bible verse written up in large print so that all can see

2 large pieces of paper or poster board

A toy shopping cart or shopping bag per team

Empty food or beverage containers such as milk cartons or cereal boxes—one for each word or group of words of the verse (no more than 10 per team)

Paper and marker

Bag or jar

Masking tape

Two tables

Preparing the Game

1. Make copy of the verse per team and cut it apart into as many parts as containers per team. Number this verse pieces in order and tape them to the containers.
2. Make a sign per team of the verse. If you have a lot of non- or early readers, write the verse in easy to read print, numbering each word/section that correspond to the sections on the cut-up version of the verse. If your children are all proficient readers, do not write the verse on the poster board, but simply draw lines and number them 1-10, corresponding to the 10 verse pieces.
3. Write down and cut out the numbers used on the verse pieces and put in a little bag or jar.
4. Use the masking tape to mark each team's home starting line.
5. Place each team's "groceries" in separate piles at the far end of the room with space between the two piles for the teacher to stand.

Learning the Verse

Some or all of your children may be non- or early readers. Teach the verse in sections, having them say it after you. Repeat a few times. Add clapping or other movement as they say it.

Directions

1. If desired, lead the children in a discussion of a **FEW** of the most important questions before beginning game.
2. Explain the game to them as follows:

WARNING: Limit the children to walking quickly if you have a slick floor.

Divide the children into two teams and have them line up at their home lines. Explain that the class will say the Bible verse together, then you will pick a number out of your bag. The first player of each team will rush to the store to find the grocery item with that number on it. Instead of money to pay for the grocery, a child says the memory verse to the teacher. Then they rush home with the item in their bag, this place it on their team's table of groceries. The whole class will say the verse again, the teacher will choose another number and the next two children will go find that item, etc. until all items have been purchased and retrieved. Then, the children will line up their groceries so that their verse is in the right order and say the verse together. If working with less confident readers, point out to them that they can use the sign you made and the numbers in the verse pieces as hints to help them line it up properly. The team then says the verse together. The first team to do so, wins.

Non-competitive Option

Don't split the children into teams. Have only one set of groceries. Have the children take turns retrieving the item and adding it to the class groceries on the table. Together they will work to put the verse together after collecting all the groceries.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

If We Say We Have No Sin

If we say we have no sin,
We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,
The truth is not in us.
If we say we have no sin,
We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,
The truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,
If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,
And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

First John One, verses eight and nine.

Listen to it on PFI ESV Songs 11, Track 7

Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean?

Materials

Sign Language signs used in song, particularly choose words with important meanings you want the children to learn, such as "grace", "redeem", etc.

Bag or bowl

Preparing the Game

1. Cut out signs and put in bowl.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well. Then put all the signs we've learned in this bag/ bowl and mix them up.
2. Ask one of the children to choose a sign, but not show it to anyone...but you, if they need some help.
3. Ask the child to do the sign for the rest of the children and see if the other children can guess which one it is. Do the sign with the child, if desired.
4. When the children guess the sign, ask them the meaning of the word. If no one guesses the sign, put it back in the bowl to be picked again.
5. Choose another child to pick a new sign from the bag and continue.

NOTE: You might want to sing the song after you do each word or couple of words.

STORY REVIEW

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

General Story Questions

1. What kind of person was considered a "sinner" by most Jews in Jesus' day? *Only people who did really bad things, especially those who knew what God's laws were and went ahead and broke them.*
2. Where were these "sinners" not allowed to go? Why? *To the synagogue or the Temple. They were considered cut off from fellowship with God. The law did not permit an offering for people who had broken God's laws on purpose, like these people. They had no way to restore themselves to worship God in the Temple/synagogue with other of God's people.*
3. What did Jesus talk to the tax collectors and other sinners about? *How God would forgive them, when they turned away from their sins, confessed them and trusted in Him to save them.*
4. What was the younger son like in the story? He was wicked. *He wanted to take his father's things and go off and do whatever he wanted to with them. He rebelled against his father and his good ways.*
5. Why was it so bad that he asked his father for his share of the father's things? *That was like saying that he wished he were dead.*
6. What did the son do with the things his father gave him? *He sold it for cash so he could spend it easily.*
7. What did the son do after he got cash? *He spent them on wild living with friends in a faraway (non-Jewish) place.*
8. What happened to the son after he ran out of money? *His "friends" left him and he became hunger.*
9. Why was it so hard for him to get a job? *There was a famine in the land. Many crops and animals died. People had little money for themselves, let alone to hire someone else with.*
10. What was especially bad about the job the son found? *It was working for a Gentile (non-Jew) and feeding pigs. A Jew didn't think he should work for a Gentile, and especially not feed pigs. Some Jews thought anyone who worked with pigs was cursed by God.*
11. What made the son finally decide to go home? *He hoped his father might hire him to be his servant. That would be much better than the way he was living now.*
12. What did the son plan to say to his father? *He planned to confess his sins against God and his father. He would ask his father to hire him as a servant.*
13. What did the law say the father had the right to do to his rebellious son? *To treat him as if he were dead...even to stone him for his rebelliousness.*
14. What did the father do when he saw his son coming? Why was that unusual? *He ran towards him. Older, important men were never to run. That was dishonorable.*
15. What did the father do when his son said sorry? *He forgave him and restored him as his son. He even gave him the BEST robe, the family ring and the sandals of a son. He had the fattened calf killed to celebrate his return.*
16. Why was the older son angry? What did the father say to him? *He was angry because the father was honoring the wicked son; and, because he had worked so hard for his father and the father hadn't rewarded him. The father told him that all the rest of his things belonged to the older son, but that they must celebrate the wonderful news that the younger son had turned from his wicked ways and come back home.*
17. What did this story tell the tax collectors and other sinners? *That God offers forgiveness to even people like them, when they turn away from their sins, confess their sins to Him and trust in Him to be their Savior.*
18. What does this story tell the Pharisees? *That they are sinners with proud, hard-hearted hearts. They need God's forgiveness, too. And, that they should welcome sinners who turn away from their sins, confess them to God and trust in Him to save them.*

Bible Truth Connection Questions

1. What does this story have to do with our Bible Truth? *Jesus told this story to teach both the sinners and the Pharisees, that God will forgive sinners who turn from their sins, confess them to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior. No one is too bad to be forgiven by God.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does the story have to do with our **Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9**: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."?

The Pharisees were wrong to think they were not sinners. They were deceiving themselves. The tax collectors and other sinners could be encouraged by knowing that God will even be faithful to them and forgive their sins & unrighteousness, if they would turn away from their sins, confess them to God, & trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Life Application Questions

1. What does this story tell us about how God will treat us if we confess our sins to Him? *He will forgive our sins, if we turn away from our sins, confess them to God, and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*

2. Is anyone too sinful to be saved? *No. God will forgive all who turn away from their sins, confess them to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for being that we learned in our story? *Praise God for being so merciful to sinful people. Praise God for being the Savior of His people.*

2. What is something we can confess as sin that we learned in our story? *Confess that we are all sinners who deserve God's punishment. We all need a Savior!*

3. What is something we can thank God for that we learned in our story? *We can thank God that His forgiveness is so great that even the worst of sinners can be forgiven by Him.*

4. What is something we can ask God for that we learned in our story? *We can ask God to work in our hearts, helping us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior.*

The Gospel

1. Why could Jesus offer the hope of God's forgiveness when the law gave no offering for sins when people broke the laws on purpose? *Because of the good news of salvation through Him! What is the gospel?*

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: String Along

Materials

- Ball of string
- Scissors
- A jar/bag big enough to fit all the string
- Masking tape
- Paper and marker
- 20+ Story Review Questions and other story review questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Story Review Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Cut various lengths of string and place them in the jar, mixed up so it is not easy to see how long they are.

Playing the Game

Divide the children into two teams and have them line up at the masking tape line. Read Team A a Story Review question. If they can correctly answer it, then the first child in line stands up and picks a piece of string from the bag/jar without looking. He holds up the string for every one to see. The leader places the piece of string at Team's A's line, but lets it point away from the group. If Team A does NOT correctly answer the question, the Team B can try to correctly answer it. If they do, then the first person in the Team B line gets to pick out a string instead of Team A. Next, it is Team B's turn. Continue as above. Each time a team gets a new piece of string, it is tied to the other strings. The goal is to see who can get the longest string by the end of the game.

Play continues as Story Review cards last; or, as time and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Don't split into teams. Mark a length along the floor, wall, etc. Tell the children this is their target string length and they will work together to see how few questions it takes the group to reach the target length. Have the children take turns pulling out a piece of string to be added to the group as the leader reads a question. If the class gets the right answer, the piece of string is added onto the group's string. Continue until the target length is reached, noting how many pieces it took. Untie the string pieces, put them back in the jar and start again, seeing if they can reach the target length with less pieces the second time.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children.

CASE REPLAY ACTIVITIES

Use this guide to review the Case Story and act it out for others to enjoy!

CASE REPLAY, JR: YOUNGEST CHILDREN

Description: The children will act out the story together, everyone doing the same action/sound effect at the same time. This activity is most suitable for kindergarteners.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Jr. script for younger children

Preparation

1. Read through the script and write in the blanks along the side possible actions/sound effects the children could do to act it out.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will be re-enacting the story together as you tell it.
2. As you read the script, lead the children in actions/sound effects to do with you.
3. If desired, you can read the script and stop at certain sentences and ask them what a good action/sound effect would be to act out what you just read.
4. Repeat the re-enactment one or two times more.

CASE REPLAY, SR: OLDER CHILDREN

Description: The children act out the story as a three-scene play. You will narrate it using the Case RePlay, Sr. script and they will act it out (no spoken words, for the most part), with each child assuming a different character's role. This activity is most suitable for first grade and up. You will review the story, then practice it a few times before performing it for others.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Sr. script
White board or other large format paper
Costumes and props

Preparation

1. Prepare for the play by choosing costumes and props for each character in the story. Decorate the area with any scenery props.
2. Write the words "Beginning," "Middle," "End" on a large piece of paper/whiteboard with plenty of space under each heading. You will use this paper to help the children think about the story as a three-scene play, as it is presented in the script.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will get to act out the story as a three-scene play, with a beginning, middle and end section. Tell them that before they can act it out, they need to think it out. as you narrate it with your script.
2. Take the children's answers as they recount the story, helping them put key incidents in the right order.
3. If desired, when they have filled in their Beginning, Middle, End, read through your whole (real) script, so they hear exactly what you will have them act out.
4. Then tell the children that it's time to practice acting out the story.
5. Assign parts to each child. If you are using costumes, do NOT give them out at this point. They will be a distraction.
6. Have all the children sit on the floor or in chairs on one side of the "stage," then call the characters up in place as their part in the story comes.
7. As you read the script, guide the children in where you want them to move or do to act it out.
8. After going through the whole script once, give out any costumes and props and act out the script once or twice more.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Re-enacting the Story

Read the script as the children act out together (younger) or assuming different roles (older) as the other children or the parents watch.

CASE REPLAY, JR--YOUNGER KIDS (KINDERGARTEN) P.2

“Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the Ridiculous Runner.

This is a New Testament story. It took place when Jesus lived on earth.

And now we present: “The Case of the Ridiculous Runner.”

Scene 1:

Actions:

One day, as a group of Pharisees were walking down the road, they saw a group of tax collectors and other “sinners” listening to Jesus. They hated that Jesus was talking to “bad people” like this about God. These Pharisees believed these people too sinful to be accepted by God, but they thought that God approved of themselves. They didn’t understand that we all need a Savior if we are to be accepted by God. So Jesus started to tell a story to them all to make His point. Here’s the story: There once was a father with two sons. The older son was obedient, but the younger was rebellious. The younger son asked for his share of his father’s things that he really shouldn’t get until after his father dies. But the father gave them to the son and the son cashed them in for money. Then the son left home and went to a faraway Gentile land where he spent all his money in wild living.

Scene 2:

Not long after the son ran out of money, a famine hit the country. It was very hard to get food or find a job. But finally, the son found a job--one that was disgusting to a Jew: he fed the pigs of a Gentile farmer. Even with this job, the son still didn’t have enough food to eat. At last, he sees how foolish he has been and decides to go home. He will confess his sins against God and his father, and see if his father will hire him as a servant. The son starts home. As he is coming down the road near home, his father sees him son and runs after him. The son confesses his sins to his father and his father joyfully receives him.

Scene 3:

The father tells his servants bring his best robe, the family ring and sandals and puts them on his son. He has them kill the fattened calf to celebrate his son’s safe return. The father has forgiven his son and has restored him to his place as his son. When the older son comes home and sees the big celebration for his sinful, little brother, he is furious. He doesn’t think it’s fair to treat his brother so well when he has acted so sinfully--especially since he, the older brother has always done what’s right and served his father. He refuses to come to the party. The father goes out to the older son and listens to his complaints about his brother. He reassures his son that the farm and everything will be his one day, but that they must celebrate this wonderful news that the younger son had turned away from his wickedness and returned home. Everyone listening to Jesus’ story was surprised with the ending. What father would ever dishonor himself by running--especially, running to a sinful son like this. He should have punished him, not forgiven him and welcomed his home! This was just what Jesus wanted them all to see: God is like the father in the story and those listening to his story are like the two sons. Some might be rebellious law-breakers, like the younger son. Others were proud, law-keepers, like the older son. They all needed God’s forgiveness. They all needed a Savior! God wanted them all to come to Him, confess their sins and be saved.

Bible Truth Tie-In:

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins.** Jesus’ story gave hope to the sinners that God would even forgive all their wickedness if they would confess their sins and turn to Him.

CASE REPLAY, SR--OLDER KIDS (1ST GRADE AND UP) P.3

"Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the Ridiculous Runner.

This is a New Testament story. It took place when Jesus lived on earth.

The characters in our story are: Pharisees and the teachers of the law; Tax collectors and other "sinners"; Jesus; the Father and two sons; his servants; the bad people in the faraway country; and, the Gentile farmer.

And now we present: "The Case of the Ridiculous Runner."

Scene 1: (Beginning)

One day, as a group of Pharisees were walking down the road, they saw a group of tax collectors and other "sinners" listening to Jesus. They hated that Jesus was talking to "bad people" like this about God. These Pharisees believed these people too sinful to be accepted by God, but they thought that God approved of themselves. They didn't understand that we all need a Savior if we are to be accepted by God. So Jesus started to tell a story to them all to make His point. Here's the story: There once was a father with two sons. The older son was obedient, but the younger was rebellious. The younger son asked for his share of his father's things that he really shouldn't get until after his father dies. But the father gave them to the son and the son cashed them in for money. Then the son left home and went to a faraway Gentile land where he spent all his money in wild living.

Scene 2: (Middle)

Not long after the son ran out of money, a famine hit the country. It was very hard to get food or find a job. But finally, the son found a job--one that was disgusting to a Jew: he fed the pigs of a Gentile farmer. Even with this job, the son still didn't have enough food to eat. At last, he sees how foolish he has been and decides to go home. He will confess his sins against God and his father, and see if his father will hire him as a servant. The son starts home. As he is coming down the road near home, his father sees him son and runs after him. The son confesses his sins to his father and his father joyfully receives him.

Scene 3: (End)

The father tells his servants bring his best robe, the family ring and sandals and puts them on his son. He has them kill the fattened calf to celebrate his son's safe return. The father has forgiven his son and has restored him to his place as his son. When the older son comes home and sees the big celebration for his sinful, little brother, he is furious. He doesn't think it's fair to treat his brother so well when he has acted so sinfully--especially since he, the older brother has always done what's right and served his father. He refuses to come to the party. The father goes out to the older son and listens to his complaints about his brother. He reassures his son that the farm and everything will be his one day, but that they must celebrate this wonderful news that the younger son had turned away from his wickedness and returned home. Everyone listening to Jesus' story was surprised with the ending. What father would ever dishonor himself by running--especially, running to a sinful son like this. He should have punished him, not forgiven him and welcomed his home! This was just what Jesus wanted them all to see: God is like the father in the story and those listening to his story are like the two sons. Some might be rebellious law-breakers, like the younger son. Others were proud, law-keepers, like the older son. They all needed God's forgiveness. They all needed a Savior! God wanted them all to come to Him, confess their sins and be saved.

Bible Truth Tie-In:

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins.** Jesus' story gave hope to the sinners that God would even forgive all their wickedness if they would confess their sins and turn to Him.

The Younger Son's Rags and Robes

Description: The children will make two paper bag puppets: one of the younger son in rags and one with him wearing the robe, ring and sandals of a son.

Materials

2 lunch size paper bags per child
 Templates for puppet parts
 White Cardstock
 Markers, Crayons or colored pencils
 Glue sticks
 Jiggly eyes
 Brown or Black Yarn
 Optional craft jewels, sequins and glitter/glitter glue
 Scissors

Preparing the Craft

1. Use the templates to make a set of parts for each puppet. These are best printed out onto cardstock.
2. For younger children, you may want to cut out the parts for them. Older children can do this themselves.
3. Cut yarn into 2" lengths (for hair) and 1" lengths (for beard).
4. Make a sample for the children to see.

Making the Craft

1. Show children your sample.
2. Have the children decorate the puppet parts. Add fingers on hands; toes on feet. Add ring to hand of robed son. Make facial features, adding yarn for beard and mustache and hair (these will look messy on the ragged son and nicely kept on the robed son). Add jiggly eyes for the eyes. (If desired, add extra decoration to the robe and add the ring with the sequins and/or glitter glue.)
3. Use glue to stick the puppet parts in place on each bag. Make sure the bag is turned upside down, with the flap of the bottom of the bag facing upward.
4. Have the children put one puppet on each hand.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Craft Presentation

If you are presenting the craft to other children or parents the children can hold up their crafts (or your model craft) and read their Bible Truth Connection answers to explain the importance of the craft.

CASE CRAFT**Discussion Guide****Instructions:**

As the children are settled into making their craft, ask them these questions to help them understand the craft's significance. Use the answers provided to guide the children's answers.

Discussion Questions

1. Who did the father see coming down the road?
His younger son.

2. How did the father treat his son when he saw him?

He ordered his servants to take off his son's ragged clothes and give him the ring, robe and shoes of a son. This was a picture of God's forgiveness for all sinners who confess their sins and turn to Him for forgiveness and salvation.

3. What did these things mean? What was Jesus wanting the people listening to understand from His story?

It meant that the father forgave his son for sinning against him, even though he didn't deserve it.

4. What is the Bible Truth that we are learning?
God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins.

5. What does our craft have to do with our Bible Truth: God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins.
Jesus told this story of a father forgiving his son as a picture of God's forgiveness of all who confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Him as their Savior.

6. What can this craft help us remember?

No sinner is too bad for God to save. He promises to forgive all who confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Him as their Savior.

TAKING IT TO OTHERS**Craft Presentation****Instructions:**

Have children hold up your model craft/their crafts. Choose five children (or you say) the five sections below to explain the craft's importance.

Presentation:

1. Our craft is: The Younger Son's Rags and Robes.

2. On the road, not far from his home, the father ordered his servants to take off his younger son's ragged clothes and give him the ring, robe and shoes of a son, because he forgave his son for sinning against him. This was a picture of God's forgiveness for all sinners who confess their sins and turn to Him for forgiveness and salvation.

3. Bible Truth 1 is: God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins.

4. Jesus told this story of a father forgiving his son as a picture of God's forgiveness of all who confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Him as their Savior.

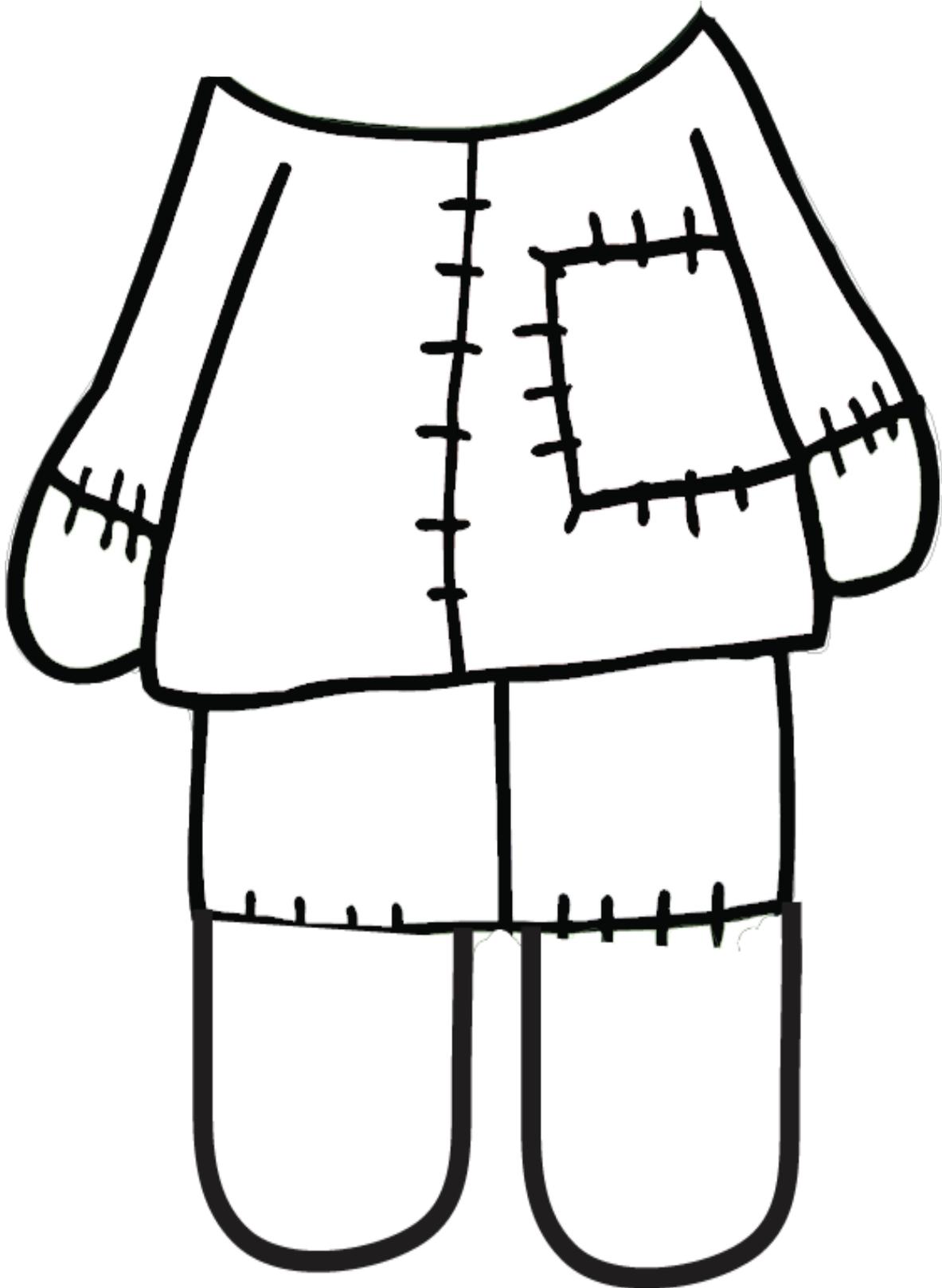
5. Our craft can help us remember that no sinner is too bad for God to save. He promises to forgive all who confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Him as their Savior.

Note: Even non-readers can participate in presenting the craft, if you will whisper what they are to say in their ear and let them say it aloud for the others to hear.

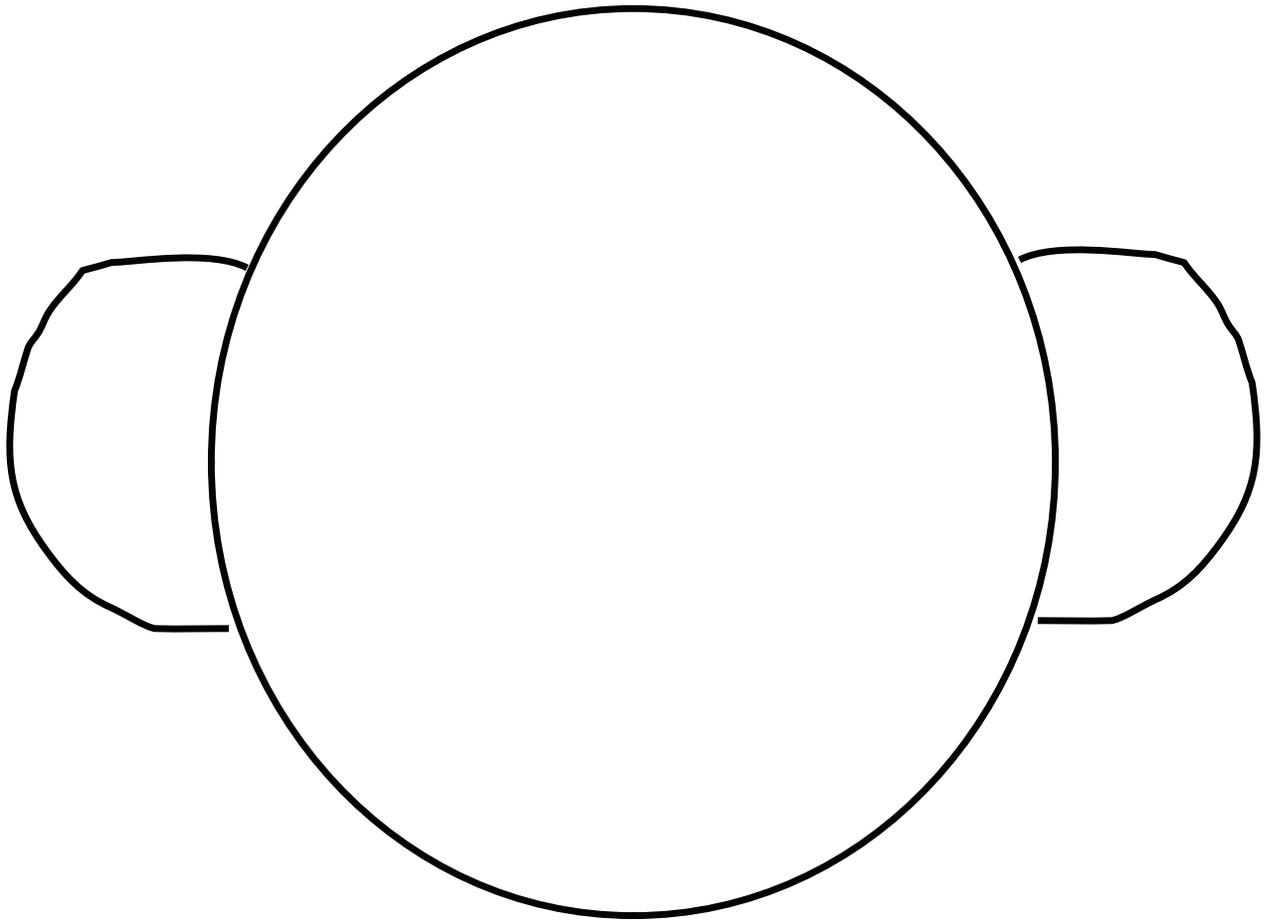
Finely Robed Younger Son



Younger Son in Rags



Younger Son's Head



BEFORE CLASS:**1. PICK YOUR PERSON**

VIPPs can be anyone in your church! Typically, they fall into 6 categories: Church staff, Elders, Deacons/deaconesses, Special Volunteers (people who aren't paid, but spend a lot of time helping out in particular ways), Supported Workers (aka missionaries), and Church Members.

2. GATHER YOUR FACTS

Use the VIPP Information Sheet to write down the facts about your VIPP. The information on this worksheet is used in the VIPP activities, listed in the "Choose an Activity" section below.

DURING THE ACTIVITY:**1. INTRODUCE YOUR VIPP**

Introduce your VIPP to the children, using the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. If desired, you can even have the actual person come into class for the children to meet.

Need help describing what someone does for the church in a kid-friendly way? Check out the list of common VIPPs on the Praise Factory website in the PFI resources. There are lots of kid-friendly descriptions for common VIPP's, such as pastors, elders, deacons and a lot more.

2. PRAY!

Lead the children in praying for the VIPP. Ask the children if they would like to pray for one of the VIPPs prayer requests. Even non-readers can pray for the VIPP if you whisper the prayer request in their ear, then let them say it aloud. Never force a child to pray!

3. CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY

There are two activities you can use to help the children learn about the VIPP:

VIPP Clue Cards: These are nine coloring sheets in which children fill in the nine things they learn about the VIPP from the VIPP Information Sheet. Photocopy a set of each child. Use as few or as many of these Clue Cards as you desire. They are found in the back of this book.

VIPP Game: This is a game that uses a set of Clue Cards for one or two VIPPs.

Choose a VIPP and fill in his/her information on the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. Tell the children about the VIPP, having them fill in the VIPP Clue Cards with the key facts as they learn them. Write any words the children need to write on a white-board or other piece of paper so they can see how to spell them. Help younger children write these words on their clue cards. Ideas for how to tell the children about many common VIPPs are listed at praisefactory.org with the resources for this Bible Truth.

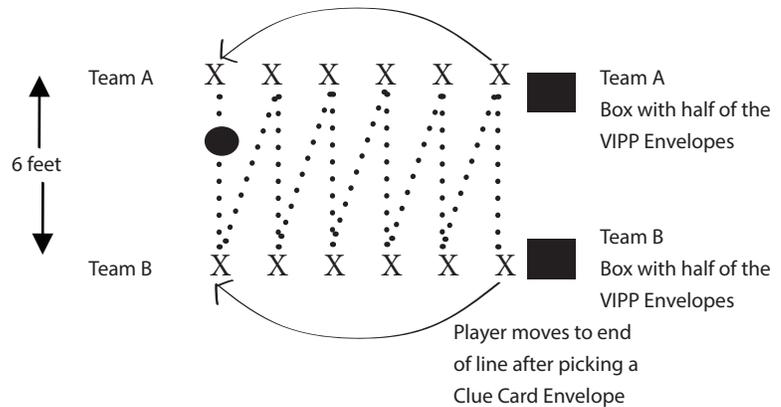
Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Introduce and Pray for the VIPP

If you are presenting the VIPP to other children or parents you can assign children to hold up the 10 clue cards and say what each card tells about the VIPP. (Or, you can have the children hold them up as you tell what each one means.) Then lead the children in praying for the VIPP.

Game: Ball Roll Review

Materials

Information Sheet for one VIPP
 2 Set of Clue Cards
 Ball
 8 8.5" x 11" Manilla Envelopes
 Tape
 Pen and Markers
 2 Boxes



Preparing the Game

1. Fill in one set of clue sheets for the VIPP you are using.
2. Tape the other (blank) set of Clue Cards to the outside of the manilla envelopes.
3. Put the filled-in clue cards in the corresponding envelope.
4. Put half the Clue Card Envelopes in one box and the other half in the other box. These are the Team A and Team B Boxes.

Playing the Game

Reveal: Tell the children about the VIPP, showing them your filled-in clue cards as you tell about them.

Review: Have the children break into two even groups and sit down on the floor facing each other, with about a 6' spread between the 2 lines (see diagram above). For Round 1, Give the ball to the first child in Team A and have them roll it across to the child on Team B directly across from them. Then, that Team B child rolls it back across to the next child on Team A, etc. all the way down the line to the last child on Team B. The last child to get the ball will then pick a Clue Card envelope out of their team's box. They (or the teacher) will tell the group and the Clue Card category by looking at the picture of the Clue Card on the outside of the envelope. Have the children try to remember the VIPP's answer to the category. If the class gets it right, the category is "retired". If they get it wrong, then it gets put back in the pile of category envelopes. The child who picked the Clue Card, then takes their place at the other end of the line. They begin Round 2 by rolling the ball to the first person on Team A, etc. This time, the ball will end up with the last child in the Team A line. ending with the last child in the other line, who gets up and chooses a clue from their Clue Card box. Continue until all the clues have been chosen/answered correctly.

VIPP INFORMATION SHEET

VIPP NAME:

WHAT VIPP LOOKS LIKE

Man or Woman? _____

Hair color? _____

Eye color? _____

FAVORITE ANIMAL

FAVORITE FOOD

FAVORITE FREE TIME ACTIVITY

WHAT VIPP DOES DURING WEEK

VIPP GROUP OF SERVICE:

Church Member

Deacon

Elder

Church Staff

Special Volunteer

Supported Worker
(Missionary)

3 WAYS VIPP SERVES CHURCH

**3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR
THE VIPP**
