



S2.Lesson 2: Prodigal Son

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; a small object to hide (thimble, quarter, hot wheels car, etc); stopwatch; tv or laptop to show movie clip; movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html.

Opening Prayer

Opening Activity – All Cold, All Hot

- I need one volunteer to leave the classroom.
- [choose a less eager volunteer]
- Before you go, let me tell you what's going to happen.
- After you leave, we're going to take this object (thimble, quarter, whatever) and hide it.
- Then when you come in, we're going to play the game, "Hot/Cold." Only the first time you come in, if you go in the right direction we'll say "warmer, hotter, etc." and if you go in the wrong direction, we won't say anything.
- Let's do that now
- ____ will go outside and as a class we'll hide the object.
- Remember, we're only saying warmer and hotter, and we don't say anything if the person goes in the wrong direction.
- [Bring Volunteer in]
- [as secretly as possible, time how long it takes the volunteer to find the object]
- [Volunteer finds object]
- Ok, very good.
- Now we're going to do the same thing, only this time when you come in, instead of telling you warmer when you go in the right direction, we'll only tell you "Cold" or "Colder" or "Freezing" when you go in the wrong directions. If you go in the right direction, we won't tell you anything.
- [repeat activity, secretly time how long it takes the volunteer to find the object]

ASK

- To the Volunteer: Which round did you like better?
- Why?
- For the rest of us, which round did *we* like better?
- Why?

TELL

- I secretly timed how long it took to find the object in each round. Here are the results: ____ [hopefully the "hot" round took less time]
- When we're told what we are doing wrong, like we did to ____ during the cold round, we tend to "freeze up." We become more concerned about making mistakes and so we become more cautious.

- When we're encouraged to do the right thing and not discouraged by doing the wrong thing, we make a lot more mistakes but we find the object faster (again, hopefully the time results of the activity backs this up).
- In the story we're going to read, look for if the father is more of a "colder" father or "warmer" father.
- Let's read the parable of the Prodigal Son now.

READ Luke 15:11-32

11 Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So the father divided his property between the two sons and gave the younger son his inheritance/share. 13 A few days later the younger son packed, took his inheritance and traveled to a distant country. There, he squandered his property in wasteful living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in great need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 The son would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating because no one gave him anything. 17 Then he came to his sense and he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger?! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' ' 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is now found!' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. 27 The servant replied, 'Your brother has come back, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because your brother has returned safe and sound.' 28 Then the older son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with wasteful spending, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was gone, dead it seemed, but now he has returned, as if from the dead; he was lost and has been found.'"

TELL

- So what do you think, is the father a "warmer" or "colder" type of guy?
- This is a story Jesus told to help the people think about themselves and about God.
- The father displays a number of similar characteristics that God has.

- The father doesn't stop his son from taking the inheritance or from leaving (he doesn't yell "COLD!" for instance).
- And when his son returns home, the father hugs him and prepares a party for him (this is the equivalent of yelling "Warmer! Warmer!").
- Even with his older son, the father is patient and clearly explains why the older son should be patient and not upset as well.

TELL

- Let's turn our attention to the brothers, now.
- We're going to watch a very brief movie clip, now.
- It has characters from Despicable Me, but its not an actually clip from the movie. It's part of an advertisement.
- We're going to pretend (cuz I don't know if its true or not) that the two characters in the clip are brothers. The older brother will be the bigger one and the younger brother the smaller one.

Watch Despicable Me clip

ASK

- What did the younger brother have? (a box that went "Moo")
- Did he like it? (yes)
- Did the older brother like the box? (yes)
- Did he like his younger brother having it? (no)
- So what did he do? (took it by force)
- Was this fair? (Definitely not for the younger brother)
- Why?
- What would've been fairer? How would you make the situation right again? (the older brother asks to use it or plays with the younger brother. Someone tells the older brother that its not his and to back off. Say this one if someone else doesn't: **Someone tells/reminds the older brother that he's got plenty and he doesn't need to take away from his younger brother**)

ASK/TELL

- Going back to the scripture story: What is an inheritance? (materials/possessions/money that parents give to their children, usually after they die in their will)
- Was the father dead in the story? (No)
- So the younger son is asking for something that is not his to have yet.
- But the father gives the inheritance to the younger son anyways, and the younger son uses it, just like the younger brother in the video clip was using the moo box, right? He's got something and he's using it.
- Do you think the older brother might be just a little bit jealous? (Yep)
- So the older brother in the story we just read does not do what the older brother in the video clip does. Even though the older brother is jealous, he doesn't take the thing away from the younger brother. But when he's talking to his father, he seems to want the party to be taken away from his younger brother. And what does the father say in response?
- The father says "All that is mine is yours." The father is reminding the older son that he doesn't need to take anything away from his younger brother because he's got *plenty*.

- In today's terms, the father is telling the older son, "Listen, you get the big screen tv, the car, the Wii, the computer, the car and the house – let your younger brother have the box that says moo.
- In our lives, we might want to take things from others. Some ways that this might look like: sneaking, lying, stealing, teasing, bullying or cheating
- But if we practice being aware of what God has given us, and we practice giving thanks for what we've received, then even though we might be tempted, like the older brother in the story, we won't act on the temptation, like the older brother in the video clip.
- That's the good news for today!

CLOSING PRAYER