



CHILDREN'S LITURGY

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT, YEAR C

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. Often, we focus only on the son who left, wasted his inheritance, came back and was welcomed by the father. He messed up, repented, then returned and was forgiven and accepted.

Let's not forget the lesson that comes from the attitude of the older brother. Although he stayed with his father, he was not a model example. Filled with bitterness, he could not accept his father's decision to welcome his brother back. The story is of God's grace rather than how good we are.

Be Dramatic!

Drama is very useful in remembering Scripture, so I suggest you read the parable and ask for volunteers to act out what you read. Nominate a younger brother, older brother and a father. Feed the actors the lines from Scripture and bring the story to life. No rehearsal is required, it is supposed to be spontaneous.

Discuss

Ask the children what they think of the story. Would they forgive the younger son if they were the dad? Do they think they might have reacted like the older brother? Who does the father represent in this story? Explain to the children that even though the older brother stayed with his father, he isn't a shining example to them. The older brother is judgemental, thinks that he is in the right, and cannot accept his father's decision. The two sons are loved and accepted based on their father's love for them, not because of their perfect behaviour.

Remind

Point out that God, our heavenly Father is like the father in the parable. He loves them, forgives them and calls them His children. No matter what they have done or said, God's grace is more than sufficient.

Connect with SCIAF

Read the following to the children:

In the parable, we see that the youngest son leaves home, and he is welcomed back by his father. Unfortunately, across the world we see lots of people leaving their homes because they are in danger – unlike in the parable.

SCIAF's WEE BOX Appeal this year focuses on the country of Colombia and the work that the Scottish Catholic Church, through SCIAF, is doing to help bring hope to families in real danger.

The area of Chocó in Colombia is the poorest region in the country, and people living there are often exposed to violence. SCIAF's brave local partners stand alongside those in Chocó, despite immense danger to themselves. They are there when communities are attacked, when families are forced to escape their homes, and when children are overwhelmed by fear and suffering.

The Church, and SCIAF's work with them, continues to bring hope in difficult times to thousands of people, helping them return to their homes.



Enrique's town was taken over by an illegal paramilitary group (you might want to say 'gang' or use language suitable to your age group). They wanted access to the community's land so they could use it to do bad things, like move drugs and illegally mine gold through the area.

Enrique and his family were forced to leave their home, with nowhere to go. Enrique said, "The Church was there when we were displaced, and when we returned to our homes too."

Thanks to your support, praying for the work of SCIAF, and for fundraising – alongside the dedication and bravery of our local partners – we've helped people like Enrique and his family return to their homes, keeping them safe during the process.

Enrique also said, "The Church has helped us return to our homes with all their might. Their presence has helped guard us from the armed groups that still operate here."

To finish

Share the quote from Pope Francis and read together the prayer below.

"With the help of Christ, Christ alive in the midst of the community, it is possible to usher in a new Colombia." Pope Francis



God of Peace and Justice

As we journey through Lent,
help us to be mindful of those
with whom we share God's Creation,
our common home.

May our praying, fasting and giving,
help us to draw ever closer to You,
and inspire us to find new ways
to bring dignity, joy, peace and justice to others,
especially this year to the people of Colombia.

Amen