

BIBLE STORY

I Don't Want to Miss a Thing
The Older Brother
Luke 15:21-32

MEMORY VERSE

Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.
Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

LIFE APP

Forgiveness
Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

KEY QUESTION

What do you lose if you don't forgive?

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

Activity: Party Time!

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Tablecloth; party hats; Bible; treats to share; napkins

What You Do:

- 1) Cover your area with the tablecloth.
- 2) Encourage the kids to wear party hats.
- 3) Set the treats in the center of the tablecloth, but do not allow the kids to touch them yet.
- 4) Talk about the choices the older brother in our story made today.
 - o How did the father react when his son returned? (*He forgave him and threw a huge party to celebrate his son's return*)
 - o Where was the older brother when the younger son returned? (*Working in the field*)
 - o How did the older brother react when he found out that the party was for his younger brother who'd returned home? (*He was angry*)
 - o What did the older brother say to the father? (*"All these years I have worked, I've obeyed. You've never thrown me a party."*)
 - o Why do you think the older brother was SO mad? Can you relate to this?
 - o Why do you think the father celebrated in such a big way?
- 5) Pass out the treats for the kids to enjoy.

What You Say:

"I can relate to the older brother in this story. He's right; he was the one who had stayed, the one who worked hard and honored his dad. But he missed out. Because he thought it was more important to be right than to forgive, he missed the opportunity to celebrate his brother's return. Sometimes we do the same thing. We want to make a point or prove that we're right and the other person is wrong. But in the end, your friendship is WAY more important than winning an argument. We need to offer forgiveness when someone apologizes and means it. Because when you don't forgive, you miss out!

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Gospel Moment

We can't have any real relationships without forgiveness. We ALL mess up. We let each other down. We do things that hurt each other's feelings. So we HAVE to forgive! That's how we make our relationships stronger. That's how we make things right with our friends and our family members, too. So be ready to forgive. Don't hold things against people. If you do, you'll miss out on that relationship. You'll miss how good it COULD be.

"From the beginning, God had a plan to fix our relationship with Him. That's why He sent Jesus—to be our Savior. He wants us to fix our relationships with each other, too. If we're not careful, we can start to think like the older brother in Jesus' story. We get upset because forgiveness doesn't seem fair. We think the person doesn't deserve it. But remember, God ALWAYS forgives. He always welcomes us home. His love is for everyone. And if we don't join in the party, we miss out!

Discussion Questions

- 6) What can it cost you to hold a grudge? For example, what might you miss out on if you decided to hold a grudge and not forgive a friend?
- 7) What if a friend says something unkind to you and they never say they are sorry? Do you still forgive them? Do you only forgive someone if they ask you?
- 8) Is forgiveness always fair? How does it make you feel when it's not fair? ***[Make it Personal] (Be prepared to share about a time when someone treated you unfairly or when you were mad at someone for how they treated you. Did you forgive them right away? Did it take you time to forgive them? How did you feel when you decided to forgive them? Did you miss out on something because you wanted to make them pay?)***

Prayer

God, Thank You for Your forgiveness and Your love. We want to show others Your love! God, please give us Your power and Your strength to forgive others. Help us to let go of anything we may be holding against others so we don't miss out on the joy of Your forgiveness. Amen!