

SERIES BIG IDEA:

God who loves invites me to rely on His love by accepting His love.

TEACHING BIG IDEA:

God who loves patiently pursues me to forgive me and to be in relationship with me.

BEGIN IN PRAYER: Consider asking God for wisdom to understand His patient pursuing love.

TALK IT OVER:

ICE BREAKER: Talk about a time when you were pleasantly surprised by a greeting; hearing your name called out unexpectedly or receiving a thoughtful message. How did it feel to be the object of another's kind intention?

1. How familiar were you with the parable of the "Prodigal Son" prior to the message? What new insights, if any, did you gain from this teaching on the parable?
2. Would you say you identify more with the younger son or the older son? Why?

SCRIPTURE:

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!' I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants' So he got up and went to his father." Luke 15:17-20 (NIV)

1. Have you ever seen someone 'come to his senses' after a bad decision? What happened? Why do you think it can be hard for us to come to our senses?
2. Discuss possible responses to the statement, "You can have trust or control, but you can't have both"? Talk through possible ways that this could be applied to the younger son's story.

SCRIPTURE:

But he answered his father, '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 squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fatted calf for him! Luke 15:29-30 (NIV)

1. What are some of the dangers in using comparison as a way to justify ourselves?
2. How could you make a case for the idea that 'the older brother was just as lost as the younger brother because he was relying on his own goodness'? Did this stop the father from pursuing the older son?

CONCLUDE: Pray that this week God would help you recognize where you need to trust His pursuing love