

PREPARING AT HOME

March 25-31, 2019

Focus reading: Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=418899444>)

Other lectionary readings: Joshua 5:9–12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

Theme: A Traitor for Grace

We read a familiar story this week. It is usually given the title of “The Prodigal Son,” but it is also known as the parable of “The Loving Father.” In this year of “Choosing Welcome,” it seems appropriate to focus on the father’s unconditional welcome, a welcome that defies the patriarchal norms of his society. Even if a father dared to prematurely give an inheritance to his son, he would have done so only under the condition of close supervision. Both the patriarchy and the empire depended upon rules and consequences, but this father rejects the norms of patriarchy and empire in favor of grace. He gives both sons freedom to make their own decisions and live their own lives, with the only consequences being those that occur naturally as the result of their choices. When this parable is understood within the context of Jesus’ mission to proclaim the Year of Jubilee (Luke 4:16-21), it is heard as a story about a patriarch who chooses grace, compassion, and radical welcome over the patriarchal rules of society. It is a welcome that is countercultural in its reach. It is a welcome that offers a new beginning.

RE-TELLING THE STORY

This is a story that children love to re-tell. Invite your child to draw the story in scenes, comic book style, and then use the drawings to guide them in re-telling the story.

WELCOME!

Draw a picture of when you have been welcomed by someone. Draw another picture of how you can welcome someone else.

FAMILIES AND FEELINGS

Families, like the one in this story, are complicated. Emotions run deep. Talk with your child about this family and your own. Who are the characters in the story? Trace a character’s feelings from the beginning to the end of the story. Have you ever felt like that? Do you think the brothers were often jealous of each other? Who did the father love? How could he love both sons?

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for loving us
even when we make bad choices,
even when we disappoint you,
Thank you for welcoming us home.
May we welcome others
with the same grace, compassion, and love.
Amen.

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