I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.

John 8:12  
(NIV 1984)
Looking Back

at Lesson 7

Jesus Answers the Prayer of a Canaanite Woman
Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

Aim: What did a woman do when her daughter was sick?

Truth: The woman kept asking Jesus to heal her daughter.

Application: God hears and answers our prayers.

Response: We do not give up asking God for help, because we trust that he hears and answers our prayers.

Lesson Summary: As Jesus and his disciples entered the area around Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman approached Jesus and begged him to heal her daughter. The woman showed her faith by persistently praying to Jesus even when he appeared to ignore her. Jesus assured the woman that her prayer was answered.

Memory Treasure: Psalm 50:15

A Father Forgives His Son

Luke 15:11-24

What did a father do when his son was sorry he had sinned?

The father forgave his son and welcomed him home.

Application: God forgives our sins and welcomes us into his family.

Response: We are sorry for our sins and thank God that he forgives us and welcomes us into his family.

Lesson Summary: Jesus told the story of a young man who left home and sinfully wasted the money his father had given him. After he realized his sin, the repentant son returned home. The father immediately and unconditionally forgave his son and welcomed him home. Jesus told this story to teach about God's great love and forgiveness for sinners.

Galatians 3:26

Dear heavenly Father, I am sorry for all my sins of thought, word, and deed. How happy I am to be reminded of your love and forgiveness! Help my students also to be sorry for their sins and to trust in your love and forgiveness. I pray in the name of Jesus, my Savior. Amen.
WORSHIP

Begin with the following action rhyme:

Listen to God’s Bible.
(cup hands behind ears; make open book with hands)
It tells us of God’s love. (cross fists over heart)
Hear God’s Word, obey it too, (cup hands behind ears; nod head “yes”)
And learn of heaven above. (point up)

You need one or more of the following: a toy (broken or missing a piece), a pillow, and a learning aid (flash cards, toy, game, book) that teaches either the alphabet or numerals.

Show the appropriate item(s) as you ask what a father might do to help his son who:

• Could not put together a toy (or broke part of a toy).
• Had a bad dream.
• Was having trouble learning the alphabet or numbers.

Fathers love their sons and daughters and do things for them. In our Bible lesson today, we will hear a story Jesus told about a father who did something for his son. **We will learn what a father did when his son was sorry he had sinned.**

Alternate Lesson Plan

Begin by singing the following words to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

Learn the Bible every day, every day, every day.
The Bible is God’s special way To teach and talk to us.

Have two students stand in front of the room. Give one a toy, and direct the other to pretend to cry.

Ask why the one child might be crying. [The other child either took the toy or would not share the toy.] Ask what the child with the toy could do to help make things better. [Give back the toy; share.] Ask what that child might say to help make things better. [I’m sorry.]

Today we will hear about a son who was sorry for the wrong things he did. **We will learn what a father did when his son was sorry he had sinned.**
Have six volunteers each hold one of the following items: real or play money, a toy pig, a robe, a ring, sandals, and real or play food. Wear a robe and sandals, and tell the story from the perspective of the younger son. As you do so, go to each volunteer and have that person hand you the prop associated with the part of the story you are telling.

One day Jesus told a story to teach people that God loves and forgives all sinners. This is the story:

“A man had two sons. One day the younger son came to his father and said, ‘Father, I know that when you die, I will get part of your money. But I want it now. Please give it to me.’

“The father took his money and gave part of it to each son. Soon after this the younger son took all his money and went to live far away from home. ‘Here I can buy anything I want,’ the young man thought. He quickly spent his money doing wrong, sinful things.

“Very soon the young son’s money was gone, and he could not buy food. He could not even find food in gardens or fields because no rain had fallen for a long time and nothing was growing. The son thought, ‘I must find a job so I can earn money to buy food.’

“The son found a farmer who needed a worker. ‘You can feed my pigs,’ the farmer told him. Each day the young man fed the farmer’s pigs. Sometimes he was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pigs’ food himself, but no one would even give him that.

“Then the hungry young man thought about his home. ‘My father makes sure his workers have enough to eat, but here I am starving.’ The young son also thought about his many sins. ‘I have done many wrong things. I am going back home to tell my father how I have sinned against God and against him. I will tell him I am not good enough to be his son. I will ask him to make me one of his servants.’ So the son started for home.

“While the young man was still far down the road, his father saw him coming. How glad the father was to see his son! Quickly he ran down the road to meet him. The father put his arms around his son and kissed him.

“The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I should not be called your son anymore.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Hurry! Get the best robe and put it on my son. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Make a big dinner with lots of good food. Let’s have a party and be happy,

Note: You’ll need to use the story in the adjacent column.

Draw a large map on the board or a large sheet of paper. Include simple sketches of the father’s home, a faraway land, and a farmer’s pigpen. You could also draw a path that goes from place to place. Color and cut out figures made from Copy Master 1. Attach the figures to the map and move them, as necessary, as you tell the story. At appropriate times, attach the alternate faces (father’s happy face, son’s sad face) and the money bag to the figures.
for my son has come home! The father loved his son even though he had sinned. The father forgave his son.”

Jesus told this story to teach about God and his love for us sinners. The love of the father in the story reminds us of the love God has for sinners. God is happy to forgive sinners. He wants us to be part of his family of believers.

Discuss

Make figures of the father and younger son from Copy Master 1, cut them out, and attach them to the board or a wall. Later you will need the alternate faces (son’s sad face, father’s happy face) made from the same copy master, either a photo of the class or a sheet of paper with many smiling faces drawn on it, an index card with “GOD” written on it, and a Bible.

Ask: What did the son ask his father to do? [Give him the money he would get when his father died.]

Say: Let’s pretend we are the son, leaving home and walking to a place far away.

Do: All walk in place.

Ask: What did the son do when he got to that place? [Spent all his money doing wrong, sinful things.]

What did he do when he had no more money? [Got a job feeding pigs.]

Do: Have a volunteer attach the sad face to the son.

Ask: Why did the son become sad? [He had nothing and could not even eat the pigs’ food. Most important, he was sad and sorry because he had sinned.]

What did he decide to do? [Go home; say that he had sinned against God and his father; ask if he could be one of his father’s servants.]

Do: Point to the father.

Say: When the father saw his son coming home, he could have been angry or told the son to go away.

Ask: But what did he do instead? [Ran to meet him; put his arms around him; kissed him.]

Do: Have a volunteer attach the happy face to the father.
Ask: What did the father do when his son said he was sorry and should not be called his son anymore? [Forgave him; welcomed him home; gave him gifts and a nice dinner.]

Do: Attach a class photo (or drawing of many faces to represent you and the class) near the son.

Say: You and I are like the son in Jesus’ story. We sin many, many times every day.

Do: Have the children give examples of ways they sin at home, at school, and while they are playing.

Say: When we think about our sins, we are very sad; sorry. We know that we have disappointed and disobeyed God and deserve to be punished.

Do: Attach the “GOD” card near the father figure.

Say: But we have a father who is even better than the father in Jesus’ story. We have God, our heavenly Father, who loves us and sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Because of Jesus, God forgives us.

Do: Open the Bible. Read the memory treasure.

Say: In his Word, our heavenly Father tells us that he welcomes us sinners into his family, just as the father in Jesus’ story welcomed his son home.

Do: Lead the children in saying the memory treasure.

Ask: What do we tell God for forgiving our sins and making us part of his family of believers? [Thank you!]

Say: Show with your faces how we feel when we think about our many sins. [All make sad faces.] We are like the son. We are sorry for our sins.

Do: Have the children take the other crayon and mark (circle or color) the picture of the father.

Say: When he saw his son coming home, the father could have been angry or could have told his son to go away.

Ask: But what did he do instead? [Ran to meet him; hugged and kissed him.]

Say: The father loved and forgave his son. He welcomed his son home.

Do: Point to the pictures in the bottom row.

Ask: Who is like the father in Jesus’ story: God or us? [God.] Why? [He loves and forgives us.]

Do: Have the children mark “GOD” with the crayon used for the father.

Say: God also welcomes us sinners into his family.

Do: Read the memory treasure for and then with the children.

Ask: What do we say to God for forgiving us and welcoming us into his family? [Thank you!]
CLOSE

**Say** Jesus told a story about a son who sinned against both God and his father.

**Ask** What did the father do when his son came home and was sorry he had sinned? [Forgave him; welcomed him home.]

**Say** You and I are like that son. We are sorry for our many, many sins.

**Ask** Who forgives us and welcomes us into his family? [God.]

**Say** Let’s thank God for his great love and forgiveness.

**Do** Have the children practice their response together before you close with the following litany:

- **Teacher:** For loving us,
- **Children:** Thank you, God.
- **T:** For sending Jesus to save us from our sins,
- **C:** Thank you, God.
- **T:** For forgiving us,
- **C:** Thank you, God.
- **T:** For welcoming sinners like us into your family,
- **C:** Thank you, God.
- **T and C:** Amen.

**Parent Idea:** Do the first activity on the student lesson to prepare your child for answering these questions during our next class: Which person from the Bible story reminds you of yourself, and which person reminds you of God? The children will also have the opportunity to tell how they marked each person on the student lesson picture.

**Galatians 3:26**

Point to the son on a student lesson picture.

**Ask** Why was the son sad? [He was sorry for his sins.] Who forgave the son and welcomed him home? [His father.]

**Do** Point to yourself and the children while saying, “You and I are sorry for our sins.”

**Ask** What does God, our heavenly Father, do for us? [Forgives us.]

**Say** Let’s thank God for loving us, forgiving us, and welcoming us into his family.

**Do Pray:** Dear heavenly Father, we are sorry for our sins. Thank you for forgiving them through Jesus, who took them all away. Thank you also for welcoming us into your family. We love you! Amen.

**Parent Idea:** As you do the second student lesson activity, list ways you can thank God for forgiving you and welcoming you into his family. The children will have the opportunity to mention some of those examples during our next class.
• Use Activity 3 (Thank You, Lord!) under Lesson Activities to begin.
• Use Activity 1 (A Son’s Journey) under Lesson Activities to review the Bible story.
• Show a coin and ask what the children would do if they lost a coin. [Try to find it.] Then tell Jesus’ parable about the lost coin. (See Luke 15:8-10.) Emphasize the last part of Jesus’ parable. There is joy in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10b). Compare this to the father’s response to his repentant son: he forgave him and welcomed him home. Explain that Jesus used these parables to teach about God’s great love and forgiveness. He forgives us and welcomes us undeserving sinners into his family. Suggestion: Have the children do Activity 4 (God’s Family Certificate) under Lesson Activities.
• Recall that we thank God for his great love and forgiveness and for welcoming us into his family. Then close by repeating the song from Activity 3 (Thank You, Lord!) under Lesson Activities.
• Choose and use the Lesson Activities that best meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Activities

1. Review

A Son’s Journey

Purpose: To use a map to review the story.

Procedure: Give each child a copy of Copy Master 3. Have the children use their fingers to trace the path the son followed as he left home and returned. Have the children stop at each place along the path and tell the corresponding part of the story. Finally, have the children use a crayon or marker to trace the path.

Story Song

Purpose: To sing a song that reviews the story.

Procedure: Sing the following words to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

Jesus liked to tell Stories to his friends So that he could help them learn About God’s love for them.

A son left his home, Led a life of sin. He was sorry and came back. His father welcomed him.

So God loves us all. He forgives all sin, Gives us what we don’t deserve— Life in heaven with him.
**Dramatization**

*Purpose:* To act out the story.

*Procedure:* Choose a cast (father, two sons, farmer, some pigs, and some servants) to act out the story. Use paper bags filled with crumpled newspaper and tied with yarn for bags of money. Have the “pigs” either hold toy pigs or wear snouts made from paper cups tied around their heads with yarn. Have the “servants” bring out a robe, a ring, some sandals, and some toy food for the “son” when he arrives home. *Optional:* You could dress in sandals and a robe, portray Jesus, and narrate as others act out the story.

**2. Application**

**God’s Forgiveness**

*Purpose:* To give a visual picture of God’s forgiveness.

*Procedure:* Cut a large cross from a sheet of red cellophane. Have the children recall that we all sin many, many times each day. Then have them name specific ways they sin. For each sin, use a red marker to make a “sin mark” on a piece of white paper. Draw the marks so that you can cover them completely with the cellophane cross. The sin marks will “disappear.” Remind the children that God forgives our sins because Jesus took them away.

*Note:* Test this activity before doing it for the class. There are various kinds of red; make sure the color you choose works with the red cellophane.

**Action Rhyme**

*Purpose:* To use an action rhyme to thank God for his love and forgiveness.

*Procedure:* Teach the following words and actions:

- My God loves me. (*cross fists over heart*)
- My God forgives me. (*make cross with index fingers*)
- I’m part of God’s family. (*point up*)
- Thank you, God! (*clap hands while saying each word*)

**3. Music**

**Thank You, Lord!**

*Purpose:* To sing thanks to God for forgiving us and welcoming us into his family.

*Procedure:* Sing the following words to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

God forgives all my sins, all my sins, all my sins.
God forgives all my sins.
I love and thank you, Lord!

God has made me his own child, his own child, his own child.
God has made me his own child.
I love and thank you, Lord!

**Let Me Learn of Jesus**

*Purpose:* To sing about Jesus’ love for us.

*Procedure:* Recall that Jesus came to earth and did everything to take away our sins. Then teach the song “Let Me Learn of Jesus.” Find the melody in *Let All the People Praise You* (Northwestern Publishing House) or, for variety, teach the words to the tune of “Glory Be to Jesus” (hymn 103).

*Note:* “Nailed upon the tree” may confuse some children. Explain that trees are cut into pieces of wood, and wood was used to make crosses long ago.

Let me learn of Jesus; He is kind to me.
Once he died to save me, Nailed upon the tree.

When I go to Jesus, He will hear me pray, Make me pure and holy, Take my sins away.
Other Songs

Purpose: To sing other songs related to the lesson.

Procedure: Teach (review) one or more of the following:

- “My Sins Have Been 4-given,” stanzas 1 and 2, from Copy Masters 4.1 and 4.2. Try the actions suggested on the music. Additional actions follow:
  - died on a cross—form cross with arms
  - He rose—lift hands high
  - do not let me park—cross arms across chest and stand still
  - in drive—pretend to shift a car
  - steer my way—pretend to steer car
  - Send your Spirit—point up and then to self
- “Jesus Loves Me,” stanzas 1 and 3, from Let All the People Praise You (Northwestern Publishing House).
- “Now the Light Has Gone Away” (hymn 593:2).
- “God Loved the World So That He Gave” (hymn 391:1).
- “O Christ, Lamb of God” (hymnal, page 23 or 35).
- The first line of “Thank the Lord” (“Thank . . . done”; hymnal, page 36).
- The refrain of Psalm 38 (hymnal, page 81).

4. Art

God’s Family Certificate

Purpose: To make a reminder that we are part of God’s family, loved and forgiven by him.

Procedure: Give each child a copy of Copy Master 5. Read the sentence and have the children add their names. Each child can add a Jesus sticker to the empty area and draw a self-portrait (or add a photo) next to him. They can also decorate with markers and other stickers. Have the children glue the certificates to slightly larger sheets of colored paper, poster board, or craft foam. Encourage them to display the certificates in prominent places in their homes as reminders that they are members of God’s family whom he loves and forgives.

Welcomed Home

Purpose: To illustrate how the father showed love to his repentant son.

Procedure: Give each child a copy of Copy Master 6. Have the children use crayons, markers, and fabric scraps to make the figure look like the son when his father welcomed him home and gave him a ring, a robe, and sandals. Add or have the children add the words “A father forgave his son.”

Wall Banner

Purpose: To make a wall banner that reinforces the lesson application.

Procedure: Make a large paper banner with a fringed bottom edge. At the top print “God Forgives Us and Welcomes Us Into His Family.” Add or have the children add the cross before and the heart after the words. Then have each child trace a jar or can lid (various sizes) on the paper to make a circle, paint the circle a bright color, and write his or her name by the circle. After the circles are dry, have the children use black paint to make their circles into happy faces as reminders of how happy they are that God forgives them and welcomes them into his family. Display this banner in a prominent place in your classroom or in a hallway. Variation: Have each child make a small version of the banner. Print the same words on the top. Have the children make the cross, the heart, and their own happy faces.
5. Other Ideas

Work Out the Wiggles

*Purpose:* To play a follow-the-leader game that acts out part of the story.

*Procedure:* Choose one child to be the son. Have the other children line up single file behind that person. Have the “son” lead the children in walking from home to a faraway place to a pig farm and back home. The son should use different types of walking: slow, fast, little steps, big steps, high steps, go backward, tiptoe, walk on heels, etc. After the children return home, choose a new son, and repeat.

*Optional:* Have the children make sandals to wear while doing the activity. Help them, as needed, to do the following:

- Trace both feet on cardboard. Cut out the tracings; they are the soles of the sandals.
- On each side cut a 1-inch slit in the spot between the big toe and the second toe. Put tape at each end of the slit to prevent tearing when inserting the strap.
- Cut a 12" x 2" strip from a grocery bag. Fold the strip in half lengthwise. This is the strap for the sandal. Push one end of the strap through the slit. You will use the strap to make one loop for the big toe and a larger loop for the four other toes. Size each loop to fit as you do the following:
  - At the top of the sandal, take about one-third of the strap, wrap it around the big toe to the back of the sandal, and tape the end under the big toe.
  - From under the sandal, take the rest of the strip, bring it around the other toes, tuck the end through the slit, and tape the end under the toe that is next to the big toe. Use tape to secure the entire strip to the bottom of the sandal.

Love or Sin?

*Purpose:* To teach how to differentiate between examples of sin and examples of showing love and thanks to God.

*Procedure:* Have each child draw a happy face at one end of a craft stick and a sad face on the reverse side. *Variation:* Provide circular stickers. Have the children draw happy and sad faces on them and attach them instead of drawing faces.

Explain that you will tell about some things people do. If an example shows a way to thank God for his love and forgiveness, the children should show the happy faces. If it is an example of a sin, the children should show the sad faces. After each sin example, have the children tell how we feel about our sins and who forgives those sins. Possible examples include:

- We sing songs that praise Jesus.
- We fight over toys.
- We forgive someone who hurts us.
- We pray to Jesus.
- We sass our parents.
- We tell a lie.