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The Son Who Came Home

Luke 15:11–32 · Sprout · Ages 5–8

Jesus once told a story to show how much God loves people who have done wrong.

A man had two sons. One day the younger son came to his father and demanded his share of the family money right away. It was a hurtful thing to ask, but the father divided up what he owned and gave it to him.

A few days later, the younger son packed up and moved to a faraway country. There he wasted every coin on foolish, selfish living. Then a terrible famine came, and food ran short everywhere. With no money and no friends, he took a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry that even the pigs' food looked good to him, and nobody gave him anything.

At last he saw how wrong he had been. He thought about his father's workers, who always had plenty to eat, while he was starving. He decided to go home and tell his father he had sinned, against God and against him. He would ask for a job as one of the workers, because he couldn't expect to be treated like a son anymore.

So he started home. He was still far down the road when his father spotted him. The father's heart filled with love. He ran down the road, hugged his son tight and kissed him. The son began to say he was sorry, but his father called to the servants: Hurry!

Bring out the finest robe for him, and a ring, and sandals! Let's have a feast! We thought we had lost him forever, and now he's home!

The older son was working in the field. As he came near the house, he heard singing and the sounds of a party. A servant told him why, and the older son became angry. He wouldn't go in. His father came out and pleaded with him. The older son said, I've worked for you all these years and always obeyed, and you never gave me a party! The father answered gently, You're with me every day, and nothing of mine is kept from you. But we had to celebrate. Your brother has come back to us!

Jesus wanted everyone to know that God is like that father. When we sin and turn back to him, God forgives us and welcomes us home with joy.

Talk about it

1. What did the younger son do with his money?
2. What did the father do when he saw his son coming home?
3. What does this story tell us about how God treats us when we are sorry?

Key verse: Lk 15:20. Look it up in your Bible.