

READY-TO-USE CRAFT

The prodigal son

The story of the prodigal son is a fantastic parable to explore creatively with children and young people. There are so many threads and themes that can be drawn out of the story: family, rebelliousness, separation, forgiveness, new life, celebration, love and jealousy. These crafts will give a helping hand in exploring some of these themes and should give plenty of space for discussion.

+ LOOSE PARTS STORY PICTURES



You will need: buttons; matchsticks; feathers; pompoms; glass pebbles; stones; feathers; pipe cleaners; picture frames or coloured A4 paper

This is very much a free expression type of craft and is likely to yield some deep and unexpected responses. After telling the story, present children with a selection of resources such as those listed above.

Ask them to choose a piece of paper as a background (or a picture frame if you have them) and create a picture showing something from the story that stood out to them. When they have finished, allow time to share what they have created, if they would like to. Prepare to be amazed by their responses.

+ NEW START PENNY POLISHING



You will need: old 1p and 2p coins that could do with a bit of a polish; salt; white vinegar; toothbrushes; water; three large bowls; a table cover

Cover the table with a protective cloth or some paper. Fill one bowl with clean water and another with a mixture of white vinegar and salt (a heaped tablespoon of salt to a cup of vinegar). In the third bowl, put the 1p and 2p coins.

Invite children to take coins and dip them into the vinegar and salt solution. Scrub them with a toothbrush until they are shiny and then put the shiny coins in the bowl of water to rinse them. As you clean the coins, take the opportunity to discuss the things we do that need to be cleaned away and forgiven by God, just as the father in the story forgives his son. Be aware that there will very likely be some mess created as the toothbrushes create spray!

+ WELCOME-HOME ROBE



You will need: an old shirt or a piece of fabric that can be made into a robe; fabric scraps; glitter; foil; scissors; glue and spreaders; a chair; newspaper or cloth to spread on the floor

+ CELEBRATION SCRATCH-ART CDS



You will need: old CDs; acrylic paint (ready-mix paint doesn't work so well as it tends to flake off too easily); paintbrushes; cocktail sticks

This craft picks up on the theme of celebration in the parable, but could also be used to explore the 'new start' aspect of the forgiveness theme.

Before the session starts, paint the shiny sides of the CDs until they are completely covered. Let the paint dry. You can use any colour, but dark paint works best for contrast.

Give each child a CD and a cocktail stick and get them to use the cocktail stick to scratch a pattern in the paint. The CD underneath will start to shine through. You might link the shine to the good news in the story or use the creating time to explore with the children what part celebration has in the story.

Cover the floor with paper or a cloth to catch any drips of glue or glitter, and then put a chair on top of the paper. Hang the shirt or robe on the back of the chair so that it is easy to stick things on. Ask the children to decorate the robe to make it as special as possible.

Link the activity to the special robe the father gives his son when he returns home. Use the activity as a conversation starter so the children can share their ideas about the final part of the story and what it must have felt like to the different characters.

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