

ACTIVITY 3: THE PRODIGAL SON

The purpose of this activity is to help them understand the mercy of the Father who always wants to forgive our sins. We simply need to come back to Him and ask for mercy.

Materials needed: Bible

Instructions

1. Read the parable of the Prodigal Son: Luke Chapter 15, starting a verse 11
2. Let's talk about the hidden meaning: Here is a list of questions to recap the story:
 - a. **In the story there was a Father with how many sons?** (*two*) **Which son wanted the estate (or inheritance) from his father?** (the younger) **Do you know what an inheritance is?** (ultimately emphasize that it is something you inherit after someone dies). **So wait a second, was the father in the story dead?** (No!) **So what was the son really kind of saying?** (He wishes his father was dead, he would rather have his money.) **How do you think his father felt?** (sad) **What did the father do?** (he just gave it to him!) **What did the son do with the money?** (He wasted it all on junk) **Then a famine came. Do you know what a famine is?** (when there is no food) **So what did the son do?** (he got a job tending pigs) **And he was so hungry, what did he want to do?** (eat the pigs food) **Finally he comes to his senses and what does he decide?** (He is going to go back and beg his father to be a servant). **When he goes back it says "his father saw him coming from a long way off." What do you think that means?** (It means the father has been waiting and wanting him to return.) **Then what happens?** (The father runs to him and puts a robe on his back and shoes on his feet and tells his servants to slaughter the fattened calf.) **What is a calf?** (a cow) **So what do you think they are going to eat for dinner?** (steak and hamburgers! Yum!)
3. Now that we have recapped the story...
 - a. **Who do you think the father could represent?** (God the Father) **Even when we sin and do bad things and reject God and listen to all the lies of the dragons, what does God do?** (He waits for us to come back "home" to reconcile so he can give us forgiveness and mercy) **Do you think it was hard for that son to decide to come home?** (Yes...he waited until he was dying of hunger). **Is it sometimes hard for us to go to confession? Are a little nervous to tell God the bad things we have done?** (yes) **But how do you think the son felt AFTER he came back and heard his father's forgiveness and received his gifts?** (wonderful and relieved!) **Do we have to be scared about going to confession?** (No, God is always waiting and watching for us to come home) **At the very end they have a great feast to celebrate. What do we do as Catholics to celebrate a "feast".** (The Eucharist! The Eucharist is even better than steak!)
4. I hope you will remember that story and how much God loves you, and come to Him often in reconciliation. Maybe you can even read the story before you go, write down your sins, make your confession, and then come home and celebrate! Maybe even with steak. But remember, the greatest celebrate and the ultimate feast foreshadowing the heavenly feast, is the bread of life... Jesus Himself in the Eucharist.