

big faith

SESSION 13

Unit 3: Recipe for Love

Faith Focus: Jesus teaches us to love and welcome others.

Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. (John 13:34)

GROW IN FAITH

One Part Forgiveness—Luke 15:11-32

Today's Bible story is another familiar parable that describes a father's love for his son. But the parable is really about all three of the characters in the story—the younger son, the father, and the older son. At some point in our lives, each of us has probably felt like each one of these three family members. Most of us can relate to the father, as we have had to experience continuing to love people even in the midst of their mistakes. And then there's the older son. At one time or another we have each felt that life is confusing and unfair. And, of course, we must remember the younger son. We have each messed up, taken a different path, and been in need of forgiveness.

No matter the mistakes we have made, the complicated family relationships we might have, or how long it takes us to ask for forgiveness, God celebrates when we decide to live our lives the way God intended. God loves us and God will always forgive us. Accepting forgiveness and offering forgiveness to others helps us live fully into God's love and grace.

- Learn about apologies.
- Explore God's forgiveness.

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Father and Son Story Squares (Sequencing)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Party Mix (Snack)

Party Hats (Craft)

Freeze Dance (Music and Movement)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

SUPPLIES

crayons

scissors

CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or streaming device

permanent marker

pretzels

candy-coated chocolates

square-shaped rice or corn cereal

nuts

small resealable plastic bags

bowl

large spoon

1-cup measuring cup

plastic gloves

plain cardboard party hats

markers

glitter

streamers

ribbons

pom-poms

glue

celebratory music

device for playing music

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16), Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20), and Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the party hat sticker on the Session 13 space.

SAY: We are learning about how Jesus teaches us to love each other.

ASK: Who did Jesus love? How did Jesus show his love?

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20). Photocopy "Father and Son Maze" (Leader Guide—p. 88) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the "Father and Son Maze."

ASK: What does it mean to forgive? When someone does something hurtful, how do you forgive them? What do you say? What do you do?

SAY: In our Bible story today we will hear about a son who made a bad decision and left home. But when he changed his mind, he went back home to ask for forgiveness.

- Give children time and space to complete the maze and color the page.

Father and Son Story Squares

Supplies: Activity Sheets, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Tear out "Father and Son Story Squares" (Session 13 Activity Sheet) for each child.

ASK: Have you ever made a mistake? What happened? How did you make it right?

- Give each child an activity sheet.

SAY: Our Bible story today is about a son who made a mistake.

ASK: What do you think happens in the story?

- Have the children cut the squares apart and guess what happens in the story by putting the pictures in order.
- After hearing the Bible story, the children will have a chance to put the story in order.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: CEB Bible storybook, story squares made earlier

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the story of Jesus teaching about the father and his sons (Luke 15:11-32) from your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

SAY: The son who left home thought his father would be angry that he had left. When he decided to come home, his father was overjoyed! His father even threw a party to welcome him home!

- Use the story squares to retell the story as a group. Or have the children pair up and put the story in order.

Big Faith Video

Supplies: Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device

- Watch the Session 13 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.
- Share the questions on the screen with the children. You may also choose to add your own questions. Give children time to share their responses and ideas.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, permanent marker

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) and Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) if you haven't already.

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other" (John 13:34).

SAY: In our Bible story today, the father welcomed his son home. But the son also asked forgiveness from his father, and the father forgave him for leaving. The father was so glad to have his son home!

SAY: When we forgive someone, we are telling them that we know they made a mistake and we still love them. God knows that each of us makes mistakes. God forgives us so that we can forgive others.

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

ASK: How does it feel to know that God forgives us?

- As the children share, use a permanent marker to write their responses on the poster above the “Forgiveness” bowl.

FUN WITH FAITH

Party Mix

Supplies: *pretzels, candy-coated chocolates, square-shaped corn or rice cereal, nuts, small resealable plastic bags, bowl, large spoon, 1-cup measuring cup, plastic gloves*

ASK: When you celebrate something special, what do you do? Do you eat a special food? Do you listen to special music?

- Have children wash their hands and put on plastic gloves.
- Have the children take turns adding the ingredients to a large bowl, 1 cup of each ingredient, and stirring them together.
- Give each child a small plastic bag and have them fill it with the snack mix.

Tip: *Before serving a snack, always check for food allergies.*

Party Hats

Supplies: *plain cardboard party hats, crayons, markers, glitter pens or markers, streamers, ribbons, pom-poms, glue*

ASK: Why did the father throw a party for his son? Have you ever had a party?

- Give each child a plain cardboard party hat. Allow the children to decorate the hats using the craft materials available.
- Give glue time to dry. You may wish to wear the party hats at the end of the session.

ASK: What do you want to celebrate by wearing your party hat?

Freeze Dance

Supplies: *celebratory music, device for playing music*

SAY: Many people celebrate by having a dance party. Let's play a game of freeze dance. Whenever the music is playing, you should dance. Whenever the music stops, you should freeze. You can only move again when I say, "You are welcome to dance!"

- Lead the children in a game of freeze dance as long as time allows.

SAY: Sometimes we are having a good time and we have to stop and think about what we are doing. The younger son had to stop and think before he decided to go home. The father might have had to stop and think before he forgave his son. And the older son had to stop and think about whether he would go to his brother's party.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: *All-Ages Class Pack*

Prepare Ahead: *Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 3 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 95–96) as needed.*

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

ASK: How does it feel when you make a mistake? What happens when you make a mistake?

- Invite children to do a centering prayer with you. Have them sit in a comfortable position. They may close their eyes if desired.
- Have the children say with you several times: "I am forgiven. I am loved. God helps me love others well."

ASK: How did your heart feel when you heard these words?

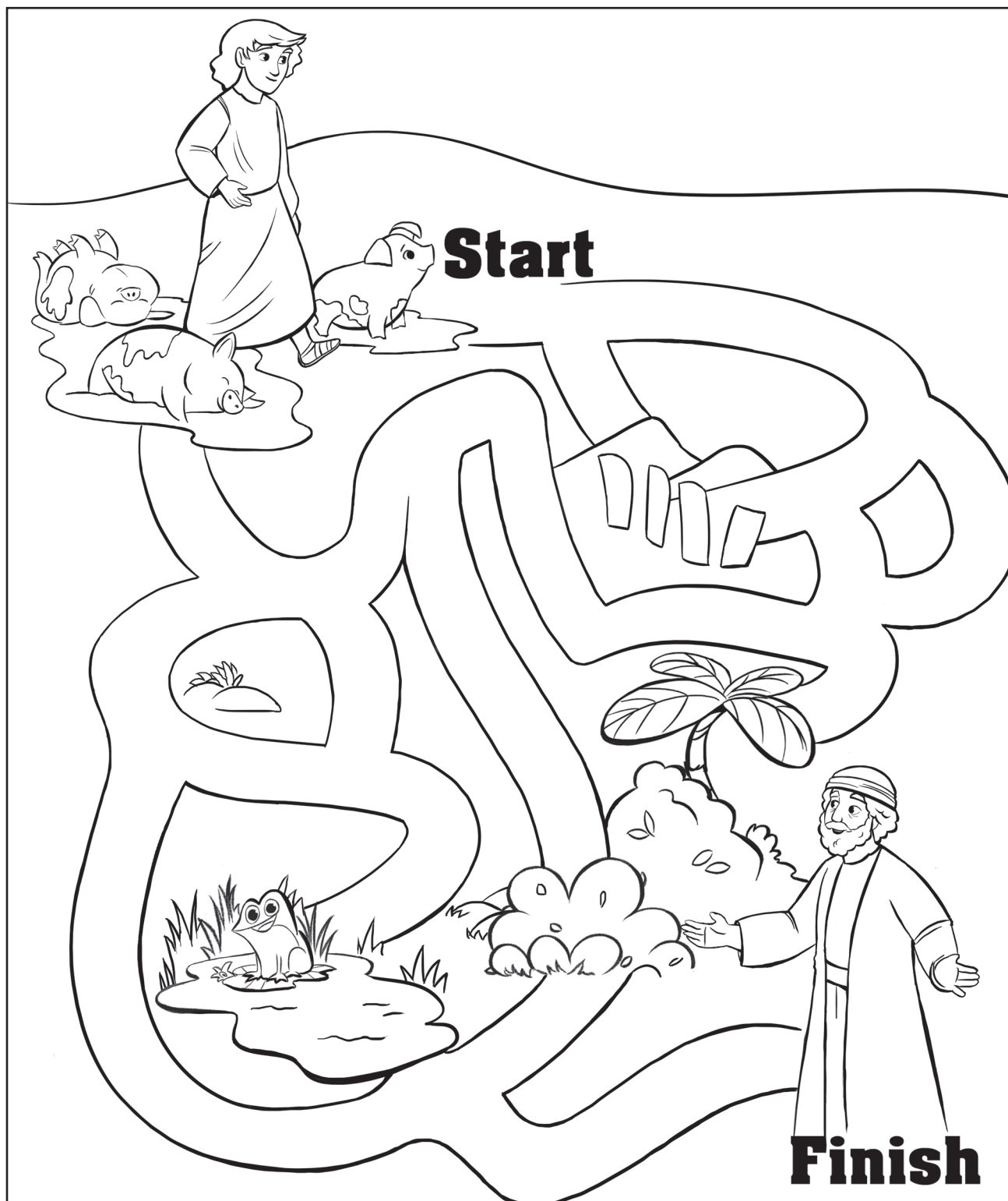
SAY: In our Bible study today, we heard a story about forgiveness. Part of how God loves us is by forgiving us when we make mistakes. We can love each other and forgive each other too.

- Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for sending Jesus to remind us that we are loved and forgiven. Help us love ourselves, each other, and our world. Amen."

- Send the Unit 3 Family Faith Letter and activity home with each child who hasn't received them.
- Also send home any activities or items made during today's session.

Help the son get home to his father.



Art: Tatevik Avakyan/Illustration Online LLC