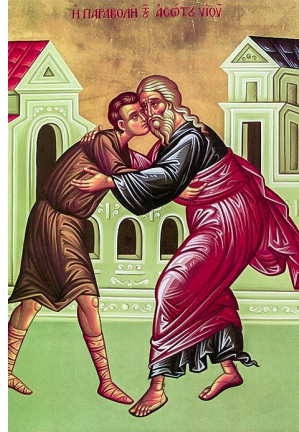
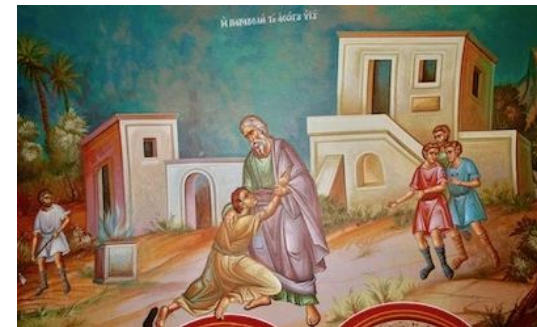




The Prodigal Son



WEEK 14 - Three Discussions and Two Activities:
Sunday's Gospel Readings, Gospel Activity,
Forgiveness and Returning to God, Festal Hymns, and Lenten Preparation Activity



OPENING PRAYERS:

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen
Glory to thee, our God, glory to thee!

Prayer to Holy Spirit

O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Trisagion Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Before Study

Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear thy word and understand it and so fulfill thy will. Amen.

DAILY LESSON / ACTIVITY: See pages below. For each topic, please note **Parent roles, notes, and (child responses).**

Prayers

Before and after each lesson, please say a short prayer in front of an icon according to your family's prayer rule or the following, taken from the red St Tikhon's Prayer Book:

CLOSING PRAYERS:

"Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb: for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Pray to God for me, O holy [name of your patron saint], pleasing to God, for with fervor I run to thee, swift helper and intercessor for my soul.

O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries, and by virtue of thy Cross preserve thy habitation.

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos: ever-blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim; without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of thy most pure Mother, of my holy guardian angel, of [name of your patron saint], of [saint(s) of the day], and of all the saints: save me, a sinner. Amen."

Day 1: Talk About Sunday's Gospel Reading

Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture: “O Lord my God, enlighten my mind with the light of the understanding of Thy holy Scripture, and teach me to do Thy will.”

Parent Explains: “This Sunday’s gospel was written by St. Luke. It is one of four written accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, found in the New Testament of our bible.”

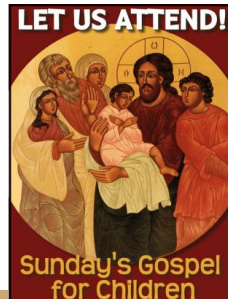
Parent or older child may read aloud from Luke 15:11-32. [Click here for OCA website link.](#)

Parent Asks 2-4 year-olds: “The story tells us about a father and his two sons. The younger son made a big mistake. What did he do?” (wasted all his inheritance, was greedy and gambled) “After he wasted all his money, he found a job. What was his job?” (he fed pigs) “When we do something wrong, we feel bad. We say, ‘I’m sorry,’ to the person we have hurt. We can also say, ‘please forgive me.’ How is this different?” (child answers) “To forgive is to make things right again. When someone says, ‘I’m sorry,’ or ‘please forgive me,’ we should always say, ‘I forgive you,’ and mean it in our heart. We also say, ‘Please forgive me,’ to God. How do we say this in some prayers you know?” (Lord, have mercy. O Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.) “God is like the father in the story. He will forgive us and welcome us back.”

Parent Asks 5-7 year-olds: “At the beginning of the story, what did the younger son ask his father for?” (all his inheritance, all the money that would be his later in life) “What did he do with all the money?” (He wasted it) “Why did he come back to the father? (to work for his father, because he felt sorry for his bad choices, because he needed help) “What did his father do?” (ran to him, welcomed him, fed him a great meal, celebrated his son coming home) “How do you know when you’ve done something wrong?” (bad gut feeling) “Remember, when we do something wrong, God wants us to be sorry. To show we are sorry, we do two things. First we go to the person we have hurt and say, ‘Please forgive me.’ The person we have hurt says, ‘I forgive you.’ Second we ask forgiveness of God in the Mystery of Confession.”

Parent Asks 8-10 year-olds: “Why did the younger son come back to the father?” “How did the father react to the return of his younger son?” “How do you know when you’ve done something wrong?” “What words do we use to apologize?” “When we apologize we are asking for forgiveness. We want to make things right again. Have you ever asked for forgiveness?” “How does it feel when you are forgiven?” “Whenever we have done something wrong, we have also hurt God, who wants us to act kindly and do only good things. Besides apologizing to the person we hurt, who else do we need to ask forgiveness of?” (God) “How do we do that?” (confess our sins) “Jesus told this story to teach us about God. Who in this story is like God?” (the father)

Parent Asks 11-15 year-olds: “When did the younger son make his first mistake?” “If you were friends with the younger son, what would you have said upon learning of his plan?” “What might the father have been thinking and feeling while the younger son was away?” “Jesus told this story to teach us about sin and God’s love for us. Which action of the son symbolizes sin?” “Which action of the father symbolizes God’s love?” “The typical icon shows a father and son embracing. In the version to the right, the father is replaced with Christ. Look at Christ. Do you see anything interesting about this depiction?” “Every day we should be walking on the good path that leads to God. When we stray from the path by doing something wrong, God is on the path waiting for us to return to Him.”

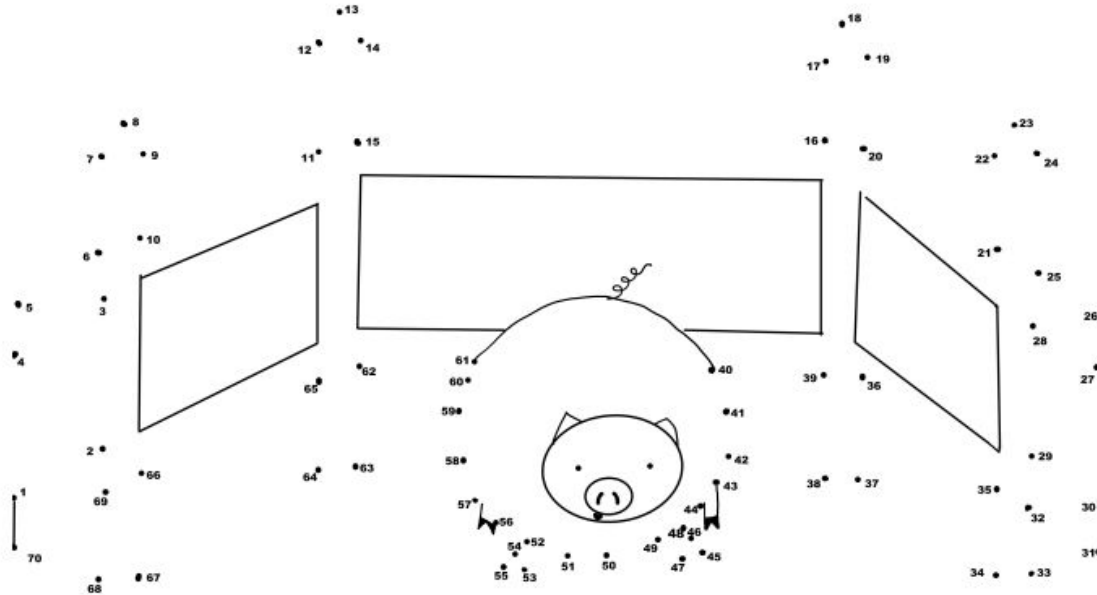


Day 2: Gospel Reading Drawing Activity

Recommended for ages 3-5

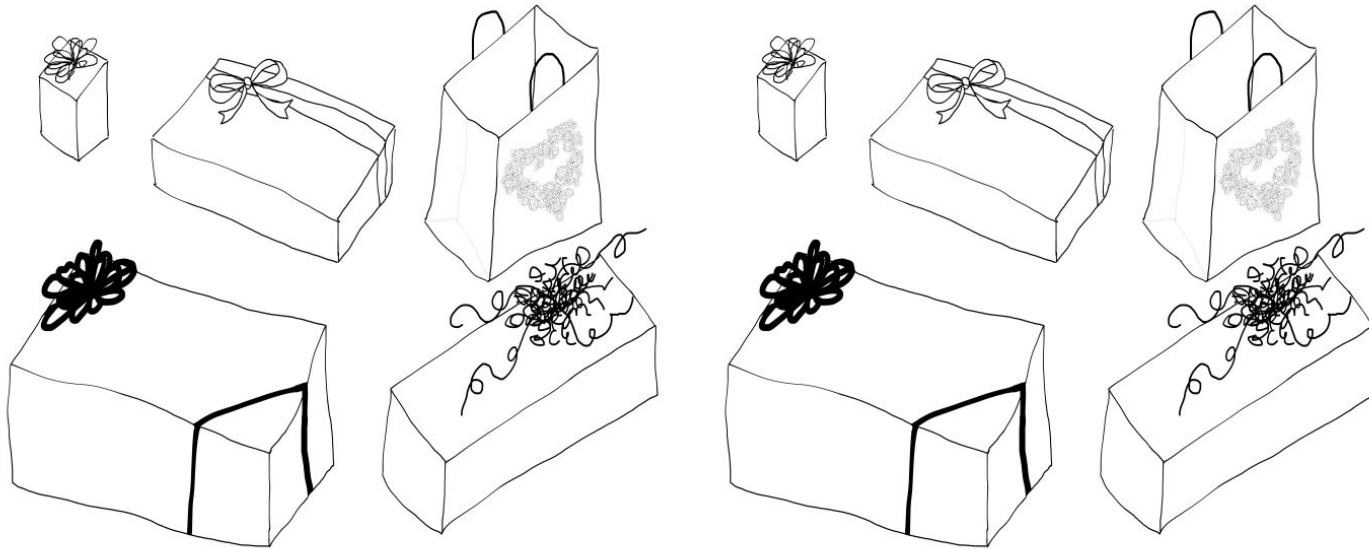
Parent Explains: “The Prodigal Son wasted all of his share of the saved money until there was nothing left. Then he realized that he had been selfish and acted wrongly. Where was he working when he decided to go home and tell his dad that he was sorry, and to ask if he could work as one of his dad’s servants? Connect the dots to see.

What work did the Prodigal Son do, here? What did he work with, and wish that he could have it for himself because he was so hungry? Draw what he used for his work and wished he could have.”



Day 2: Gospel Reading Gift Label Activity

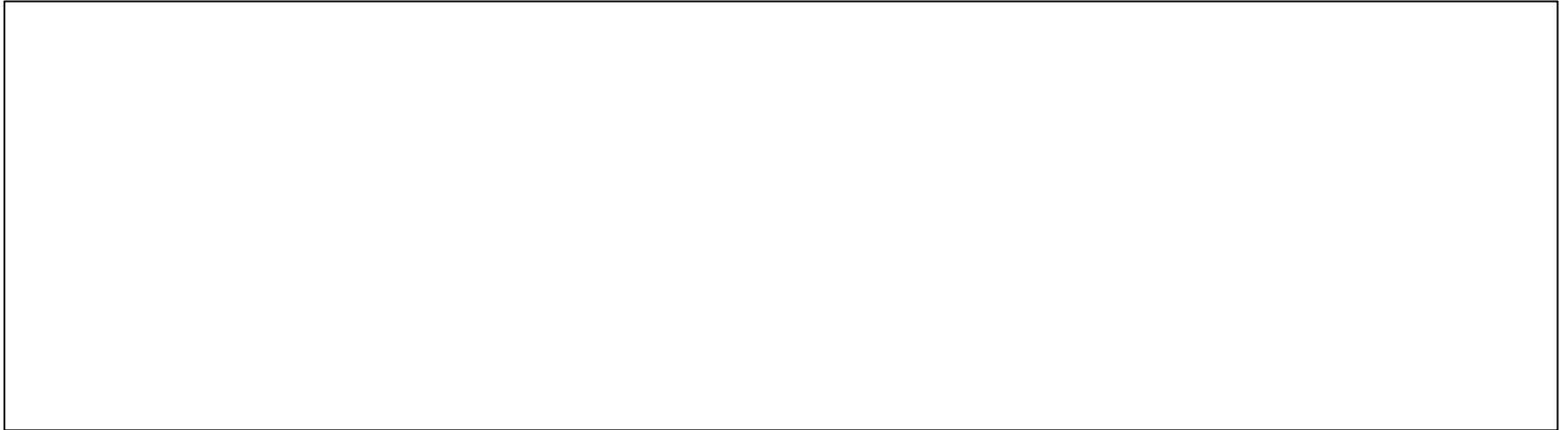
Parent Explains: “God gives this world to us freely, but, just like the Prodigal Son wasted his inheritance, we are not always good stewards of God’s gifts to us, are we? God blesses us with the whole world and with life. If you can walk or write or talk, it’s because God gave you that ability. If you have a beautiful home or good friends or a nice family, it’s because God gave those things to you. This page will help you to think about that for a moment. Start by drawing/writing about a gift that God has given to you in each of these packages:



Take a look at all of these gifts that God has given to you! Thank Him for each one. Then, draw a heart around your favorite gift. Draw a smile beside any gifts that make you smile when you think of them. Draw big eyes next to the one(s) that help you to see God’s work in your life. Draw a teardrop next to any that you take for granted or forget to see as a gift from God. Ask God to forgive you for forgetting. Then try to do a better job of noticing God’s gifts and thanking Him for them!”

Day 2: Gospel Reading Summary Activity

Draw the actions of the story here, or write a summary about the parable.



I like the part where: _____

Today's secret message: (Write the letter of the alphabet that comes just before the one shown.)

Xifo xf dpnf cdbl up Hpe, If gpshjwft vt.

Day 3: Talking About a Returning to God

Parent Explains: “Glory to Jesus Christ!” (Glory forever!) “Orthodox Christianity is a **faith built on relationships**. In fact, it couldn’t exist without them! That’s because our Christian Faith is centered on a relationship with God. The relationship between God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is **the image of love** in which we were created. **We are called to be that image** of God before others.

God is Love. Our **experience of God’s love** teaches us how to connect with family, friends, and classmates, people at church, those in public, and even those who don’t like us. The relationships we have with each person is unique to us, shaping who we are, and how **we reflect the image of God’s love** in the world.

Obedience and Rejection. We might follow God willingly, without question, faithfully doing what is expected of us. **God rejoices in our faithfulness**, loving us as His children. Or, when we face moments of doubt, running from God, rejecting his teachings, feeling isolated from God - **He still loves us without question**.

Restoration and Redemption. Isolation from God is unnatural. Our **repentance is a return to God**, possibly expressed in tears of sorrow. God’s mercy **restores us to full communion** in joy. God’s love surrounds us like a warm blanket on a cold night, providing the mercy needed to **heal even the most wounded soul**.

Knowing God and Ourselves. Drawing closer to God, we **learn about Him**, and come to **know ourselves** in new and meaningful ways. Seeing ourselves through God’s eyes reveals the beauty of humanity and can inspire us to **treat others with the same mercy and patience God has for us**.

Image of Divine Love: As **God loves us**, we are called to **love one another**, expressing the same compassion and understanding to those who love us, as well as those who offend us. When we **express ourselves with God’s love**, patience, creativity, compassion, and forgiveness, we become what God intended: **His image in the world**.

Day 4: Festal Hymns

2) Read or sing together, then discuss:

Sunday Troparion - Tone 6

(from the Lenten Triodion)

I, a wretched man, hide my face in shame:
I have squandered the riches my Father gave to me;
I went to live with senseless beasts;
I sought their food and hungered, for I had not enough to eat.
I will arise, I will return to my compassionate Father;
He will accept my tears, as I kneel before Him, crying:
“In Thy tender love for all men, receive me as one of Thy servants and save me!”

Kontakion Tone 3

(from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father;
and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou gavest me.
And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal:
“I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father;
receive me as a penitent,
and make me as one of Thy hired servants!”

1) Parent Asks: “What is the troparion (tro–par–ee–ohn) and kontakion (kon–tahk–ee–ohn)?” (Theme songs for each feast, celebration, or saint. These hymns describe what or who we’re celebrating and how this event or saint is important to our lives as Orthodox Christians).

These are celebratory hymns, rejoicing in God’s mercy and wonders. Feel free to add them to your mealtime or daily prayers!

3) Parent Asks: “What do the hymns teach us about today’s commemoration?”

Possible Answers: (The prodigal son disobeyed his father, being greedy for money. The man realizes he’s done wrong, so he repents before God, admitting his sin and desire to be received back.)

Parent Asks: “How can the message of the hymns apply to our lives?”

Possible Answers: (God is very generous with us, are we responsible with what we received from Him? If we ask for God’s forgiveness, repenting of our failings, we are being humble before God. In humility, we admit we did something wrong and want to change our behavior. Our willingness to accept whatever God gives us is a sign of our faith in Him, to provide what we truly need.)

Parent Explains: “We can learn to be hard working like the older son, repentant like the younger son, and merciful like the father.”

Day 5: How Will you Prepare for Lent?

Check out our new Lenten Activity Calendar at church. It has activities for each of the 40 days of Lent!

Talk with your family about these or other good ideas to help you prepare for Lent.

1. Say morning and evening prayers
2. Enjoy the beauty of God's creation
3. Cross yourself and say a prayer before each meal or snack
4. Do one anonymous act of kindness or activity from the Lenten Activity Calendar
5. Repent and ask for forgiveness if you do something wrong
6. Find a lenten meal recipe to help your parents make during Lent
7. Attend (or prayerfully view online) one extra church service each week



Parent Leads Discussion: Let's make a plan to follow during Lent. How will you prepare for Lent? What will you do differently during Lent to return closer to God? Write your plan here. *Hint: Choose only the actions that you can really commit to!*
