

Prayers for Lent

Scripture Focus: Luke 15:11–32 (Featured Story “The Forgiving Father”)

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father . . .

Leader: In this Gospel, Jesus tells us the Parable of the Forgiving Father. The father had a son who ran away and spent all his money. When he had nothing left, he came back to his father and said: “I’m sorry. Please forgive me.”

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Reader then reads the Scripture passage above from The Catholic Children's Bible.

Leader: Sometimes we have to say “I’m sorry” to God our Father. We can say: “I’m sorry, Father. Please forgive me.”

All: “I’m sorry, Father. Please forgive me.”

Leader: When we have made bad choices and done wrong, we can say:

All: “I’m sorry, Father. Please forgive me.”

Leader: When we have disobeyed parents, grandparents, or others in charge of us, we can say:

All: “I’m sorry, Father. Please forgive me.”

Leader: When we have hurt friends with unkind words or actions, we can say:

All: “I’m sorry, Father. Please forgive me.”

Leader: At one time or another, we are all like the son. We all make bad choices and need forgiveness. God our Father is always waiting for us, hoping we will return and ask forgiveness, especially in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. After we are forgiven, we have every reason to celebrate!

Closing Prayer

Leader: Today we heard the story of the Forgiving Father. When the son asked forgiveness, the father forgave him. This is what God our Father is like. And when we forgive others, we are being just like God! Let us pray the prayer to God our Father that Jesus taught us:

All: 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

Amen.



Ritual Guide

Opening Prayer

Preparation

Choose one or two readers to read the short passage from this parable, or choose several readers (including yourself) to read the entire story, Luke 15:11–32. Or, choose volunteers to be the Father, the Son, and the Older Son. Instruct them to act out the story as you read it.

Optional: You may want to choose an appropriate song to begin or end the prayer.

Gather

Gather the children in the Bible corner. Distribute the prayer handouts. Briefly rehearse the prayer response. Ask the children to listen for the part of the Gospel story in which the son says similar words to his father.

Pray

Begin with the Sign of the Cross as indicated. Introduce the reading with the words given, or in your own words.

(An activity for Lent can be found on page 91 of *The Catholic Children's Bible Leader Guide*.)

Closing Prayer

Preparation

This prayer is based on the Parable of the Forgiving Father, and includes the Lord's Prayer, the prayer Jesus taught us.

Gather

Gather the children in the Bible corner. Explain that the closing prayer is the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught us. In this prayer we ask God our Father to forgive us, and we promise to forgive others.

Pray

Lead the children in prayer.

Optional: You may want to end with the song you chose for the opening prayer.

