

'Making Mistakes'



This material is suitable for ages 5 - 7.

Aim:

For the children to know how God responds to our mistakes when we are sorry and to give them an opportunity to say sorry to God.

Bible focus:

Luke 15.

Introduction:

Choose an activity from one of the two options listed.

1. Spider Web Game

This is an entangling exercise that can also be a thought-provoking icebreaker. Have your group form a circle. Starting with yourself, pass/throw a ball of thick wool. When the children catch it, they must wrap it around themselves and name a mistake/bad choice children sometimes make. (Make sure you start off with a good example so they understand what's expected of them. If your children are too young, play the game without asking them to think of mistakes.)

Then, on the count of 3 ask them to get untangled as quickly as possible. When they are untangled, ask them why it was so hard to get untangled?

Sometimes when we make mistakes we tangle things up and we need help getting untangled - making things right again.

(Adapted from Children's Ministry Mag July/Aug 2003, p. 73. Group Publishing.)

OR

2. North-South-East-West Game

This game is an adaptation of the Captain's Coming game. Have the children stand in the centre of the room and designate the 4 walls of the room as North, South, East, and West. (Be sure that the East & West walls are the furthest from each other. You may need to put signs up or point to the walls until the children become familiar with which wall is which.) As you call a direction the children run to the correct wall, aiming to be the first. As the game goes on you can increase the challenge by calling out directions much closer together.

It's a long way from East to West isn't it? In the Bible, God says that's how far he throws our mistakes and things we do wrong, when we say sorry.

There is a story in the Bible about a man who made some mistakes.....

Bible time

You will need: Flannel graph pictures (if you have access to them) OR enlarge the attached pictures to A3 and have groups of 2 or 3 colour the picture which can then be used to tell the story. Try to tell the story and not read it.

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15 - adapted from "The Message" Paraphrase).

There was once a father who had two sons. The youngest son said to his father, "Father, I want half of all your money right now". (The father would have left money for his son after he had died). So the father divided up all he had between his two sons. Soon, the younger son decided he'd pack his bags and go off on an adventure to another country. There he wasted everything that he had. Spent the lot!

He was soon out of money and friends, and the country he was living in had begun to run out of food and he got really hungry. He had to get some money quickly. He took a job feeding pigs and was so hungry that he thought the slops the pigs were eating looked really good. This got him thinking; "All those servants working for my father sit down to 3 meals a day, and here I am starving to death! I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, "Father, I've sinned against God and I've sinned against you, I don't deserve to be called your son. Will you take me back as a servant?" Straight away he headed home to his father.

Questions:

- ◆ Do you get in trouble when you do things wrong??
- ◆ Would you have been worried if you were the son going home??

(Allow time for the children to think and answer.)

Let's listen to what the father in the story did....



When the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart was pounding as he ran out to his son, hugged and kissed him. The son started his speech: "Father, I've sinned against God and I've sinned against you. I don't deserve to be called your son ever again." But the father was already busy planning a celebration. He called to the servants, "Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then we're going to have a party! My son has returned."

Application

Jesus told this story to show how God feels about us. He loves us so much that when we're sorry, he straight away forgives the mistakes we make. He chooses not to remember the bad stuff we've done.

Optional

(If you used the NSEW Game at the beginning it would be useful to refer to it again here.) You could point out again that East is one way and West is completely in the other direction.

There is a verse in the Bible that says, "...as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins from us." That's how much He forgives our mistakes - he completely takes them away from us!

Response

The aim of the following activity is to provide the children with an opportunity to identify something in their life that they need to say sorry for - and to give them opportunity to do that.)

The children may like to draw a picture of a mistake they have made or something that they want to say sorry to God for.

Then, as a way of demonstrating God taking the wrong things away, tear up their pieces of paper and throw them into a bin. As the children watch you do this, pray for them. Invite them to silently pray this prayer with you.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me (pause). I am sorry for the wrong things I've done (pause). I ask you to forgive me and be my friend forever (pause). Please help me to love you and to follow (pause) and obey you for the rest of my life (pause). Amen.

Follow up

There is a template of a bookmark attached which you could use.

The bookmark serves as a reminder of what you talked about. Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves in the space provided on the bookmark.



Ensure you follow up any children who indicate they said this prayer with you for the first time. For this age group Scripture Union produces Bible reading notes called Find Out which are helpful in encouraging children to read their Bibles regularly. These are available through SU's Resources For Ministry ph. 02 4321 0200 or Koorong Books.

Linking children in to other sections in the corps e.g. Sunday School, SAGALA or Kids Club, will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.



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above the earth, so great
is His love for those who
love Him.
As far as the east is from
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Psalm 103:11 & 12
(Good News Version)

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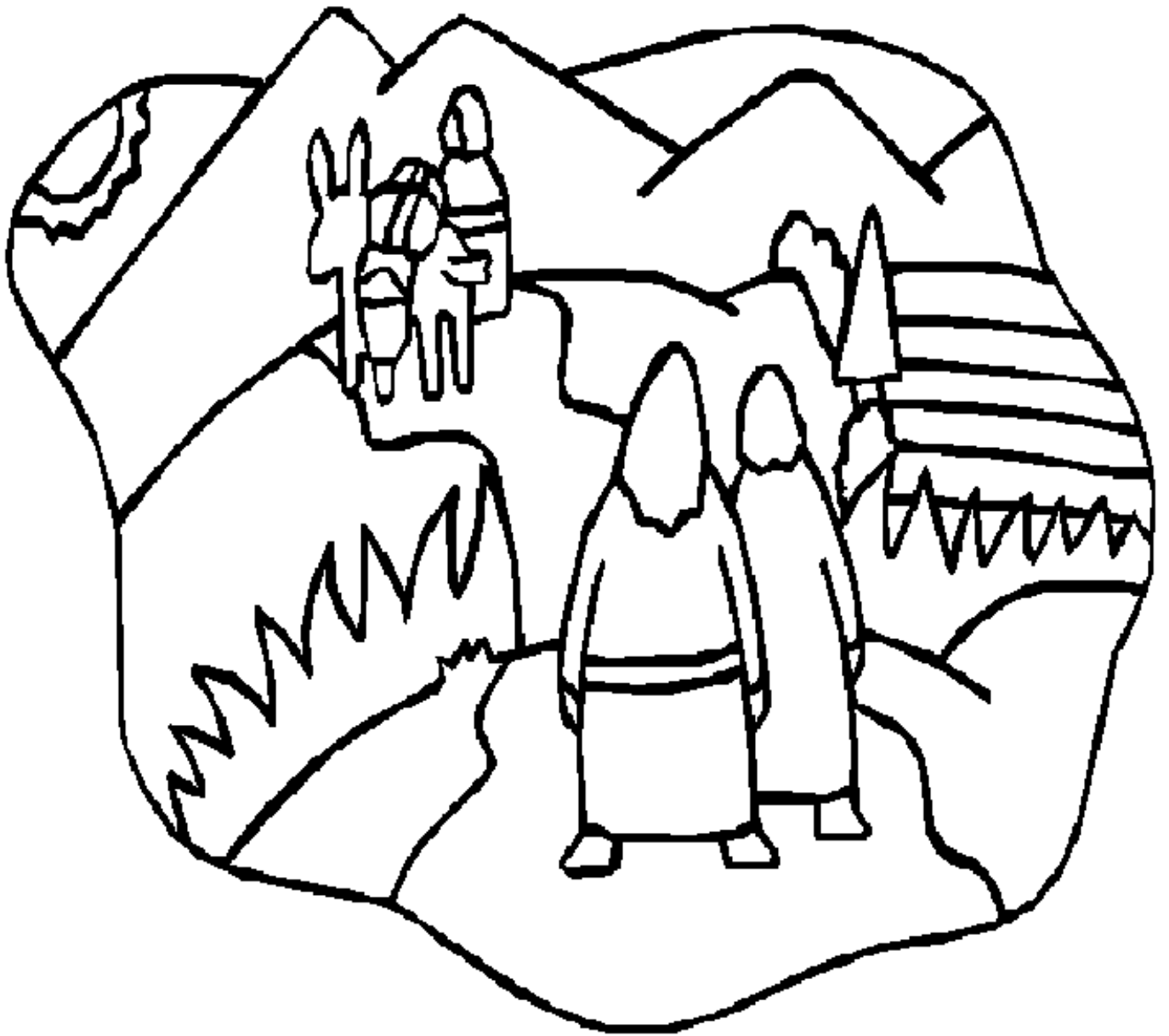
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The prodigal son leaves home.



The prodigal son lives with pigs



They have a party for him, but his brother is mad.



The prodigal son comes home.