

Instant Bible Session

The Prodigal's Dad

You will need: pen and paper

– just one sheet, as you're going to gather your responses communally. You might like to ask if one of the group would like to be the scribe to catch all the responses so that you're freed up from that task.

Open your evening in prayer, asking God to draw to your attention whatever he wants you to focus on in this session together.

Ask the group this question: What do they think makes a 'good' dad?

Note all the answers that come from the group down onto your paper.

Read the passage that tells the story of the Prodigal Son. The first thing to notice is that it got called the story of the prodigal son, but it's not just the story of the one son: it's a family story.

Read Luke 15:11-32

It's such a familiar story. Indeed, it's so familiar that we can sometimes miss what's hidden in plain sight.

Together, as a group, list out what sort of father the Prodigal's Dad is.

What kind of words came up?



So often, our focus is on the moment the father welcomes the son back, and on both sons' behaviours in the story, but pausing to look at what sort of father we are shown can be an illuminating angle.

He's a father who let his son take his inheritance before it was due. He doesn't point out all the errors of his son's ways when he returns. He's someone whose love for his children causes him to act in a way we might not actually approve of, in terms of our view of consistent, 'sensible' parenting.

As a group, respond: If the father in this story represents God, what can we know about the way he parents us? Is there anything that strikes you afresh or perhaps for the first time?

Examining the story from this angle can reveal the astonishing grace and love of God for us in surprising ways.

Pray together in response to this passage.

Spend five minutes in silence as a group after praying, to listen and allow God to respond to your prayers.

Close your evening by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

