

Wednesday

Read Luke 15:20-24 *The reunion of father and son*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What if the father had not chosen to run to meet his son?*
2. *The father says his son was dead and now was alive. What does that mean for the son? The father?*

Prayer Focus: Reflect on ways we withhold a welcome from someone who needs our acceptance. Imagine how a truly joyful, loving response might look.

Thursday

Read Luke 15:25-30 *The elder son's complaint*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Have you ever felt like the elder son—as if someone else less worthy got a reward and you didn't?*
2. *Do you think the elder son ever joined the party?*

Prayer Focus: God, even when we stay at home, we can be living in a far country, a wilderness of our own making. Help us turn back to love, to let go of the jealousy and anger we cling to in our hearts. Bring us into the party.

Friday

Read Luke 15:31-32 *Who is lost and who is found*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why did Jesus tell this story to the Pharisees and scribes?*
2. *How can we offer Jesus' example of love and forgiveness to each other and to the world, especially when the world seems so divided?*

Prayer Focus: Beloved Creator, thank you for being so completely, foolishly in love with us, for racing to welcome and heal us, drawing us close. Find us once again. Fill our hearts with that same love so that we can welcome and heal in your name.

Wilderness

Story of the Prodigal Son

It is often in the wilderness - far away from what we know best - that we can see most clearly. Have there been times that you have found yourself literally (or figuratively) very far from home? Have you heard God speaking to you there? How might God be calling to our church in our present wilderness? *"Sometimes God calls a person to unbelief in order that faith may take new forms"*—*Christian Wiman: My Bright Abyss*

Message Notes:

Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Have you ever been lost? What was it like, being lost, being found, being reunited with others?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on

- Have someone read **Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**. Discuss observations about the text.
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

March 31, 2019

The Prodigal Son



Monday

Read Luke 15:1-3, 11b-13 *Jesus and sinners*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why were the Pharisees and scribes so upset that Jesus was welcoming and eating with sinners?*
2. *Why would the father give his sons their inheritance early? How do you think the father felt about that, especially after learning his son was wasting that money?*

Prayer Focus:

Holy and gracious God, help us to see our own judgements against others. Help us to see when we are chasing after things we believe are richer than anything you offer. Forgive us when we reject your open arms and try to do it all by ourselves.

Tuesday

Read Luke 15:14-19 *The younger son's choices*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why did the younger son change his mind and decide to go home?*
2. *Do you think the son was truly repentant about his actions? Do you think he expected to be welcomed?*

Prayer Focus:

Holy Spirit, wake us up to the suffering and sorrow and emptiness we sometimes create for ourselves. Turn us around, set us on a new path out of our wilderness, back to the One who is watching and waiting for our return.