4th Sunday of Lent



Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable:

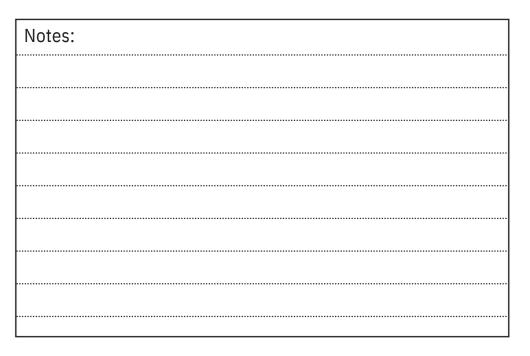
"There was a man who had 2 sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." And he arose and came to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him

Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'" And they began to celebrate.

"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"



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Some things to think about...

Why did Jesus tell this story?

How did the eldest brother react when his younger brother came home?

What does "judging someone" mean? Can you think of some examples of when we might judge others?

St Vincent de Paul taught that we should "Make it a practice to judge persons and things in the most favorable light at all times and under all circumstances." - what do you think this means?

Activity

With your Mini Vinnie group, complete this activity on the SVP website: "Embracing Kindness: The Prodigal Son and Seeing the Best in Others" - A drama workshop

Teacher's Notes

In Luke 15:1-3, 11-32, Jesus tells a story about a young son who asks his father for his inheritance and leaves home. He spends all his money and ends up with nothing. Feeling sorry, he decides to return to his father, who welcomes him back with open arms, forgiving him completely. The older son, who stayed and worked hard, becomes angry, but the father explains that the lost son was found and it's time to celebrate. This story shows us that God is like the loving father. No matter how far we've gone or how many mistakes we've made, God always welcomes us back with love and forgiveness. It also teaches us that it's important to be kind and not jealous when others are forgiven.

This is from the official lectionary. However, you may decide to find a more child-friendly version of the Prodigal Son.

The story teaches us about the power of repentance, forgiveness, and how unconditional love can heal even the deepest mistakes.

The aim of the SVP drama workshop is for the Mini Vinnies to explore how to see others in the best possible light and how to make judgments based on kindness and understanding.

They will create and perform a short play that demonstrates these ideas.

