

The Kingdom of God
Lesson 8: The Parable of the Lost Boys (Part 1)
LifeWalk Leader Guide

Open/Icebreakers: If you are a parent, share a story involving a time where you were disappointed with a choice your child made. What emotions does this story evoke? What response do you desire from your child? Growing up, did you rebel? To what extent? Did you find there were consequences from rebellious choices?

Digging In: Luke 15:11-24

1. When the younger son asked for his share of the estate of the father, what was he saying? Why would this statement be such an insult?
2. Note in vs. 11 that the inheritance seems to be divided with both sons. Describe the predicament of the younger son when his money ran out. How bad did it get?
3. Did the younger son choose to remain in poor condition? What thoughts came to his mind as he experienced life “at the bottom of the barrel?”
4. Describe the father’s behavior when he sees his son. How was the father able to see his son “while he was still a long way off?” Running was considered undignified by the family patriarch. Why would the father run to the son? How much of the “rehearsed speech” was the son able to share with his father?
5. How does the father react to the return of his son? What does he do? How do the following cultural notes enhance your understanding of this story?
 - The finest robe belonged to the father. By placing it on his son, he is reaffirming the son as an heir and a cherished member of the household.
 - A ring was a symbol of authority. Like the robe, it indicated the way the father felt about the status of his son restoring his place as son and heir.
 - The father would have been fattening a calf for a banquet. The son was welcomed as a visiting dignitary.

Reflection:

1. Discuss the symbolism in this parable. Who does the father represent? The younger brother? The older brother? (Remember the audience to whom Jesus is speaking from the beginning of the chapter.) Which character do you find it easiest to relate to? Which is most difficult? Why?
2. Put yourself in the position of the lost son. How would you feel when the father received you like he did in this parable?

3. This parable (in many ways) repeats the same message from the previous 2 parables. Why do you think such repetition is needed?
4. How can we put the truths from this parable into practice?

Prayer: God, help me see people as you see them. Help me ascribe unsurpassable worth to everyone. Thank you for Jesus and His sacrifice. Holy Spirit, move my heart to love and service.