



# Open Arms

## Secondary Father's Day Assembly

### Resources

PowerPoint presentation

Video clip ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxfdChYCKYA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxfdChYCKYA))

### Aim:

To reflect with thankfulness on the people who are there for us

To reflect on what the parable of the prodigal son tells us about God

### Introduction

Imagine you could be given £20,000 either now or when you are 25 years old. Would you ask for it now or later in life? Ask for a show of hands.

If you were given it today, how would you spend it? Show the pupils the options on the presentation asking them to put their hands up if they would spend the money on the thing shown on the slide.

The story we're going to hear about in a minute is a story Jesus told. It's about a son who didn't want to wait for the money he was going to be given when his father died. He wanted the money now to spend on whatever he wanted.

### Story

To understand the whole story we are going to watch a video clip that shows the story Jesus told in a modern way.

When the clip finishes read the Bible text from Luke 15 as shown on the PowerPoint presentation.

When the boy asked his father for his inheritance he was basically saying, 'I wish you were dead.' He took the money and spent it on all the wrong things. He was in a mess, having made a lot of mistakes. But his father welcomed him with open arms; he was just glad that his son was OK and home. For his father that was something to celebrate.

In the story Jesus tells, the older brother is angry at his father's reaction to his younger brother returning home. He felt that he'd not done any of the bad things that the other brother had done, and yet it's his little brother that's getting treated so well and not him. His father says to him, 'You are always with me, and everything I have is [already] yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

Jesus was showing us how God is like this loving parent: he responds with joy and celebration when we turn to him after making mistakes no matter how big, and he loves us just as much when we stay with him faithfully.



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The Salvation Army tries to respond to people with open arms, as the father in the story does. Its members welcome anyone who needs help getting back on their feet, or needs a friend. That's why we help people with things like finding work, beating addictions and getting out of debt. This story teaches Christians to love others as God loves them and to give support when people want help.

### Challenge

Who can you relate to best in the story?

Are you like the younger son in the story, needing to tell somebody that you're sorry even though you're scared about how they might react?

Are you like the elder brother in the story? Do you need to be forgiving to those in your family who have got it wrong?

Are you like the father in the story? Have you been wronged, let down, taken advantage of? Maybe you need to respond as he did, with open arms and forgiveness, to that person.

Let's take a moment to reflect on who we are like and what we may need to do.

We can also be thankful for those people in our lives who act like the father in the story - no matter what we do they are always there waiting to see us and give us a hug. Let's take a moment to reflect on who we are thankful for, before I end with a prayer.

### Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for those people in our lives who are there for us even when we make mistakes. Thank you that you are always there welcoming us when we turn to you. We pray that you would help us forgive others as you forgive us, and to welcome those that have wronged us with open arms.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

