

Explore It FOR LEADERS



GOD'S CHOICE

Luke 15:11-32 The prodigal son

Each child will need:

- Items to build a tower – building blocks, cushions, Tupperware boxes... (optional as they can also improvise)
- Sticky notes, or pieces of paper with Sellotape folded on the back
- Pens/pencils

You will need:

- Good or Bad Choices PDF

Start It

Explain to the children that *Desert Island Discs* is a radio show where people share what they would want with them if they were cast away on a desert island. They choose eight pieces of music, one book and a luxury item.

Say to children they have a couple of minutes to think about what they would choose. They can choose two songs, one book and a luxury item (anything they want) if they were going to be stuck on a desert island. Children could go and collect things from around their home to share.

Give children time to share their responses and explain their choices.

Say: We all make choices every day. Our choices impact our actions and how we move through life.

Play a game of Good or Bad Choices. Print out and cut up the following statements and lay them face down in front of the camera. You could number the backs of each one. Give children the choice to choose which number they want.

Ask them if the statement is a good choice or bad choice and explain why.¹

- You take a toy belonging to your brother, sister or friend without telling them.
- You go outside to play without asking the adult who is looking after you.
- You walk away when someone tries to start a fight with you.
- You stand up for yourself.
- You call your friends names like ugly or stupid.
- You tell your family that you love them.
- You do your homework and hand it in on time.
- You keep a promise.
- You do something that your parents have told you not to do.
- You stay up past your bedtime.
- You get angry at your mum because she didn't buy you something you wanted.
- You give up your seat on the bus for an older person to sit down.
- You give some money to charity.

Say: Some choices we make are not always easy to make or have the same response every time. Today we are going to hear a story all about choices.

Tell It

Watch *Prodigal Son Story* by Superbook, a shortened version of the story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SNr5zJFngg>

Discuss:

- ➔ I wonder why the younger brother chose to leave the family home?
- ➔ I wonder why the father chose to give him what he wanted?
- ➔ I wonder if the brothers have a name?
- ➔ I wonder if the father has a name?
- ➔ I wonder why the father chose to wait for the younger son and welcome him back?
- ➔ I wonder why Jesus chose to tell this story?
- ➔ I wonder if you have ever chosen to go away and been welcomed back?
- ➔ I wonder if you have ever had to see someone you love leave, and then they have come back? How did you choose to respond?

● **Say:** We could spend lots of time looking at the choices of all the different people in the story, but just now let's focus on the choices of the father.

Ask: Can you remember some of the choices the father made in the story?

Read Luke 15:20-24 (NCV)

'So the son left and went to his father. While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him and hugged and kissed him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get our fat calf and kill it so we can have a feast and celebrate. My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!" So they began to celebrate.'

Ask: What did the son say on his return to his father? I wonder what you think about the choices the father made?

Sing It

Watch, dance and sing along to this lively song.

'You forgive me' by Life Tree Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LO-2fm7IKcU>

Action It

● **Say:** We have a God who chooses to love us always. Even when there are times we make mistakes or turn away from God, God welcomes us and celebrates that we have returned to live in his love. He rejoices when we seek forgiveness for the things we have done wrong.

Ask the children to build a tower. They could use building blocks, cushions, Tupperware boxes... or improvise and use anything they have around them. The only rule is only one item can touch the floor.

Using sticky notes or pieces of paper and Sellotape, ask the children to write down things which they find can get in the way of spending time with God or living a loving life. Stick these to the tower.

It could be things which consume our time, or make us behave how we shouldn't, or things which irritate us... As children do this, get them to share what they are writing and help each other.

Pray It

- **Say:** In the story, Jesus said, 'While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming and felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him and hugged and kissed him.'
- **Say:** The father didn't stop thinking about his son, and God does not stop caring for us. God chooses to love us – always – he doesn't move away. When we don't feel close to God, we can look at ourselves and ask how we are doing.
- **Say:** We are living in unusual and difficult times and people of all ages will have mixed feelings about how they are doing. Saying phrases like, 'I'm not doing OK today' or 'I need others to help' is important, and sharing this with those you trust and with God is important.

Ask: Who do you turn to for help?

- **Say:** Having people we trust and learning that God is there for us gives us hope when we are in difficult times.
- **Say:** As we pray today, let's knock down the tower, this wall of things we feel can get in the way of our time and relationship with God, and pray we stay close to him.

Share the website <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home> and talk about different prayer stations children could create in their own home.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.