

BIBLE LESSONS

written by Margaret Law (Adelaide, South Australia, 1985). Presentation: Colleen Plant (email: hannahrt@bigpond.net.au)



LESSON 5: GOD IS ... OUR FATHER

AIM: To give children an understanding of the Father nature of God - the depth of His love and the good gifts He gives to His children. (For your private study read Psalm 103. It expresses much of the character qualities of God.)

OPENING IDEA: Pin a large piece of paper on a wall and as children enter, have them quickly draw a picture of their own father. At the appropriate time, children who did a drawing can come to the front and talk briefly about their father. Then tell the story of the male catfish....

As soon as mother catfish lays the eggs, father catfish takes over. Each egg is laid, one at a time, and is about two and a half centimetres wide. Father catfish opens his large mouth and carefully tucks each egg inside. There are at least ten eggs. While he is carrying the eggs over a period of one month, the male catfish does not eat. Each egg actually hatches inside his mouth. He must make sure he doesn't swallow them! Father catfish's mouth works like an incubator. It keeps the eggs protected at just the right temperature until the new fish are ready to hatch. The sea catfish makes a fantastic father. We all want a fantastic father. Sometimes this doesn't happen but we can be sure that whatever happens in our family, one Person never changes. We have a Father in heaven who is the same yesterday, today and forever. The catfish father does some great things, but naturally he isn't perfect. All fathers make mistakes - that is, all fathers except God the Father who watches over us.

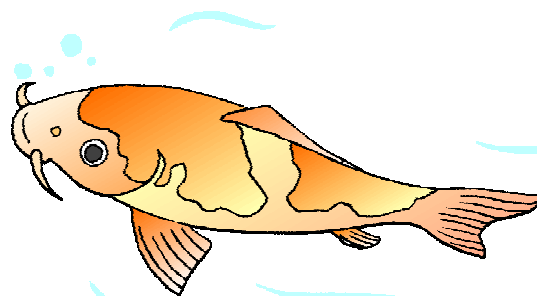
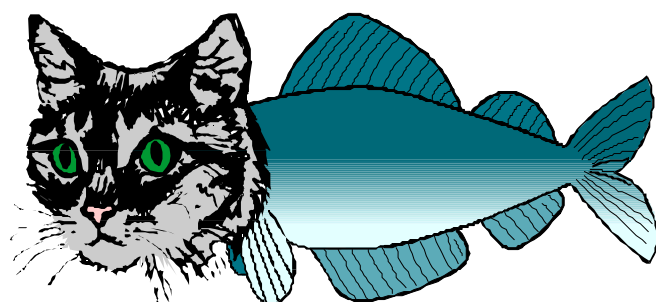
This may be a good opportunity for children to pray for their fathers and to thank God for their heavenly Father.

DISCUSS the things a father gives his children, eg. a name, security, a sense of belonging, a home, a family, food, advice, encouragement, love, discipline, training.

MEMORY VERSE: "To show that you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out, 'Father, my Father'." (Galatians 3:4), or

"It is through faith that all of you are God's sons ... " (Galatians 3:26a)

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION: Write each word on a fish shape with a paper clip attached. Children can 'go fishing' using a 'fishing rod' - a stick with a string and magnet attached.



STORY: THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke 15:11-24)

Presentation: Can be illustrated as you tell the story with stick drawings, sock puppets or can be acted or mimed. This story can be successfully adapted to a modern setting, making it more real for the children.

‘Prodigal’ means wasteful, extravagant.

STRESS POINTS:

- Family setting, father and two sons.
- Younger son dis-satisfied with home life.
- He left home with his share of the family’s money.
- Left the country and wasted all his money, partying with lots of friends.
- Ended up lonely and poor.
- Worked as a farm hand, ate pig food.
- Remember his father and longed to go home.
- Being truly sorry, he decided to go back to ask forgiveness.
- Father was waiting for him.
- Received him back as a son.

This story gives a good opportunity for using the questioning technique. Try to use questions that require more than ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers, e.g:

- Why did the younger son want to leave home?
- How do you think he felt when he left?
- How did the father feel?
- In what ways did the son waste his money?
- Why did he end up lonely?
- Why was it so awful for him to end up working with pigs?
- How important was it that he felt truly sorry?
- Did the father know he was coming home?
- How do we know his father received him as a son and not a servant?

Relate this story to God as our Father...

When we choose to go our own way, we hurt our family, ourselves and God.

God never forgets us, even when we go away from Him.

God loves us even when we do wrong.

God wants us to be sorry for our sins and come back to him.

God will always welcome us as His sons and daughters.

SONG: Our God is a God Who Will Never Fail
What a Mighty God we Serve

ACTIVITIES:

- Pg.10—Cut on dotted line. Curl a pink pipe cleaner and push it through cut to make pig’s tail.
- Write the Bible verse on a ‘catfish’ shape



THE PRODIGAL (WASTEFUL) SON

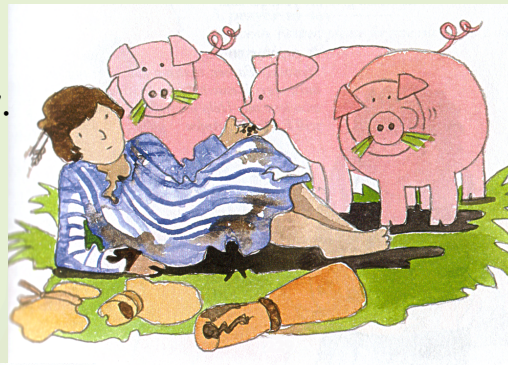


The father loved his sons and was sad to see the younger one leave home.

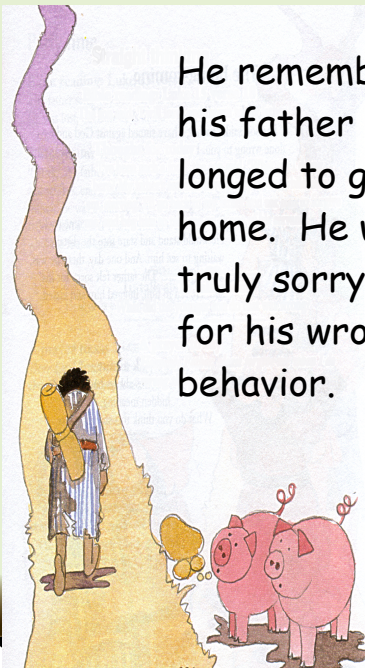


The younger son took his share of the family's money and left home to have fun.

The prodigal son wasted all his money. His friends left him, and he ended up working on a farm, eating pig food.



He remembered his father and longed to go home. He was truly sorry for his wrong behavior.



His father was waiting for him to return home. He welcomed him back as a son.



(Luke 15:11-24)

MEMORY VERSE



21, 6

21, 5

6, 20, 4, 1, 7, 19, 20

18, 13, 21, 6, 20

21, 26

22, 17, 5, 7, 5

15, 20, 4, 21, 5, 6

6, 20, 13, 6

13, 24, 24

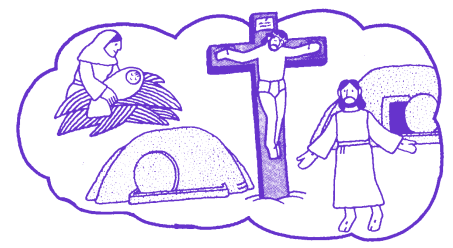
1, 18

11, 1, 7

13, 4, 17

19, 1, 16, 5

5, 1, 26, 5



a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	Z
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

THE PRODIGAL SON

Read the story in Luke 15:11-24.

Answer the questions below.

When we choose our own way, we _____

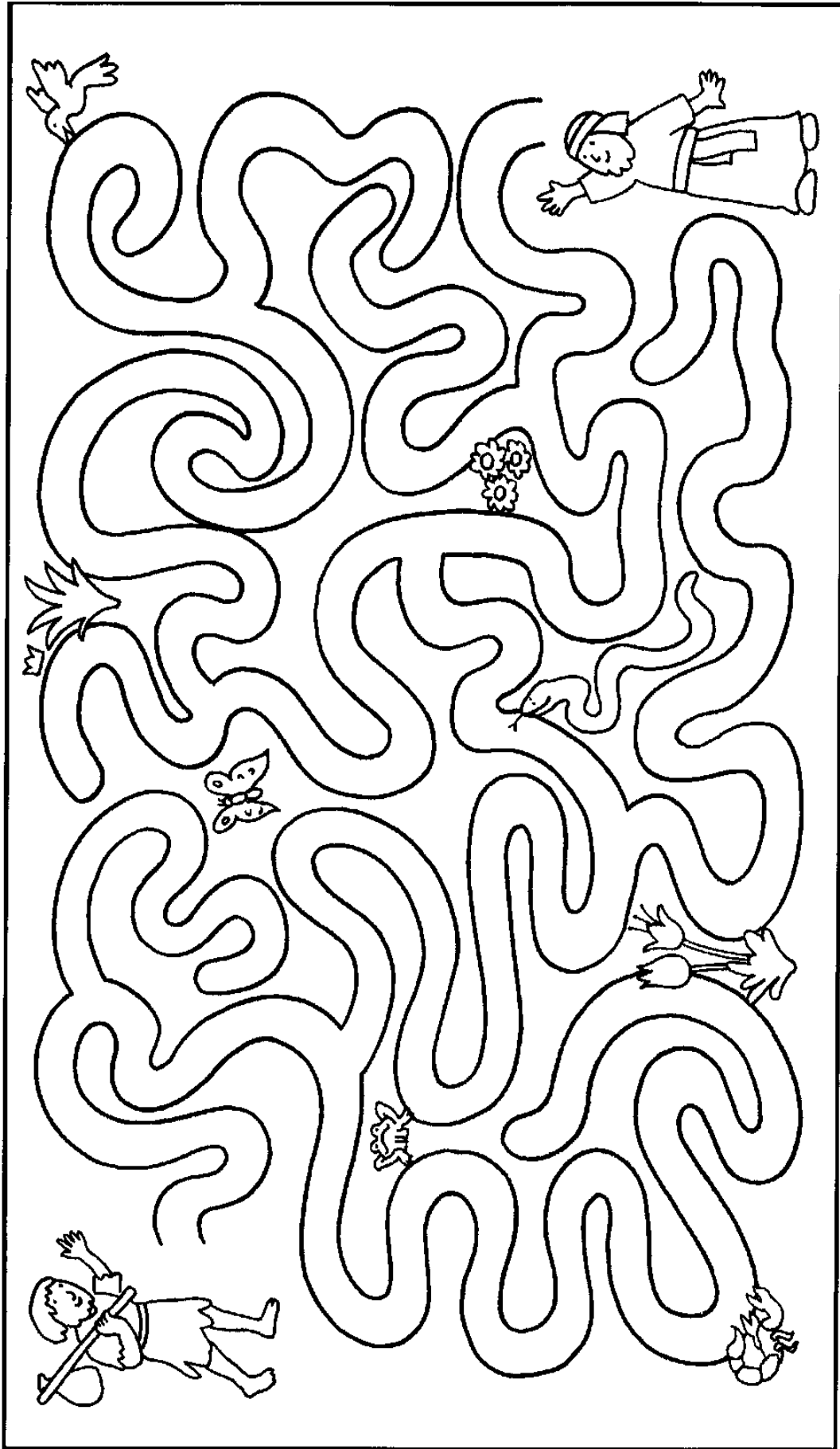


What is God's attitude toward us when we do wrong? _____

What does God want us to do when we have sinned? _____

What have you learnt from this story about the Father nature of God?

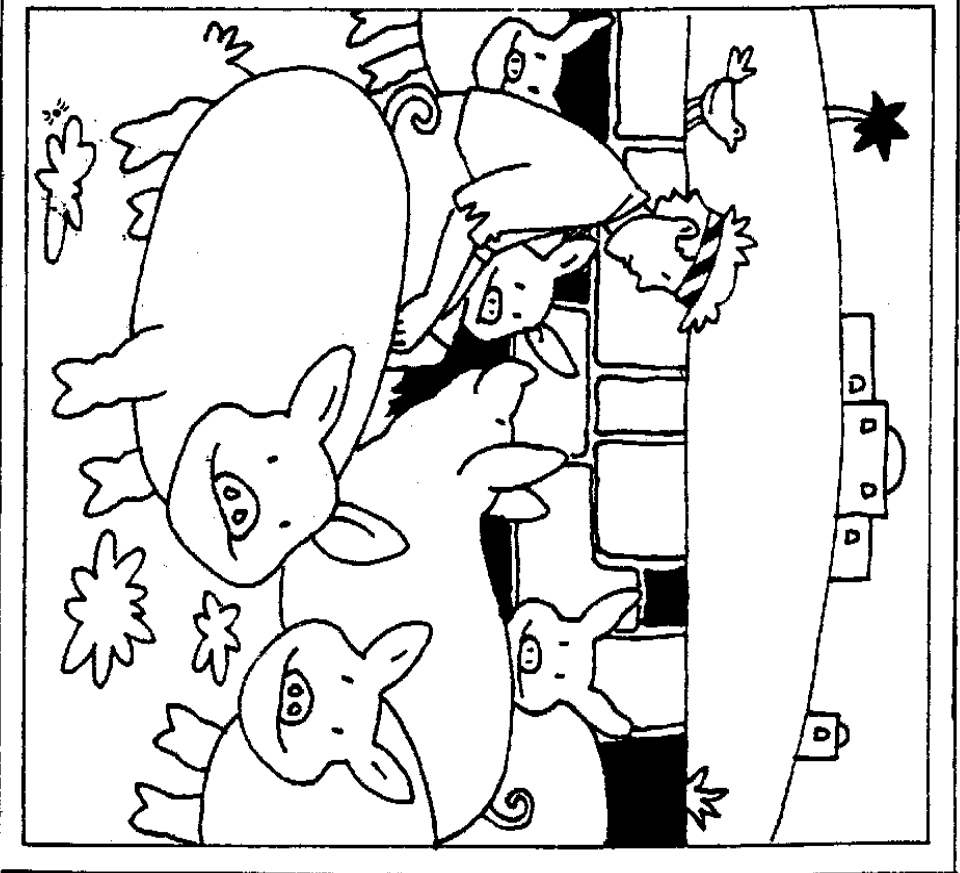
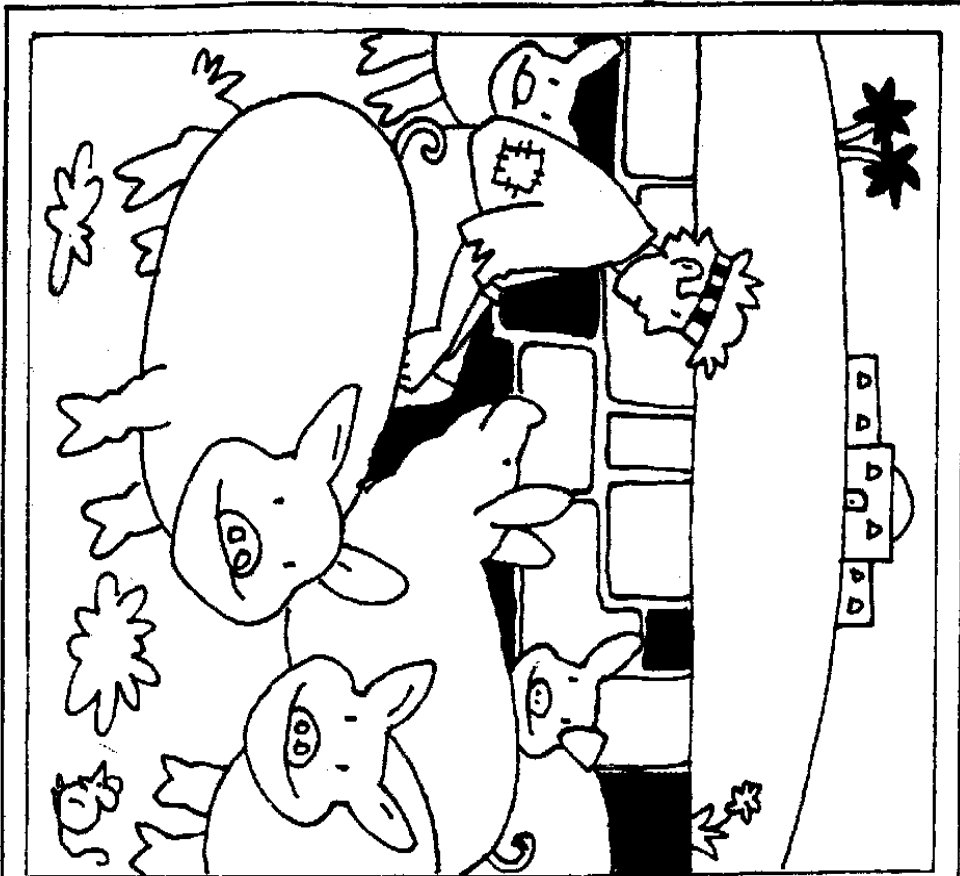
The Prodigal (wasteful) Son



Jesus told a story about a boy who left home and became very sad.
Help the boy to go back to his loving father.
You can read about this in *Luke 15:11-32*.

SPOT the DIFFERENCES

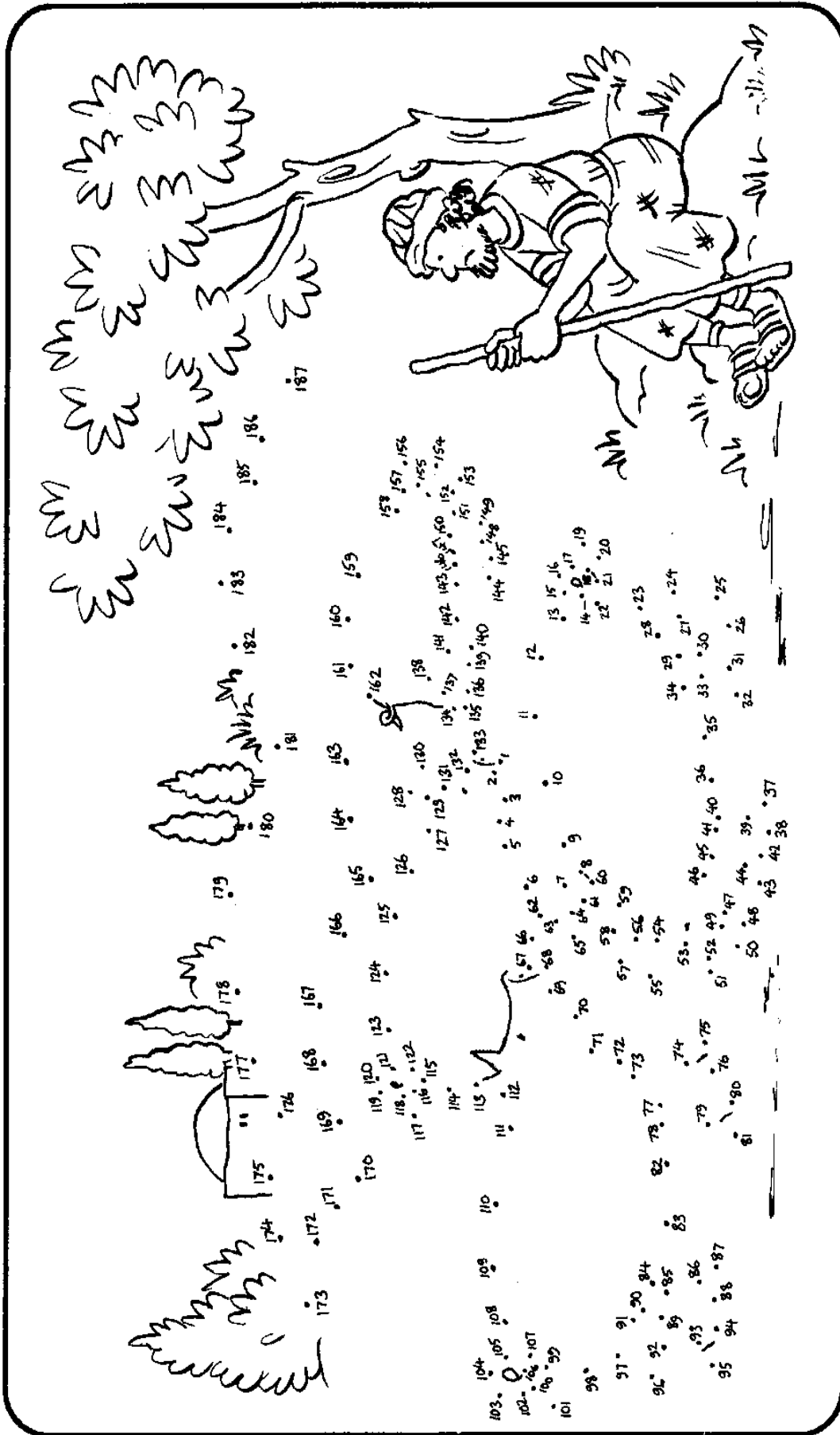
These two pictures look the same, but there are 10 differences. Can you find them?



While he looked after the pigs, the boy thought sadly: How stupid I have been!

You can read this story in Luke 15:11-32.

The Prodigal (wasteful) Son

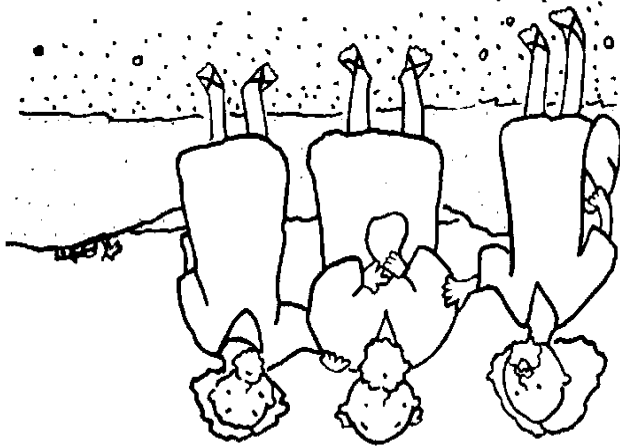


Join up the dots. The p _ _ _ had more food to eat than the son who left home.

You can find this story in Luke chapter 15, verses 11-31.

TO MAKE A 3D CARD: Colour the pictures, cut along dark lines, fold on dotted lines, trim edges.

Jesus told this story to teach an important lesson. A rich man had two sons. The younger son asked his father for his share of money. He took the money and left home. While he was away, he spent his money foolishly and wasted it. After the money was gone he got a job feeding pigs.

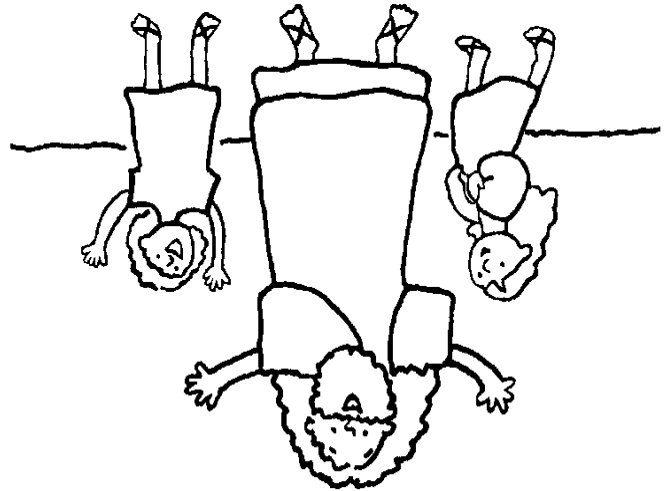


Luke 15:11-32

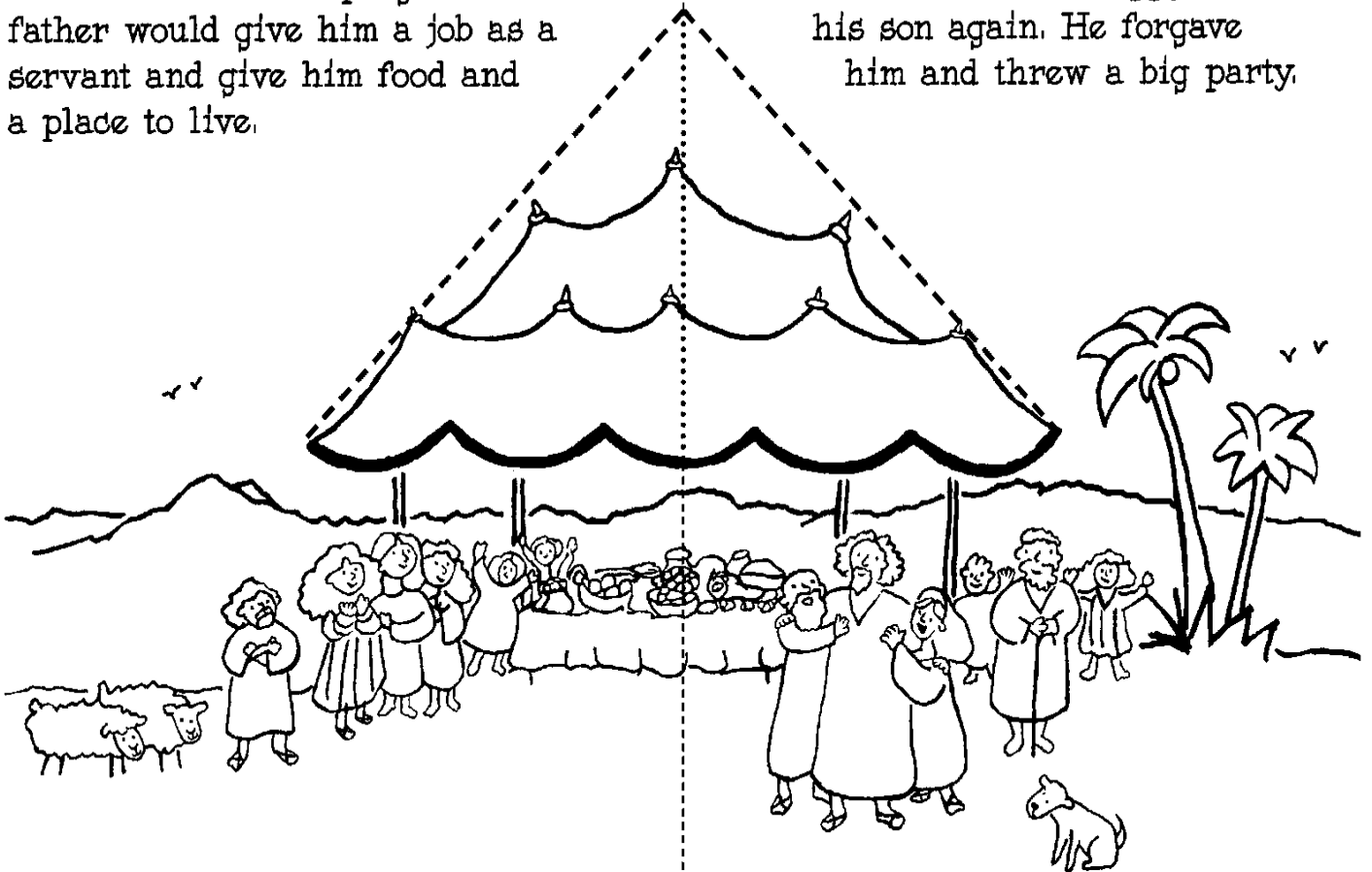
The Prodigal Son

He came home hoping that his father would give him a job as a servant and give him food and a place to live.

The older son said, "Father, I've helped you all these years, but you never gave me a party. Why do you treat my brother so well?"
The father said, "I love you both, but I thought your brother was dead. He is alive and I want to celebrate." That's how God feels about us. He loves us and forgives us. He loves us so much we can celebrate.



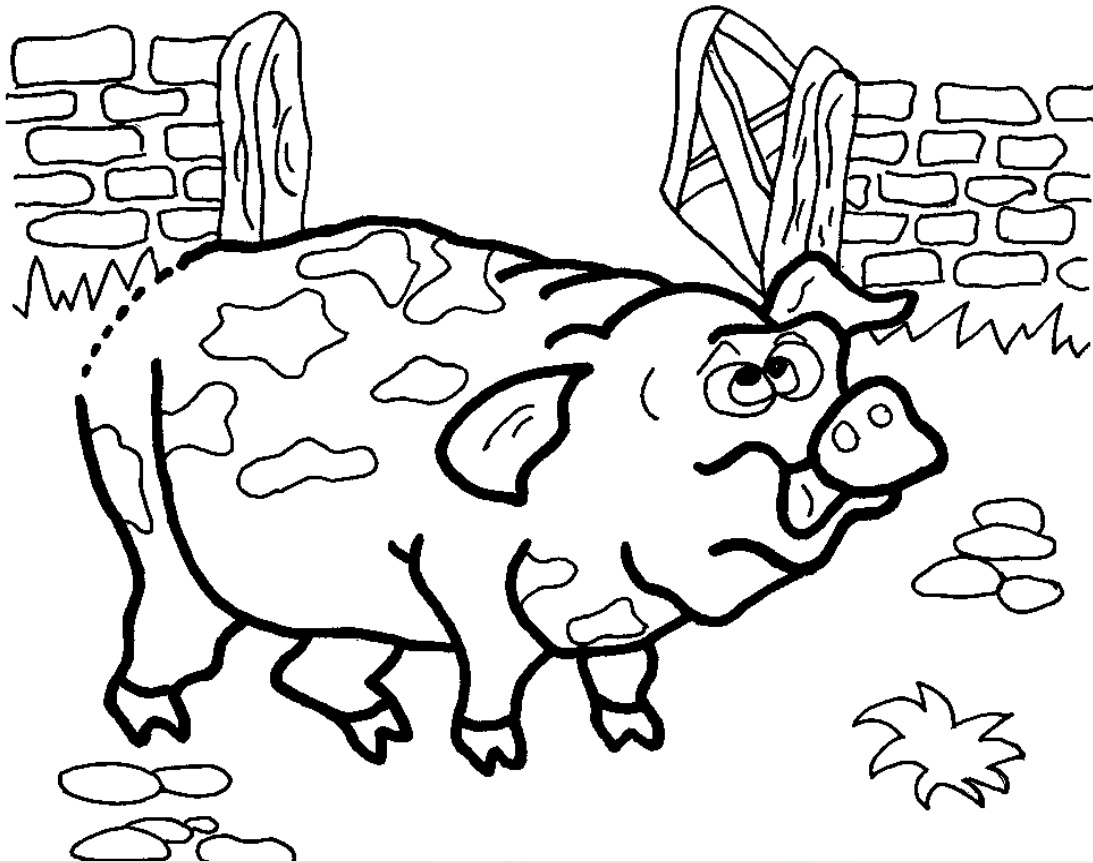
The father was so happy to see his son again. He forgave him and threw a big party.



Luke 15:11-24

The WASTEFUL SON

To show that you are
God's children, He sent
the Spirit of His Son
into your heart
(Galatians 3:26a)



The wasteful son went away and did his own thing, but his father still loved him, never forgot him, and longed for the day he came home. The son was lost, and ended up eating pig food, but when he repented, he found his father was waiting to welcome him home again as his beloved son.

