



Date: _____
Series: Good Kings – Bad Kings
Fall Year 4, Lesson 22

Patient Father

Primary Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

Key Verse: 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord isn't slow to do what he promised, as some people think. Rather, he is patient for your sake. He doesn't want to destroy anyone but wants all people to have an opportunity to turn to him and change the way they think and act.”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids need security from their parents, as well as security in their relationships with God. Kids need to know that even when they wander away from God's will, he patiently waits for them to turn to him. When they do, they find forgiveness and a restored relationship. The parable of the Prodigal Son illustrates this so effectively. Children need to identify with the joy that the lost son had when he returned.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Through Jesus' death and resurrection on our behalf, we have a restored relationship with God that always invites us to return to the Father.

Jesus in us: By the power of his Holy Spirit, Jesus moves in us to push back our stubborn wills and return to the Father's heart.

Jesus through us: Because we have been found in Christ, we can share this joy with others and be thankful when they, too, are found.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: U-turn sign from the appendix printed on yellow poster board

Show the boys and girls the U-turn sign. Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate what the sign means. Set the U-turn sign on one side of the stage (or room) displayed on a music stand, signpost, or easel and have the volunteer stand at the other side of the stage (or room). Ask the child to pretend that he is driving a car toward the U-turn sign. When he gets to the sign, he should turn around and come back toward you. Then have the volunteer return to his/her seat. Say:

Sometimes this sign is placed before dangerous obstacles, like when a bridge is out or a road is closed, to tell people that they must turn around. This is also the sign that God uses to describe "repentance." It means if we sin, we should turn around and go back to God.

Every Sunday when we come to worship, we turn to God with our praise and our worship. Let's turn to him right now with our songs of praise and worship.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

What do you think might happen if we wander away on our own and don't turn back to God? If we wander away and leave on our own, we become lost from God.

Listen to this story about an eight-year-old boy named Austin. He loved riding his bike. When he got older, he wanted to ride his bike farther and farther away from home. One day, however, he went so far that he became lost. He wasn't sure how to get back home. So he pedaled faster and faster, trying to find the way, but, instead, he became more and more lost.

He stopped and rested on his bike, almost in tears. Then he looked up and saw in the distance the steeple of a tall church with a cross on top. He knew that cross and steeple quite well. It was the church across the street from his house. He knew that if he followed the cross, he could find his way home.

You and I are like Austin. Sometimes we can become lost when we try to live life on our own power—making our own choices. And sometimes we even forget about God. Sometimes we do wrong things, and we end up far away from him. That is what it means to be lost.

Let's stop right now and tell God silently about anything that we have done that makes us lost or far away from him.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Now let's return to Jesus by remembering the cross and what he did for us. Please pray with me.

Lord, thank you for sending Jesus. We love him. He gave his whole life for us on the cross so that our sins would be taken away and that we could always come back to you. We trust him, so forgive us our sins and help us to find our way to you. Please help us to remember that if we ever wander away, we should look for the cross to find our way home. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Your choice of music.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Place the U-turn sign in the offering plate and say:

The U-turn sign can also remind us that as we bring our money and our gifts to the Lord, he turns it around so that it goes outside the church and helps other people come to know Jesus.

Let the kids place their offering on it.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Electric Patience

Supplies: one quarter for every group of ten kids

Divide the kids into groups of ten. Have every two groups pair up so that they compete with each other. Have each team form a line standing side-by-side. An adult should stand at the head of two lines (or opposing teams). Each adult should have a coin, such as a quarter, to be flipped to “heads” or “tails” letting it fall to the ground.

The team members should hold hands and get prepared to play the game of electricity. They must patiently wait for the current to start. The current starts when the first person in line sees that the adult has flipped the coin to “heads.” When this happens, he quickly squeezes the hand of the person behind him. Then the second person in line squeezes the hand of the third person, and so on down the line. After the last person in line receives a squeeze, he runs to the front of the line and grabs the quarter. The winning team is the one who grabs the quarter first. Then the last person becomes the first person in line, and the game repeats.

The reason the quarter is flipped consecutively is to cause the team to get anxious, waiting for the electrical current to start. It might be helpful for the adult to flip the quarter with his body shielding the view of the quarter from the second person in line so that only the front person can see when the quarter lands on “heads.”

Gather the kids together to discuss the learning point:

Think about what it felt like to wait for the electric current. Sometimes it takes patience to wait for something for which we are very eager. How do you think this game compares to how God feels about unbelievers? Do you think it might be hard for God to wait for lost people to turn to him? He is eager to have them turn to him, but he is willing to patiently wait no matter what.

At the end of the each round in our game, the last person ran to the front and grabbed the quarter. Likewise, when we turn back to God, there is always a treasure. He receives us in love, and he forgives us. So when we start to wander, we want to run back to him quickly anytime we can.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Storytelling of Luke 15:11-32

Supplies: a small folded map, the U-turn sign displayed as in the Attention Grabber, video The Prodigal Son – Animated Stories from the New Testament produced by Nest Family Entertainment, 1988, ISBN 1-56489-002-3—order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=PSD

Have two or three adults act out the following two stories – one is the narrator and one plays the son. The narrator or a third adult can act out patient Papa.

Place a U-turn sign four to five feet from the front wall so that the adult character playing the son can walk past the sign and bump into the wall. The more exaggerated the bump, the better. Also, you will need a map that can be placed in the person's back pocket.

If no boy is available, use the name Girl Gertrude if a woman is the volunteer and adapt the script throughout.

NOTE: The adult playing the son should wear pants with a back pocket. These stories need to be rehearsed ahead of time. The narrator can read the story in a Southern, country, or some other fun accent.

Story One:

I'm going to tell three stories. After I'm through, I'll see if you can tell me which story is most like the relationship between God and us.

This is story number one. There once was a patient man named Patient Papa. He had a little boy named Boy Buford.

Everybody say, "Hi, Boy Buford" (or Girl Gertrude)! Now, Patient Papa knew that Boy Buford had a tendency to go wandering off by himself, and he always warned him, "Don't go wandering too far because if you do, you'll get lost, bump your head, and bruise your noggin. And whatever you do, always take your map with you so you can find your way back home to me. Now don't go wandering off."

But Boy Buford didn't hear much of what his papa said and went off a-wanderin'. When he was wanderin' down the road, he got so involved in what he was seein' that he forgot his way home. Before he knew it, he was lost.

Do you think he checked his map? Nope. It was still in his back pocket. Then he came up to a warning sign. There it is right there. It says, "Turn around."

Do you think he paid attention? Nope. He kept right on going, and there he goes! Kerpunk! Wouldn't you know it? It was just like his papa said. He got lost, bumped his head, and bruised his noggin. He started to cry. Then, he realized he needed to check his map. He figured out where papa was, and away he went back home.

When he got back home, Patient Papa said, "I warned you. If you wandered off, you'd get lost, bump your head, and bruise your noggin. So don't cry your tears around me. I don't know you, kid. Take a hike."

Story Two:

That is the first story. Here is the second story. There once was a patient man named Patient Papa. He had a little boy named Boy Buford. Use the name Girl Gertrude if a woman is the volunteer.

Everybody say, "Hi, Boy Buford!" Now Patient Papa knew that Boy Buford had a tendency to go wandering off by himself, and he always warned him, "Don't go wandering too far because if you do, you will get lost, bump your head, and bruise your noggin. And whatever you do, always take your map with you so you can find your way back home to me. Now don't go wandering off."

But Boy Buford didn't hear much of what his papa said and started wanderin' off. Then Patient Papa went runnin' after him. He grabbed him by the collar and said, "Nope. I said not to go runnin' off." His son tried to get free, but his papa grabbed him by the arm and said, "Please come back. Please come back. Don't leave. I won't let you go." And he stopped the boy right there from wanderin' off so he wouldn't get hurt. As a matter of fact, he drug him right back home.

Story Three:

That's the second story. Here's the last story. There once was a patient man named Patient Papa. He had a little boy named Boy Buford. Use the name Girl Gertrude if a woman is the volunteer. Everybody say, "Hi, Boy Buford" (or Girl Gertrude)!

Now Patient Papa knew that Boy Buford had a tendency to go wandering off by himself, and he always warned him, “Don’t go wanderin’ too far because if you do, you will get lost, bump your head, and bruise your noggin. And whatever you do, always take your map with you so you can find your way back home to me. Now don’t go wandering off.”

But Boy Buford didn’t hear much of what his papa said and went off a-wanderin’. When he was wanderin’ down the road, he got so involved in what he was seein’ that he forgot his way home. Before he knew it, he was lost.

Do you think he checked his map? Nope. It was still in his back pocket. Then he came to a warning sign. There it is right there. It says, “Turn around.”

Do you think he paid attention? Nope. He kept right on going, and there he goes! Kerpunk! Wouldn’t you know it? It was just like his papa said. He got lost, bumped his head, and bruised his noggin. He started to cry. Then he realized he needed to check his map. He figured out where papa was, and away he went back home.

When he returned home, Patient Papa ran to him with his arms open wide and gave his son a big hug. Then he said, “Welcome home, son. It looks like you got lost, bumped your head, and bruised your noggin. I sure am sorry, but I’m glad you came back home to me. I hope you learned your lesson.”

Now which story best describes the way God is to us?

Does that remind you of any other stories in the Bible? Yes, the parable of the Prodigal Son is told in Luke 15. Jesus tells the story to show us how faithful and patient God is. God, the Father, rejoices when the lost return to him.

Let’s watch a video now about the Prodigal Son.

Video

Show the video *The Prodigal Son – Animated Stories from the New Testament* produced by Nest Family Entertainment. Order from: http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=PSD. The video is 26 minutes 30 seconds after the opening title.

Begin at the opening title and end it when the credits begin at the end of the movie.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Think about a time when you prayed because you were lost, and God helped you to be found. Who would like to share a time when this happened?

Let the kids tell their stories.

Think about a time when you felt far away from God, but you came back to God and felt his love and his forgiveness. Who would like to share a time when this happened?

Let the kids talk about this.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- U-turn sign from the appendix, printed on yellow poster board
- music stand, sign post, or easel on which to display the sign
- tape may be required to attach the sign to an object

Learning Game:

- one quarter (or other coin) for every group of ten kids

Bible Presentation:

- map
- U-turn sign and display stand as described in the *Attention Grabber*
- video *The Prodigal Son – Animated Stories from the New Testament* produced by Nest Family Entertainment, 1988, ISBN 1-56489-002-3. Order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=PSD. The video lasts 26 minutes 30 seconds after the opening title. Begin at the opening title and end it when the credits begin at the end of the movie.

