



The Great Family Get-Together

THEME: Family Reunion

BIBLE STORY: The Prodigal Son (*Luke 15:11-32*)

MATERIALS NEEDED

<p>OPENING GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Trivia, one copy per family• Pens, one per family	<p>CRAFT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sheets of 18" x 24" art paper, one per family• A black marker, one per family• Paper plates, one per person• Washable tempera paints (5 - 7 colors), one bottle of each color• Tables for the families to sit at (covered with newspaper or plastic because the families will be painting)• A pack of moistened wipes
<p>GAMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60 small disposable cups (3-oz.)• Cones (or a similar substitute), at least six• An inflatable beach ball	

90-MINUTE SESSION OUTLINE

- [Introduction and Opening Game](#) (10 minutes)
- [Craft Activity](#) (30 minutes)
- [Games](#) (20 minutes)
- [Devotional Thought](#) (10 minutes)
- [Family Discussion](#) (15 minutes)
- [Closing Prayer and Dismissal](#) (5 minutes)

Introduction and Opening Game

(10 MINUTES)

Introduction

Welcome to family fun night! We are so glad you're here. Our goals are to help your family have fun together and to learn about God's love and his word.

Tonight, our theme is "The Great Family Get-Together" because we are looking at a Bible story about a family reunion! Let's read it now.

Read Luke 15:11-32.

That's an amazing story, and we'll have a chance to come back to it later, but right now let's get things rolling with a little family competition!

Opening Activity: Family Trivia

Setup: Give each family a copy of Family Trivia and a pen.

Instructions: Each family will write down one family member that best answers each question.

Craft Activity

(30 MINUTES)

Family Handprint Art

Preparation:

Each family will need a sheet of 18" x 24" art paper and a black marker.

Each family member will need a paper plate with one color of washable tempera paint of their choosing.

Cover tables with newspaper, butcher paper or another covering to protect the surface from paint. Have moistened wipes available for quick cleanup.

Instructions:

1. One family member at a time can place their hand in the washable paint on their plate and then make a handprint somewhere on the sheet of art paper. (It works best if those with the largest hands go first.)
2. Use the moistened wipes to clean up after each handprint is made.
3. With a black marker, each family member can sign their name next to their handprint. (Optional: Kids may want to put their age underneath their name, or their birthdates.) The family's last name can also be added if space allows.
4. Optional: Families may want to write something special on their artwork.

Games

(20 MINUTES)

Cup Capture

Object: To be the team with the most cups captured

Setup: Designate two equal sides of the playing area with cones (or a similar substitute).

Disperse 30 paper cups evenly on one side of the playing area, and 30 cups on the other side of the playing area.

Divide the participants into two teams. Identify where the *jail* will be on each side for those who get “out.” Additionally, identify someone to be the “Keeper of the Cups” for any cups that are captured once the game begins.

Instructions: On your GO signal, players can run into the other team’s territory to grab cups and bring them back safely to the other side, giving the cup to their team’s “Keeper of the Cups.” Players can only capture ONE cup at a time. If players are tagged in the other team’s territory, they need to head directly to jail. The game leader can call out “Jailbreak!” at any time. The only other way to get out of jail is if a teammate runs to the jail without being tagged, and then both players can safely return to the other side. The team with the most captured cups at the end of the game wins.

Giant Beach Volleyball

Object: To be the team with the most points.

Setup: Set up the cones or markers to designate the opposing sides of the “court.”

Divide the families into two teams and assign them each to one side of the “court.”

Set a timer for 10 minutes. The game will end when time is up.

Instructions: Participants may hit the ball back and forth using only their hands. If the ball touches the ground on one team’s side, the opposing team gets a point. Set a reasonable “out of bounds” limit (doesn’t necessarily have to be marked by cones, but participants should be informed that if the ball is way beyond any player’s reasonable reach, it doesn’t count.) Play until time is up. The team that has the most points wins.

Devotional Thought

(10 MINUTES)

Summer is a great time to spend time together as a family. What do you like to do together as a family in the summer? Turn and talk about this with your family.

Allow each family to talk amongst themselves.

One thing a lot of people do in the summer is to gather with their family members for a family reunion, especially if it's been awhile since they've seen one another. We're going to hear about a family reunion in today's Bible story. Earlier we read that story to you, but let's hear the story again in a different way.

This is a dramatic telling of the story of the Prodigal Son using multiple characters' points of view. The presentation can be done with three volunteers who perform character monologues. (Another option is to present the three character monologues in a puppet show format.)

The Younger Son

I am living the LIFE! My dad always made me work hard and be responsible, but I had enough of that. I want to live MY life, my way. Enough of rules that took all the fun out of life. I told my dad, "enough of this! I'm old enough and independent, so just give me my inheritance. It's going to be mine one day, so why not now? And he gave it to me! Whoo hoo! Now I'm on my own and it's awesome! No one to tell me what to do anymore.

The Father

I was shocked when my youngest son came to me a few weeks ago and asked me to give him his inheritance. Did he want me dead, so he could get all of my money? I gave it to him, and it broke my heart when he took all the money and ran off to waste it all on fun and games. He ran with the wrong crowd and made foolish choices! I haven't heard from him in weeks, and I'm worried sick about him. What's he doing? Who is he with? Is he okay? Will I ever see him again?

The Older Brother

My selfish little brother! I can't believe he had the nerve to ask dad for his inheritance and go waste it all on himself. He'll get what's coming to him, and he'll be sorry when he realizes what a

fool he's been.

The Younger Son

Oh man, I really messed things up. I hung around with people I thought were my friends, but they didn't really care about me. They disappeared as soon as my money started running out. I spent all my money on partying and nice stuff that made me look cool. I didn't think about the future. Now it's all gone, and I don't even have money to eat! The best I can do is this job as a farmhand, feeding pigs. Man, even the pigs slop looks good to me now, I'm so hungry. My father's servants are better off than this! I was so foolish! I don't deserve to go home now...but maybe if I offer to be a servant in his house, he'll forgive me and let me come home.

The Father

I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw my son coming down the road this morning. He has returned! My own son whom I love, returning safe and sound! I didn't even stop for a moment to think about how he'd hurt me. Instead I ran down the driveway to meet him. I wrapped him in my arms and forgave him. He tried to offer to be one of my servants, and pay me back for the wrong he'd done. I wouldn't have any of that, no way! He's my SON!

The Older Brother

Can you believe this? My father is throwing a party for that lazy brother of mine who caused all this family drama. He deserves to be in the hole he got himself into! This is totally unfair? What about me? I've been responsible, I've never disobeyed my father. And yet, HE gets a party?

The Father

I'm so filled with joy that my son changed his mind and his heart and came back home! It's like he was dead and has come back to life! My son who was lost is now found. Won't you join us for the celebration we're having? Come on!

Now that we've heard the story a couple times, I want to ask you:

What are some things you notice about the younger son in this story?

Give the families some time to discuss, and then take their answers.

What are some things you notice about the older brother in this story?

Give the families some time to discuss, and then take their answers.

What are some things you notice about the older brother in this story?

Give the families some time to discuss, and then take their answers.

I also noticed three big things ...

- 1. The younger son realized that the life he was looking for could not be found with lots of money but could be found in his father's house.**
- 2. The older son was so preoccupied working for his father that he didn't spend time with him or get to know how generous and kind his father was.**
- 3. The father's deepest desire was that his sons would be with him, both his younger son and his older son!**

Here's what I'd like us to remember from this story. God's love for us does not depend on how hard we work for God or how faithful we are. God's love is unconditional, and what he desires the most is that we would be with him where he is. God wants to be close to us, and in his presence we'll find life, joy and peace!

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you that you love us and welcome us with open arms even when we mess up and sin against you, because we are your children and you desire to be with us. Help us understand who you truly are and how much you love us so that we might be drawn back to you. Amen.

Family Discussion

(15 MINUTES)

Distribute the family discussion guide and give the families time to discuss the questions there together.



The Great Family
Get-Together

Closing Prayer and Dismissal

(5 MINUTES)

Thank everyone for coming. Make any announcements about future family fun nights or other events at your church. Let the families know you love them and want to serve them. If anyone needs prayer, offer to pray for them.

Close the evening in prayer.

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read the story together again, and then answer the questions together. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak.

A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."' So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast!' Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. 'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.' The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after wasting your money, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!' His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day, for your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'"

To Discuss

- Retell the story in your own words.
- What are the three things you found most surprising about this story?
- How did the younger son change his mind?
- How can you see the Father's love in this story?
- Why do you think the older brother was upset?
- Do you think the father loved his two sons differently? Why or why not?

FAMILY TRIVIA

Directions: Guess the family member that best answers the question.

1. Who is the best cook in the family? _____
2. Who has the most contagious laugh? _____
3. Who is the most serious family member? _____
4. Who cracks the most jokes? _____
5. Who takes the most risks? _____
6. Who sings the most? _____
7. Who owns the most pairs of shoes? _____
8. Who could beat everyone in a dance battle? _____
9. Who loves animals the most? _____
10. Who is the cleanest? _____
11. Who is the pickiest eater? _____
12. Who is the most athletic? _____
13. Who is the most creative? _____
14. Who is the most likely to talk in their sleep? _____
15. Who takes the longest to get ready? _____