

Lenten Small Group

Session FOUR • Repentance and Renewal • 60-90 Minutes

1. Welcome and Fellowship (10 minutes)

- Begin with a warm welcome and casual conversation.
- If applicable, share snacks or refreshments.
- Briefly check in with members about their week and Lenten practices.

2. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Lead a prayer inviting God's presence and guidance for the discussion.
- Include a moment of silence to center hearts and minds on Christ.

3. Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

- Read Luke 15:11-32.
- Read the passage aloud (Use multiple readers for engagement).

4. Group Discussion (30-60 minutes)

- Instructions: Have a group discussions on 3-4 of the following questions. The bolded questions are great starters. If time permits check out the DEEPER DIVE questions at the end of the list.
 - Who do you identify with most in this parable—the younger son, the father, or the older son? Why?
 - How does the father's response to the younger son challenge or encourage you?
 - What does the younger son's decision to return home teach us about repentance?
 - Have you ever experienced a moment where you "came to your senses" like the younger son? How did it change your relationship with God or others?
 - How does the father's reaction to his son's return reflect God's grace and forgiveness?
 - Why do you think it's sometimes hard for us to fully accept God's forgiveness?
 - The older son struggles with resentment toward his brother. Have you ever felt this way when someone else received grace or blessings?



- How does the father's response to the older son challenge our attitudes toward fairness and grace?
- The father celebrates the return of the younger son. What does this teach us about God's joy in reconciliation?
- How can we cultivate the same joy when others come to faith or return to God?
- Are there areas in your life where you feel like the younger son—needing to return to the Father?
- Is there someone in your life who you need to forgive or welcome back, like the father does?
- How can this parable shape the way you approach Lent (e.g., repentance, forgiveness, or celebration)?

Deeper Dive Questions

- What does repentance mean to you, and how do you practice it in your daily life?
- In what ways do you feel called to let go of old habits during Lent?
- Is there a specific area in your life where you sense God inviting you to grow closer to Him?

5. Reflection and Response (5-10 minutes)

Each person pick one question and share

- What about today's discussion brings you hope?
- Share a "high and/or low" point from the week.
- Where did you see Jesus this week?

6. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Pray over any specific intentions or challenges shared by group members.
- Offer gratitude for the discussion and guidance as the group continues their Lenten journey.
- Conclude with a communal prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

7. Announcements and Sending (5 minutes)

- Share any upcoming events, readings, or service opportunities for Lent.
- Encourage members to check in with each other during the week and utilize their Lenten Journals.

The Parable of the Lost Son.

Luke 15:11-32

Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'



Small Group Guidelines & Expectations

To ensure a respectful, meaningful, and Christ-centered small group experience, it's helpful to establish clear expectations. Here are some suggested rules:

1. Respect Confidentiality

- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Avoid gossip or sharing others' personal stories outside the group.

2. Listen Actively

- Give full attention when someone is speaking.
- Avoid interrupting or side conversations.

3. Participate, But Don't Dominate

- Everyone should have an opportunity to share.
- Be mindful of how much you're speaking and allow space for others.

4. Stay on Topic

- Keep the discussion focused on the scripture, lesson, or theme.
- If a conversation drifts too far, the leader should gently refocus.

5. Be Honest and Open

- Share authentically but within your comfort level.
- Encourage each other without judgment.

6. No Fixing, Preaching, or Debating

- Offer encouragement rather than trying to "fix" someone's struggles.
- Avoid theological debates that could become divisive.

7. Be Punctual and Committed

- Arrive on time and be consistent in attending.
- If you can't make it, let the leader or group know in advance.

8. Respect Differences

- Everyone is on their own spiritual journey.
- Show kindness and understanding even when opinions differ.

9. Be Prayerful

- Pray for each other throughout the week.
- Approach discussions with a spirit of humility and openness to God.

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