

Within this unit, pupils find out what parables are, and that Christians believe these stories were told by Jesus to teach his followers about God. They learn about the parable of the Lost Son and what this story teaches many Christians about God, including God being loving and forgiving. Pupils think carefully about what it means for Christians to ask for forgiveness from God and the promise that people will be welcomed back into God's family. They also learn the story of Jonah and the Big Fish and find out about how many Christians put their beliefs into practice through worship.

Key Vocabulary

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| • Forgiving | • Father |
| • Prodigal | • Parable |
| • Worship | • Jonah |
| • Nineveh | • God |
| • loving | • Holy |



Lesson 1: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: Show an artist's impression of the moment in the story from the Lost Son parable where the father hugs his son and welcomes him home. Ask what pupils think is happening in this picture.

STEP 2: Explain that this is a picture an artist has created of something that happened within a parable. Ask pupils if they know what a parable is. Explain that parables are stories that Christians believe Jesus told to teach people something about God. Tell pupils that we are going to be learning about the parable of the Lost Son, which some Christians also call the Prodigal Son.

STEP 3: Display the original image again, then show some other artists' impressions of the same moment. Recap what pupils' thought was happening in the picture during STEP 1 and add any extra ideas they now might have about what is happening in the original image from having seen some others. Ask these questions about the original image: In the story, what might have happened before this picture? What might happen next?

STEP 4: Share the story of the Lost Son with pupils (using a high-quality text such as The Beginner's Bible). Discuss the main events with pupils. Find out whether any parts of the story surprised them and which events they liked/disliked the most.

STEP 5: Give pupils a speech bubble that is headed with 'I wonder...' encourage them to use the words as a sentence starter to write an 'I wonder' statement about the story inside the bubble. Bring the class back together and ask pupils to share their statements.

Lesson 2: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: Recap the last lesson with pupils. Ask the following questions:

- Can you remember what a parable is?
- Who do Christians believe told parables?
- What do Christians learn from parables?

STEP 2: Show six images from the story of the Lost Son, each showing a different event in the story. Use these to help pupils retell the story as a class. Show a video of the story that clearly links with the text*. Ask pupils if the video left any of the main events from the story out. Explain that many Christians find it important to go back to the original text to understand the story properly.

STEP 3: Remind pupils that many Christians believe parables were told by Jesus to teach something about God. Discuss what pupils think this parable might teach Christians about God. During discussion, draw out pupils' thoughts on what the parable teaches Christians God will do if people get things wrong and which events in the story might show Christians that God is forgiving. As a class, write a couple of sentences onto the 'meaning of the story' slip outline (these will be printed and placed inside the story cubes that pupils will make later in the lesson).

STEP 4: Show the six main images from earlier in the lesson. Look carefully at the pictures and discuss the amount of detail that has been included. Give pupils a cube net and explain that on each side they are going to draw one event from the story. Tell pupils that once their story cubes have been constructed, we will print our class 'meaning of the story' slips and put one inside each cube so that other people can find out about what this parable means for many Christians.

STEP 5: Pupils draw their six images, before constructing the cubes and placing the meaning slip inside.

* A link that you might like to use is [Treasure Champs. 30: Forgiveness - 'The Prodigal Son' - BBC Teach](#) or [BBC Two - Pathways of Belief. The Bible: The New Testament, Parable of the Lost Son](#)

Lesson 3: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: With pupils, recap the last lesson; together, discuss what the parable was all about and what it might teach Christians about what God is like. Read the story again with the pupils (using the same text as lesson one). When you have finished reading, show pupils a picture of the father welcoming his son home. Explain that many Christians believe God is like the father, forgiving his people for the things that they have done wrong, but that many Christians also believe they should ask for forgiveness when they have done something wrong.

STEP 2: As a class talk about times when we get something wrong; can pupils give any examples? Help pupils to extend thoughts beyond getting answers wrong in class to times when we get things wrong due to our words and actions. How does it feel when you know that you have got something wrong?

Give pupils a paper heart template, encourage them to write or draw a picture of a time they have got something wrong and then had to say sorry (remind pupils not to use any names).

STEP 3: Bring the class back together and encourage pupils to share some of the ideas they have written and drawn on the hearts. Ask pupils how it felt when they were forgiven. Discuss whether these feelings might be like how they think the son in the story could have felt when forgiven by the father. Move on to discuss how pupils think a Christian who believes they have been forgiven by God might feel (if necessary, remind them of how they feel when forgiven and what they thought the son might have felt).

STEP 4: Give pupils slips of paper and encourage them to write one word that describes how it feels to be forgiven.

Bring the class back together and stick the adjectives onto a large sheet of sugar paper to create a class wordle. Share some of the words pupils have written and draw parallels between these and how Christians might feel when they say sorry to God and believe God has forgiven them.

STEP 5: Christian prayers have four main types. Some prayers show all four, some just one or two. These are praise, saying sorry, saying thank you and asking for something. Introduce the pupils to four jelly-baby characters: Peter Praise, Suzy Sorry, Andrew Ask and Thea Thanks —each character should be a different colour. You could use the Understanding Christianity KS1 unit 1.1 resource sheet 3 or provide your own jelly babies for this. Ask the pupils to look through the Lost Son and ask if they can see which parts of the story suggest that Suzy Sorry, Peter Praise, Andrew Ask or Thea Thanks prayers are something that the characters might say. Ask the pupils to focus on two of the types of prayer: Suzy Sorry and Peter Praise. Remind pupils that Christians believe God is loving and forgiving, so what prayers might a 6-year-old Christian say in a time of prayer at church?

Write these prayers, copy some words from Understanding Christianity KS1 unit 1.1 Resource Sheet 4 or draw on suitable shaped and coloured paper, perhaps for display.

Discuss with pupils their ideas about why the story of the lost son might be helpful for Christians today.

Lesson 4: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: Recap the last lesson, helping pupils discuss what they learnt about the Christian view of God from the story. Explain that Christians also look to other teachings and stories in the Bible to find out more about what God is like. Tell pupils that we are going to be finding out about another story today. Show some stained-glass windows featuring the story of Jonah and the Big Fish. Ask whether anyone can guess what the story is about, and whether anybody knows the story already. Explain that this story comes from the Old Testament part of the Bible.

STEP 2: Read the story of Jonah and the Big Fish together as a class (a high-quality version can be found in The Beginner's Bible). Talk through the key events with pupils.

STEP 3: Show pupils a map of where Jonah travelled on his journey. How do pupils think that God knew where Jonah was? Focus on the Christian belief that God is all knowing; help pupils to work out what this

meant for Jonah. Ask pupils what God does in the story that is loving and forgiving - explain that the examples they have picked out are ways in which the story helps many Christians to see God as loving and forgiving.

STEP 4: Give pupils a copy of Understanding Christianity KS1 unit 1.1 resource sheet 5. Encourage pupils to use it to map out and draw key parts of the story using the frame on the sheet.

Lesson 5: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: Recap the story of Jonah with pupils, what do they remember? Ask: What does the story teach many Christians about God? Ask pupils to look at their story plans from the last lesson, encourage pupils to retell the story to their partner, using their plan to help guide them.

STEP 2: Pick out some key events from the story plan of Jonah, ask how pupils think that Jonah might be feeling at each point.

Encourage pupils to go through each event and choose to draw either a sad, happy, or worried face next to each one.

STEP 3: Ask pupils if they think Christians have times in their lives when they might feel worried, happy, or sad. When might these times be? Ask pupils what Christians might say to God when they feel worried, happy or sad. Explain that in all things, many Christians believe they should talk to God. When things make them feel happy, they might praise God. When they feel sad, they might ask God for help. When they feel worried that they have got something wrong, they might ask God for forgiveness through prayer.

STEP 4: Explain that many Christians attend church to praise God's name, say thank you for what God has done, say sorry for the things they do wrong and talk to God about what they are worried about. How do pupils think this might make Christians feel? Play pupils a praise song that might be used in church* with lyrics that focus on how God is there through both difficult and good times. Explain that within this song the person singing is talking about the hard times and good times and how God is always there for them. Can pupils make links to when this happened in the stories that they have learnt about within this topic?

*A suitable example might be Goodness of God by Bethel Music <https://youtu.be/n0FBb6hnwTo>

Lesson 6: What do Christians believe God is like?

STEP 1: Recap with pupils what they have learnt about in this topic and reread the parable of the Lost Son and the story of Jonah, what do these stories teach Christians about God?

STEP 2: As a class, go through these sticky knowledge retrieval questions and encourage pupils to share their knowledge.

STEP 3: Pupils to complete the cloze activity, sharing their knowledge of the concepts covered.

Learning Outcomes for this Unit

- Identify what a parable is
- Tell the story of the Lost Son from the Bible simply and recognise a link with the Christian idea of God as a forgiving Father.
- Give clear, simple accounts of what the story means to Christians
- Give at least two examples of a way in which Christians show their belief in God as loving and forgiving (e.g. by saying sorry, by seeing God as welcoming them back; by forgiving others)
- Give an example of how Christians put their beliefs into practice in worship (e.g. by saying sorry to God)
- Think, talk and ask questions about whether they can learn anything from the story for themselves, exploring different ideas
- Give a reason for the ideas they have and the connections they make.