

“I Was Naked...”

The Prodigal Son
Luke 15:11-32

Level C

Ages 11-14

Series Theme: You shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.

Lesson Focus: We are to love and protect other people when they feel vulnerable, ashamed or “naked”.

Reading Summary: A man had two sons. The younger asked for his inheritance. When his father gave it to him he gathered his things, went to a far country and wasted it all with prodigal living. When the money was gone a famine started. The son worked feeding pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the pigs’ food. He came to his senses and said, “How many of my father’s servants have more than they can eat, and I am dying of hunger! I will go to my father, and will say, ‘Father, I have sinned and am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your servants.’” His father saw him coming from far away and ran and kissed him. The son said, “Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your son.” But the father said, “Bring out the best robe, put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. Bring the fatted calf and let us eat and be merry; for my son was lost and is found.” The older brother was angry, but his father said, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”

Lesson 4		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Tricked! watch a video that has been faked; discuss what it feels like to be fooled or made to feel “naked”	Choose from a Playlist of Video Fakes directions p. 2 video online at www.bitly.com/VideoFake	viewing device for watching a video online
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2	Bible or copy of Luke 15:11-32
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Read and Discuss explore positive and negative qualities of both brothers and discuss what the parable shows about how the Lord loves all His children	The Prodigal Son and His Brother directions p. 3 <i>The Prodigal Son and His Brother</i> p. 6	copies of the Word or Bible, pens or pencils
	Act Out Scenarios act out common situations from the perspectives of being loving toward others or being selfish	Keep Your Clothes On directions pp. 3-4 <i>Keep Your Clothes On Starter Scenarios and Discussion Questions</i> p. 7	<i>optional:</i> one scarf for a player to wear
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Take the Message Home introduce the quotation for the week	Take Home Cards p. 8	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Tricked!

Supplies needed: a device for showing videos online, e.g. computer, mobile phone or tablet

Do in advance: Select a video or two to show students from this playlist: www.bitly.com/VideoFake.

Watch one or more videos **without disclosing that the videos are fake**.

1. Did what you just saw really happen? Why or why not?
2. How might an actor or video maker react if exposed as a fake?
3. How do you feel if you discover you have been fooled?
4. Our minds are clothed just as clothing protects our bodies. What protects our minds? (Facts—especially facts from the Word. They help us see if something is true or false.)
5. Ideas we learn and come to love become part of us. They “clothe” our minds. They show others who we are. After death we appear to others in the spiritual “clothing” we chose on earth. If we make a habit of reading the Word and doing what it teaches we will appear in beautiful angelic clothing. If we love only ourselves we will appear in wretched and dirty clothing.

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Luke 15:11-32. If needed, shorten the story by using your own words and reading key verses

Babies are naked when they are born, and they are lovingly clothed and wrapped in blankets to keep them safe and warm. What do clothes do for us? Clothes protect us from harsh weather, help us stay clean, and offer us privacy. We can also express ourselves by wearing clothes in colors and styles we like. **We can tell a lot about people by their clothes, e.g. if a person is relaxing, working, or trying to impress others.**

In our story the younger prodigal son took the fine clothes and belongings his father had given him and went far away from home. He wasted all his money and eventually had nothing but the rags he wore as clothing. One day he realized that he had made a terrible mistake. What did he do? He went to his father and told him that he was not worthy to be his son.

How did his father treat his son when he returned? He saw him from far away, ran to meet him, greeted him with kisses and hugs, and told his servants to bring out the best clothes for him.

We are not so different from this son. Sometimes we leave our Heavenly Father and go far away. What kinds of actions might move us away from the Lord? Breaking the Ten Commandments, saying hurtful things to others, making fun of others, doing things we know are wrong, etc.

How can we return to our Heavenly Father if we make a mistake like this? We can admit what we have done, say we are sorry and try to do better. **This can be hard to do, especially if others know what has happened. We might feel “naked” or exposed and ashamed in front of others.**

What should we do if we notice others have broken the Ten Commandments? We should try to love and protect them, to cover their “nakedness” by thinking well of them, treating them kindly and helping them find a path back to their Heavenly Father.

Clothing represents the ideas which clothe our minds. When we do what the Lord teaches, our minds are clothed with true ideas from the Word. These ideas can protect us in powerful ways, leading us to make fewer choices that have us feeling embarrassed or “naked”.

After death others see us in the spiritual clothing we have chosen through our actions throughout our lives. Devils, whose minds are clothed with selfish and hateful thoughts, appear in dark, ugly, twisted forms. Angels who love the Lord appear radiant and in beautiful clothing.

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice

The Prodigal Son and His Brother

The parable of the prodigal son can teach us about various ways we can respond to the Lord's love and guidance, and also how He responds to us at different points in our lives. In this activity, students will explore the actions of both sons, comparing their reactions to their father, and hopefully recognizing his love for both of them.



1. The father represents the Lord, and the sons show two different ways we sometimes respond to Him. Do you identify with one of the sons more than the other?
2. We all move away from the Lord at times and make selfish choices that end up being harmful to us and to others. Like the father in the parable, our Heavenly Father is always ready to forgive and welcome us back with joy.
3. At other times we follow the rules, but feel like we aren't being valued—like the older brother. It may seem as if trouble-makers get all the attention. They have the "fun" of being rebellious, and get attention when they are sorry.
4. Have students look up the parable and fill out the chart (p. 6), describing qualities of both brothers. When charts are completed, have students discuss their responses. Suggested questions appear below.

Discussion:

- What do these comparisons tell us about what people are like?
- Do some people need the Lord more than others?
- Do some people deserve the Lord's love more than others?
- Does the Lord treat different people differently?
- How can we prepare to "make merry and be glad" with our heavenly Father?

Materials Needed
copies of *The Prodigal Son and His Brother* p. 6, copies of the Word or Bible (each pair can share one), pens or pencils

**New Church Concept
The Inner Meaning**

The prodigal son symbolizes those who are prodigal or wasteful of spiritual riches... His return to his father and his confession that he was not worthy to be called his son symbolize repentance of heart and humility. The best robe that is given to the son means important first truths. The ring means the conjunction of good and truth in the internal person and the sandals mean that conjunction in the external person. The fatted calf symbolizes the goodness of love and of charity. The eating and being merry mean heavenly joy and affection. *Apocalypse Explained* 279, adapted

Choice

Keep Your Clothes On!

Students will act out scenes in pairs. One part will be acted in the manner of a person who is "naked"—behaving selfishly, without thinking of the Lord and others. The other part will be acted in the manner of a person who has "come to himself" and received clothing from his "Father." That is, he

Optional
Differentiate between "nakedness" (selfishness) and a "clothed" mind by handing one person a scarf to wear while acting.



Keep Your Clothes On *continued*

is able to reflect on his actions from a higher perspective. Audience members can shout “freeze!” and replace players as described below. The teacher stops the scene when its purpose has been fulfilled. Follow the skits with a discussion. Choose several of the scenarios listed (p. 7) to use with your group, or come up with your own scenarios.

Activity

1. Ask for two volunteers to act out a scene. One player will act in the manner of someone who appears “naked.” The other player will act in the manner of someone who is “clothed”—leading an unselfish life. Players decide who plays which part.
2. Select a scene from *Keep Your Clothes On Starter Scenarios and Discussion Questions* (p. 7). Once students are engaged in the activity, they may have their own skit ideas.
3. Once a skit has started, audience members may shout “Freeze!” at any time. Both players must then freeze in whatever position they are in at the time.
4. The person who shouted “Freeze!” taps one of the players on the back. The player who is tapped then sits down while the new player assumes their frozen pose. Unfreeze and continue the scene.
5. Players may be replaced repeatedly until a scene has been resolved.
6. After each skit, discuss what happened and how it relates to the students’ lives. A list possible of discussion questions (p. 7) is included to help you get started.

New Church Concept Nakedness

“Naked” denotes those who are not in truths, and yet long for truths, and also those who acknowledge that there is nothing of good and truth in them. *Arcana Coelestia* 9960

“Naked” and “nakedness” mean those who are lacking in understanding and love. *Apocalypse Explained* 240

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted...to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.... Isaiah 61:1-3

4. Wrap It Up

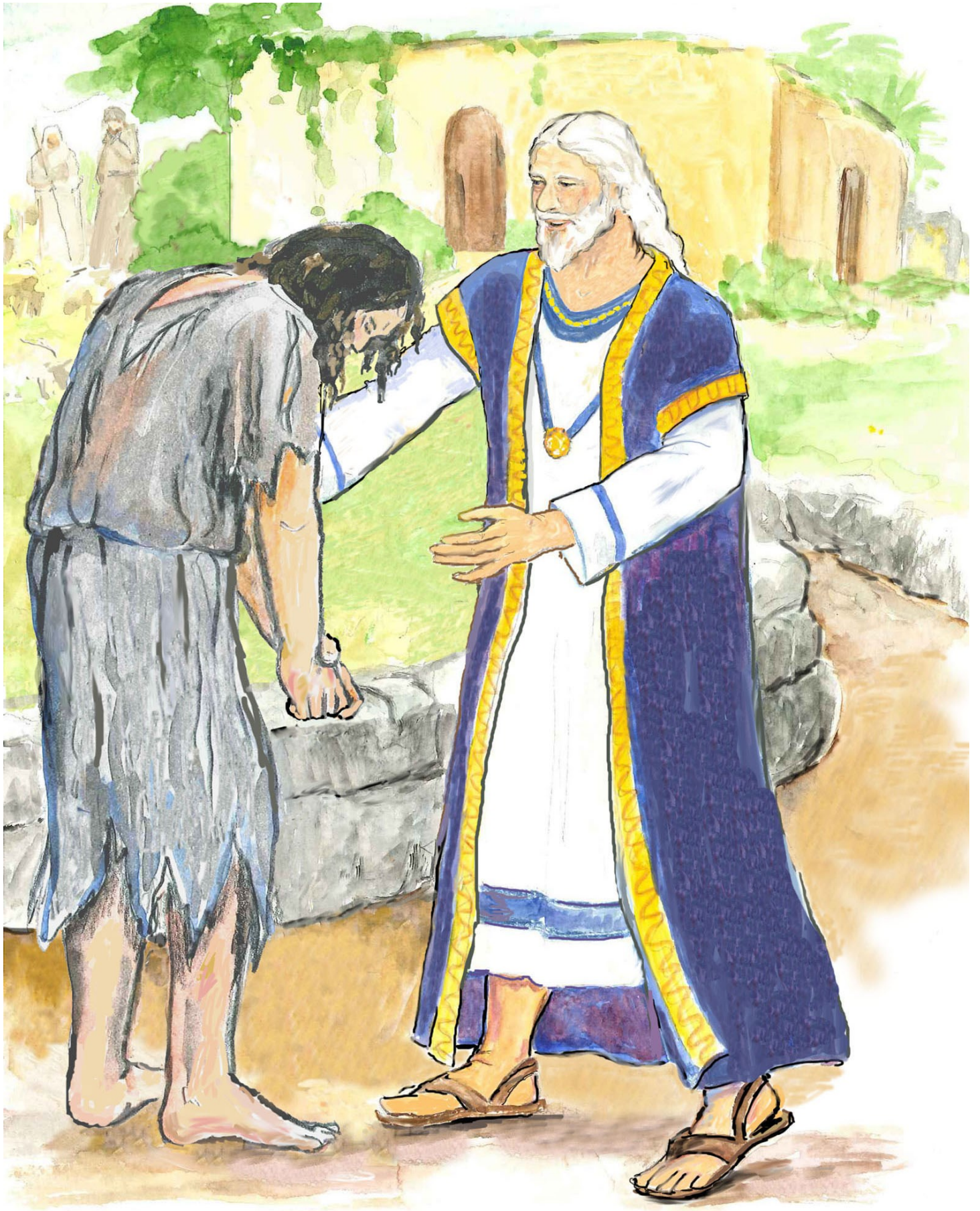
Take the Message Home

Read this quotation aloud: “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing, You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.” (Psalm 30:11)

We do not know what the prodigal son was wearing when he arrived home, but he was probably in rags. He was sorry for the mistakes he had made and willing to serve his father. We can imagine that his father’s joyful response to seeing him made the son happy too. Giving his son the best robe is a symbol of the father’s joy.






When you feel sad about something in your life—a mistake you have made, a tough challenge you are facing, or unkind words that were said to you—think of what you can do to cooperate with the Lord so that He can clothe your sorrow with gladness. Remember that He will always love and welcome you, and will find a way to bring you through the sadness and back to happiness. Praying to Him or reading His Word can bring comfort and inspiration about how to change our lives so we can receive the happiness of heaven.

Give *Take Home Cards* (two per page, p. 8) to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up where they will see them this week.



The Prodigal Son and His Brother

Read the story from Luke 15:11-32 and complete the chart below with information on the older brother.

Qualities	Prodigal Son	Older Brother
<p>Positive Qualities</p> 	<p>The younger son is sorry at the end of the story. He humbly asks his father's forgiveness (v. 21).</p>	<p>(see v. 29)</p>
<p>Negative Qualities</p> 	<p>The younger son is greedy for his inheritance and then wastes it all on his own pleasure (see v. 12-13).</p>	<p>(see v. 25, 28-30)</p>
<p>Turning Away</p> 	<p>The younger son rejects his father by going away to a far country (v. 13).</p>	<p>(see v. 28)</p>
<p>The Father's Love</p> 	<p>The father shows his love by running out to meet the younger son, kissing him, giving him gifts, and preparing a feast (v. 20, 22-24).</p>	<p>(see v. 28, 31)</p>
<p>The Ending</p> 	<p>Who is the father showing love for in v. 32—the younger or the older brother?</p>	

Keep Your Clothes On

Starter Scenarios and Discussion Questions

Starter Scenarios

1. Two people are carrying trays of food and heading toward the same empty space at a table of friends. There is one empty seat.
2. Two people finish their shopping and reach the check-out at the same time.
3. A group of friends is going out to have fun (movie, food, shopping, party, skating). One person has not been invited and is left out.
4. One person wins a prize that everyone wants (candy, music gift card, movie tickets).
5. Two people are streaming videos on the same network. The videos are not loading properly. They keep slowing down and pausing.
6. One person is watching a loud action movie; another person is trying to do a quiet activity (sleep, read, talk to friend).
7. Friends have two servings of food (cake, pie, meat, potatoes). One serving is smaller than the other.
8. Two people have not seen each other for a long time and are both eager to share news.

Discussion Questions *(choose 1 or 2 after each skit)*

1. What impact did the “naked” attitudes have on problem resolution?
2. What clues can help people recognize attitudes in themselves that come from “nakedness”?
3. How might different choices have changed the conversation?
4. Children are taught that if they are caught in a fire, they should “stop, drop and roll”. What steps might you suggest someone take to stop the path of an inner fire of “nakedness”?
5. What tactics do the hells use to fuel selfish states?
6. The father in the story of the Prodigal Son represents the Lord. He welcomes his lost son back. How might our Heavenly Father “run to meet” us after we have made a mistake?
7. Are there any sins that the Lord cannot forgive?
8. How many second chances does the Lord give people?
9. If a friend has behaved badly toward us, what steps might we take to restore the relationship?
10. If we have behaved badly, what steps might we take to restore the relationship?



"I Was Naked"

Read: You have turned for me my mourning into dancing, you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness. Psalm 30:11

(In Biblical times, sackcloth was a rough, itchy fabric that was worn to show that a person was sorry or in grief.)

Reflect: We do not know exactly what the prodigal son was wearing when he arrived at his father's house, but he was probably in rags. He was sorry for the mistakes he had made and willing to be a servant in his father's house. But we can imagine that his father's response must have brought him joy. The father was so happy to see his son. He welcomed his son home and gave him the best robe—clothing that would have been worn for celebration and to show joy.

Respond: When there is something in your life that you feel sad about—a mistake you have made, a difficult challenge you are facing, or something unkind that was said to you—what can you do to cooperate with the Lord so that He can clothe that sorrow with gladness? Remember that He will always love and welcome you. He brings us through states of sadness and (eventually) renews our happiness. Praying to Him or reading from His Word can bring you comfort or inspiration about how to make changes for the better.

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