

## Community-Developed

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**Date:** 2004

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## **The Parable of the Lost Son** Musical Theatre

### Welcome/Introduction

*Tonight we are presenting a musical and dramatic portrayal of a well-known parable of Jesus, the parable of the lost son. The presentation is in four short acts—first will be the story as the younger son sees it, the second will be the older son’s story, and the third will be the experience of the father. While Jesus was ministering in Palestine he upset many people, particularly the religious authorities who were very concerned that the proper practice of religion should not be jeopardized. The fourth act is portrays the response of the first hearers of this parable.*

**Reading the story:** Luke 15:11-32

**Voice:** What kind of a story is this? How does this story teach us to live well? If we are supposed to be obedient to our parents and do good work this story isn’t fair. It’s not fair!

**Theme music:** *Field behind the plough. Vocals complete song.*

## Act 1 - The Lost Son

*Enter father and sons.*

**Narrator:** A father had two sons. They farmed. The father was proud because his sons worked hard and were responsible and got things done and were competent. The farm prospered and they bought more land and more cattle and bigger tractors. They all went to church. And people respected them because they did good work and made wise decisions.

**Theme music:** *Field behind the plow (instrumental)*

*(Father and two sons are working with hoes in the fields. Father stands tall and smiles. Older son works diligently. Younger son looks around at the world. Young people at other end of church laughing and having fun. Son is bored working.)*

**Narrator:** Well usually they all worked hard. The younger son watched TV and surfed the net and talked to his friends and knew there was a bigger world out there where everyone didn't get up every morning to work in the fields. There was a bigger world out there where people had fun all the time.

**Son 1:** Give me my money and I'll go. *(Father hands over bag of money.)*

**Music:** *Take the money and run*

*(Rebellious son puts on shades and rides a skateboard down the aisle and out the back of church. Comes through front, with friends, laughing and having fun, dancing.)*

**Music:** *Purple Haze*

*(Plays a hand of cards.)*

**Music:** *The Gambler*

*(Puts money on table, money bag is noticeably smaller. Runs out the back again. Enters by himself. Meets card dealer. Music stops.)*

**Friend:** Pay up!

*(Money bag is obviously empty.)*

**Son 1:** I don't have anything or I would.

**Friend:** Well, you can always sell drugs for me.

*(Son 1 walks out quiet and depressed.)*

**Music:** *House of the rising sun (violin)*

**Narrator:** The young man had no more money and there were people waiting to be paid. What was he to do? He tried working at MacDonald's but he didn't earn enough to pay his debts. He pumped gas but he needed the money in the cash register and he got fired. He had nothing to eat so he asked for change from pedestrians on the street and everyone was either angry at him or afraid of him. He sold drugs and he got busted.

*(Son 1 panhandles in the audience.)*

He was living on the street, sleeping in a cardboard box, had been beat up by someone who wanted his bottle, was sick with AIDS, and was eating from garbage cans when he realized ...

**Son 1:** In my Dad's place the hired men are living better than I do. I'm going to go home and say to him 'Dad, I've sinned against you and God. I've done everything I shouldn't have done. I'm sorry, Dad. I don't deserve it but can I come home and work for you like one of your employees? I could live in the barn.'

*(Walks slowly up aisle on crutches. Father stands at the front waiting. Embrace.)*

**Father:** "I've been waiting for a long time. Welcome back. This is absolutely wonderful. Let's invite everyone to come celebrate your coming home. We'll roast the pig we have been saving in the barn.

*(Exit out front.)*

## **Act 2 - The Stay-at-Home Son**

**Narrator:** Now we will see how the stay-at-home brother saw the story.

*Theme music: instrumental*

*(Father and two sons hoeing.)*

**Son 1:** Dad give me my inheritance.

*(Father hands money bag over to younger son. Son 1 runs out happily.)*

**Music:** *Let it ride.*

*(Son 2 reacts with anger. Works with emotion while he hoes.)*

**Narrator:** The older brother was angry but he was a real hard worker. He understood what needed to be done on the farm. That sometimes you have to work long hours to get the crop harvested before the rain comes and that the bales have to be brought in before the snow comes and that machinery has to be fixed before the next season. There was always work to do and he did it willingly but there was always more work.

The older son went to church and was baptized.

When the younger son left during harvest they couldn't replace the tractor that blew its transmission and there was more work to do because his brother wasn't there and the winter came early and the bales were still in the field. But the older brother worked harder and they got the jobs done and somehow they managed. But his brother wasn't there.

**Music:** *Dusty old farmer* (adapted lyrics)

The younger brother wasn't there but with time they were able to buy the quarter section they gave back to the bank to pay out the younger son. And they bought more land and more cattle and the farm prospered once again. They hired more people and the place ran fine without the younger son. They didn't need him anymore.

The older brother didn't need him anymore but the father ...

**Son 1:** *(from the back of the church):* I'm sorry, Dad. Can I come home?

**Father:** Of course!! Welcome home. Let's have a party, we'll roast the pig we have been saving and we will invite the whole community. Everybody needs to know you are home!

*(The older son is angry.)*

**Son 2:** Dad what are you doing? This guy has wasted his wealth, your wealth, our wealth. This guy has ruined his reputation, and dragged our reputation through the dirt. This

guy has caused you so much grief. And you are going to take him back. We don't need him. We don't want him.

I've stayed home Dad. I haven't messed up, I have stayed here and worked and did what you wanted. Now this brother who wasted everything he ever got, shows up and you are going to take him back. And then we are going to have a party and roast a pig for the whole community! Look at me Dad. I stayed home and I've never even had a BBQ with my friends! You are not being fair, Dad!

*(Son 2 storms out and slams door behind him.)*

## Act 3 - The Father and Mother

**Narrator:** Act 3, the experience of the mother and father.

### **Theme music**

*(Son 1, father and mother walk out from the front of church. Son 1 takes money and skate boards off. Father and mother watch helplessly as son leaves. Sit at table and pour tea. Continue watching.)*

**Music:** *I don't know how to love him* (adapted from Jesus Christ Superstar)

**Narrator:** The father and mother loved their son, and were devastated when he left. There were reports that the son was living a wild and unruly life seeking only his pleasure in the big city.

**Mother:** We tried sending letters to his friends, we checked the homeless shelters, walked the streets at night, and talked to the police. People say they have seen him but he has never called and never writes. We say, "Come home, we love you," but there is never a reply. Why doesn't he call?

**Narrator:** The neighbours were appalled that someone from such a good family would do something like that. Many wondered if there were family secrets that would have motivated the son to waste the family wealth on drugs and alcohol and hookers.

**Father:** The neighbours are asking, "What kind of a father are you?" Some in the family say forget him. He has rejected you. Your son is gone. Get on with life.

**Mother:** "But how can we forget him?"

**Narrator:** The father and the mother waited and the hole in their hearts did not fill. One day the son returned, broken, and aged.

**Son 1:** Dad I'm sorry. Can I come home?

**Father:** Of course. I have waited for so long. Everyone said you were dead but now you are here again. You are my son. You have decided to come back and we want to celebrate and welcome you. I have waited so long.

**Music:** *I don't know how to love him*

**Son 2:** (from back of church) Dad it's not fair!

**Father:** How can I not take him back? He is my son. He has wasted my wealth, he has destroyed himself and his reputation, he has hurt my standing in the community, and he has brought bitterness into our home. But he has seen what he has done and has decided to come back. How can I not take him back?

**Son 2** (*angrily and moves forward*) Dad it's not fair!

**Father:** Both of you are flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone. Some things are more important than performance. Your brother went away and was like dead, but has come again. He has suffered and changed and learned much. He is in need of mercy. We can take him back.

**Son 2** (*more angrily, standing at front*) Dad, it's not fair!

**Father:** Why are you so angry son? Everything on this farm is yours too. You just haven't taken advantage of your good fortune to enjoy it. You only see work and responsibility. You are in need of mercy too so you can learn how to live.

(*Son 2 walks out slamming door.*)

**Music:** *Amazing grace (instrumental)*

## Act 4 - The Religious Authorities

**Music:** *theme music*

**Narrator:** Jesus went about Palestine teaching all who would hear him. Jesus was not a conventional religious teacher and the authorities were concerned about who Jesus

was attracting to the faith. Many of Jesus' parables were directed against the religious elite who felt they had inherited their faith.

**Mrs. Peters:** Good evening, Mrs. Jones.

**Mrs. Jones:** Good evening, Mrs. Peters. How are you?

**Mrs. Peters:** I have really been enjoying our worship services recently. When all those cute Sunday School children in their nice clothes sing, it just makes me feel wonderful. God must be smiling too when he hears that. Your grandson has just started singing too, hasn't he?

**Mr. Jones:** Oh yes. He is in Sunday School now at First Prairie Church, just like his father was before him, and I was before that. Our family has been part of this congregation for so long. We really feel connected to God in this place. We have seen a lot of things happen over the years and feel really blessed that we have been preserved here from the chaos in the world around us.

**Mrs. Peters:** Have you heard about Jimmy Friesen?

**Mrs. Jones:** Yeah. He came home, didn't he?

**Mrs. Peters:** I don't know what ever got into him. Five years ago he took his Dad's money and took off. Wasted it all and now he shows up as if nothing ever happened.

**Voice 1 (from audience):** We heard he did drugs.

**Voice 2 (from audience):** My cousin saw him drunk in a bar.

**Voice 1:** And he had women hanging all over him.

**Voice 2:** He's got a police record.

**Voice 1:** He lied.

**Voice 2:** He cheated.

**Voice 1:** He did doughnuts on the church yard.

**Mrs. Peters:** And now he comes home as if nothing happened.

**Mrs. Jones:** And his Dad is going to take him back. His Dad was even happy to have him back, even after what his son did to him.

**Voice 1:** The Friesen family always went to church and they said they lived good lives. But this? I always wondered about them.

**Voice 2:** I heard Jimmy wants to come to church on Sunday.

**Mrs. Peters:** If Jimmy Friesen comes back, what kind of an example will that set for our kids? It's not fair. Jimmy was a graduate of our Sunday School. Do we want our kids to look up to him?

**Mrs. Jones:** God has rules for how we are to live. Jimmy messed up. He broke all the rules. He should go find himself another church. It would be easier for him. Heaven is for those who don't mess up. Heaven is for those who know what is going on.

**Mrs. Peters:** His parents are having a welcome home party for Jimmy tonight and the whole community is invited. Are you going?

**Mrs. Jones:** No way. We can't approve of that kind of behaviour. What would people say? What would God say?

## Conclusion

*Theme music: Field behind the plow*

**Narrator:** The son came back bearing the consequences of his rebellion—the scars and the changed relationships. It would never be the same again. But the father took him back. God isn't fair. God's love is different than our love. Despite what we do, despite what others do, God welcomes us back. We all need grace. . . . God is fair!

*Party music: I'm a child of God*

*(A BBQ is brought onto the stage. "Welcome Home" sign is hung on the front. Decorations for party, balloons, streamers are put up, table with food and drinks. Father and lost son walk up the aisle arm in arm. Everyone in the cast plus others in the audience gather on the stage to take part in the festivities. They gather around the son welcoming him home. The last to join are the older son and Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Peters.)*

**Narrator:** Thank you coming to our party tonight.

*Dessert is served*



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