

# Week 12: Lead Others to Jesus Pt 1

Luke 15:11-32

To be studied in preparation for December 2, 2018.

**Leader's Note:** Please refer to the resource, "Storying," available [on our website](#), for a detailed guide on how to facilitate storying in your group.

**this is life:**

A people apprenticed to  
the Life of Jesus

## Why We Have Gathered

**Our common goal as apprentices of Jesus is to learn to be *loved by Jesus*, to be *led by Jesus*, to *become like Jesus*, to *lead others to Jesus*.**

### Establishing "Safe Harbour"

*For us to open up to God and one another, the environment needs to be safe, and we each need to be safe for each other. Let's remember the following guidelines:*

- Practice **good listening skills**: open body postures and eye contact, no "cross talk" (side conversations when someone is sharing), non-judgmental reflection, attention to the one sharing (rather than forming your own thoughts), allowing others to finish their thought, and not rushing to fill a pause or moment of silence.
- Honour "**sharing boundaries**" and **confidentiality**: Don't share what you don't have permission to share, here or outside our meetings, and don't gossip about others. Tell your own story.
- **Don't try to fix, problem-solve or rescue**. Our aim is "**gospel fluency**": pointing toward Jesus' life-changing power and the truths of who we are, who God is, and what God has done in Christ.
- Practice **healthy conflict resolution**: offer **grace, patience** and the **benefit of the doubt**; accept your responsibility for **peace**; seek swift **reconciliation** and **make amends** for hurts caused.
- Let's seek to be **co-learners** and make this a safe space to ask **any and all questions**.

**Week 11 Follow-up:** In last week's study, and in Pastor Matthew's (WG) and Spencer's (YK) sermons, we've been learning more about Apprentice Groups, a new initiative for NLCC. Discuss briefly how many would be interested in taking this step in intentional apprenticeship to Jesus, and map out a few steps you could take toward this together.

### Entering Into the Story: Luke 15:11-32

**Setting the Scene:** This is one of Jesus' most familiar and iconic stories. It is the third of three stories that Jesus told together; Luke 15:1-2 give us the occasion: "Now the tax collectors and 'sinners' [considered the rebels and failures in Israel] were all gathering around to hear [Jesus]." That sounds like a good thing, doesn't it? "But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law [who see themselves as the most pious and obedient in Israel] muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.'" This was not a complement! Jesus responds to their muttered condemnation with three stories that expose what he judges to be a loss of vision, a hardening of their hearts toward the ones God most desires to reconcile to himself. As you listen to this story, consider this question: **Who or what do you relate to most in this teaching, and why?**

**Tell the Story:** The leader will tell Luke 15:11-32 from memory..

**Rebuild the Story:** Let's open up our Bibles to Luke 15:11-32.

- *Walk through, chronologically, verse by verse, asking "Who, What, Where, When, How, and sometimes Why" questions. Where did the leader add or omit details?*

**Read the Story:** Read the story in one translation. If you have time, you might choose to read a second translation as well.

**Debrief the Story:** Let's respond to the following questions:

- Who or what do you relate to in this story, and why?
- What questions arise for you out of Jesus' parable?
- What vision or goal are the positive images in this story calling us toward?
- What "loss of vision" does this story critique? How could this apply to the church today?
- How is this story a picture of the fourth movement of apprenticeship, "fishing for people"?
- What are the practical implications of what Jesus' story teaches for our TODAY?
- What specific action do you sense God asking you/us to do as a result of our conversation with Him through his Word?

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## **Praying for One Another**

Using the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) as a guide, and based on what has come to the surface in your sharing together, lift one another to God in prayer.

### **WORSHIP**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

Express your thanks and praise to your heavenly  
Father for his work in your lives.

### **PETITION**

Your Kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.

Invite God to be King in the various areas of your  
life, as well as for practical needs, people far from  
God, the church's mission and its leadership.

### **CONFESSION**

And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have  
forgiven our debtors.

Repent of any sin, express forgiveness regarding  
any broken relationship, and ask for God's help in  
bringing reconciliation wherever it is needed.

### **ENGAGEMENT**

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.

Ask God to lead, protect and heal you wherever it  
is needed. Give time to listen and respond to the  
Spirit's voice.

### **WORSHIP**

For yours is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

Close by praising God for who he is, and for  
anticipated opportunities and answers to prayer.

## Leader Notes

Often this story is labelled “The Parable of the Prodigal Son,” and the emphasis is on God’s tender Father-heart toward the son who strays into a far country. While this is a valid insight to draw from the story, the story does not end with the younger son’s return. His story is a plot device that leads us toward the real question Jesus is posing. The story ends with the spotlight on the older son, still lost in the “far country” of his own Father’s fields, unable to share his Father’s joy at the rebel’s return. The question that hangs in the air is this: Who is the rebel now?

In his short book on this parable, *Prodigal God*, Pastor Tim Keller suggests that the cultural responsibility of the elder son in this scenario goes far beyond joining the party. The most genuine act of devotion to his father would be to empathize deeply with his father’s pain, and to take responsibility, as the heir and the big brother, to go and seek his brother on his father’s behalf. This implicit word of rebuke toward Jesus’ uncaring “pious” opponents also points to the true Son and elder Brother, who left the comfort of his Father’s embrace in heaven to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). As children of our heavenly Father, we apprentice to Jesus, our Big Brother, who teaches us how to take on the Father’s burden of reaching those far from God.

This parable is chosen to help us understand the fourth movement of apprenticeship: the call to lead others to Jesus (“fishers of people”). As you have opportunity, encourage the group to reflect on...

- Jesus’ method of reaching the lost and the least – not just “mass evangelism” or “sharing your faith,” but personal, life-on-life disciple-making.
- Jesus didn’t consider himself finished his work after a person “prayed a prayer” – he was willing to invest time and energy into their development, their “orientation” to living and working with the Father.
- Jesus’ investment in the “early adopters” (his first apprentices) was always done with an eye to equipping them to join him in his work of “fishing for people.” His vision for “maturity” wasn’t just the memorization of his teachings or theological complexity, it was the embrace of the work that he had embraced.