Each Talk should include:
- Scripture Passages in TNIV & The Message
- Thoughts on this Passage (commentary or exegesis)
- How does this relate to where kids are at?
- Campaigner Questions

Intro Talks
The Great Banquet Parable = Luke 14:16-23

Person of Christ Talks
Jesus Heals the Centurion’s Servant = Matthew 8:5-13 or Luke 7:1-10
The Parable of the the Lost Sheep & Lost Coin = Luke 15:1-10

Sin/Need Talks
Parable of the Two Sons - Luke 15:11-20a

Cross Talks
Parable of the Two Sons = Luke 15:20b-32

Resurrection Talks
Jesus Reinstates Peter = John 21:15-19

Appropriation Talks
Dead to Sin/Alive in Christ = Romans 6:5-14

Walk with Christ Talks
How to stand in your Faith = James 1:2-8
Bring the Children = Matthew 19:13-15 & Matthew 18:1-4
Storing Up Treasures in Heaven = Matthew 6:19-24
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Luke 14:16-24 - NIV

16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

22 “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

Luke 14:16-24 - CEV

16 Jesus told him:

A man once gave a great banquet and invited a lot of guests. 17 When the banquet was ready, he sent a servant to tell the guests, “Everything is ready! Please come.”

18 One guest after another started making excuses. The first one said, “I bought some land, and I’ve got to look it over. Please excuse me.”

19 Another guest said, “I bought five teams of oxen, and I need to try them out. Please excuse me.”

20 Still another guest said, “I have just gotten married, and I can’t be there.”

21 The servant told his master what happened, and the master became so angry that he said, “Go as fast as you can to every street and alley in town! Bring in everyone who is poor or crippled or blind or lame.”

22 When the servant returned, he said, “Master, I’ve done what you told me, and there is still plenty of room for more people.”
His master then told him, “Go out along the back roads and fence rows and make people come in, so that my house will be full. 24 Not one of the guests I first invited will get even a bite of my food!”

Luke 14:16-24 - The Message

16-17 Jesus followed up. "Yes. For there was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servant to the invited guests, saying, 'Come on in; the food's on the table.'

18”Then they all began to beg off, one after another making excuses. The first said, 'I bought a piece of property and need to look it over. Send my regrets.'

19”Another said, 'I just bought five teams of oxen, and I really need to check them out. Send my regrets.'

20”And yet another said, 'I just got married and need to get home to my wife.'

21”The servant went back and told the master what had happened. He was outraged and told the servant, ‘Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.’

22”The servant reported back, 'Master, I did what you commanded— and there's still room.'

23-24”The master said, 'Then go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full! Let me tell you, not one of those originally invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.'

Where kids are at?

Being included and making excuses are key factors in kids’ lives. Everyone wants to go to the exclusive party, that is invitation only. No one wants to not be invited. No one wants to not be included. Kids are especially sensitive in these areas.

A world in which heaven is inviting (with a welcome and party like atmosphere) is something kids could have a difficult time putting their mind around. Our job is to help kids see what heaven is truly like and why it is so inviting. We want to help them see that for themselves.

The idea that the kingdom of heaven is one in which everyone is invited might not seem fair to kids. God is a just God, not a fair God. He chooses everyone and we have the choice to choose Him.

Campaigner questions:
• Where is the coolest or most exclusive place you have been? Where were you and why were you there?
• Have you ever heard of a party that you were not asked to attend, but really wanted to attend? Why did you want to attend? Who was there?
• Why do you think people turned down the invitation to this party? Would you have turned it down as well?
• Why do you think the owner of the house invited the least desirable people to attend the party? Why does it matter?
• The owner of the house sent his servants out a second time to bring more people to the party. Why did he do that?
• How does the kingdom of God (heaven) relate to this story as a metaphor or parable? How does this story relate to our lives?

About this passage.

Jesus uses a story here to speak about what heaven is and what it will look like. The double invitation would have been customary for the culture in Jesus’ day. The excuses given by the people invited to the banquet, would have sounded lame to the audience Jesus was speaking to then. And they sound the same now with us.

Jesus is inviting all people to His kingdom. It is our choice to enter in or stay outside. Jesus also tells us in the story that not everyone will enter into His kingdom.

Jesus said in this story that His kingdom would be for all people; and that He invites the bottom people of society. This would have made the religious leaders hearing the story think less of Jesus. To the religious leaders, God’s kingdom was for the devout and the elite.
Jesus Heals the Centurion’s Servant = Luke 7:1-10

Luke 7:1-10 - NIV
The Faith of the Centurion

1 When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.
2 There a centurion’s servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” 6 So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Luke 7:1-10 - CEV
Jesus Heals an Army Officer’s Servant

1 After Jesus had finished teaching the people, he went to Capernaum. 2 In that town an army officer’s servant was sick and about to die. The officer liked this servant very much. 3 And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish leaders to ask him to come and heal the servant.

4 The leaders went to Jesus and begged him to do something. They said, “This man deserves your help! 5 He loves our nation and even built us a meeting place.” 6 So Jesus went with them.

When Jesus wasn’t far from the house, the officer sent some friends to tell him, “Lord, don’t go to any trouble for me! I am not good enough for you to come into my house. 7 And I am certainly not worthy to come to you. Just say the word, and my servant will get well. 8 I have officers who give orders to me, and I have soldiers who take orders from me. I can say to one of them, ‘Go!’ and he goes. I can say to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes. I can say to my servant, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

9 When Jesus heard this, he was so surprised that he turned and said to the crowd following him, “In all of Israel I’ve never found anyone with this much faith!”
10 The officer’s friends returned and found the servant well.

Luke 7:1-10 - The Message
A Place of Holy Mystery
1-5 When he finished speaking to the people, he entered Capernaum. A Roman captain there had a servant who was on his deathbed. He prized him highly and didn't want to lose him. When he heard Jesus was back, he sent leaders from the Jewish community asking him to come and heal his servant. They came to Jesus and urged him to do it, saying, "He deserves this. He loves our people. He even built our meeting place."

6-8 Jesus went with them. When he was still quite far from the house, the captain sent friends to tell him, "Master, you don't have to go to all this trouble. I'm not that good a person, you know. I'd be embarrassed for you to come to my house, even embarrassed to come to you in person. Just give the order and my servant will get well. I'm a man under orders; I also give orders. I tell one soldier, 'Go,' and he goes; another, 'Come,' and he comes; my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."

9-10 Taken aback, Jesus addressed the accompanying crowd: "I've yet to come across this kind of simple trust anywhere in Israel, the very people who are supposed to know about God and how he works." When the messengers got back home, they found the servant up and well.

* This passage is also found in - Matthew 18:1-4

**How does this relate to kids?**

Kids often feel God & Jesus are far off beings. Jesus shows great power in this story by healing the servant who was not even in Jesus’ presence. Even though the servant was not in the presence of Jesus, He had the power to heal him.

Kids want to care about something that is present in their lives. Things they can touch, feel, taste and see. Jesus cares for us even if we think He is a long way off. If Jesus can heal people without the people being in His presence, what does that say about how much He cares for you?

**Campaigner Questions**

- What do we know about who the Centurion was? How does who he is, associate with who Jesus was?
- Why do you think the Centurion sent people to talk to Jesus and he didn’t go himself to talk to Jesus? If you were in the Centurion, would you send people to talk to Jesus or would you go talk to Jesus yourself?
- What does this story say about the power of Jesus? What power does Jesus have?
- Why do you think Jesus was moved to heal the servant of the Centurion? If you were Jesus would you have healed the servant?
- Does your faith move Jesus like the Centurion’s faith? Why or why not?
- Who is someone in your life that you would go to Jesus to ask to be healed? Why?

**About this passage**

The centurion would have been a high ranking official in the Roman army. He would have commanded many soldiers and would have been wealthy. He had enough money to donate the building of the temple in Capernaum.
The Centurion was a man of great power. But, he recognized that his power lacked in comparison to Jesus. It would not have been uncommon for the centurion (a gentile) to send people on his behalf to Jesus (a Jewish rabbi).

Two different groups go to Jesus on the behalf of the Centurion:

1. The first group that goes to Jesus on the behalf of the Centurion were Jewish elders. For Jewish elders to go to Jesus on the behalf of the Centurion would have been out of fear or respect.

2. The second group that goes to Jesus on the behalf of the Centurion were Gentile friends.

Jesus was moved by a gentile (the centurion, a non Jew) who had such a great faith in Jesus. Jesus healed the servant because of the faith of the Centurion. Jesus was moved by his faith.
The Parable of the Lost Sheep & Lost Coin = Luke 15:1-10

Luke 15:1-10 - NIV
The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Luke 15:1-10 - CEV
One Sheep

15 Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. 2 So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, “This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this story:

4 If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won’t you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? 5 And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder 6 and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbors and say, “Let’s celebrate! I’ve found my lost sheep.”

7 Jesus said, “In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don’t need to.”

One Coin

8 Jesus told the people another story:

What will a woman do if she has ten silver coins and loses one of them? Won’t she light a lamp, sweep the floor, and look carefully until she finds it? 9 Then she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, “Let’s celebrate! I’ve found the coin I lost.”
10 Jesus said, “In the same way God’s angels are happy when even one person turns to him.”

**Luke 15:1-10 - The Message**

**The Story of the Lost Sheep**

1-3 By this time a lot of men and women of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, "He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends." Their grumbling triggered this story.

4-7 "Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it? When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbors, saying, 'Celebrate with me! I've found my lost sheep!' Count on it—there's more joy in heaven over one sinner's rescued life than over ninety-nine good people in no need of rescue.

**The Story of the Lost Coin**

8-10 "Or imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and scour the house, looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it you can be sure she'll call her friends and neighbors: 'Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!' Count on it—that's the kind of party God's angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God."

**How does this scripture passage relate to where kids are at?**

Kids can see and know that the world around them is lost. They don’t have to look far to see that their friendships and families are also broken. It becomes more difficult for kids to the see the redemption of God’ story in the messed up world of their lives.

Culturally, we give up on things and people that are lost very quickly. We don’t have the diligence and perseverance that the people of Jesus’ day had. This might a a hurdle you will need to clear in this Club talk of Campaigner lesson.

**Campaigner Questions:**

- What is the most important thing you have ever lost? Did you every find it? How long did you search for it?
- What is something, if lost, you would search for until you found it? Why would you search for it until you found it?
- Why would Jesus tell us this story (parable) to explain how much God loves us?
- How does the searching for the lost sheep and the lost coin relate to each other?
About this passage.

Jesus is eating with people with sinners is something He does many times throughout the scriptures. This instance is no different. The Pharisees are under the impression that God’s love for people is exclusive to them. Jesus tells the differently in this story.

A job of a shepherd was to protect, watch over and guide their flock of sheep. They are the ones ultimately responsible for the sheep that they watch over. Good shepherds have an eye for what is best for his sheep.

Money is something that drives us in our lives, the need for more or the lack off it. One of the coins in the story would have been equal to one days wage. The loss of one coin would have had a significant impact on the family. In Jesus’ time, what you made one day; bought food and other resources for the next day. Homes in Jesus’ day would have had no windows and earthy floors, making it difficult for anyone to find a coin lost in a house.

Being lost is something in our lives that we all can relate to. The idea that God will continue to search (pursue) us until we find Him, wis something that was revolutionary in Jesus’ day and also in our day.
The Parable of the Lost Son

11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven in heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.

Luke 15:11-20a - CEV

Two Sons

11 Jesus also told them another story:

12 The younger son said to his father, “Give me my share of the property.” So the father divided his property between his two sons.

13 Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. 14 He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

15 He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. 16 He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

17 Finally, he came to his senses and said, “My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! 18 I will go to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.’”

20 The younger son got up and started back to his father.
Luke 15:11-20a - The Message

The Story of the Lost Son

11-12 Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'
12-16 So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.
17-20 "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.

Where are kids at?

Sadly, many kids have broken relationships with their fathers. Whether their fathers have abandon them or are not engaged in their lives, many kids feel estranged from their fathers. In many cases kids feel that they need to turn their backs on the people that love them the most.

Kids (and we do as well) practice through “speeches” to those around us. Kids can relate to the son practicing through what they say to other. We have all been in these types of situations.

Some kids can relate to the partying and crazy living well. For other kids it is a stretch to get them their. A common factor between both sets, is that we all have turned our backs on people that we love to do something we want. We all that damaged someone else for our own gain.

Often, takes something significant in our lives to create repentance. Most kids have a moment like the son in this story. Our job in giving this Club talk is to figure out how to tap into that story in their lives.

Thoughts on this passage?

The younger son asks for his inheritance early from his father. Culturally, this would be the same as him viewing that his father was “dead” in his eyes. The amount of cash, land and assets would have been one third of the fathers possessions. The younger son turned everything that the father had given him into cash.

We don't know if the son's original intent was to party wildly and spend everything he had from his father. We also don't know how long it took the son the spend all of his money. He didn't act alone in this, he had “friends” help him spend all he had.
The son was a Jewish man. The job of slopping (feeding the pigs) would have been the lowest of lows when it came to a job. Jews viewed pigs as unclean animals and did not eat, touch or associate with pigs in any way, shape or form.

The son goes back to his father’s house not willing to be called a son, but wanting to be a servant. A servant is very different from a son. A son would have all the power and resources of the father. A servant would have nothing and do whatever the father told him to do, no questions asked.

Campaigner Questions:

- Why did the son ask for his share of his father’s estate? Was he justified to do so, why or why not?
- How did the son’s sin separate him from his father’s love? Or did it? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the father gave his portion to the younger son? Would you have?
- If you were caught in the situation the son was in, would you go back to the father to ask forgiveness? Why or why not?
- Has there ever been a time when you have created a story in your mind and who did that story play out? Where were you and what were you doing?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt more like a servant than a son? What are the circumstances around this situation?

Media
Parable of the Two Sons (Luke 15:20b-32) - Cross Talk

Luke 15:20b-32 - NIV

The Parable of the Lost Son

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 ‘The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 ‘But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

25 Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

28 ‘The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

31 ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.””

Luke 15:20b-32 - CEV

Two Sons

But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.

21 The son said, “Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.”

22 But his father said to the servants, “Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and
celebrate. This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.” And they began to celebrate.

25 The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants over and asked, “What’s going on here?”

27 The servant answered, “Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.” The older brother got so angry that he would not even go into the house.

His father came out and begged him to go in. But he said to his father, “For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on prostitutes. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.”

31 His father replied, “My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.”


The Story of the Lost Son

20-21 "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'

22-24 "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

25-27 "All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast— barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.'

28-30 "The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!"

31-32 "His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!'"
Where are kids at?

Kids want a loving relationship with their fathers, the same way the father loves his son in this story. Often, kids see the character of God the father with the same characteristics as their earthly fathers. A challenge in this talk is to help kids see that God the father and their earthly fathers are not related to each other.

The great thing about this story is that some kids will relate more to the older son, while other kids will relate to the younger son. Both son’s are defiant of a loving father. This is the common theme of this story.

Thoughts on this passage?

The father’s love for his son is the exact way that God loves us. God is waiting on the road for us to come home to Him. He is waiting for us to follow Him and wanting to put a robe on our backs and a ring on our fingers.

The older brother must have been so anger after hearing of his brother’s return and the way in which the father greeted the younger son. The older brothers response would have been the same as many of us. Deep in our souls we are all selfish (like the older brother) and only want the best for us.

Some people look from the outside (the older brother) and judge the redemption of others to a loving God. The older brother accuses the father of failing to treat him in the same free and joyous manner, only to be reminded that all the resources the home were his. One can be lost even at home.

The older brother never address his brother as “brother” in the end of the story. He says “your son”, referring that he wanted nothing to do with his own brother.

Campaigner Questions:

• What do you think the significance of the father running out on the road to his son is? What do you think it means?
• If you were the father would you have welcomed the son with open arms? Would you have welcomed him the way the father does? Why or why not?
• How does the father welcoming the son in this story, symbolize God’s amazing love for you and me? What does this tell us about a loving God?
• The question is did the older brother enter into the celebration? Why or why not? Would you have entered into the celebration if you were the older brother?
Jesus Reinstates Peter = John 21:15-19

**John 21:15-19 NIV - Jesus Reinstates Peter**

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”
   
   “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”
   
   Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”
   
   He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”
   
   Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”
   
   Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”
   
   Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

**John 21:15-19 CEV - Jesus and Peter**

15 When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating, he asked, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than the others do?”
   
   Simon Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know I do!”
   
   “Then feed my lambs,” Jesus said.

16 Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”
   
   Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you!”
   
   “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus told him.

17 Jesus asked a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”
   
   Peter was hurt because Jesus had asked him three times if he loved him. So he told Jesus, “Lord, you know everything. You know I love you.”
   
   Jesus replied, “Feed my sheep. I tell you for certain that when you were a young man, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will hold out your hands. Then others will wrap your belt around you and lead you where you don’t want to go.”

19 Jesus said this to tell how Peter would die and bring honor to God. Then he said to Peter, “Follow me!”

**John 21:15-19 The Message - Do You Love Me?**

15 After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"
   
   "Yes, Master, you know I love you."
   
   Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

16 He then asked a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
   
   "Yes, Master, you know I love you."
   
   Jesus said, "Shepherd my sheep."

17-19 Then he said it a third time: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

   Peter was upset that he asked for the third time, "Do you love me?" so he answered, "Master, you know everything there is to know. You've got to know that I love you."
   
   Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. I'm telling you the very truth now: When you were young you dressed yourself and went wherever you wished, but when you get old you'll have to stretch out your hands while someone else dresses you and takes you where you don't want to go." He said this to hint at the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And then he commanded, "Follow me."
About this Passage

Peter had denied Jesus before Jesus died on the cross. Jesus reinstates Peter and gives Peter the ability to go on and lead the followers of Jesus Christ in the future. In other words, Jesus puts His whole ministry in the hands of Peter directed by the Holy Spirit.

Peter had denied that Jesus even existed a few days before this encounter Jesus has with Peter. Peter had broken his relationship with Jesus by denying that Jesus existed. Without Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead, we would also be in a broken relationship with our Savior. Jesus invites Peter back into a relationship with Him. This shows us that it doesn’t matter how far we stray from God, He is continually calling us back to Himself. Jesus responds to Peter in three different ways. All of these ways are in the same context of taking care of the ones that He loves. Jesus is asking us, “Do you love me?”

Jesus uses the word for love in His first two questions to Peter as, agapao. In His last question to Peter about love, He uses the word for love, phileo. The essence of Agape (agapao) love is self sacrifice. The essence of Philia (phileo) love is a close friendship love or brotherly love. In the first and third statements to Peter, Jesus asks Peter to feed His sheep or lambs. In the second response to Peter, Jesus asks Peter to tend His flock.

Where kids are at?

Kids want to hear Jesus’ voice saying to them, “Do you love me?” The response for kids is what Jesus is asking Peter in this story. Do you love me?

Kids want to love Jesus and for Jesus to love them. They often feel that they have to have “their lives together” in order for Jesus to love them. The amazing thing about Jesus is that He loves us in spite of our sin. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, He wants you to live your life in a way that honors Him. Does your life honor Jesus?

Media

Campaigner Questions:

• If you had denied Jesus, what would you expect Jesus to respond to you? How and why?
• Why do you think Jesus asked Peter if he loved Jesus? Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times in three different ways?
• What did Jesus mean by feed my Lambs/Sheep? What did Jesus mean by take care of my sheep? How are they different?
• How is Jesus asking you to love Him? What is Jesus requiring for His love?
Dead to Sin/Alive in Christ = Romans 6:5-14

Romans 6:5-14 - NIV
Dead to sin, Alive in Christ.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:5-14 - CEV
Dead to sin, Alive in Christ.

5 If we shared in Jesus' death by being baptized, we will be raised to life with him. 6 We know that the persons we used to be were nailed to the cross with Jesus. This was done, so that our sinful bodies would no longer be the slaves of sin. 7 We know that sin doesn’t have power over dead people.

8 As surely as we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him. 9 We know that death no longer has any power over Christ. He died and was raised to life, never again to die. 10 When Christ died, he died for sin once and for all. But now he is alive, and he lives only for God. 11 In the same way, you must think of yourselves as dead to the power of sin. But Christ Jesus has given life to you, and you live for God.

12 Don’t let sin rule your body. After all, your body is bound to die, so don’t obey its desires 13 or let any part of it become a slave of evil. Give yourselves to God, as people who have been raised from death to life. Make every part of your body a slave that pleases God. 14 Don’t let sin keep ruling your lives. You are ruled by God’s kindness and not by the Law.

Romans 6:6-14 – The Message
Dead to sin, Alive in Christ.

6-11 Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did.

12-14 That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised
from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God.

**Thoughts on this passage:**
Before accepting Christ's sacrificial atonement for the remission and forgiveness of our sin, we are slaves to sin. Just as slaves yield and obey the authority of their master, unbelievers are chained to the consequences and authority of sin. Though sin produces temporary desirable outcomes—happiness, satisfaction, pleasure—people are always in submission to its consequences. These consequences include fleeting passions, selfish ambition, physical and spiritual death, and enmity towards God (James 4:4).

When we accept Christ as our Savior, there is a transformation in the renewal of our heart and minds (Romans 12:2) This transformation demands change in our lives.

Because Christ paved the way for us by defeating and conquering sin and death, we too share in this victory. He set us free from the bondage of sin. We are no longer slaves to sin and under its authority, we are slaves to righteousness. We ought to no longer live for sin, but rather we are instructed to live for righteousness. Live for purity. Live for loving God and others and keeping his commandments!

Jesus demands CHANGE in our lives from the past ways of living. From our enslavement to sin to a new way of living which includes the enjoyment and fulfillment in GOD!

Do you think once slaves were liberated after the civil war they continued to obey their masters and live in oppression as if their emancipation never happened?! NO! They radically changed their way of life because they no longer were under the bondage and captivity of slavery. In the same way, believers are no longer under the authority and dominion of sin- we are liberated and live under the grace and love of Jesus.

**How this applies to Kids:**
Kids may not understand the weight and aptitude to repent from sin. They may claim or actually believe that they are followers of Christ, and yet willingly and deliberately sin with no real urgency of conviction or repentance. They may think, “yeah, I believe there is a God and we are on good terms” or, “I said a prayer once asking for forgiveness of all the bad stuff I did, and will do in the future.” But God didn’t design life to be lived this way. There is real responsibility in living out Faith, and God demands change. Students need to understand there is a transformation that takes place in someone’s life when they accept Christ. There is an old self that died with the consequences of sin, and they are now alive in righteousness and a new way of living.

**Campaigners Questions:**

1) Have you ever changed something about your lifestyle? What happened?
2) What comes to your mind when you think about slavery?
3) What is your master right now in life? What do you give your time, talents and treasure to?
4) If Jesus demands change in the believer’s life, can we live for both sin and holiness?
5) What does it mean to be a slave to sin… a slave to righteousness?
How to stand in your Faith = James 1:2-8

James 1:2-8 TNIV

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

James 1:2-8 CEV - Faith and Wisdom

2 My friends, be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble. 3 You know that you learn to endure by having your faith tested. 4 But you must learn to endure everything, so that you will be completely mature and not lacking in anything.

5 If any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you. God is generous and won’t correct you for asking. 6 But when you ask for something, you must have faith and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like an ocean wave tossed around in a storm. 7-8 If you are that kind of person, you can’t make up your mind, and you surely can’t be trusted. So don’t expect the Lord to give you anything at all.

James 1:2-8 The Message

1 I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello! Faith Under Pressure

2-4 Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

5-8 If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get his help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don’t think you’re going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.
Thoughts on this passage

“When life hands you a lemon you make lemonade.”

The truth is, that trials and tribulations make us stronger. It tests our faith while producing perseverance, and our perseverance is what helps complete the work in us. When we persevere, we grow, mature and equip ourselves. It’s difficult at times though and when we lack understanding, we should go to Him. He wants to grant us wisdom, and the cool thing is He doesn’t find our faults to deny us. He simply looks at our faith. Do we believe? If we continue to doubt, we are considered double-minded and unstable. I want to be stable in Him!

If we allow them to, trials and temptations can produce the spiritual growth that cannot be attained by any other means. In the educational system, tests are given to help measure what students have learned, how well they've learned, and how capable they are in the practical application of what they've learned. In a similar way, the tests and trials we endure as believers serves as measures of growth in the knowledge of God and toward spiritual maturity. James' letter was written to Jewish converts who underwent severe persecution because they chose to follow Christ. His encouragement is particularly relevant now to believers everywhere. Christians in foreign countries, particularly countries in which they are the minority population, face grave difficulties. Many believers have been attacked, jailed, harassed, had their homes burned, had their possessions confiscated, or have lost their lives simply because they have chosen to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. As more and more people fall away from the faith, situations for Christians everywhere grow worse. No matter what we face as believers in this life, a great reward awaits us in heaven. All we need to do is remain faithful.

Media Options

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lBkazgfS-pk&feature=fvsr

Campaigner Questions:

• When has there been a time in your life that has brought on trials? What were the circumstances of your life during this time?

• When has there been a time in your life that you have doubted God? What were the circumstances of your life during this time?

• Were the questions above during the same time in your life or different times?

• When has your faith been tested? How has your faith been tested?

• What is perseverance? Do you believe that faith develops perseverance? If so, how?

• Who is someone in your life that you feel is wise in their walk with Jesus? What makes them wise?
Matthew 19:13-15 - NIV
The Little Children and Jesus
13 Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.
14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” 15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew 18:1-4 - NIV
The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven
18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”
2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3 And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:13-15 - CEV
The Little Children and Jesus
13 Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.
14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” 15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew 18:1-4 - CEV
Who Is the Greatest?
18 About this time the disciples came to Jesus and asked him who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 2 Jesus called a child over and had the child stand near him. 3 Then he said:

I promise you this. If you don’t change and become like a child, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. 4 But if you are as humble as this child, you are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The Little Children and Jesus
13-15 One day children were brought to Jesus in the hope that he would lay hands on them and pray over them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus intervened: "Let the children alone, don't prevent them from coming to me. God's kingdom is made up of people like these." After laying hands on them, he left.
Matthew 18:1-5 – The Message

Whoever Becomes Simple Again

1 At about the same time, the disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who gets the highest rank in God's kingdom?"

2-5 For an answer Jesus called over a child, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, "I'm telling you, once and for all, that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you're not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom. What's more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it's the same as receiving me.

Thoughts on this passage

Jesus always recognized and took into special consideration a child’s innocence, frailty, and humility. But why? A child's physical and cognitive development permits them to live life in a very exploratory, care free, and honest way. As we get older (even as teenagers), we worry more about ourselves and our social identities, taking on responsibilities, and become overtly selfish while always wanting more to be satisfied. As children, our imagination roams wild as we are content playing with invisible monsters or playing the super hero in make believe fantasy stories. In the like manner, children are dependent upon adults and others for survival. A child can’t make money to pay for the food in their kitchen or the water bill for their baths. Nor can they drive to the doctor or reach the top cabinet for their food. Yet there is something about a child’s heart that Jesus loves. It is the same thing that we as adults admire and makes our hearts melt. What can we learn from a child’s heart and intentions that make us understand eternity better and Christ's will for our lives? A child’s intentions and innocence are a rare beauty as they live life with no pretenses or deadlines. Christ admires this, and asks his followers to do the same- recognizing their limitations while trusting in his sovereignty.

Where Kids are at

Teenagers are too cool for school sometimes. They are caught within the limitations of social/emotional demands and are always left wanting more and more from the world and wanting it here and now. While teens are still considered children, they’ve moved past the stage of frailty and innocence and are moving into a phase of life where they are trying to construct their own identities. During this time, Christ is often forgotten as it takes more to entertain and satisfy their wants and desires. It no longer takes a simple child’s imagination and trusting will to stay content. But rather, Xbox, MTV and other outlets of fun take priority. God wants us to stand in awe and wonder of him every time, just as a child does when they experience something for the first time. Christ loves humanity's humility and frailty and that is why He also paid the price for our innocence before God.

Questions

What was your favorite childhood toy?
What do you admire most about children?
How and why does Jesus take children into special consideration?
How can our relationship with God be strengthened if we too take on child like faith?
Illustration

A man sat at a metro station ...in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that 1,100 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by, and a middle aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace, and stopped for a few seconds, and then hurried up to meet his schedule.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping, continued to walk.

A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried, but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally, the mother pushed hard, and the child continued to walk, turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money, but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected $32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the most talented musicians in the world. He had just played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, on a violin worth $3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston where the seats averaged $100.

This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste, and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be:

If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing?
Matthew 6:19-24 - NIV
Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:19-24 - CEV
Treasures in Heaven

19 Don't store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. 20 Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them. 21 Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

Light

22 Your eyes are like a window for your body. When they are good, you have all the light you need. 23 But when your eyes are bad, everything is dark. If the light inside you is dark, you surely are in the dark.

Matthew 6:19-24 - The Message
A Life of God-Worship

19-21 "Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

22-23 "Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!

24 "You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.
Thoughts on this Passage (commentary or exegesis):
Jesus challenges his followers to move away from living for material worldly things and focusing on storing up eternal treasures that can’t be taken away or destroyed. In each set of verses (19-21, 22-23, and 24) Jesus points out the issues in the way we often live our lives. Verses 19-21 focus on material possessions and the pursuit of them. Material possessions break down and become useless, but in contrast eternal treasures never get destroyed or taken away. Verses 22-23 focus on what our life is like without Christ by the analogy of us being filled with light or darkness. If we do not have Christ who is the Light of the world, then the light inside of us truly is pitch black. Finally, verse 24 challenges the follower of Christ by pointing out that we can’t worship two gods at once. We can’t be part of the world and living for material possessions and still worship Christ with all our hearts. It is impossible to do both.

How does this relate to where kids are at?
Kids that we hang out with today live to store up worldly treasures here on earth where moth and rust can destroy. Many Young Life kids come from homes that are filled with “stuff” and grow up with parents around them working to obtain more of this “stuff”. This stuff is not eternal treasure, which is an issue, but we must understand that this surrounds kids each and every day. Kids are also challenged and encouraged to seek out worldly treasures in order to fit in or look cool. The big hurdle our kids must get over is that they can’t truly live out a life for Christ, and still attempt to store up earthly treasures. A life focused on Christ is a life focused on storing up eternal treasures.

Campaigner Questions:
1. What is something you can think of that you purchased at some point in your life and loved it, but now is rusty and worn out and useless?
2. What do you think people in our society treasure and work really hard to obtain? Do you think these treasures bring people happiness?
3. Do you feel it is possible to live for Christ and work to get the latest and greatest stuff all the time? Explain.
4. What is Jesus challenging us to do in this passage? Do you agree with what Jesus is telling us? Explain.