

Week 1 - Cleaning Out the Inside

Easter preparation first begins with reflection. We in our humanity tend toward complacency. We allow habits to creep in that detract from our walk in Christ or we become blinded to the things in our life that are choking the growth of Christlikeness from our walk. Christ's sacrifice for us demands our own sacrifice of repentance. What needs to be cleaned out to make more room for Jesus?

Family Time with God

Activity

Begin your family time with God with a lost and found activity – here are some options:

- ◆ Younger Children Hide 10 coins around an area of your house. Celebrate when all 10 are found.
- ◆ Younger & Older Guide your older children to hide the coins for their younger sibling(s) to find.
- ◆ Older "Lose" something important maybe the computer mouse or the car keys. Make a big deal of this as you engage your children in your hunt for the missing item.

Ask your child about their experience. How did they feel when the item was "lost" and "found"? We are going to look in the Bible and read a parable – a story Jesus told about something lost.*

Open the Bible

Read or tell the story of Luke 15, verses 1-3a and 8-10.

Think about It and Respond

How important was that coin to the women?

Jesus wanted us to know how important it is when someone repents — decides to follow Jesus. He used the women searching for the coin to help us think about this. From His story, how important are people to God?

If each of us is this important to God, how should you respond to Him? (John 14:15-17)

Bring out a trash bag, and guide a conversation about attitude, actions and even habits that get between us and God.

- What do we need to clean out of our lives?
- Do we always do the things that honor God? Honor means to show respect and love.

Let's think about some things that don't show our love for God. We are going to write these on pieces of paper and throw them where they belong, in the garbage!

End with a time of prayer thanking God for showing you what needs to be cleaned out of your lives and thanking the Holy Spirit for helping us show our love for God.

* Sentences in italics can be read as written, put in your own words or adapted for your family.



More Spiritual Conversation Starters

Here are some additional conversation starters that you can use during your Family Time with God, Family Experience, or just in your day to day conversations.

- Remember Jesus used the word repent in the parable, Jet's look at Matthew 4:17. What did Jesus teach while here on earth?
- What does repentance mean? (use a Bible dictionary to find the answer). If you or your church doesn't have one handy (your children's ministry department might have a children's Bible dictionary), check out these options online: https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/
- ◆ Can we keep Jesus' commandments just by trying hard? Who helps us do the right thing? (John 14:15-17)
- ◆ Is repentance a one-time thing we do just when we decide to be a Christian?
- ◆ Now that we've cleaned out some stuff in our life, what does it leave room for?

KEY VERSE

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

Family Experience

Supplies needed: One trash bag for each family member

Experience: During the Bible story you explored cleaning out your inside so that you could make more room for God. Let's take this concept of cleaning out a bit further by filling up your trash bag with stuff that is not serving you well and either throw it away or if you have things that might help others, bring your bag to a local donation center.



Debrief: Now that we have cleaned out this space, what does it make room for? Describe your experience and write a short prayer to express your gratitude to God for what you have learned.



