

Unlocking the Prodigal



**A selection of creative and reflective
Unlock activities based on Luke 15.**

**Originally created for Unlock's 40th Birthday Party in 2012,
updated after further use 2018**



Unlocking The Prodigal

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*These are to print off and use to help run the activities.



The origins of this resource and ways it might be used.

Unlock celebrated its 40th Birthday in 2012 with a Bible activity day/ birthday party in Bristol.



The activities in this resource were developed for that day and offered as part of it along with food and worship. Subsequently, as a result of support from the Lindisfarne RTP, they were made available on a cold January afternoon at St Alban's Windy Nook, Gateshead and we are grateful for their hospitality and feedback in developing this pack. It has since been used in Heanor, Derbyshire in 2018 and further refined as a result.



The 'zones' could be used as a series of sessions, or as a single day or half day event. For a single event the activities were arranged in Zones with the prayer/robe activity in the centre of the room and all the others round the edge.

For the Bible content you might want to use this Bible Society resource which is an audio version of the whole of the New Testament available as a download.

www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/what-we-do/our-work/youve-got-the-time/ (from time index 19.35)

Or you may wish to use this sand art version

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGQiJGxsMbs



Practical Tips.

Having used these activities on three occasions it makes sense for us to share what we learned from our experience.

If you are running Unlock The Prodigal as a single event:-

- How much time you allow will depend on how many people there are but we found that around 40 people could have a go at all of the activities and have some time to chat in around 2 hours.
- Light refreshments or a meal can be offered if you want to and the venue allows but this is not essential.
- The event can be run by 4 to 6 people.
- You will need power sockets for at least 4 of the activities. It is worth ensuring that you have some extension cables to hand but please make sure you route them safely and avoid creating trip hazards.
- If you are not familiar with the venue it is always worth checking it out beforehand, or arranging for someone else to do so and let you know how it is laid out and what facilities are available.
- Check what items of furniture it is okay to move and which should be left alone, and take note of where everything is before you start laying out the space so that you will be able to put things back when you are finished.
- You need to allow a couple of hours for setting up, clearing away will usually be quicker.
- It is helpful to tell people that they are free to simply wander at will from activity to activity and have a go at whatever they like. They may not be used to such unstructured events.
- There need to be toilets and people need to know where they are!
- It is helpful to display a poster outside the venue so that people arriving know they have come to the right place.
- Ensure you have plenty tables and chairs. The Father, Younger Brother and Older Brother Zones will each require at least one large table. If you are expecting more people (say over 20) it will work best if you can have a table for each activity (i.e. 2 per zone).
- The Pigs Zone can just about manage with only a chair or two, but does need a large piece of wall where the pig can be stuck up to have its tail pinned on. You need to check whether or not you can fasten things to the walls!
- The Best Robe, needs some floor space, ideally somewhere central, with a circle of chairs around it.
- For the Elbow song in the Father Zone it will work best to use several sets of headphones. Ideally have the track on several phones or MP3 players with a set of headphones for each.
- The Younger brother zone, the 'Best Robe' and the audio version of Luke 15:11– 32 all need to be well enough spaced out so that you do not get too much sound interference between each zone, and volume levels need to be tested and adjusted carefully. If there is a tame sound engineer on hand they could be extremely helpful!
- We made life size figures of the Father, the two Brothers and a pig. They were painted on card and cut out. You don't have to be a fine artist to do this. Ours were done by Children drawing round adults lying on the card on the floor, and then painting in the outlines with a little adult supervision. These were used to identify the different Zones, each with a sign saying 'Father Zone' etc.
- We also had the whole of the Bible text printed out on large posters and displayed. We use the Good News Bible because of its accessibility for readers with limited vocabularies. To save you typing it out you will find the relevant text at www.biblija.net/
- The planning table we used is included on page 26-27; and the floorplan on page 28. You might find them helpful.

We have not tried running this as a series of shorter sessions but obviously some of the same issues will apply, while others will not.



The Father

Setting the scene:-

A life-size picture of the 'Father' from the story and a poster displaying the relevant sections of the Bible account.

A table set for a party; with the best glassware and china, crackers, streamers, party poppers etc.

Listen to 'Open Arms' by Elbow

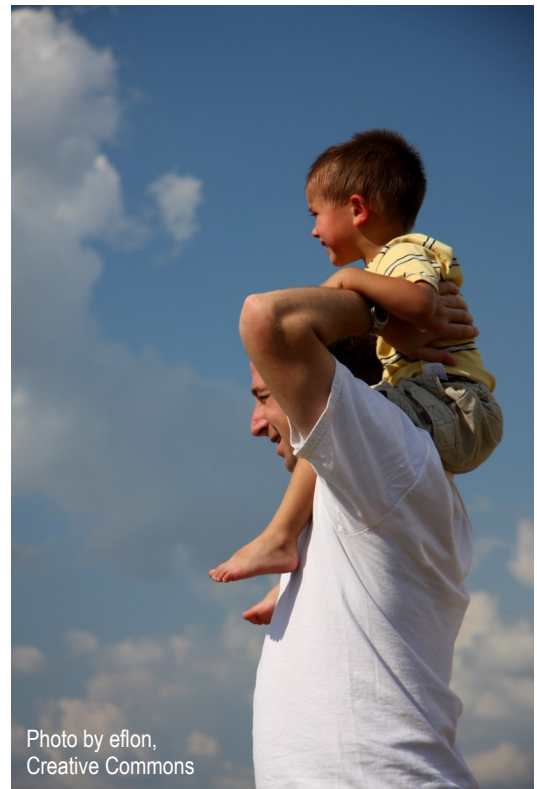
[www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJV71cW400Q)

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Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences brought to mind by the scene setting and the song.

- Have you ever felt the need of an open loving welcome?
- Have you ever run 'home' to someone's 'open arms'?
- Has anyone ever thrown a real celebration for you?



Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Share the relevant sections of the prodigal Son story using either the text at the end of this resource or -

www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/what-we-do/our-work/youve-got-the-time/ (from time index 19.35)



Father Zone

Listen to (or read) 'Open Arms' by Elbow

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences brought to mind by the scene setting and the song.

- Have you ever felt the need of an open loving welcome?
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Father Zone

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

What would love do?

Review some of the stories and discuss what would be a loving response to each character.

Make or draw.

Make a model or picture of how you understand God's love using modelling clay or pastels.

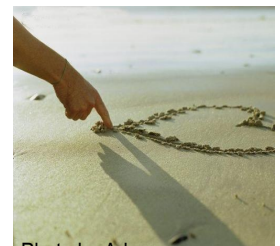


Photo by Adrea

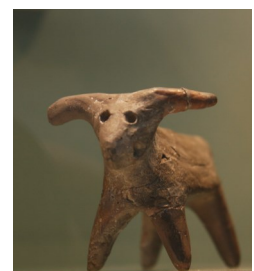


Photo by Cristian Chirita

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Options for Reflective Activities

Make or draw.

Make a model or picture of how you understand God's love using clay or pastels.



Photo by Cristian Chirita_Creative Commons

What would love do?

Review some of the stories on pages 9-10 and discuss what would be a loving response to each character.



Photo by Adrea Silva, Creative Commons



Resources—Stories for ‘What would love do?’ activity on page 7

Bill (about 14) is a dirty, scruffy looking lad. You have caught him stealing fruit from your market stall. He says he’s taking it for his little sister because she is hungry.

Sheila (73) appears ill and frail and lives next door but she and her husband have always been a bit standoffish and you have never really got to know them. They hardly ever go out, do not appear to have any family and receive very few visitors. Sheila turns up on your doorstep very distressed early one morning asking you to come because she thinks her husband has died in the night.

Fiona (44) has had a very difficult life. She has many health problems and people always seem to pick on her for ‘no reason’. Everything she gets involved in ends up with people getting fed up of her and trying to get rid of her. She finds it impossible to trust people, is very easily offended and once offended will never forgive. She wants to help with a new community project you are running.

Janice (28) is a single mother and a pathological liar. She makes up fantastical stories to get attention and sympathy. She moves away from an area and starts again somewhere new whenever people start to realise that she is not telling the truth. She is attending the church toddler group with her son and being very demanding of everyone’s attention.

Joan (70) seems very stern and forbidding, bad tempered and very critical of everyone she meets. She is a member of your congregation. Every time she sees any young people anywhere near the church she shouts at them to clear off because as far as she is concerned they are clearly ‘up to no good’.

Sarah (23) is slim, tall and beautiful. She comes from a wealthy family and has had a privileged upbringing, but she has had some mental health problems and is now an alcoholic and drug addict and relapses every 3-4 months. She works in the hospitality trade where you are her employer. She is unreliable and is routinely unable to fulfil her work commitments.

Brenda (36) grew up in poverty. She was abused as a child and does not really know how to behave. She thinks it is acceptable to shout aggressively at people who are trying to support her, she is greedy and pushy at social events, routinely upsets people, and constantly fails to deliver on promises she has made; she is also indiscrete. She wants to be affirmed by being given a responsible role in your church.



Resources—Stories for ‘What would love do?’ activity on page 9

Craig (56) has a history of violence. He really struggles to keep his temper and in the past has been inclined to lash out physically at the slightest provocation or perceived insult. He is just out of prison, after serving a term for assault. He wants a job in your small business.

Bert (it's hard to be sure but maybe around 60) is a vagrant who is often seen in your local town centre. He is very dirty and transports his belongings around in an old shopping trolley. You discover that he has been sleeping in your empty outhouse from time to time.

Simon (30) works in your office and he is a charmer. He does not work very hard but is very good at blowing his own trumpet and taking credit for work that others have done. He sees you as competition, and as having the potential to show him up, so he consistently undermines you and makes you look bad in your boss's eyes.

Hannah (38) and her husband are childless; they are desperate to have a family of their own. IVF has failed and left them in debt and they are considering surrogacy. They tell you of their plans and ask if you will help them with funds.

Charlotte (16) is your daughter. She confesses that she participated in the recent rioting in your city and brought home some top brand trainers and an I-pod.

Karen (34) is a friend of yours from play group who is married with 3 small children. She tells you that she is having an affair with a married man.

Barbara (81) is a lady you have known for many years and who you visit regularly. She is starting to become confused. She accuses you of taking things from her house and of hiding her valuables. You have reason to believe that she may also be shoplifting.

Tom (27) A homeless young man who comes to the soup kitchen you help at tells you proudly that now he has a Bible of his own because he stole one from a neighbouring church.



The Younger Brother

Setting the scene:-

A life-size picture of the 'Prodigal Son' from the story and a poster displaying the relevant sections of the Bible account. The debris of a wild party; Rubbish, empty drink cans and bottles, etc. (Please be aware of health and safety issues. If this is too risky in your context you can just display pictures instead but keep them appropriate to the age range present.)



View Video inspired by Psalm 51

www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources_heart.php

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences brought to mind by the scene setting and the video.

- Have you ever felt really sorry for the way you have behaved?
- Have you ever wished that you could wipe the slate clean and make a completely fresh start?

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Share the relevant sections of the prodigal Son story using either the text at the end of this resource or

www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/what-we-do/our-work/youve-got-the-time/ (from time index 19.35)



Younger Brother Zone

Watch the video at www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources_heart.php
Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People



Photo from Wikimedia

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- Have you ever felt really sorry for the way you have behaved?
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Photo by Chaojoker, Creative

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Reflective Activity: –
Washing dirty Hearts.

- People are invited to take a grubby heart and wash it clean, then rinse it, squeeze out the excess water and hang it up to dry.
- Those who wish to can take one home to remind them of what they have done and thought about



Photo from Wikimedia Commons.

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Reflective Activity: –

Washing dirty Hearts.

Provide:-

- red hearts cut out of scrap fabric and made dirty
- Washing up bowls with warm soapy water
- Fresh clean water for rinsing
- Latex gloves & hand towels
- A washing line and pegs.
- People are invited to take a grubby heart and wash it clean, then rinse it, squeeze out the excess water and hang it up to dry.



Photo from Wikimedia Commons,
Louise Docker



Photo by Pemanducomm, Creative



Photo from Wikimedia Commons, attribution unclear

Later they can each take one home to remind them of what they have done and thought about.



The Pigs

Introduction/prompt

Scene setting:- A large picture of a pig and a poster displaying the relevant sections of the Bible account. Create a pig pen with hay on the floor, fencing and a food trough (this can be life size or a model depending on space and resources available). You may be able to borrow parts from a child's play farm set. Display pictures of pigs.

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

Encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences brought to mind by the scene setting.

- Have you ever found yourself in company you would prefer to avoid?
- Have you ever hit rock bottom? Felt you could sink no lower?
- Have you ever felt utterly friendless?



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Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Options for Activities: –

Apple Bobbing

You need:-

Washing up bowl with clean water.
Fresh eating apples.
Hand towels.

People take turns to try and get an apple out of the bowl using only their mouth, with their hands clasped behind their back.



Photo by Caleb Zahnd, Creative Commons

Pin the tail on the pig:

You need:-

A large picture of a pig (rear view!) fastened up on a wall.

Pig's tails made from long 'pipe cleaners' (available from children's craft suppliers) twisted into curly spirals.

'Blu' tack.

A blindfold.

People are blindfolded and try to stick their 'pig's tail' onto the pig in the right place using the 'blu' tack.



Photos by Tim Watkins Ltd

Greedy Pig:

Place a small toy plastic pig into a large plastic tub. Fill the tub with a mixture of cold baked beans, cold custard and cold cooked spaghetti. A Greedy Piglet has fallen into his food trough and people are invited to take turns to 'rescue' him. Provide water, soap and towels for hand-washing afterwards.

Bash the pig:

A long cardboard tube is fixed along the length of a wooden plank (the plank needs to be about 50 cm longer than the tube at one end). You need to find a small soft toy pig that will fit down the tube (or a tube big enough for the smallest soft toy pig you can find!). You also need a rolled up newspaper. Stand the plank vertically on the floor so that the tube ends at around knee height. Drop the pig down the tube and allow people to see if they can hit it with the newspaper as it drops out of the lower end of the tube before it hits the floor. Prizes can be offered if you like but most people will have a go just for the fun of it. We are not suggesting that any real pigs should ever be treated in this way!



The Older Brother

Setting the scene:-

A life-size picture of the 'Older Brother' from the story and a poster displaying the relevant sections of the Bible account.



View

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGQIJGxsMbs

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences brought to mind by the scene setting and the Video

- Have you ever felt really resentful of the love and forgiveness shown to someone else?
- Have you ever felt overlooked or taken for granted?

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

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www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/what-we-do/our-work/youve-got-the-time/ (from time index 19.35)



Older Brother Zone

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Decorating pots and planting bulbs.

You need:-

- Small fibre plant pots
- Bulb compost
- Flower bulbs *appropriate to the time of year*
- Poster paint and paint brushes, paint jars, water etc.



Please take a bulb and plant it – this symbolises new life that is buried but will spring to life in its time. The bulb should be covered with a just a thin layer of compost.

Please feel free to decorate your pot with a design that reflects the story of the Prodigal Son.

While doing so please reflect on the following comment: *The older son failed to see the new life that was in his brother because he was blinded by jealousy, anger, bitterness etc. It has been suggested that this story was told because this is how the Pharisees were – boasting that they had followed the law to the letter, yet they were blinded to the resurrection occurring all around, the new life bursting out as Jesus touched lives and welcomed back sinners and outcasts. They failed to celebrate what was well worth a party because, like the older brother, they were “looking at the garbage and refusing to smell the flowers”. (Tom Wright – “Luke For Everyone”)*

Q: How often are we just like that? - too busy seeing the compost to appreciate the new life growing within it or around us!

Older Brother Zone

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban People

encourage people to reflect on and share any of their own experiences

brought to mind by older brothers experience in the story

- Have you ever felt really resentful of the love and forgiveness shown to someone else?
- Have you ever felt overlooked or taken for granted



Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Options for Reflective Activities

Decorating pots and planting bulbs.

You need:-

- Small fibre plant pots
- Bulb compost
- Seasonally appropriate bulbs (*crocus bulbs are suitable for the months between August and January. Alternative bulbs or seeds could be used at other times of year.*)
- Poster paint and paint brushes, paint jars, water etc.



Photo by [Nino Barbieri](#), Creative Commons

Please take a bulb and plant it in a small pot – this symbolises new life that is buried but will spring to life in its time. The bulb should be covered with a just a thin layer of compost.

Please feel free to decorate your pot with a design that reflects the story of the Prodigal Son.

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Q: How often are we just like that? - too busy seeing the compost to appreciate the new life growing within it or around us!





Care of your crocus.

When you get home:

1. Water your crocus and let the excess drain.
2. Move the container to a cool, dark location, like the basement or garage for at least 12 weeks. Water when dry.
3. When the plants start to sprout, move the container to a slightly warmer location with indirect light.
4. Gradually move closer toward the light. Rotate the pot so the plants grow straight and sturdy.
5. Once in bloom, they'll need plenty of direct sunlight and water when dry.
6. Allow the plants to die naturally, then plant your bulb outdoors. The biodegradable pot can be planted straight in the ground. The crocus should re-bloom next year.



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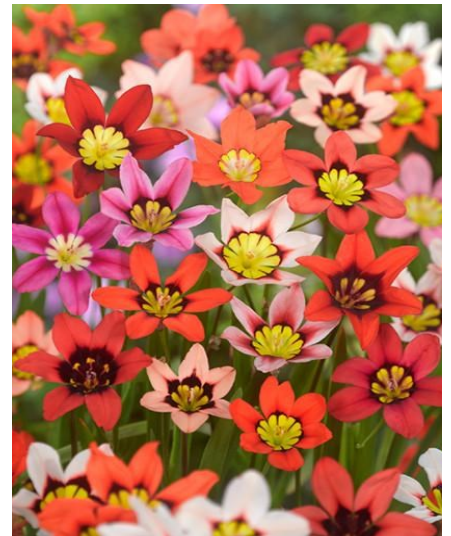




Care of your Harlequin flower or Windflower (Sparaxis tricolor).

When you get home:

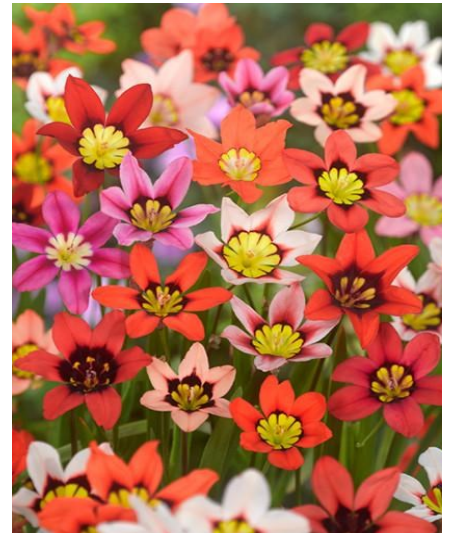
1. Water your pot and let the excess drain.
2. Stand pot outdoors in good light
3. After a couple of weeks plant the whole container into the ground, or a window box or patio pot.
4. Plants should flower in 2-3 months from planting.
5. They are unlikely to survive for more than one year.



Care of your Harlequin flower or Windflower (Sparaxis tricolor).

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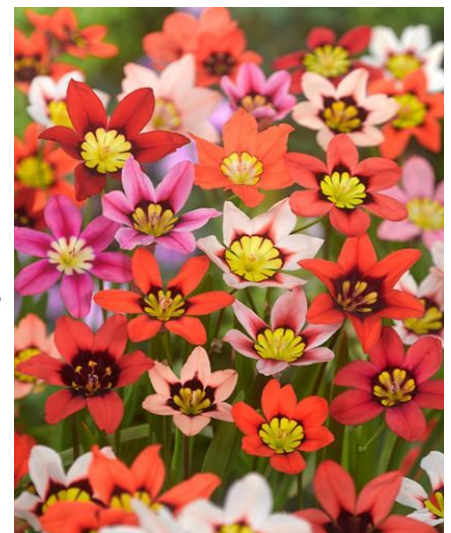
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Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Options for Reflective Activities

Tasting bitterness and sweetness

Please take a slice of lemon :

Suck on it and reflect on the following questions:

- How do you think the older brother felt when he saw a party being thrown in honour of his younger brother's return?
- v 28 tells us he was angry – but why? Perhaps it is because he was jealous? Or because it was his inheritance that was being frittered away on a party? (The younger brother had already had his inheritance so anything left should be going to the older brother, not being squandered on parties.)
- Do you think he may have felt bitter? Does the lemon remind you of bitterness? Have there been any times when you have felt angry and bitter? Was it a good feeling? Was it rewarding?

Lemon contains citric acid which can be damaging. Bitterness and anger can also eat away at you.



Photo by André Karwath, Creative Commons

Now please take a square of chocolate:

Let it melt in your mouth and savour it, reflecting on the following:

- We are not told in the story whether the older brother remained bitter and angry or whether he relented. Imagine the end of the story – do you think it is open for him to relent and to join in the celebrations?
- How do you think he would feel if he did?
- How does the chocolate taste compared to the lemon? Smooth? Sweet?
- Does it remind you of the sweet taste of forgiveness? Or of a party or celebration?
- Can you think of a time when you swallowed your pride and allowed someone else to be the centre of a celebration when you felt that you deserved it more?
- Being forgiving and welcoming is hard work and requires effort but it is worth it - it tastes sweeter and more soothing.



Photo by André Karwath, Creative Commons

Although bad for us in large quantities, perhaps chocolate should not be written off as having no nutritional value at all. It contains an array of minerals (copper, magnesium, potassium, calcium, iron, phosphorous and zinc) which are essential for sustained health - just as a sustained steady faith has its value (such as that of the older son in our story).



Who is Missing?

**Who is
Missing?**



Who is Missing Zone

Who is Missing from this story?

Whether or not she was still alive these two sons must also have had a ***mother***.

- What do you think she looked like?
- How do you suppose she felt about the things that happened in her family?
- Have you ever experienced anything like she must have gone through?
- What do you think she would have been doing while all this was going on?
- What do you think she would have had to say:-
 - ◆ To her younger son?
 - ◆ To her husband?
 - ◆ To her older son?
 - ◆ To God?

Use wax to write or draw your ideas about her. If you want to, you can give her a name or a face. Then paint over it with colourwash so that it shows up; just as in the story we know she must have existed but we can't really see her clearly.



The 'Best Robe' - Prayer

Place a tailor's dummy in the centre of the room dressed in a 'best robe'. (We made ours out of some old velvet curtains.) Put a circle of chairs around it facing inwards. We made a set of postcard sized pictures (artist's interpretations and photographs) relating to the prodigal son story and placed them on the chairs along with the instruction cards below. If you have the appropriate license you can play a selection of prodigal son themed music (we found a selection by typing 'prodigal son' into You Tube and then purchasing the tracks as downloads). Provide small pieces of paper or sticky-notes for people to write their prayers on and attach them to the robe.

Luke Chapter 15: 11—32

"He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms round his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called his servants. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feasting began.



The robe symbolises the welcome our Father gives us whenever we turn back to him. Because of the quality of that welcome we can come to God in prayer, no matter what. The picture cards are here to help you reflect on the story. You are invited to draw or write your prayers on the post-its and pin them to the robe.
Prayer is in the middle of everything we do.



The Biblical text

Luke 15:11-32

11 Jesus went on to say, “There was once a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to him, ‘Father, give me my share of the property now.’ So the man divided his property between his two sons. 13 After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. 14 He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. 15 So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. 16 He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. 17 At last he came to his senses and said, ‘All my father’s hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! 18 I will get up and go to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against God and against you. 19 I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.’ 20 So he got up and started back to his father.

He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms round his son, and kissed him. 21 ‘Father,’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’ 22 But the father called his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. 23 Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! 24 For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ And so the feasting began.

25 “In the meantime the elder son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him, ‘What’s going on?’ 27 ‘Your brother has come back home,’ the servant answered, ‘and your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.’

28 “The elder brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! 30 But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!’ 31 ‘My son,’ the father answered, ‘you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ ”



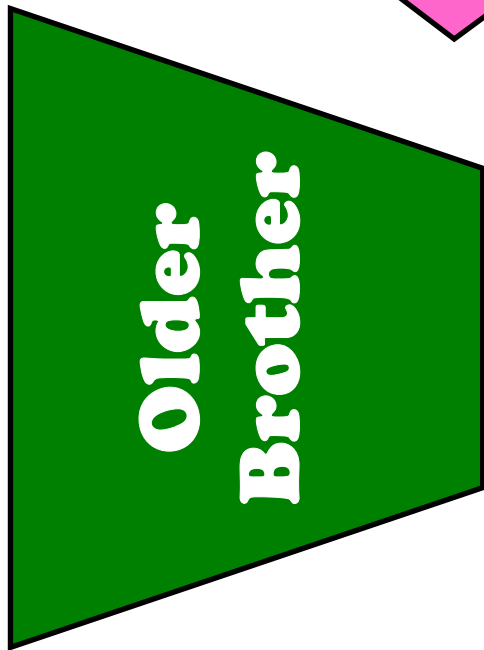
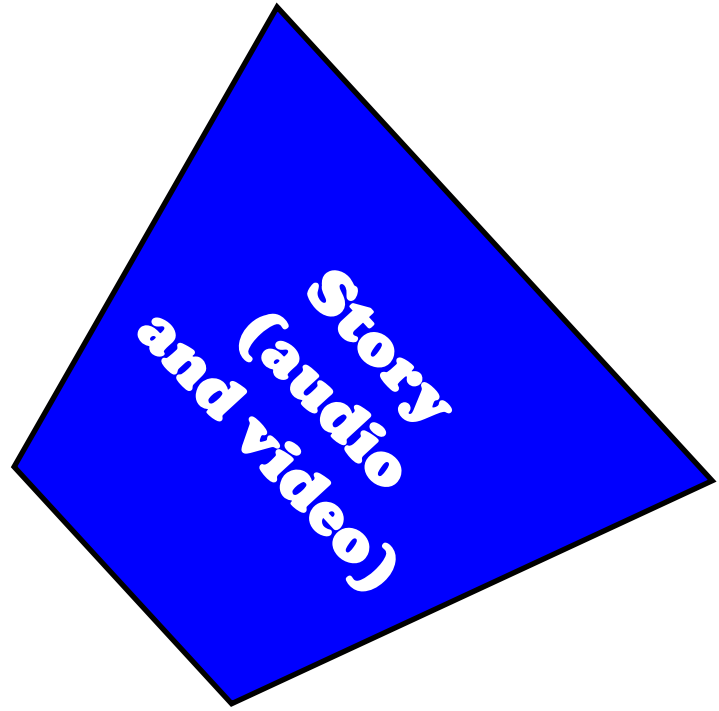
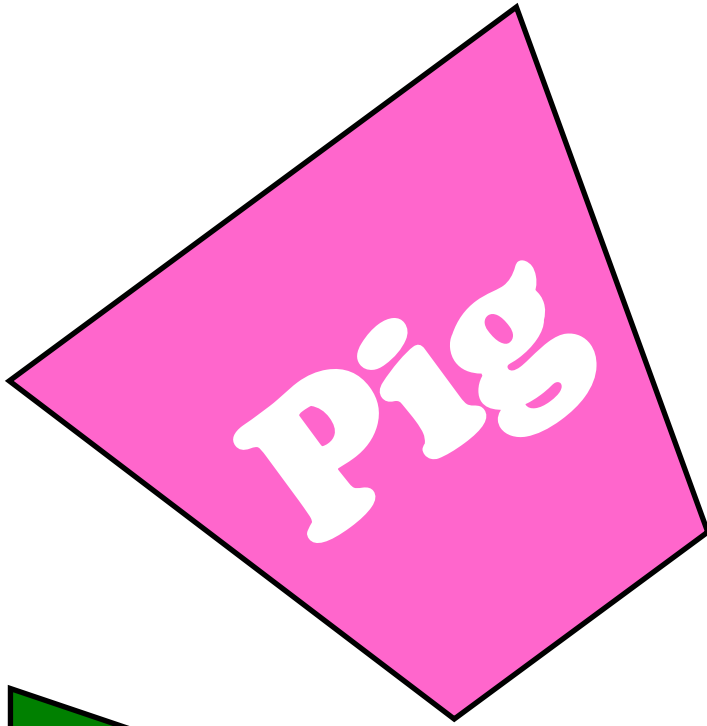
Activity Planning Table i

Zone	Item	Details
General	Life size figures	One for each character in story
	Lots of blu tak	1 pack for each zone
	Unlock display & resources (optional)	Display boards and resources (contact Unlock office for materials)
	Unlock powerpoint (optional)	projector running Unlock powerpoint on a loop (silent) http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/Unlockpresentation2018-generalversion.pdf
	X 2 Large poster print out of Bible text	
	Activity instruction cards for each zone	
	Extra extension cables	x2
	Signs for each zone	x2 copies of each , one for wall and one for floor
	Laptop running video	laptop running video on a loop using screen or projector https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGQJGxslMbs
	Small table set for a party	Table cloth, plates, bowls, cutlery, glasses, bubble bottles, party poppers, table confetti, candles, crackers, twinkly lights
Story	Open Arms (Elbow) to read	Lyrics printed out
	Open Arms (Elbow) to listen to	MP3 player and headphones
	plasticine	4 new packs
	pastels	Or other colourful drawing materials
	Drawing paper	A3 & A4 – coloured is best
	What would love do case studies	Printed
	Dirty red fabric hearts	Cut out and make grubby. We shake ours up in a bag with a handful of coal pieces and leave them for a couple of weeks.
	Handwash Laundry soap	For washing hearts
	Heart video running on laptop	Run on a laptop – screen and projector probably not necessary but good sound quality (possibly an additional speaker) is required
	Latex gloves	For handwashing hearts
Younger brother zone	Pictures of party mess	Put on a display board or wall as scene setting for this section
	Washing up bowls X 2	1 for wash and 1 for rinse
	Old towels to catch water	Spread a couple under the table to catch any splashes
	Hand towels X 4	For hand drying after washing hearts
	Laundry line	String up a line somewhere for washed hearts to be pegged on to dry
	Clothes pegs	
	White wax crayons	
	Large roll of paper	Wallpaper lining paper or similar
	Poster paint in shades of blue and turquoise	
	Paint water pots and brushes	
Father Zone	Party table against wall.	
	2 activity tables with chairs. Power sockets probably needed	
Who's Missing?	1 table with chairs round it	

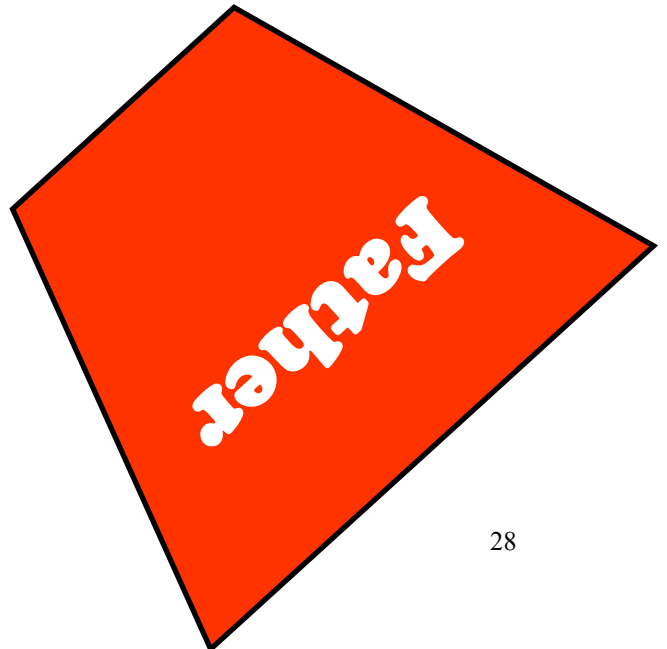
Activity Planning Table ii

Zone	Item	Details
Older brother zone	Small fibre plant pots	The ones that biodegrade when sunk in the ground
	Potting compost and old spoons	
	Paint brushes and paint, water jars etc.	fairly fine brushes
	Flower bulbs	Select something appropriate for planting at this season. Autumn and winter – spring flowering bulbs; Spring and Summer – summer or autumn flowering bulbs.
	Lemons cut into wedges	On a plate
Pig zone	Assorted chocolate squares	fairtrade
	Splat the pig tube, whacker and piggy	Make whacker from rolled up newspaper. Small soft toy pig. Carpet tube or similar.
	Toy pig-pen & pigs and other items from model farm set	Set out on a low table for small children to play with
	Pin the tail on the pig picture	Large picture of a piggy without a tail
	Pinboard background for pig	You need to be able to put up the pig picture on a background you can stick pins into
Best robe zone	Drawing pins	
	Pig's tail	Craft pipe cleaners made into spirals work well as tails to pin on.
	Bindfold(s)	Soft scarves or sleep masks
	Tailors dummy	Borrow, your local charity shops may be able to help
	Best robe	We made ours from some old velvet curtains
	post it's	Assorted shapes and colours are best
	Safety pins	
	Art picture cards	We printed a range of images from a Google search for 'Prodigal son' onto postcards.
	Speaker with assorted Prodigal music tracks on Mp3 player or micro SD card.	We had fun choosing a selection of music of many different styles on the themes of the prodigal story including repentance and forgiveness.





Suggested floor plan depending on the space you have available



For Group Leaders

Course / Event name: Unlock's 40th Birthday Party, Bristol, 2012

Authors / Facilitators: Many Unlock staff, workers and friends.

Pack Name: Unlocking the Prodigal

These sessions can be used in any order or as a single event.

Aims: To help the group to explore some aspects of the story of the Prodigal Son and discover its significance afresh. To encourage the group to reflect on the significance and the impact of the story on their own lives, as well as hopefully building some confidence within individuals to continue a process of reflection and engagement with the Bible and the Prodigal Son story. These sessions aim to facilitate this through engaging with the group's own experiences and exploring how they might connect with the story.

Outcomes: The group will be more able to engage with each other, using a reflective theological cycle, starting from their own story or the stories of others in the group, or things that have affected them on a daily basis. The group will be more able to consider the way that the Bible might impact on their own situations or experiences, both now and in the future. The group will be able to reflect on topical issues which affect them, and to do this in relation to scripture. The group will feel more confident in approaching and exploring for themselves this and other stories in the Bible.

Session Content

Unlocking Real Life Experience

Media: Using a range of creative and reflective activities.

Own story: Within our own narratives and situations are threads that can be woven into scripture and understood, helping us recognise our connections with God's story.

Questions: Each activity raises questions for consideration in relation to day to day life and the story of the prodigal son.

Revealing the Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Bible: Passages used: Luke 15:11-32

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Through connecting God's story with our own we engage more deeply with the Holy Spirit and the work of God within our lives, as well as increasing our understanding of God's story and our own place within it. We grow in confidence to reflect with one another on our own experiences, on our journey with God and on wider issues within the community. We learn more about valuing one another; how to listen and understand what others are saying and feeling.

Reflective Activities

See resource details.



Unlock, by various names, has been around since 1972, trying to help (mainly) urban Christians to understand and share their faith appropriately. Our life experience matters; our stories; our joys and sorrows. The Bible has plenty to say, more than we'll ever know, about our lives, if we know how to read it and apply it - if we know how to **UNLOCK** it!

The activities and discussion questions outlined in this pack apply the learning cycle on page 31. The activities are designed to help us make connections between our own day-to-day experiences and the story of the Prodigal Son, which will be very familiar to some and possibly less well known to others.

Working with Bible stories in this way helps us connect more deeply with the different levels of meaning within each story. Engaging in creative activities around the themes within the story helps us to connect with the story in our hearts as well as in our heads. Not everyone will necessarily 'like' all of the activities, partly because they are designed to allow a range of different people to find their own way of connecting with the meanings in the story, but it is worth encouraging people to have a go. Often the activities that initially make us most uncomfortable will be the ones from which we learn the most.

The creative and reflective activity creates space in which discussion and reflection can continue in an unforced way. Participants can be encouraged to think about any action they might want to take as a result.

Finally, some of the activities suggested are actually just for fun. There is no deep hidden meaning in them (although you may discover something that we have not thought of!) They are just there because there is no reason why we shouldn't enjoy ourselves while connecting with the Bible.

Illustrations

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The Unlock Learning Cycle

Unlocking real life stories of urban people

Start with the group telling stories from their real life experience.

Leading to more experience

What we learn now is learnt for life and changes us. We also learn to keep reflecting!

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

The real life stories are connected to and compared with similar situations in the Bible.

Releasing life changing skills and confidence

Change happens as a result of linking real life experience with the Bible. This change often leads to action among others.



Unlock uses an approach to engaging with the Bible that is different to traditional Bible studies (see page 3). Unlock's approach starts from the stories and experiences of group members, whereas a more traditional approach starts from the Biblical text. Unlock's approach has been found to work well with small groups of urban, oral learners from outside of the church. There are many free resources on the Unlock website designed for use with such groups. However, because this material was designed for a particular group in a particular time and place it may not be a perfect fit for your group as it stands. It is offered more as inspiration to you to design your own materials along the same lines, rather than as a ready to use package.

Unlock usually works with people outside of church who may be interested in finding out a bit more about faith but perhaps are not attracted to the formal methods of learning often associated with church. Our work is based on a reflective learning cycle and is a tried and tested way of introducing people to the Bible in a non-threatening way. Many churches have activities that draw in members of their surrounding community but then struggle with how to move on from those relationships into exploring faith, especially in urban environments where anything formal might be treated with suspicion.

Unlock celebrated its 40th Year in 2012 with a Birthday Party in Bristol which took the form of a Bible activity day with food, drink and worship. These activities were developed around the Gospel story of the Prodigal Son told in Luke chapter 15.

All of Unlock's short sessions are designed to be used with a group of people who are not familiar with the Bible. Other similar resources are available to download free from www.unlock-urban.org or from the Unlock office based in Sheffield.

However it is our experience that each group's circumstances are so unique, that it may be best to develop your own materials using themes that you know your group will connect with, and reflective activities that are inspired by their own interests.

May God inspire you!

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Unlock, 15 Station Rd, Rotherham S60 1HN

01709 380 318 office@unlock-urban.org.uk

