



## **A Father's Day Story**

**Ready:** Here's a multi-sensory story to celebrate Father's Day. It's based on the Bible story of the Prodigal Son. The story ends with a party, so you might like to provide some party plates, cups, and straws for refreshments both to 'play' the story and to celebrate the occasion. Some chocolate coins would also link with the story. When the children arrive, let them play with a toy farm that includes pigs, or toy shops/money tills.

**Teddy:** Use Teddy to introduce the idea that sometimes we need to say sorry for making others sad. Teddy could even play the part of the boy in the story!

**Go:** You're ready to show that God is our loving Father, always ready to forgive us and to let us start all over again whenever we are truly sorry.

**The story basket:** Pack a basket with some multi-sensory props for the children to experience during the story, such as: a boy doll with an item

of clothing, a small drawstring bag or purse with coins to jingle in it, a toy pig, a container of mud, some pieces of raw swede, paper party hats for everyone.

**Story-telling tips:** The finger rhyme, ‘Two little dickey birds sitting on a wall’, provides a good “way in” to the story:

**Song:** Two little dickey birds sitting on a wall, (*hold up index fingers*)

One named Peter, (*wiggle one finger*)

One named Paul, (*wiggle other finger*)

Fly away Peter, (*take first finger behind back*)

Fly away Paul, (*take other finger behind back*)

Come back Peter, (*bring first finger back*)

Come back Paul! (*bring other finger back*).

**Storyteller:** Hello, everybody! How are you feeling today? I’m sorry to say that Teddy’s feeling very cross. I wonder why? (*Teddy appears to whisper in your ear*) Oh, he says he just woke up feeling cross!

Well, we all feel like that sometimes. We fold our arms ... (*encourage everyone to fold arms*), we stamp our feet ... (*encourage everyone to stamp feet*) and when someone asks us to do something, we shout “No!” ... (*encourage everyone to shout “No!”*) Oh, dear! That makes our Mums and Dads feel sad and we need to say sorry! Here’s a song about saying sorry! Can you join in?

**Song:** (To the tune of ‘Morningtown Ride’, sung by The Seekers)

*Sometimes I am naughty,*

*And that makes you feel sad,*

*But if I say “I’m sorry!”*

*We can hug and all feel glad! (Repeat)*

**Storyteller:** Who likes getting a bear hug? Yes! Well, Jesus told a story about a boy who got a great big hug from his dad when he wasn't expecting it! Listen!

*(Show doll)* One morning, a boy woke up feeling as angry as a lion shut in a cage. He sprang out of bed and got dressed ... *(dress doll)* Then he paced up and down, up and down ... *(walk doll)*

Out of the window, he could see his father and his big brother working hard on the farm. "Hurry up!" they called. "Come and help us with the work!"

The boy didn't want to. So he folded his arms ... *(all fold arms)*, stamped his foot ... *(all stamp feet)*, and shouted "No!" ... *(all shout "No!")* That wasn't very kind, was it? Then the boy marched outside and spoke rudely to his father. "I'm a big boy now," he said. "Give me some money! I'm going to leave home." Well, the father loved his boy very much. But he let him go.

"Here's your money," he said, sadly ... *(show money bag)* "Take care. I'm going to miss you."

He held out his arms to give his boy a hug ... *(hold out your arms)* but the boy just walked away, jingling his moneybag ... *(let children hear the money jingling in the bag)*

At last he reached a busy town. In the market there were lots of exciting things to buy.

“Hooray!” he said. “I’ve got all this money to spend! Listen!” ... (*jingle bag again*) So he dipped into the bag over ... and over ... and over again ... (*give coins from bag to helpers*) until ... Listen! ... (*shake empty bag*) No sound! The bag was empty!

Soon the boy’s tummy was empty too! ... (*rub your tummy*) “I’m hungry!” he said. “But I haven’t got any money left to buy food. I’d better get a job.”

Well, *someone* gave him a job looking after their pigs (*show pig*)... can you smell the mud in the pigs’ field?... (*invite children to smell mud!*) Pooh! But *no-one* gave him any food.

“Oh, no!” he said. “I’m so cold and hungry that I could eat the pigs’ dinner!” Would *you* like to taste the pig’s dinner? ... (*offer some swede!*) It’s not very nice, is it! Poor boy! So he gave himself a hug ... (*all hug themselves*) and he stamped his feet to keep warm . . . (*all stamp feet*) and then he *whispered* “No!”... (*All whisper “No!”*)

“No more being rude and unkind! I’m going to go home and say sorry to my father.” What was he going to say? (*all say, “I’m sorry!”*) That’s better!

So the boy turned back towards home ... (*turn doll back*) But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming and what do you think he did? He **ran** to give him a great big hug! Shall *we* do that? ...

*(Encourage the children to move a short distance from their carers) ...*

Then one two three ... *(The children run back for a hug!)* Shall we do that again? ...

“Oh, Dad,” cried the boy. “I’m sorry! I’m sorry I made you sad!”

“It’s all right!” said his father kindly. “Pooh! You’re a bit smelly, though! Lets find you some clean clothes and then we’ll have a party!”

*(Hand out some party hats)*

When the boy’s big brother came in from working on the farm, would you believe it, **he** folded his arms ... and stamped his foot ... and shouted, “No! ... No party for that lazy boy! **I’m** the one who’s been working hard!”

“Oh, don’t be like that!” begged the father. “You see, I was very sad when your brother went away. But now I’m happy because he came back to say sorry.”

I expect they had a wonderful party, don’t you? Jesus says that God has a party whenever **we** say sorry! **HOORAY!**

Just before **our** party, let’s say another finger rhyme together:

**Song: (To the tune ‘Two little dickie birds sitting on a wall’)**

Two boys working on a farm one day, *(hold up index fingers)*

One was rude and ran away, *(take one hand behind back)*

He came back *(bring hand back)* and his Daddy said “Hooray!

I’m so glad you’re home to stay!” *(Link index fingers)*

And now let's put our hands together for a prayer:

*Dear Father God,*

*Sometimes we do things that make you sad. Please help us to say "sorry". Thank you that you are just like the Dad in the story, always ready to forgive us and let us start all over again.*

**Amen**