

# The way back – Jesus death and resurrection



## Bible reading

Matthew 27:32-54 and 28:1-10 Jesus death and resurrection [bit.ly/3St5QLG](https://bit.ly/3St5QLG)  
[bit.ly/3Udv6a6](https://bit.ly/3Udv6a6)

Luke 15:11-32 Prodigal son [bit.ly/3Hs8dZ9](https://bit.ly/3Hs8dZ9)

## Bible video

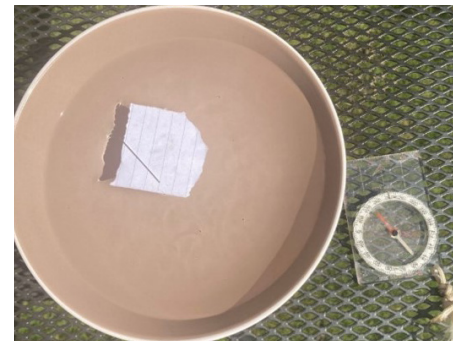
- Parable of the Prodigal Son Saddleback Kids [bit.ly/496NXaX](https://bit.ly/496NXaX)
- Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection – The Gospel project [bit.ly/3StZH1R](https://bit.ly/3StZH1R)

## Arrival activity

### Make a Compass

Explain that magnets work by having a magnetised piece of metal (needle) that will align itself to the earth's magnetic core as it is moved, pointing north. This helps us to be able to know where we are and what direction we are facing.

Make a simple magnet together and have some fun experimenting. Groups with very young children may need extra help and support or even to have the compass set up before the children arrive.



You will need:

- Paper clip or a needle
- Small bowl or saucer
- Water, enough to fill the plastic bottle half
- Small magnet (fridge magnets work)
- Small circular piece of paper marked N on one edge and S 180 degrees round the circle from the N.

What you do:

1. Open up the paper clip so it resembles a straight needle, or take your needle.
2. "Fill the bowl/saucer with water. Take the magnet and rub it along the length of the paper clip/needle in one direction about 20 times.
3. Place the paperclip on the circle of paper with one end on the N and the other end on the S.
4. Place onto the water and watch it spin until it stops and the needle points North, like a compass.
5. Once you have a working compass, you could set some challenges, eg can the children use the compass to find out which direction the door is, or the pulpit etc. Completing this task can earn the "way back" badge.

## Story

### The way back

Out Of The Box style story using symbols/reflective story.

You will need a box filled with the elements as listed in the script.

Gather the group into a circle so that all can see the box. This box has everything we need for today's story. I wonder what we will find and what they will tell us. Open the box (*place a Jesus figure in the centre of the story area*).

It's a story about Jesus (*place a person figure opposite the Jesus figure*).

And it's a story about us (*place a big paper heart in front of Jesus and begin to lay threads of golden ribbon coming from Jesus to the person*).

God loves us more than we will ever understand. The Bible says we can't understand how high, deep and wide God's love is for us (*turn the person figure to be facing away from Jesus and place blocks of wood onto the ribbons*).

The Bible says that nothing can separate us from God's love. But we can forget God's love and choose to live life without God. Sometimes we can think that there is no way back. Does God love me? (*Place a cross on the heart near Jesus and begin to remove the blocks of wood on the ribbons, removing them from sight. Place a compass on the cross*).

With God anything is possible. God sent Jesus to show us once and for all how much we are loved and to make the way back for us. Jesus takes the things blocking our way and sends them as far as the east is from the west (*turn the person round to face Jesus, add more ribbons going both ways between them*).

All we need to do is turn again, look to God, see what Jesus showed us and believe (*add three hearts in a row between the person and Jesus*).

God loved us yesterday, God loves you today and God will love you tomorrow (*place the compass near the person*).

God is with you always no matter where you go.

## Parable

In my hand I hold something very special. Very special indeed. I wonder what it might be. It's not precious in itself, but it represents maybe the most precious thing of all.

I open up my thumb and fingers – one-two-three-four-five – and there it is. A heart.

If I put my fingers on my wrist I can feel my pulse, the measure of my heart beating away inside me, pumping life-giving blood to every part of my body, supplying everything my body needs and taking away that which will harm me. But our hearts represent something else, don't they? They represent love.

In the deepest depths of our hearts we find a glimpse of God's wonderful kingdom.

There was once a person who lived with their sibling in the house of their parent. They worked together on the farm and rested and ate together in the house. But this person was not sure that this life was enough. Surely the world had more to offer, places to explore, people to meet, opportunities to fulfil. They would get half the money when the parent died but they just didn't want to wait. They wanted it now. So they asked: "Please give me my share now, so I can go out and explore the world."

With hardly a backward glance at their sibling and parent, the young person set off into the world with a pocket full of money to ease their way. Spend. Spend. Spend. Spend. Spend. The world was their oyster... until the money ran out. Then things were not so good.

The big spender had nothing left to spend. In fact, with empty pockets and an empty belly, there was nothing for it but to take whatever job was going. That job turned out to be caring for the pigs ... And even the pigs ate better than our good-for-nothing loser. The young person's rumbling tummy seemed to say, "You fool! You'd be better off working for your parent on the farm at home" and that advice seemed worth listening to, so with a heavy heart the young person set out towards home, determined to apologise and ask to be employed as a labourer.

But a surprise awaited our hero. The parent was having none of it. As soon as they saw who was walking down the path, miserable and dishevelled, they ran out of the farmhouse and hugged their child tight. New clothes and shoes, a ring, a place at the table and a celebration "Welcome home" feast – all was laid on for the returning young person. The sibling was less than amused – I've been here all this time, slaving away on the farm to make a good profit for the family, doing my best to be a good child to you, and what do I get? Not even a bit of meat so I can have a BBQ with my mates. And yet this waste of space takes your money and wastes it on parties and fancy living and comes skulking back when he has spent it all, and you do all this for him."

But the parent explained – both were loved equally. One stayed close and lived in that love. But when you love someone and they turn away from you for a while, you still keep them in your heart. You can't help but rejoice when the wanderer returns, not dead but alive, not lost but found.

This story is a parable, a picture story, of course. I wonder what it tells us about God's kingdom.

## Campfire song

To the tune of Ol' MacDonald had a farm.

There was a man who had two sons,  
Ee i ee i o

One son did stay, and one did go,  
Ee i ee i o

With a spend, spend here, and a spend, spend there,  
Here a spend, there a friend, everywhere a spend spend,  
The young son spends and gets some friends,  
Ee i ee i o

And when his money was all gone,  
Ee i ee i o,

He also lost his friends, SO LONG!  
Ee i ee i o,

With a goodbye here, and a goodbye there,  
Here a bye, there a bye, everywhere a bye-bye  
And now his money is all gone,  
Ee i ee i o.

So off he went to get a job,  
Ee i ee i o

To feed the pigs and earn a bob,  
Ee i ee i o

With an oink, oink here,  
And an oink, oink there,  
Here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink, oink  
Now feeding pigs is his new job,  
Ee i ee i o.

Feeding pigs was not much fun,  
Ee i ee i o.

He wanted pig food in his tum,  
Ee i ee i o,

With a bleurgh, bleurgh here,  
And a bleurgh, bleurgh there,  
Here a bleurgh, there a bleurgh, everywhere a bleurgh, bleurgh,  
Feeding pigs was not much fun,  
Ee i ee i o.

He sat and thought, "I must be mad!"  
Ee i ee i o.



“I know! I’ll go back to my dad”,  
Ee i ee i o.

With a beg, beg here, and a beg, beg there,  
Here a beg, there a beg, everywhere a beg, beg,  
So off he went to see his dad,  
Ee i ee i o.

The boy said “I am sorry dad”,  
Ee i ee i o.

“You’re home, you’re safe and I am glad”,  
Ee i ee i o,

With a big hug here, and a big hug there,  
Here a hug, there a hug, everywhere a big hug,  
“You are home and I am glad”,  
[Big finish]  
EE I EE I OOOOOOOOOOOO!

### Wondering questions

1. I wonder where you see God in today’s stories and in your story.
2. I wonder what one thing you liked best from today’s stories.
3. I wonder what you will remember about today’s stories and maybe share with someone else.

### What’s your story?

- Can you share the story of a time you felt let down?
- Can you share the story of a tradition your family shares at Easter time?
- Can you share the story of a time when you made a bad choice but someone forgave you?

### Small group prayer

#### Folded Paper Cross

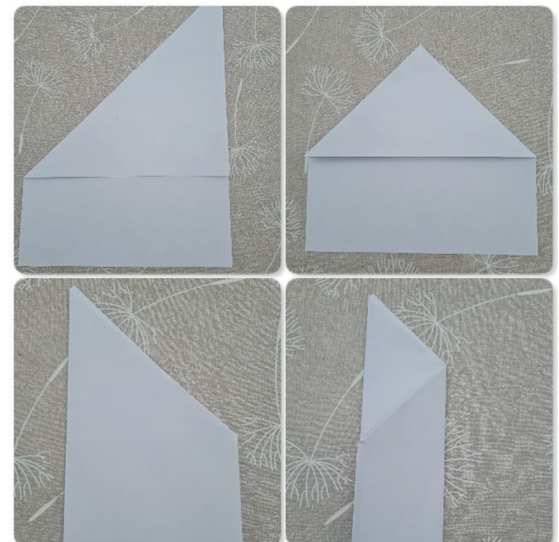
This reflective prayer activity makes a cross from a sheet of paper. It has a real ‘wow’ moment as you unfold the paper and reveal a cross and the word life. As you fold the paper together, retell the story of Jesus dying on the cross and that three days later he rose to life.

What you need:

- A4 paper
- Scissors (optional).

What you do:

1. Fold the top corner down to the edge of the paper.
2. Fold the top right corner down, you now have a house shape.
3. Fold in half along a vertical line.





4. Fold in half vertically again.
5. Tear or cut lengthways down the centre of the folded paper.
6. Carefully unfold all the pieces. You will find a large cross and the remaining small pieces can be used to spell the word 'life'.
7. As you sit quietly, just looking at the cross and the words, a leader can say that the cross reminds us that Jesus loves you and me.
8. After a very short time of quiet, someone can lead the children in prayer by saying these words from Roots for Churches:



God so loved the world – and me and you, that he sent his Son – that’s real and true, so we might have life – life without end. Thank you, God, for Jesus, your Son and our friend. Amen.

## Activity/craft

### Stained Glass Cross

What you need:

- Ready made shortcrust pastry (gluten free if needed)
- Boiled sweets (eg Fox’s glacier fruits)
- Baking tray and baking paper.

What you do:

1. Put the boiled sweets into a ziplock bag, wrap with a teatowel, and bash with a rolling pin to break the sweets into small pieces.
2. Roll out the pastry and cut out a cross shape, cutting a smaller cross shape inside and removing this to create a cross-shaped frame.
3. Place onto baking paper on a baking sheet.
4. Fill the space in the middle of the cross with a thin layer or broken boiled sweet.
5. Cook at 180 degrees celsius for 15 minutes until the sweets have melted and the pastry is golden brown. Allow to cool.



## STEM activity

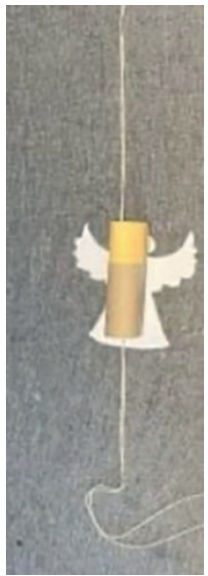
### Cardboard Roll Shuttling Rocket

What you need:

- Kitchen roll inner, cut in half horizontally
- String
- Decorations
- An image of a person (optional).

What you do:

1. Decorate the toilet roll. If you want you can glue an image of a person onto it or decorate it to look like a person.
2. Cut two long lengths of string about two meters each, make a loop at each end of each piece of string to create a handle and then feed the two lengths of string through the hole in the tube.
3. Now stand opposite a partner, each holding the two loops of string in their hand. Stand so the string is fairly taut and both start by each holding their hands close together. Position the rocket tube on the string close to one partner's hands. As that child widens their hands apart, watch the rocket tube person move towards the other partner. The rocket tube person can be sent back again by the first partner moving their hands together and the other partner moving theirs apart.

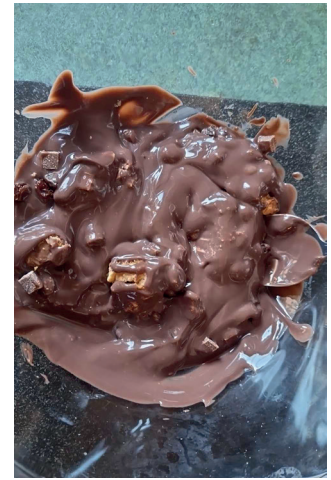


## Recipe

### Pig Swill

What you need:

- Chocolate or butterscotch Angel Delight (soya milk)
- Raisins/ dried fruit
- Biscuits (free from)
- Shredded Wheat (free from)
- Chocolate chips (free from)
- Bowl
- Spoon.



What you do:

1. Make up the Angel Delight in advance, ensuring that there is enough for everyone to have a generous spoonful. Scoop a generous spoonful of Angel Delight into each person's bowl.
2. Provide dishes of crumbled biscuit, Shredded Wheat into it, raisins, dried fruit and chocolate chips and these can be added to the Angel Delight to taste. Give it a really good stir then eat and enjoy!

## Games

### Easter Celebration

You will need artificial Easter eggs (chocolate or small wooden eggs could be an example) or a ping pong ball, one for each pair. Players need to be in pairs of similar height. One person in the pair throws the Easter egg into the air and both players need to high-five each other before the egg drops down and the opposite player catches it. Then the second player throws it and the pair need to high-five each other twice before the egg drops down and the first player catches it. They carry on to see how far they can get before failing to catch the egg or doing the requisite number of catches. If children find this difficult, you could go for best of three.

### Save Me

This game works like Stick in the Mud. Split the group into two teams. One team is designated taggers and the other players run around the room, trying to avoid being tagged. Once they are tagged, they must stand still with arms out and legs apart. To be "saved" by their team, another team member must crawl through under their legs, without being caught in the process. Then the

player who was tagged can rejoin the game. Play for five minutes and then count up how many players are stationary. Then swap roles and play again. Can the new taggers tag more?

## Large group prayer

### Prayer Walk

What you need:

- Deep trays – tea trays or new cat litter trays work well for this
- Pebbles
- Large car washing sponges
- Damp soil/compost
- Water and towels.

This prayer walk can be done in bare feet while thinking about the story. You may need a leader to support at each station, especially to help with reading the questions and to ensure that any wet feet are dried to avoid risk of slipping.

The trays are placed in the following order:

**Pebbles** represent the difficult times.

Which part of the story was difficult for the son?

As you stand on the pebbles, think about things which you find difficult.

**Sponges** represent the thankful times.

Was the son thankful. Were his friends thankful?

As you stand on the sponges, think about what you are thankful for.

**Soil/compost** represents the sorry times.

In what way did the son in the story make a mess of things?

As you stand on the soil/compost, think about those times when you might get things wrong.

**Water** represents forgiveness.

What happened when the son said sorry to his father? What does this tell us about God?

As you stand in the water, think about the way that God forgives us and welcomes us.

Say thank you for the love, forgiveness and acceptance we know through Jesus.

While drying feet after this prayer walk, you could discuss how it felt and what was discovered through doing it.

Collective group prayer for all to share at the end of the walk:

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for walking with us when our way is rough and uneven.**

**You are with us when we are happy and thankful and the path feels smooth.**

**When things go wrong and get messy, you are there with us in the mud,**

**You forgive us and wash us clean with your love.**

**Help us to walk with you.**

**Amen.**

