



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Keep Looking

[10 min]

#### Play I Spy

Say: **In Jesus' story, the son took his father's money and went far away, but the father never stopped loving his son. Even when the son was still far from home, the father saw his son returning home. Let's play I Spy to see what we can see far away.**

- If you have windows in your classroom, gather kids in front of the windows. Pick something far off to describe. If you don't have windows, pick something in the classroom.
- Say: **I spy something...** and then use one word to describe what you picked.
- Allow kids to take turns guessing what you spied. If after several tries they haven't guessed it, give them another clue.
- After kids guess what you described, invite a willing child to pick something to describe. If needed, help kids with their descriptions and their guesses.
- Continue as time allows.

#### Talk About It

Say: **When we're excited about something, we often watch for it, like the dad was watching for his son.**

Share about something *you've* watched for. It might be your husband coming home from work on a special day, a friend from out of town coming for a visit, or a special package you were waiting to have delivered.

Ask: • **What's something *you* were excited about and watched for?** Kids might say Dad coming home from work, Grandma coming to visit, or a friend coming over to play.

Say: **The father saw his son coming from a long way away. Even though the son had done wrong things, his dad still loved him and was excited to see him coming home. God loves us like that. And because God's love is in us, we can love others the same way. God's love overflows out of us into others because love is a fruit of the Spirit.**



## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO The Lost Grape

[10 min]

### Supplies

- “The Lost Grape” teaching video

### Discuss and Watch “The Lost Grape”

Say: **We’re learning that love is a fruit of the Spirit. We saw how the father in the story Jesus told showed love when his son ran away and then came home.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time you knew your parents *really* loved you. Share your own story first.**

Say: **Let’s see what happens when one of our fruit-basket friends heads off on his own.**

Watch “The Lost Grape.”

Ask: • **Why did the adventures the grape went after seem exciting at first?**

- **Why weren’t the adventures as exciting as he expected?**

- **Why is being safe in God’s love better than doing our own thing?**

Say: **For the grape, the best place to be was in the fruit basket with his loving fruit family. For the son in Jesus’ story, the best place was home. Sometimes it can seem like following our own way will be more exciting, but the best thing in life is accepting God’s love! Then God will help us pass his love on, because love is a fruit of the Spirit.**



## DEEPER BIBLE Unchanging Love

[15 min]

### Supplies

- hanger with notches (1 for every adult or teen helper)
- 8-ounce paper cups (2 for every adult or teen helper)
- hole punch
- yarn (two 2-foot pieces per adult or teen helper)
- large plastic coins (4 per child)
- masking tape
- paper
- markers (1 for every adult or teen helper)

### Easy Prep

- Punch 2 holes in each paper cup, about 1 inch from the lip of the cup and directly across from one another. Draw a smiley face on half the cups and a frowning face on the other half. Thread a piece of yarn through both holes in each cup and tie the ends together in a loop. Hook each loop on a hanger notch so every hanger has 2 cups hanging from it, 1 smiley and 1 frowning. Draw an arrow on a small piece of paper, and tape it to the hanger above the frowning cup.

### Add Coins to the Happy Cup

Form groups so each adult and teen helper has about the same number of children. Give each helper four coins per child and a scale you made ahead of time.

Say: **In Jesus' story, the dad had a great big love for his son.** Have adult or teen helpers draw a large heart at the top of a piece of paper.

Say: **But the son asked for all the money his dad was going to give him when he died.** Have leaders hand each child four coins.

Say: **This probably really hurt his dad's feelings. So when the son decided to come back home, he thought he'd done too many bad things for his dad to still love him. Maybe he hoped the dad would love him a *little*.** Have adult or teen helpers draw a small heart at the bottom of the same page on which they drew the big heart.

Say: **Sometimes we feel the same way about God. We feel like we've done so many wrong things that God may not love us very much. Let's look at something to help us think about that.**

Have each adult or teen helper hook the hanger over a finger and hold the scale out in front of the kids. Helpers can hold the papers with the hearts in their other hands, beside the scales, so that the arrow will be pointing between the two hearts before any coins are added.



Say: **When we do good things, God is happy.**

Share about something good *you've* done to please God. It may be that you helped a friend, told the truth, or took care of someone who was sick. Invite one child in each group to add a coin to the cup with the smile.

Ask: • **What's something good *you've* done?** Kids may say obey Mom, share with a friend, or be kind to a neighbor. Have each child add a coin to the cup with the smile as he or she shares.

Say: **Look—the scales are pointing to the big hearts. That means God loves us a lot.** Have adult and teen helpers show kids that the arrow is pointing to the large heart.

### **Add Coins to the Sad Cup**

Say: **But what if we have a day when we're crabby? What if we yell at Mom and hit our sister?**

Share about something unkind *you've* done. Maybe you yelled at your kids, told a lie, or said something unkind. Have a child in each group add a coin to the cup with the frown.

Ask: • **What's a wrong thing *you've* done?** Kids may share about fighting with a sibling, not sharing toys, or disobeying Mom. Have them each add the rest of their coins to their group's frowning cup.

Say: **Uh-oh! The arrow is now pointing to the smaller heart. When we do bad things, we may think, like the son in the story, that God loves us less.** Have adult or teen helpers show kids that the arrow is now pointing to the small heart.

Say: **But remember, the dad's great big love for his son never changed, even after the son did a lot of bad things.** Have each adult or teen helper draw a second large heart on another sheet of paper and tape it over the arrow on his or her scale.

Say: **The dad's love was always big, and God's love never changes either. God has a great big love for you on your very best days and on your very worst days.** Have adult or teen helpers show kids that the big heart is always

there, whether or not the cup with the frown is full.

**Say: God is happy to see us make good choices, but it doesn't make him love us more. And God doesn't want us to make wrong choices, but he still loves when we do. God's love is bigger than anything we can ever imagine. And when we're friends with God, he helps us love others no matter what, too. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. That means God's with us, showing us how to love others!**



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

### Show Me the Love

[5 min]

#### Supplies

- red washable marker\*

#### Play a Love Game

Refresh any red marker hearts on kids' hands as needed. Sit with kids in a circle. Say: **Today we learned that love is a fruit of the Spirit and that God helps us show love to others.** Lead kids to touch the hearts on their hands.

Say: **Let's play a game. We'll try to think of people we can show love to—as many as we can. You'll each have a turn to share. On your turn, touch the heart on your hand and name one person. You might say someone in your family, or you might say someone you don't even know, like the cashier at the grocery store, a police officer, or a cook at a restaurant.** Demonstrate to start, then have the child sitting to your left in the circle share. Guide each child to share, one after the other, encouraging them to speak quickly. Continue around the circle more than once and until kids run out of ideas or as time allows.

#### Pray

Say: **Wow! There are so many people we can show love to—from our families to our neighbors to our church and school. Since God is the one who helps us show love—love is a fruit of the Spirit—let's ask God to help us love these people we named this week.**

Lead children in a brief prayer, asking for God's help and mentioning as many kinds of people as you can remember from what kids shared in the game.

Say: **I love that you were here today to learn about love! I hope you'll show love to everyone you see this week, and remember that God will help you show love because love is a fruit of the Spirit. I hope you'll come back next week to tell me all about it!**