



Into The Prayground



RCL
September, 2025

Into The Prayground

Into The Prayground is our weekly resource designed for multigenerational faith formation. Based on the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), it complements your worship experience. This is how we connect our children's moments with meaningful activity in the pews. This is written for those who:

- Are looking for an alternative to traditional faith formation.
- Want to bring generations together.
- Need flexible options.
- Have limited leaders available.
- Seek to create meaningful opportunities for faith formation while fostering connections among families.

But how do you do this? Start with your children's moment. We have a script all ready for you, plus directions on how to extend the wonder into the pews. We love introducing the activity during the children's moment or message, then handing out the supplies. It allows you to explain the activity, give instructions, and link it to the text. It also gives the kids something fresh to work on and keeps them busy during the sermon.

Each week there is a new activity with simple supplies that links to at least one text from the Revised Common Lectionary. We use simple supplies you already have in your supply cabinet or that you can easily pick up while running regular errands (or order online).

SEPTEMBER 7

Into The Playground

session at a glance

the message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luke 14:25-33• Would You Rather?
the extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• following Jesus bingo boards

Luke 14: 25-33

materials

- direction strips, printed and cut out, placed into a basket
- pencils
- clipboards
- copies of the following Jesus bingo boards

The Message

procedure

Bring out the basket with the question strips. My friends, will someone please reach in here and grab one of the pieces of paper? Thank you! Here, let's read it together. *Read it aloud.* Okay, so which would you choose? *Allow for responses.* Let's pull out another one. *Read it aloud and allow for responses. Repeat with the remaining two.*

Were any of these questions easier to answer than others? Why? *Allow for responses, but come around to some of them had choices that were disgusting or dangerous.* How do we make decisions when both choices are equally good or equally bad? *Allow for responses.*

Today's Scripture gets into these sorts of decisions. Jesus wants his disciples to be certain in one thing: LOVE. Jesus was sent to this world because of LOVE, because

God wants to share God's LOVE, and because Jesus was the one who could bring love from God to the world. Jesus is talking with people that want to be his disciples, and he is clear that choosing to follow Jesus means choosing the way of love towards all. Doing this is a big commitment and Jesus wants them to know how serious it is. He didn't want them to see this as a game of 'Would You Rather' because once they choose to follow Jesus, everything is different. There are costs to following Jesus. You won't always be liked by people for choosing to help others. You won't always have comfortable situations. Sometimes you have to choose to give up relationships that keep you from being loving with God's people. Jesus wants the people to realize this and plan ahead. If they are serious about following Jesus, they need to think about what gets in their way of loving God's people. Are they ready for those costs? It's a harder question, like we had earlier with 'would you rather eat ice cream or cake'? It's not as simple as knowing that you'd rather eat a donut than a bug.

I have blank bingo boards for you. As you listen to the sermon and to the rest of the service, I want you to think about ways that you see people choosing to follow Jesus. How are they showing love? Write or draw these in the boxes on your Bingo board. This week, cross out each square when you see someone doing these actions. Let's see what happens in our community when we pay attention to the different ways people follow Jesus.

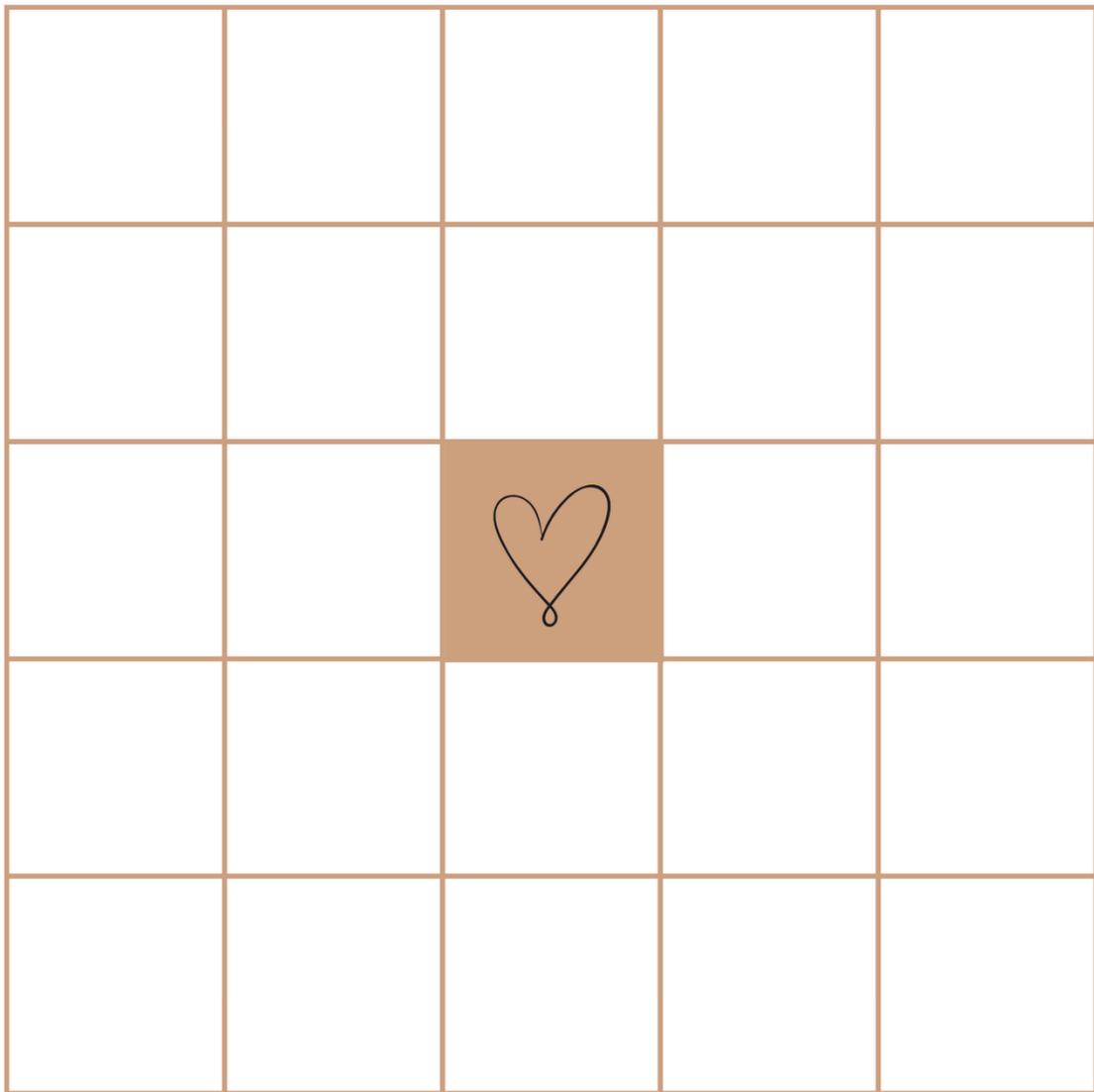
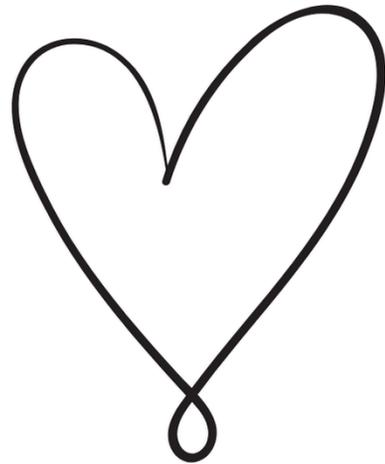
Would you rather: eat a sandwich or eat a bug?

Would you rather: go for a swim or walk barefoot over broken glass.

Would you rather: eat ice cream or eat cake?

Would you rather: go to bed early or go to bed late and be tired the next day?

following
Jesus
BINGO



SEPTEMBER 14

Into The Playground

at a glance

the message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luke 15: 1-10• When do we party?
the extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• party buntings

The Message

materials

- construction paper, scrapbook paper, or colored printer paper; whatever you have in your supply closet
- magic markers
- scissors
- twine
- scotch tape

The Message

procedure

Friends, I have exciting news for you! You are NEVER going to believe what happened this morning. Want to guess? *Allow for responses, and after each one, respond that it is a good guess, but this was even BETTER.* Alright, let me tell you. GUYS. This is huge. I PUT ON MY SOCKS. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT???. *Pause for a moment and see if anyone responds.* You don't seem very excited. Did you not hear me? I PUT ON MY SOCKS!!! *Pause again.*

Tell me this: is putting on your socks the reason to have a big celebration? A giant parade with marching bands and fire trucks and people throwing candy? Then followed up by a giant BBQ and an ice cream sundae party for everyone? And then fireworks? *Allow for responses. WHY? Allow for responses.* I guess it seems pretty mundane to put on your socks. It usually happens each day that you need socks. No one has ever put me on television or featured me on Instagram for putting on my socks.

So, what IS worthy of a celebration? *Allow for responses.* Those are all really good responses! Did you know that Jesus also discussed what is worthy of a celebration? That's what we hear about in today's Scripture. Jesus is talking with the Pharisees and legal experts when they start grumbling about him welcoming the sinners. I wasn't there when Jesus talked with them, but I wonder how he felt when they said this. They were talking about the people that Jesus loved and took care of. They were basically saying that Jesus was doing the wrong thing by hanging out with them. I wonder what that did to Jesus's heart.

You know how he responded to them? He told them a parable so that they could learn about WHY Jesus welcomed the sinners and ate with them. Jesus told a story about having 100 sheep, but one was lost. The person that lost that one sheep left the others and worked hard to find the lost sheep. And when the sheep was found, there was so much rejoicing. Some people would think, "Oh, this is like expecting a parade for putting on your socks." But Jesus saw it as a reason to celebrate- the lost one was found and part of the team again. Just like being able to welcome those that do things that are wrong- it's a chance to show them love and bring them back into God's family. That is worth celebrating!

Jesus ends this passage with this beautiful statement: "I tell you, joy breaks out in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who changes both heart and life."
Celebration! Not condemnation.

Today, we're making party buntings to help us remember that each person in God's family is beloved and worthy of a celebration. You are going to cut out triangles or rectangles from the papers and attach them to a length of string. You can decorate them however you want. Take it home and save it for a time that you want to celebrate.

The Extension

materials

- construction paper, scrapbook paper, or colored printer paper; whatever you have in your supply closet
- magic markers
- scissors
- twine or string
- scotch tape

This project is infinitely customizable. If you do not have tables available for the children, consider having clipboards available for them to work on. [Consider having a sample](#) in the space for them to see.

SEPTEMBER 21

Into The Playground

at a glance

the message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luke 16:1-13• focus
the extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• window frames

The Message

materials

- [sample window](#) (use the materials below)
- card stock squares (use whatever you have in your supply closet and cut them into 6 inch squares), one per person
- pencils
- scissors

- small rulers or straight edges
- washable fine tipped markers
- plain white paper

The Message

procedure

I have a new plant at home. I need some help figuring out how to take care of it. I heard that plants need water and light to survive, right? Does this mean I should leave it in a sunny window or inside a closet? *Allow for answers.* Okay. Got that squared away. Now let's talk about the water. If I take my cup and put a whole cup of water into the plant each hour I'm awake, will that be enough? *Allow for responses.* Okay, what about at breakfast, lunch, and dinner time? Still too much? What will happen if I do it too much? *Allow for responses.*

Let me get this straight- are you telling me that too much of something that is good for you can actually be a problem? Huh. Interesting. So, if I love riding my bicycle, riding it every moment I'm awake in every type of weather could be a problem? *Allow for responses.* But I LOVE to ride my bike. I want to do it all the time.

Help me for a moment. If I ride my bike ALL THE TIME, why is that a problem? *Allow for responses.* Well, wait. Maybe you're right. It would make it hard to eat if I'm riding my bike. I couldn't get my work done, could I? Hmm. But I really love to ride my bike. What should I do? Get rid of it? *Allow for responses.*

Are you telling me that the bike is not the problem? Hmm. What IS the problem? ONLY focusing on the bike? Ahhh. Interesting. If I only ride the bike and focus on it the most, I won't have time to spend with my family, reading a book, helping my friend who needs someone to help them with a project, and more. The problem is not focusing on the right thing. Got it.

That's what Jesus is talking about mostly in this passage. Today's Scripture reading is TRICKY. There are a lot of pieces to this story. Jesus tells us about a person who hasn't done the best job at work for their boss. The boss finds out and tells the person to wrap up the work because they will no longer be working there. We don't know if the person really wanted to be working there or if they were forced to do the job. We just know that they no longer have the job and will have no way to pay their bills. It's a really rough situation, so the person finds a way to get some of the boss's money returned to him but also be in a good relationship with those that needed to pay the boss. His focus was on taking care of himself. The person honored both relationships there because what he

needed was a way to earn money and have people that could help him. He focused on that.

It's hard to figure out what Jesus wants us to pull out of this story, especially since the person gets praise from the former boss and Jesus, saying that it is good that he was shrewd and found a way to make it happen. Jesus does end the passage with a very clear lesson: *You cannot serve two masters. You can focus only on one, not two.* Like my focus on my bike- loving it so much that I let it crowd out everything else in my life is a problem. Focusing on getting new items crowds out everything else. Focusing on getting lots of money crowds out everything else. When you listen today, think about all the ways we choose what we focus on. We're called to focus on Jesus and sharing the love of God with those we meet. Anything that pulls our focus from that is a problem, no matter how small it is.

I have something for you to use back in your seats. We're making viewing windows. Cut out a square in the center of your piece of cardstock and then decorate your window however you want. Maybe you want to doodle reminders to keep focused on God, maybe you want pictures of ways that we follow God. Make this however you wish!

The Extension

materials

- card stock squares (use whatever you have in your supply closet and cut them into 6 inch squares), one per person
- pencils
- scissors
- small rulers or straight edges
- washable fine tipped markers
- plain white paper

This project is infinitely customizable. If you do not have tables available for the children, consider having clipboards available for them to work on.

SEPTEMBER 28

Into The Playground

session at a glance

the message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luke 16:19-31• what is visible?
the extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• decorated sacks for the pantry guests

materials

- an uninflated balloon
- washable markers or crayons
- paper grocery bags

The Message

procedure

I have a riddle for you. What takes up space but you cannot see it? *Allow for answers.* Do you need another clue? Watch this. *Blow up the balloon you have and allow the children to respond.* What made it so you could answer the riddle? What did we put inside the balloon? Can you **see** the air or can you **see** how the air fills things? That's the way it is in life sometimes. We can't see the object, but we can see how the object affects us. We have to pay attention. If we weren't paying attention to the riddle, would you have thought about something taking up space but you cannot see it OR would you just notice that I was holding a balloon? Probably just the balloon, right?

Let me tell you about today's story. Jesus is telling a story about a rich man who paid attention to how he could be comfortable. He made sure he had the best clothes. He feasted on wonderful foods every day. His focus was on himself, and it was to the exclusion of everything else. He didn't pay attention to the needs of others around him. He didn't listen to what people told him, especially what people told him about what it meant to be part of God's family. He just really wanted to be comfortable.

Jesus went on in the story, describing what life was like for the rich man when he had died. He was NOT comfortable anymore. In fact, he was hot. He was parched. He wanted relief, even if it was just a drop of cool water. So he looked up and demanded that Lazarus, one of the men he passed every day and ignored while he lived on earth. All Lazarus needed was some food, but because the rich man was so focused on his own comfort, he didn't pay attention to Lazarus. And why is he paying attention to Lazarus now? Because he wants to be more comfortable and demands that Lazarus come to dip his finger into some cool water and drop it onto his tongue. Did the rich man ever pay attention to what it means to be part of God's family? *Allow for responses.*

This passage is a bit difficult. It's hard to hear about people being ignored. It's hard to think about people caring more about their own comfort than about helping those around them. It's hard to think that there are things that we pay attention to that crowd out our abilities to see what God wants us to see. But there's good news for all in this. We gather here as God's beloved children and we learn together about what it means to pay attention to what God says is important. We are sent out together as people that can pay attention, and we work together to keep our vision tuned to the needs of others. We help encourage each other to pay attention and take care of others. We aren't stuck like the rich man was. We can keep practicing and learning and changing so we can do it better.

I am sending you back to work on some paper sacks for our food pantry. Let's decorate them with lovely pictures and words of love. Let's keep our attention focused on sharing God's love with all of God's beloved.

The Extension

This is a craft that lets people create as they feel called. Every bag will be different, but isn't that a wonderful illustration of the diversity of God's good and beautiful creation? You may want to give the children suggestions of phrases they could use, such as YOU ARE BELOVED, YOU ARE LOVED, and HAVE A GREAT DAY. Give a little check through the bags at the end to make sure they don't have phrases that could be unhelpful.