

More Than Hearing Worksheet

Episode: CLent4x2019

Texts: [Joshua 5:9-12](#) • [Psalm 32](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:16-21](#) • [Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32](#)

EYE Smart

EYE smart deals with visuals, obviously. But where do those visuals come from and where do they take us? For worship experiences, the visuals can take the form of projected images on a screen or a wall; posters or banners placed around the worship space; the windows of the sanctuary covered with cellophane to filter sunlight into specific colors. There can be objects brought into the worship space that either illustrate or demonstrate a part of a story or a theological idea that comes from the Scripture. You can stage drama around a passage; you could invite someone to literally draw the story as it is read (we've done this! It's fun!). You could commission an art piece to be displayed for the service and then keep it around for a while afterwards.

The visuals can also be mental - invite your congregation to explore the story or the theological idea in their imaginations. You may have to give some parameters or even do a guided meditation that lays the ground for the mental journey. If you are illustrating an actual journey, roll out maps to show distances travelled and the types of terrain met along the way. Use your own sanctuary as an entire stage and move around the room as the story progresses. These ideas can borrow elements from **BODY**, **NATURE**, **PEOPLE**, and **SELF** smarts as you engage people with the story.

Text: **Luke 1:1-3, 11b-32**

15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were **grumbling** and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." 3 So he told them this parable:

11b "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and **traveled to a distant country**, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to **feed the pigs**. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will **get up and go** to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."'

20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was **still far off**, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the

son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.

29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, **you are always with me**, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Smarts	Images in the text/ interesting exegesis	Illustrations	SFX
<p>EYE smart</p>		<p>A la Scott Hoezee at CEP, Stephen Colbert and "Dead to Me" - a modern reading of the son's request for his inheritance</p> <p>The distant country is not specified, but for Jesus' original hearers, it could have been Egypt, Syria, or even Rome. The idea is that the distance was great - so that the son could live with no family connections weighing him down, perhaps? He seems to be a spoiled brat and being unfettered by obligation might be a convenient thing for blowing one's inheritance. Where might a "far off place" be for you all? (See sfx ⇒)</p>	<p>For a special effect for worship, include images for parts of the lesson. For example,</p> <p>Verse 2: Grumbling Pharisees</p> <p>More grumbling Pharisees</p> <p>This image is from a Magic the Gathering Playing card called "Murmuring Phantasm". Eek!</p> <p>Verse 13: The far off country - either include a map of the area vis. Palestine or include a map of YOUR area and a place that would be considered "far off" by your people.</p> <p>Verse 21-24: Guercino "Return of the</p>

		<p>People tend to wander into their own family systems when they hear this parable so invite them at the outset to put family members faces on the players. Jesus was doing exactly this in order to surprise the Pharisees into considering their own circumstances. This could either be powerful or dangerous for some people. But it could also be a way for grace to break into a situation that needs it.</p> <p>Verse 31 - "...you are always with me"</p> <p>Allegorically, this is God speaking to anyone feeling left outside the party. But it could also be a parent, a friend, a loved one who is "always with you". Imagine that person as the story is read.</p> <p><i>This may flow into some SELF smart for calling up personal memories and thoughts.</i></p>	<p>Prodigal"</p> <p>Rembrandt "Return of the Prodigal Son" (The reference to Henri Nouwen's 1992 book is worth the click.)</p> <p>James Tissot "The Prodigal Son in Modern Life: The Return" (1882)</p> <p>Sochi Watanabe "The Prodigal Son Returns"</p> <p>ANOTHER way to illustrate the story would be to arrange scenes from it in tableau vivant. Structure the scenes with as much detail as you desire but our experience shows the less the better for quick scene changes. For example, start the younger son with a tunic that grows increasingly dingy and dilapidated as the story goes along until he is given new clothes by his father at the end. To do this, you could quickly spill and tear the original tunic behind the scenes!</p>
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Text: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

5:16 From now on, therefore, **we regard no one from a human point of view**; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: **everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!** 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Smarts	Images in the text/ interesting exegesis	Illustrations	SFX
<p>EYE smart</p>		<p>Ambassador credentials!</p> <p>Verse 17: It's springtime here in the USA and green things are starting to cautiously poke their tops out of the dirt. <i>Borrowing from NATURE smart, bring in some flowers beginning to bloom!</i></p> <p>OR think of this transformation in terms of growing up - babies becoming children becoming teenagers becoming adults becoming parents becoming middle aged becoming older and all the ways the former age makes way for the next one. Layers of becoming.</p> <p>Benjamin Button</p>	<p>God glasses!! Get some cheap sunglasses and hand them out to people encouraging them to keep them near to remind them to look at others through God's eyes. I used to have a pair hanging from my rear view mirror. Invite people to see them as instruments of reconciliation!</p>

Text: Psalm 32

32:1 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, **whose sin is covered**. 2 Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I **did not hide my iniquity**; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

6 Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. 7 You are **a hiding place for me**; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah

8 I will **instruct you and teach you the way you should go**; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

10 Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD. 11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Smarts	Images in the text/ interesting exegesis	Illustrations	SFX
EYE smart		Verse 1, 5, 7 - "...whose sin is covered.." "...did not hide my iniquity..." "... a hiding place..." This makes me think of a blanket or a coat; the vulnerable part of a person is given something to protect it from further exposure. <i>This has some BODY smart elements to it, too.</i>	Do you have anyone in your congregation with horses? Ask if you can borrow a bridle to show for this psalm. Also, invite them to talk about how a bridle works to communicate to a horse. <i>(NATURE smart)</i>

Text: Joshua 5:9-12

5:9 The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have **rolled away from you** the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Smarts	Images in the text/ interesting exegesis	Illustrations	SFX
EYE smart		<p>The manna stops coming when the people are able to provide their own food from crops planted in the land. This is like a child no longer nursing or bottle feeding when it is old enough to eat solid food.</p> <p>It is also like taking training wheels off a bike.</p> <p>OR It is like putting the cane away after surgery and walking without assistance.</p> <p>The journey from Egypt was a long experience of transformation from a people who had been slaves to a people independent and self sufficient enough to feed themselves through their own labor.</p>	<p>Gilgal = wheel</p> <p>God has rolled away the past experience of oppression in Egypt. Bring in a big tire and wheel it down the aisle as you talk about how God removes the past and shows us the future.</p>