

## THE PRODIGAL SON

(15 minutes maximum. Discussion, poster and summary sharing. This talk is given by an inside team member.)

Please limit your talk to 15 minutes. Try to follow the outline as close as possible. The most important part of this talk is your own story. Please be as much open, honest and sincere as possible.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR TALK: Before writing anything you have to read the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke Chapter 15, verses 11 to 32. Think about the similarities of the story of the Prodigal Son with your own life. You are the most important part of this talk.

Write down the answers to as many of the following questions as you can. You don't have to answer them all, they are only to help you to write your talk. You may answer your own questions if you want. You know your own story better than anyone.

In the story the son squandered everything he was given. Nothing was left. He had nowhere to go, no one to turn to. He faced starvation. He lived like a slave. Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers: Have I been there before too? Have I squandered what God has given to me? Have I been down that low? Have I been that desperate? What did I think of myself? Have I strayed away from God? Why?

The story goes on and the son finally reacts. It was hard for him to take the first step but he made the decision to go back to his father. Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers: Did I make the decision to go back to God too? Was I afraid to make the decision? What made me make that decision? How did I feel after I decided to return to God?

The most beautiful part of the story comes after the son has decided to return to his father. You may want to go back to your Bible and reread the story. The story tells us that the father saw his son from the distance coming down the road. Do you think that the father was waiting for him? Why? Then the father ran to meet his son. Do you think the father was anxious to see him? Why? After that it says that the father hugged his son. What does this hug mean to you? And finally it says that the father threw a party to celebrate the return of his son. Why do you think he did that? Think of the son as yourself and of the father as God. Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers: Did I too feel the loving forgiveness of God the father? How do I feel about the mercy of God in my own life?

Remember the feeling of forgiveness and acceptance by the father. How does it feel to know that God will always forgive you no matter what you have done? This story is about forgiveness and acceptance. You should focus on these two issues and talk from your heart how do you feel knowing what God will forgive you and accept you no matter what you have done. Write down and answer these questions: What kind of life you lead before coming into prison? What do you think about that kind of life? Why? What kind of life are you leading inside this facility after you decided to go back to your father? How do you feel about it? Why? What kind of life do you want to have after you are released? Why? Do you have any advice to others that may be in a same or similar situation as you?

Finally, in the story the older son got upset. He was angry and refused to go in. He complains to the Father. He brought up all what he had done for his father all these years. He refused to call the

prodigal son his brother. He said: "That son of yours" instead of "my brother". Why do you think he did that? Write down and answer these questions: Do I reach out to forgive those who hurt me? Do I forgive and forget? How do I feel when I forgive someone else? How do I feel when someone forgives me?

GIVING YOUR TALK:      Open with a short prayer  
                                    Read the Gospel to everyone  
                                    Read what you have written

NOTE: You must have your talk ready for one of the inside meetings. You will be notified in advance of the date and time. On that date you will read your talk to the teams and they will make suggestions for improvement. Listen to the suggestions and make the necessary changes. Explain your point of view if you don't agree with any of the suggestions. Remember, you are the most important part of this talk, not the words you use or the way you say it.

**At the inside team formation meetings the Lay Director will meet on a one to one basis with the assignee for this talk to coach him. The message of forgiveness and acceptance must be clearly understood. Special attention must be given to this message and not turn this talk into a second Metanoia talk. Other issues related or within the outline can be covered as long as the main message of this talk is transmitted to the audience.**