## July 28, Small Group Leader's Guide Read Luke 15

1. Luke 15 is Jesus' full response to the religious leaders' complaint against Him for hanging out with "sinners". In a sentence or two, what is Jesus conveying in His trilogy-parable response to the religious leaders?

Jesus' parables depict God's quest to reconcile with even just one person as reckless (a shepherd leaving behind 99 sheep for one lost sheep), as relentless and obsessive (a woman sweeping her house for a lost coin), and as a father who is recklessly generous towards his two lost sons in order to bring them home to himself and even so, to one another.

2. As a rabbi, from which Old Testament texts could Jesus have drawn inspiration for His parable of the prodigal son? What is implied in Jesus' parable as drawn from this Old Testament story?

Jesus may have drawn out of the story of Jacob and Esau. There are narrative clues in Jesus' parable that have literary hyperlinks to the Old Testament story. One clue is the younger son's speech to his father as being "not worthy" to be called his son. This phrase occurs in the Genesis story when Jacob prayed to God to spare him from Esau. Another clue is Jesus' description of the father running, embracing, and kissing the lost son. That almost exact phrase only occurs in the Genesis story when Esau ran, embraced, fell on Jacob's neck, and kissed him. Jesus is implying that the religious leaders should learn from Esau as being a true older brother, who chose to reconcile with his younger brother who had wronged him.

3. Jesus is all about reconciling us to God and equally to reconcile us to one another, especially with those we tend to despise and denigrate. Today, what groups of people or which individuals do we as a society or as a church tend to socially ostracize?

Allow for open discussion and for others to share their thoughts on a controversial issue of who is deemed to be in and who is out of society or the church. It is an exercise of identifying and naming our social bigotries and prejudices.

4. What does reconciliation "on the ground" look like for you and for our community at Little Trinity?

Allow for open discussion for creative and basic ways to exercise reconciliation and forgiveness. An example would be to exchange the peace of Christ to each other during a Sunday service. Another example is to create a timeline to attempt reconciliation or conversation with estranged family members or friends. Another example as a church is to consider ways to live out the call to actions in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.