

Use LAaSMO to analyse the following passage from Luke's Gospel:

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"



L	Literary Form What genre or literary form has the author used? What sort of truths does the form convey?	
Aa	Author & Audience Who wrote this? Who did they write it for? What was happening at the time? What was life like?	
S	Setting What is the world that this passage is set in? What places, roles, people and customs are mentioned?	
M	Meaning What do you think the author was trying to say to their community: About God? About people? The world?	
O	Our World Today What do others, people of faith and people of no faith, think of this passage?	

Author

Traditionally Luke was thought to be a Doctor; Luke, the beloved Physician, friend of Paul (see Col 4:14). Although this is debated now both the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles are attributed to him. Luke writes very well in Greek so we think he was well educated; he writes more than any other Gospel writer, (writing a Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles). Luke writes in common Greek and uses Roman literary techniques and styles: he loves journeys, speeches, allusions to other stories or events, parallel stories (matching one character with another).

Literary Form

As you work through each passage be mindful of its individual literary form and of its role in the wider Passion and Gospel. This is a parable. A parable is a succinct, didactic story, in prose or verse that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles. It differs from a fable in that fables employ animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature as characters, whereas parables have human characters.

Read Luke 15:11–32

Behind the text

1. Why did Luke include this story?

In front of the text

2. What were Jesus' listeners and Luke's readers supposed to get from the story?

In front of the text

3. What affects my reading of this text?

Audience

We think they were Gentiles – not Jews – which means that he had to convince them that the Jewish messiah had come for all – even Gentiles. This is evident in explicit mention of the Gentiles (Simeon) and in the larger number of passages which emphasise inclusion. Luke's Jesus is more gentle, more calm, than Mark's and very outward looking; even in death Jesus is very 'together', more concerned about those around him than himself. Finally, his writing style seems to assume his audience are competent readers, educated like himself. If so, they are likely to have been wealthy rather than poor.

Setting

Like all the Gospel's Luke's is set in Palestine in the 1st century. The Romans occupy the land, demanding obedience to Rome as well as offering the Jews time and space to practice their own faith. The Temple in Jerusalem, extended by Herod the Great, focussed as the central point of religious faith and belief. Following the occupation of the Greeks, Greek was spoken, along with Aramaic (the local language) and Hebrew (the language of Judaism.)

Reference: <https://www.philosophycat.org/post/hermeneutics-in-the-classroom>