

Four Friends Helped

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12

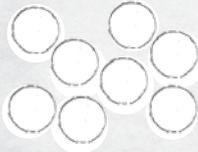
MAIN POINT: Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:2-3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.

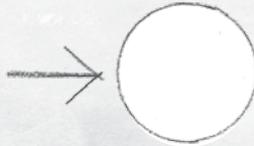
SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)

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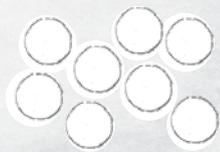
LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(25–30 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus was in Capernaum, a city on the Sea of Galilee. The Pharisees and scribes—teachers of the law—came to listen to Jesus’ teaching. They were curious about His message and wanted to make sure He was teaching things that were true. So many people came that they crowded the house; there was no more room.

That day, four friends came to see Jesus. The four men carried their friend who was paralyzed. Jesus had healed people before—even people who were paralyzed. (See Matt. 4:24; 8:6.) The men believed Jesus came from God, and He could heal people. So their faith led to action. Because the friends could not get through the crowd, they

carried their friend to the roof and lowered him down to Jesus.

Jesus' words to the man surprised the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Rather than saying, "Get up and walk," Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." The religious leaders kept quiet, but Jesus knew their thoughts. They accused Jesus of blasphemy, dishonoring God by claiming to do what only God can do. But Jesus did not blaspheme. He is God, and He has authority to forgive sins.

Jesus asked them, "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'" Simply saying, "Your sins are forgiven," seems to be the easier thing, but to actually forgive sins is harder, something only God can do. As God, Jesus has the power and authority to heal and forgive. And Jesus knew He would take the man's sins upon Himself on the cross—an act of love that would cost Him His life.

Jesus healed the man who was paralyzed to prove to the religious leaders His power to forgive. Mark 2:12 records the crowd's reaction: "They were all astounded and gave glory to God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"



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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use gestures:** Use gestures to emphasize action. Motion as though you are lifting off part of the roof, reach out your hand as Jesus addressing the man on the mat, and cover your mouth in surprise when the crowd sees Jesus' miracle.
- **Encourage movement:** As you tell the story, encourage kids to recline on the floor as they listen. When Jesus tells the man to get up, invite kids to stand and listen to the rest of the story.

Four Friends Helped

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus had been traveling, and He went to Capernaum (kuh PUHR nay uhm). **When the people in the town heard that Jesus was home, they gathered at the house to hear Him teach.** Pharisees and other teachers of the law had traveled from villages all over Galilee and Judea. Some even came from Jerusalem to hear Jesus. **So many people came that they stood in the doorway, and there was no more room for anyone else.**

Just then, four men came to the house. They were carrying their friend on a mat because he could not walk. They wanted Jesus to heal him, but they could not get through the crowd. So the men carried their friend up to the roof. They took off part of the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered their friend through the crowd so that he was right in front of Jesus.

Jesus saw that the friends had faith, and He told the man lying on the mat, **“Young man, your sins are forgiven!”** When the religious leaders heard this, they thought, *Who does Jesus think He is? He is being disrespectful to God! Only God can forgive sins.*

Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. He said to them, **“Why are you thinking like that? Is it easier for Me to say to this man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Get up and walk?’”**

As God's Son, Jesus had the power to forgive people's sins. But how could He prove that the man's sins were really forgiven? So **Jesus showed His power on earth to forgive sins by turning back to the man on the mat. “Get up, pick up your mat, and go home,”** Jesus said.

The man who had been unable to walk immediately got up. He picked up his mat, and he went home, just like Jesus commanded.

Everyone in the crowd saw what happened, and they **could hardly believe what they had seen! They praised God** and said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Christ Connection: The man who was paralyzed needed to be healed. Jesus knew this and did something even greater; Jesus forgave his sins, and then He healed the man. Because Jesus is God, He has the power and authority to heal and forgive. Jesus forgives those who trust in Him.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that the four friends trusted Him to heal their friend, and Jesus did something greater. We can trust Jesus to forgive and heal. (Ps. 56:3) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Four Friends Helped

BIBLE PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12

MAIN POINT: Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:2-3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, invite them to share about a time their friends helped them do something. Would they have been able to do that task on their own?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Four Friends” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Four Friends” on the activity page. Kids should interview classmates and collect signatures for each category.

SAY • Were you able to find four friends who fit each description? Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about four friends who worked together to help someone they cared about.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Human obstacle course

Choose four to six kids to be human obstacles. Instruct them to stand throughout the room. Determine a pose for each obstacle and demonstrate what the player must do at each obstacle.



Tip: Adapt obstacles to the abilities of your kids.

Consider these examples:

1. Human obstacle lays flat on his back. Player must carefully step over obstacle.
2. Human obstacle stands with his legs apart to form a tunnel. Player must crawl through the tunnel.
3. Human obstacle holds hands high in the air. Player must give obstacle a high-five.
4. Human obstacle sits cross-legged on the floor. Player must circle the obstacle twice.
5. Human obstacle squats down with knees, arms, and legs on the floor. Player must hop over obstacle like a frog.

Allow kids to take turns moving through the obstacle course. Then switch roles and create new obstacles.

SAY • Have you ever been in a room so crowded that it was hard to move from one side to the other? Imagine so many people in a house that you couldn't get in at all! That's what happened to some friends who were trying to get to Jesus. We will hear more in our Bible story today.

OPTION 2: Unique inventions

Form groups of three or four kids. Provide various supplies and challenge them to create something. After several minutes, allow kids to explain how their invention is used.

After a group presents its invention, exclaim, "I've never seen anything like this!"

SAY • In today's Bible story, Jesus did something that caused people to say, "We have never seen anything like this!" Let's find out what happened.

- scissors
- tape
- glue
- markers
- various supplies: paper towel tubes, drinking straws, sticky notes, paper clips, and so on

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Simulate a waiting room at a doctor's office. Set up a desk or table as a reception area. Position a potted plant, file folders, and office supplies on the desk. Arrange a row of chairs at the front of the room along with a stack of books or magazines. Hang a clock and generic art on the wall or display the theme background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire

[Large Group Leader enters wearing a wristwatch and solid-colored clothing, such as medical scrubs. He or she carries a clipboard and a Bible.]

LEADER • Mr. Smith? The doctor will see you ... *[Glance up and notice kids with surprise.]* Oh! Wow! This waiting room sure got crowded fast. *[Look back at clipboard.]* But I don't see any of you here on the list. Are you here because you are sick? Injured? No? *[Look at wristwatch.]* Ah! I know! You are here to hear a Bible

story! It is that time, isn't it? Wonderful! Let's get started.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • While Jesus was on earth, He spent time with many people. Sometimes *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom*. Jesus also performed miracles. Miracles are unusual events that only God can cause to happen. *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son*. For the next few weeks, we are going to hear Bible stories about ways Jesus healed people. Our big picture question is, *What did Jesus heal people from?* Listen closely to find out the answer.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • Here is where today's Bible story is on our timeline. It is called "Four Friends Helped" and it comes from the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. Remember, the Bible is made up of lots of smaller stories, but all these stories fit together to tell a bigger story of how God sent His Son into the world to save sinners.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Mark 2:1-12. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Four Friends Helped."

LEADER • Jesus grew up in Nazareth, but when He was an adult, He lived in a city called Capernaum (kuh PUHR nay uhm). One day, when Jesus was home,

• Bibles
• "Four Friends Helped"
video
• Big Picture Question
Poster
• Bible Story Picture
Poster

many people came to hear Him teach. Religious leaders—the Pharisees and other teachers of the law—came. Some of them traveled many miles to hear Jesus. The house was so crowded that no one else could get in. Then some men came to the house. They carried their friend on a mat because he couldn't walk. They wanted to see Jesus. They hoped Jesus would heal their friend, but the house was too crowded. What did they do? Did they turn around and go home? No! The four friends went up onto the roof, took off the roof above Jesus, and lowered their friend down into the house.

Can you imagine? Jesus was sitting there in front of the crowd and all of a sudden, this man came down from the ceiling right in front of Him! Jesus saw that the friends had faith; they trusted that Jesus was telling the truth about who He is and that He could heal their friend.

Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins. Jesus said something that surprised everyone. He looked at the man on the mat and said, “Young man, your sins are forgiven!” This made the religious leaders upset because they thought Jesus was being disrespectful to God. Only God can forgive sins. They didn't realize that Jesus is God the Son. God sent Jesus to earth to rescue people from sin. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take the punishment for sins. That is why He could forgive people's sins.

Jesus knew the religious leaders were upset. So He showed them that He has power on earth—not only to forgive sins but to heal a man who couldn't walk. Jesus told the man, “Get up, pick up your mat, and

go home.” And that is just what the man did.

It was a miracle! The people praised God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Christ connection

LEADER • The man who was paralyzed needed to be healed. Jesus not only healed the man physically, He did something greater: He forgave the man’s sins and then He healed the man. Being able to walk would help the man while he was alive on earth, but being forgiven of his sins helped the man eternally. Jesus was going to die to take the punishment for the man’s sins, and the man would live with God forever.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Read Psalm 103:2-3 aloud. Then lead boys and girls to read the key passage together.

LEADER • Does anyone know who wrote this psalm? (*King David, Psalm 103:1*) Who is David talking to? (*himself; his soul; Psalm 103:2*) It might seem strange that David is talking to his own soul, but he is telling himself, “Remember this! This is important!”

David wanted to remember to praise the Lord. He wanted to remember everything the Lord gave him. God forgives sin and heals our diseases. Let’s sing our key passage song to remember these words.

Lead boys and girls to sing “My Soul, Praise the Lord.”

• Key Passage Poster
• “My Soul, Praise the Lord” song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • The four friends helped get their friend to Jesus. **Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.** Jesus knows our needs. Now watch this.

• “Unit 24, Session 1” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 24, Session 1” discussion starter video.

Then guide kids to discuss the following questions:

- What did Nell need from her friends?
- Have you ever helped a friend in need? What do our friends need the most?
- In the Bible story, what did the man who was paralyzed need from Jesus? (*physical and spiritual healing*)
- How can we bring our friends to Jesus? (*invite them to church, share the gospel, pray with and for them, love them, read the Bible with them, and so forth*)

LEADER • The four men who carried their friend to Jesus had faith. They believed that Jesus could heal their friend who could not walk. Helping their friend was probably hard work, but they were determined to get him to Jesus. God calls us to bring our friends to Jesus. He has the power to heal us and forgive our sins. Are you willing to help someone in need?

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Mighty Healer” song

LEADER • Jesus helps us in our greatest need. Let’s sing. Sing together “Mighty Healer.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • God, thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sins so that we can be forgiven. I pray that we would all look to Jesus to rescue us from our sins. Help us to trust in You. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Small Group LEADER

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- crayons

Display the key passage poster. Provide paper and crayons, and encourage kids to write out Psalm 103:2-3 using a different color for every other word. When kids finish, guide them to read the verses aloud together two times.

SAY • This is our key passage for the next few weeks. It comes from the Book of Psalms. Can anyone tell me what part of the Bible the Book of Psalms is in? (*Old Testament, Poetry*)

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- chalkboard or dry erase board (optional)
- chalk or marker (optional)

Provide a Bible for each kid. Choose four kids to sit at the front of the room. Then form two teams with the remaining kids. Explain that you will ask a review question to the first team. The team should choose one of the four kids at the front of the room to answer. If the chosen player answers correctly, the team earns one point. If the player answers incorrectly, the other team may answer for a point.

After each question, provide the Scripture reference and ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud. You may choose to keep score on a chalkboard or dry erase board.

1. The people came to hear Jesus teach in what city?

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

(Capernaum, Mark 2:1)

2. How crowded was the house where Jesus preached?
(There was no more room, Mark 2:2)
3. How many friends carried the man who was paralyzed?
(four friends, Mark 2:3)
4. How did the men get their friend to Jesus?
(They removed the roof above Jesus and lowered the man down, Mark 2:4)
5. What did Jesus see in the four friends?
(their faith, Mark 2:5)
6. What did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of doing?
(blaspheming, or speaking against God; Mark 2:6-7)
7. What did Jesus tell the man to do?
(to get up, pick up his mat, and go home; Mark 2:11)
8. How did the crowd react?
(They were astounded and gave glory to God, Mark 2:12)
9. ***What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.***

SAY • Great job, everyone. Did you know that in the Old Testament, God described Himself as the Lord who heals? [See Ex. 15:26.]

In our Bible story today, Jesus healed a man who was paralyzed and forgave his sins. Jesus is the only Son of God. Not only can He heal people physically, He can heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: What's easier?

Give each kid a pencil and two or more index cards. (Aim to use at least 30 cards total.) Instruct kids to write on each index card something they know how to do. For example, *ride a bike* or *bake a cake*. Prepare two cards that say *heal a*



- index cards
- pencils

man who is paralyzed and forgive sins.

Collect the cards and mix them up. Hold up two cards. Read the cards and guide kids to decide which task is easier. Encourage kids to explain their reasoning.

SAY • Today we heard a story about a time when **Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.** The religious leaders were upset with Jesus, and Jesus asked them, “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’”

The religious leaders might have thought it was easier to say “Your sins are forgiven” because the result was invisible. No one could disprove Jesus’ power to forgive. To prove His power to heal the man’s body, the man who was paralyzed had to get up and walk.

Jesus could forgive the man because He knew He was going to do the hardest thing. Jesus was going to die on the cross. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, everyone who trusts in Him receives forgiveness and eternal life.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

OPTION 2: Key passage collages

Display the key passage poster. Form four groups of kids. Divide the key passage into four phrases and assign one phrase per group.

Challenge kids to work together to find and arrange letters from the magazines to spell out Psalm 103:2-3. When all groups finish, call on them one at a time to read their portions aloud.

SAY • We learned in our Bible story today that these things in Psalm 103:2-3 are true. Jesus forgives our sin and can heal our diseases. In the story, **Jesus healed a**

- Key Passage Poster
- magazines
- scissors
- paper
- tape or glue

Tip: Preview magazines to ensure all content is appropriate for kids.

man and forgave his sins. Jesus healed people then, and He can still heal people today. ***What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.*** Jesus may not always bring physical healing in this life, but we believe when He comes again, He will make all things new.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Encourage kids to write the name of a friend and list a few things they can pray for that friend this week. Remind kids that we can help our friends in many ways, and the best way to help them is to bring them to Jesus.

SAY • When you see someone in need, do you help them?

Remember our Bible story and look for ways this week to help others.

Lead kids in prayer. Pray that kids would show God's love to others. Pray that God would guide them to be friends who point others to Jesus. Thank God for sending His Son down to us to meet our greatest need and to heal us.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Jesus the Healer" on the activity page. Direct kids to use the grid to fill in the blanks and answer the big picture question. (Answer: *Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.*)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Jesus the Healer" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.