

Four Friends Helped

BIBLE PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12

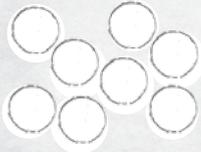
MAIN POINT: Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:2-3

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

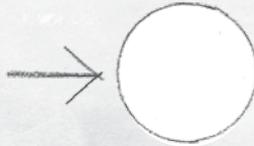
SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)

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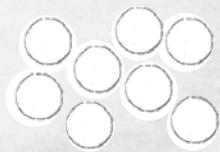
LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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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 paralyzed 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 paralyzed man 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

- **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.*

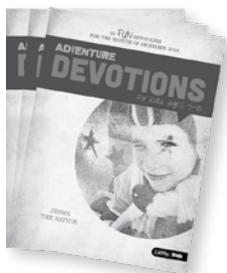
Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. He said to them, “Why are you thinking like that? Is it easier for Me to say to this man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Get up and walk?’”

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
ADVENTURE!**

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 ask them about a time they helped a friend or a friend helped them. What was the task? Why did you or your friend need help?

SAY • Today we will learn about a four men who helped a friend with two big problems. We will learn what the problems were and what his friends did to help him.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Unexpected Guests” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Unexpected Guests” activity page. Guide kids to find and circle the six things they wouldn’t expect in a Bible story picture.

SAY • Some things in our picture obviously did not belong. But in our story today, we will learn that there were also five men who were unexpected guests in the house where Jesus was teaching. Why do you think they were unexpected? How do you think they got in? We’ll learn more soon.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Healthy hearts

Instruct the class to do a series of simple exercises, like jumping jacks, running in place, push-ups, squats, or arm circles. Allow volunteers to take turns leading the workout.

SAY • Today we will learn about a man who had two big problems. One was with his physical body. He was paralyzed, which means he could not move the muscles in his body. We will learn about his other problem and what happened to help him fix both. What do you think his other problem was? What do you think could fix his two problems?

OPTION 2: On the mat

Set up cones around the room to make a race course. Form teams of four and provide each team with a towel and a beach ball. Instruct each player on the teams to grab a corner of the towel. Kids must use the towel to carry their beach ball through the race course and around the cones. If the ball falls off the towel, the team must return to the start and try again. The team with the fastest time wins.

SAY • In our story today we will hear about a man who was carried on a mat by four friends. Why do you think his friends had to carry him? Where do you think they were carrying him? We will learn more soon!



Tip: If you have kids with physical limitations, modify the activity to include them.

- towels, 1 per team
- beach balls, 1 per team
- orange cones
- stop watch

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Recreate a doctor's exam room. Cover a high table in a white sheet to look like an exam table. Hang age-appropriate anatomy posters. Fill jars with cotton swabs, tongue depressors, and lollipops and place them on a shorter table. Consider displaying 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
- stethoscope

[Large Group Leader enters wearing white lab coat and stethoscope around his or her neck. He or she is carrying a clipboard, studying it instead of looking up.]

LEADER • Let's see here. *[Look up]* Oh my. I was not expecting this many patients today. Well, I guess I'd better get started. Who here is sick? *[Allow responses.]* Wait, you aren't sick? Well then, you must be here for a regular check-up? Is that right? *[Allow responses.]* Wrong again? Hmmmm ... Well, why are you here? *[Allow responses.]* You want to hear a Bible story?

Well, since I don't seem to have any other patients besides this group, I suppose I have time for that! What if I tell you some stories about the greatest Healer to ever live? Awesome!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • You may have already guessed, but Jesus is the greatest Healer I was speaking of. As we learn about Him, let's use a big picture question to help guide our learning. Our big picture question is, *What did Jesus heal people from?* You will have to pay close attention each week to see our answer and how it fits in the story.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • I heard that over the last few weeks you were training at an obstacle course and learning about Jesus' miracles. Well, as you can see [*point to giant timeline*] we are focusing the next few weeks on a different part of Jesus' ministry on earth: the times He healed people. This week our story is called "Four Friends Helped."

• Giant Timeline

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 was causing quite a commotion in the places He went. I've seen some crowded rooms in my day, but never a house so crowded no one else could get in! That's how things were when Jesus taught.

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

People traveled from far and wide to hear Him teaching. That did not stop the four men in our story though, did it?

They saw that there was no room for them to enter the house through the door, so they went up to the top of the house, removed some of the roof, and lowered their friend down through the ceiling! They were so confident that Jesus is who He said He is, they would not give up on getting their friend to Him for healing. Then Jesus did something unexpected.

“Your sins are forgiven,” Jesus told the man who was paralyzed. The religious leaders felt angry. They knew that only God could forgive sins, but they did not believe that Jesus is God the Son. Jesus saw what was in their hearts and decided to show them His power not only to forgive sins but to heal bodies. He told the man on the mat to stand up, take his mat, and go home.

As soon as Jesus said that, the man rose from his spot, grabbed his mat, and went out! People were amazed. None of them, not even the religious leaders, had seen something like that before. ***What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.***

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.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.

Similarly, we may need healing from different physical problems, but even more than that we need forgiveness for our sin. The Bible tells us that the

wages of sin is death. On our own, we cannot escape the punishment we deserve. We need Jesus. Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, and taught many amazing things. He performed miracles and healed people to show His power as God the Son. Then, He laid down His life to die like a sinner deserves to die. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the grave to show that His sacrifice was enough to cover sin. When we believe in Him, we receive forgiveness and new life from God.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Psalm 103:2-3.

LEADER • King David wrote this psalm. He wrote it almost like a reminder to himself. David knew that praising God was important, and he did not want to forget why God is worthy of praise. Our key passage reminds us of the same things. We can praise God for forgiving our sins and healing diseases.

Lead boys and girls in singing “My Soul, Praise the Lord.”

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

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever helped a friend in need like the four friends in our Bible story? As you think about that question, watch this short video.

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

Discuss with kids any times they helped a friend in need. What is everyone’s greatest need? How can we help others who need Jesus?

LEADER • In the story, four friends brought their friend to Jesus because they knew Jesus could help him. We

- “Unit 24, Session 1” discussion starter video

too can bring our friends to Jesus. Only Jesus can forgive sins and restore our hearts. He gives us life with God forever.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Mighty Healer” song

LEADER • Jesus is amazing. Let’s all praise His name right now! I know just the song too. Sing together “Mighty Healer.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Thank You, Lord for sending Jesus to be our Healer, Friend, Savior, and King. Help us learn to trust You with all our problems. Give us courage to tell our friends about You so they can find healing and forgiveness too. 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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Small Group LEADER

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- color scratch paper
- paper clips, coins, or other scratch utensils
- “My Soul, Praise the Lord” song

Provide each kid with a sheet of color scratch paper. Invite the kids to copy the key passage from the key passage poster onto their color scratch paper. They will use a paper clip, coin, or other utensil to scratch the letters onto the black to reveal colors underneath. Then read the verse together and sing “My Soul, Praise the Lord.”

Tip: You can make color scratch paper with crayons, tempera paint, and dish soap. Search online for help.

SAY • Our key passage is a great reminder that God heals physical problems and forgives our sins to give us new life. When we trust Jesus, we will want to remember to praise God, just as David did when he wrote this psalm.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- four-in-a-row vertical game

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids locate Mark 2:1-12. Form two teams of kids and place a four-in-a-row vertical game at the front of the room. Assign each team one of the colors from the game (for example, red and yellow). Alternate between teams asking questions. If the red team answers correctly, they will choose where to drop a red disk in the game. If they answer incorrectly, the yellow team will choose where the red disk is dropped. Then it is

the yellow team's turn. Play until one team has four of their color disks in a row or there are no questions left to ask.

Questions:

1. The people came to hear Jesus teach in what city?
(*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 Jesus first say to the man on the mat?
(*"Your sins are forgiven," Mark 2:5*)
7. What did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of doing?
(*blaspheming, or speaking against God; Mark 2:6-7*)
8. What did Jesus tell the man to do?
(*to get up, pick up his mat, and go home; Mark 2:11*)
9. How did the crowd react?
(*They were astounded and gave glory to God, Mark 2:12*)
10. ***What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.***

SAY • Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins. Jesus can do both because He is God the Son. The religious leaders did not believe Jesus could forgive sins, but we know that Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin and rose again to give us new life. Apart from Jesus, there is no forgiveness of sin.

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

- index cards
- pen

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: What's easier?

Before class, prepare a set of index cards with actions on them. The last pair should read *heal a man who is paralyzed* and *forgive sins*. Draw index cards two at a time and ask kids to decide which they think is easier. Challenge kids to explain why they chose the card they chose.

Example actions:

- ride a bike
- tie your shoe
- write your name
- do a pull-up
- paint a picture
- build a birdhouse
- cook a meal
- do a cartwheel
- dunk a basketball
- drive a car

SAY • **Jesus healed a man and forgave his sins.** The religious leaders did not believe He could forgive sins, so Jesus asked them if it would be easier to tell the man who was paralyzed to get up and walk. Then, to prove that He is God the Son, Jesus did both! Nothing is too hard for God. Jesus can still heal our physical bodies, and only Jesus provides the way to have forgiveness and life with God.

LOW PREP

Note: Be sensitive to kids in your class that experience a physical disability.

OPTION 2: Freeze tag

Choose one kid to be *It*. He will chase other kids to tag them. When a kid is tagged, she must lay on the ground without moving. She is stuck until four friends come around her and say, "Let's go to Jesus." Kids who are in the

process of unfreezing other kids cannot be frozen until the process is complete. For smaller groups, alter the rules so that one kid can say, "Let's go to Jesus," four times.

SAY • The man who was paralyzed could not move, similarly to when you were frozen in the game. The four friends of the man who was paralyzed had faith that Jesus could help their friend. They trusted that Jesus is who He said He is, and knew He could heal people. *What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin, and death.*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture of a friend they know who needs Jesus.

SAY • Just as the four friends in our Bible story helped bring a man to Jesus to be healed, we can help our friends meet Jesus too. We help bring people to Jesus when we tell them about the gospel: We are all sinners and Jesus came to die for us. Try to think of a friend who needs to hear about Jesus this week.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to be with your class and help them to be faithful to their friends and tell them about Jesus.

- markers or crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible story coloring 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.