

A Sunday School Series



GOOD NEWS

from Mark

JESUS IS HERE!

JESUS FORGIVES



LESSON 3

Mark 2:1–12



faithin**kids**

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Jesus is here! Good news from Mark (Part 1)

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Jesus Forgives

Mark 1:40–45



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Truth that changes me:

Good news! Jesus has the power to forgive sin.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are amazed and thankful for the forgiveness Jesus offers.

Preparation



Where are we going?

The action here is amazing: a packed room, a ripped roof, four friends, a man on a mat and, in the middle of it all, the Saviour we all need. Last week we saw Jesus' power to heal and help - the leper was healed and his life was transformed. People have heard about Jesus' extraordinary power and compassion - the crowds and the friends are there for a reason - what will Jesus do next?! This time we see Jesus not only heal and help, but also meet the man's biggest need - forgiving his sin.

As we enjoy the action, we want the children to understand that Jesus says the biggest problem we *all* have is our sin. Our biggest need is forgiveness. We want the children to feel the problem and be amazed and thankful that Jesus offers the forgiveness we all need.

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read **Where are we going** and **Look at the passage** to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.



Look at the passage

Four Fab Friends (v1–4)

The good news of Jesus is spreading and crowds flock to him as he returns to home territory. Four men are desperate to get their paralysed pal to Jesus, hoping for healing. The house is packed but that doesn't stop them - they climb on to the roof and begin some demolition!

Their commitment and love is inspiring. They truly believe that Jesus will be good news for their friend. Let's be as committed to bringing the children in our groups to Jesus.

continued →

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One Big Problem (v5)

The paralysed man has an obvious problem - no walking, no football, no tag but also no job, no money, no independence. Everyone expects a healing miracle - surely Jesus will meet his great need? Jesus surprises us all when he announces with great tenderness, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Jesus shows that he is not here just to deliver a temporary fix and heal our bodies, he's here to deliver an eternal fix, healing the great rift between us and God.

Good news is on offer to us all - Jesus can forgive sin, our biggest problem.

A Confusing Question (v6-9)

The teachers of the law are outraged by Jesus' words - they know that he is claiming to be God. Because sin separates us from God, only God can forgive sins. Jesus gives them a question to consider - is it easier to say "your sins are forgiven", or, "take up your mat and walk"?

- "Your sins are forgiven" - easier to say because nobody can prove whether it has happened.
- "Take up your mat and walk" - harder to say because everyone can see the evidence of your words.

We will unpack this point more with the older children in their teaching time.

A Happy Ending (v10-12)

Jesus says what is harder to say, showing again his amazing power and compassion. The man stands up and walks out - life transformed in every way - and the crowd stand in wonder, praising God.

Jesus' ability to heal demonstrates his care and power, but his ability to forgive is the good news that we all desperately need. Like the paralysed man we are stuck, unable to help ourselves, the forgiveness that Jesus offers transforms us from being paralysed by sin, to dancing in praise.



Win my heart

What would you say you most need today - a holiday in the sun, more money, more friends? Perhaps you feel paralysed by something - a loveless marriage, addiction, terminal illness in a family member, a child's disability? Help with that is what you long for. Sometimes our - often very real and heartbreaking - problems are so consuming that we miss the bigger picture. Jesus says that for each of us, our most paralyzing problem is our sin and the broken relationship with God that results. Is your heart convinced?

For your heart, before you prepare the lesson.

The brilliant good news Jesus offers is a permanent solution to the problem of sin - the forgiveness that we so desperately need. There is no other solution - only forgiveness from God himself. Jesus can be trusted to care for us completely, to solve our biggest problem and help with all the other problems and heartache that we face. The man walked away with forgiveness and healing - a life transformed in more ways than one. Jesus offers the same good news to us today.

Questions for your heart

- What problem would you most like Jesus to fix in your life *right* now?
- How would your life look different if you truly believed that being forgiven by Jesus was your greatest need?

continued →

GOOD NEWS
from Mark





5 minutes to focus on your group

Do the children in your group understand what sin is and how big a problem it is?
Do they understand that they need forgiveness and can only get this from Jesus?
Do you know of any problems in your group that cause a constant ache in their family? It takes care to offer Jesus' forgiveness to those children without ignoring their painful situations.

*What do the children in
your group need?*

*Pray that the Spirit
would help them:*

- *to grasp the truth*
- *to live it out*

GOOD NEWS
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All together time



This has been written as an all-age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



Helpers Needed

Volunteers to hold up pictures & act out carrying a man on a mat.



Props

Three pictures of problems and solutions printed or to show on a screen, a large strong sheet / blanket – capable of carrying a child, a cardboard box, play figures / paper doll chain.



What to Say



What to Do

Are you ready to play an exciting game called, "What they need!"
I've got three pictures of "Problems".
And three pictures of "Solutions".
All you have to do is match the problem with what they need to fix it!

Pictures of problems and matching solutions printed out/on a screen – you could start this like a game show host.

- Smashed up car – *solution = recovery truck*
- Footballer lying on ground holding his leg – *solution = stretcher*
- Person with wildly sticking up hair / dirty teeth – *solution = hairbrush / toothbrush*

Volunteers hold up problems on one side and solutions on the other. State the problem and ask everyone to cheer for the solution that they think is "what they really need" as you point at each one.

The man who met Jesus in today's Bible adventure had an obvious problem. His legs were paralysed - he couldn't walk or move his legs at all.

It wasn't an injury that would get better, like this footballer has – this was a permanent problem with no hope of change.

Hold up the picture of the footballer.

Back then, there were no wheelchairs, mobility scooters, lifts, automatic doors and no smooth pavements. The man's only way to get around was to be carried by his friends as he lay on a mat – all of the time.

Just like in our game, everyone knew what solution this man needed. Fixed legs! But that was impossible...

Until Jesus arrived - an amazing man who had both the power and the willingness to heal and help!

Get your helpers to try and carefully carry someone from one side to the other in a strong sheet / blanket = hard work, be careful not to hurt them.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

The man's friends were desperate to get him to Jesus.

But the good news about Jesus was spreading! So many other people wanted his help too that when these men got to the house where Jesus was, it was full of people, completely packed. They had no hope of getting inside.

They were outside with the problem.

Jesus was inside with the solution.

Too many people and a house in their way... if we can't get through the people, we'll go through the house!

Amazingly, that's just what they did – up on to the roof, carrying their friend, digging through the roof. Imagine being inside – chunks of ceiling falling on your head, a patch of sky, a group of faces and then a mat, as through the roof to the feet of Jesus came the paralysed man.

And everyone felt like they were in the game we played earlier.

What does it look like the man's problem is?

Take answers, "he can't walk".

What solution are they hoping for?

Take answers, "Jesus will fix his legs".

But there was a big shock in store for everyone. Jesus said...

"Son, your sins are forgiven". (Hold a moment of silence. Shock!)

I like to imagine the person at the back – "he said shins right – shins on his legs, is that what Jesus is fixing?!"

No – he definitely said SINS!

Jesus said the man's biggest problem was his sin.

"Sin" is the Bible word for every way we think, say and do the opposite of what God wants. I'm sad to say that sin is in every minute of our lives. I'm sadder to say that we don't grow out of it. And at the very heart, the beginning of all sin is the way we treat our loving God and creator, believing we know better than him about how to live. Sin creates a gap between us and God. It separates us from our loving heavenly Father because it shows that we don't want to live his perfect way.

Produce cardboard box as the house.

Add play figures / paper doll chain to the house – you could draw on a window and add lots of faces.

Rip open the roof of the cardboard house – lower a figure through the gap.

Show the man's problem – illustration 1 page 17

continued →



What to Say

What to Do

Jesus cared for the man, he saw the problem with his legs, he knew how hard that made his life, but Jesus said he had something better to give the man than mended legs.

Forgiveness for sin – a fix for the man's biggest problem!

It's good news that Jesus cares and can help and heal people.

It's far better news that Jesus came to forgive.

And so that we can be totally sure that Jesus has the power to fix our sin problem, Jesus fixed the man's other problem too. "Take up your mat and walk", Jesus said. And to the amazement of everyone, he did!

Show illustration 2 page 18

I suspect everyone here today has a problem that we wish Jesus would just fix right now. Amazingly, Jesus came to do something even better, to forgive us and mend us, to make us whole, to bring us back to the one we need most – our heavenly father. That is good news for everyone here today!

Pray/sing to finish





7s and under



Get going

Man on the Mat

Divide the group into teams – each team has a tea towel and a large action figure / doll. Set up a simple obstacle course, perhaps under a table, round a chair etc. Each team has to work together to carry their doll across the obstacle course. You could use a large cardboard box as a house at the end and introduce the story – they pull back the roof and lower the mat through. *With larger groups – you could do this with four children at a time in a relay style.*



Link: Today's Bible story is about a man who had a problem with his legs. He couldn't walk so his friends carried him around on a mat. Let's hear what happened when his friends took him to Jesus.



Teaching time

Four Fantastic Friends (v1–4)

Use your story sticks to tell the story – see the craft for further details if necessary.

- Wobbly legs – the sad problem, the man's legs don't work. Emphasise to the children what this means – he can't walk, play, run, kick a ball.
- Number 4 – the good news, four friends who care for him and carry him on their mat.
- House – Jesus has come to town, news has spread of the help he has offered, everyone wants to go to him.
- Window – the house is packed, they can't get inside – how can they get their friend to Jesus?
- Stairs – up on to the roof, nothing standing in their way.
- Hole / diamond – pulling back the roof to make an opening.
- Rope shape – lowering the man down.

Read v4 from the Bible.

continued →



Notes

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

Use a suitable Bible translation – we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

You will need: A large sheet of paper and pen, Bible verses, four strips of card of equal length, attached together using split pins. These strips of card (story sticks) will be used to make different shapes that tell the story.

The following video gives an example of how to use the story sticks:



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One Big Problem (v5)

Ask the children what big problem the man has, make the wobbly legs again with the story sticks. What did everyone expect Jesus to do for the man?

Read v5 from the Bible.

Jesus knew all about the problem with his legs, he knew how hard his life was, but he still thought there was a bigger problem than his legs to deal with – a problem called sin.

Use the story sticks to explain the problem sin causes visually. Have the sticks in a line and explain that God is at one end and we are at the other end. Explain that God is holy, perfect and only does what is good. Explain that we all do what is wrong and don't live loving God as we should. The Bible calls that sin. That makes a great gap between us and God. Use the middle two story sticks to make a "V". People are apart from God because we do not want to live loving him. There is no way for us to get across the gap.

When Jesus says, "your sins are forgiven", he is saying that he is sorting out the problem and fixing the gap between us and God. Flip the stick on God's side over so that the "V" is bridged.

Jesus has the best news of all - he can fix our biggest problem by forgiving our sin.

A Happy Ending (v10-12)

Read verses and use the story stick again to conclude the story...

- Diamond shape / open mouths – some of the religious leaders were shocked that Jesus said he could forgive sins.
- Legs – Jesus told the man to pick up his mat and walk, and he did!

Explain that healing the outside problem that everyone could see (paralysed legs) helps us know for certain that Jesus has the power to fix the inside sin problem that we can't see.


Use the story sticks to make a smile. Jesus is good news, good news for the man and good news for us, he can help us with the problems we face, but best of all, he can fix our biggest problem and forgive our sin.



Brain break

Bring them back

One person is nominated as the "tagger" and everyone else starts on one side of the room which is home. Everybody runs around but if you are tagged, you are stuck until a free person grabs your hand and leads you back to home. Once you have been taken home, you are free again and can run around.

 **Link:** The person who freed you brought you back home. Today we learnt that Jesus has come to forgive our sin so we can come back to God.

continued →

A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.

GOOD NEWS
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Heart & hands

Craft time – Story Sticks

Make your own story sticks using four strips of card which are the same width and length. Attach the card together with 3 split pins to make a long moveable stick.

➡ **Link:** Help the children to retell the story using their own story sticks and the storyboard on page 19 or using their own words. Can they remember what happened next?

Think time

Big question: What was the man's biggest problem? *His sin.*

A follow up question: What did Jesus do for the man? *Forgave him and healed his legs.*

Pray

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to help fix our sin problem, we are sorry that we have not loved you like we should, thank you that because of Jesus we can be forgiven. **Amen**



*Make a craft and have a chat.
Give the children time to
reflect on today's big truth, so
it can impact their hearts.*

You will need: 4 strips of card, 3 split pins

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from Mark

JESUS IS HERE!




8s and over



Get going

Bring a Friend

Divide the group into teams and get them to line up on one side of the room. Set a chair for each team on the opposite side of the room. The first person in each team runs around the chair then heads back and links to the second in line, together they run around the chair, then head back to link to the third etc. Until the whole team runs around the chair linked together.

 **Link:** In today's Bible story four friends take their friend to meet Jesus, like we took our friend to the chair in a chain. But these men had to carry their friend on a mat because he couldn't run or walk.



Teaching time

Four Fab Friends and One Big Problem (v1-5)

Look at the verses together, fill in the table to spot the problem – and the solution. You could offer the children the problem and get them to work out the solution and vice versa.

Problem	Solution
v3 – For the man He can't walk	v3 – For the man His friends carry him on a mat
v4 (also v2) – For the friends There are crowds of people around Jesus - they can't get inside the house	v4 – For the friends They dig a hole through the roof and lower the man on the mat down with ropes
v5 – Man who can't walk is in front of Jesus	v5 – Jesus forgives his sin!?!

continued →



Notes

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As you fill in the table together, help your group feel the surprise – the problem and the solution seem obvious – the man can't walk so Jesus needs to make him walk again. We have already seen in Mark's gospel the kindness of Jesus and his willingness and power to heal and to help. Jesus sees the man and understands his struggle and his problem, yet Jesus knows that the biggest need the man truly has is to be forgiven.

Ask your group what they think their biggest need is right now?

What would Jesus say their biggest need is?

Draw a picture to show the problem of sin. Draw two cliffs with a bottomless ravine between them. Draw a stick man on one side to represent people. Draw a crown on the other side to represent God. Explain that God is holy, perfect and only does what is good. God created us, loves us, and he tells us how to live loving him and following him.

Explain that we all do what is wrong and don't live loving God as we should. The Bible calls that sin. That makes a great gap between us and God. Point to the ravine. There is no way for us to get across the gap. Even if we try our hardest, we still do not live loving God perfectly and need to have our sin forgiven.

Only God can forgive our sin, because sin is things we have said, done and thought against **God**. Expand on this example – if Jack hits John, Sarah can't forgive Jack, only John can. In the same way only God can forgive sin.

When Jesus says, "your sins are forgiven", he is saying that he is sorting out the problem and fixing the gap between us and God. Draw a bridge across the gap. Write "Jesus" on the bridge. Jesus is saying he is God and has come to offer forgiveness.

Jesus has the best news of all – he can fix our biggest problem by forgiving our sin.

A Confusing Question and Happy Ending (v6–12)

The people in the room were surprised at what Jesus did – some were horrified that Jesus claimed he had the power to forgive sins. Jesus' answer and actions help us understand that he was right to make the claim that he can forgive.

Illustrate: If I said, "I can turn my stomach purple by just saying the words", I could say it and claim it had happened but you wouldn't be able to see any proof. You wouldn't know if I was telling the truth or not. But if I then said, "I'll prove it by turning my face purple", and you saw me actually do that, it would make sense that I had probably done the other thing too!

Jesus says, "You are forgiven", a change we can't see. Then Jesus says, "get up and walk", a change we can see. Ask the children what happens. Get them to see the responses from those standing by. We can have confidence that Jesus has the power to forgive, because he has the power to heal.

It is really good news for each one of us that Jesus knows our greatest problem and offers us the solution we need – he can forgive our sin and fix the gap between us and God.

continued →



GOOD NEWS
from Mark






Brain break

Rip the Roof

Give each child a piece of paper, this is the roof, and ask them to close their eyes. They need to listen and follow the instructions you read out.

- Fold the paper in half
- Tear off the upper right corner
- Fold the paper in half again
- Tear off the lower right corner
- Fold the paper again
- Tear off the upper left corner
- Open your eyes and unfold your paper

Get the children to look at what they did – there will be different results depending on how they followed the instructions, how they folded the paper – how much they ripped – did they manage to make a hole in the middle of the roof? Weird? Imagine how much weirder it is to rip a hole in an actual roof!

 **Link:** Did you manage to rip the roof? Did you make a hole? Did you make a mess? Did you need help? In today's Bible story a roof got ripped, a hole got made but best of all – Jesus offers forgiveness to sinners like us.



Heart & hands

Did you spot it?

- What problem did the man have that everyone could see?
- What problem did Jesus fix first?
- What else did Jesus do for the man?

Work it out

- Why do you think the man's friends went to so much effort to get him to Jesus?
- Why did Jesus think the man's greatest problem was his sin?
- What evidence did we see that Jesus really can forgive sin? *Get them to name the link between the physical healing that could be seen and the forgiveness that was unseen. Allow other discussion too!*

continued →



A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.

We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section.

These questions can mostly be found on the Chat Time (see p.21) sheet which has been designed to aid your discussion. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together. Make sure each child can still answer the personal questions honestly for themselves (e.g. hand out Post-it notes for them to write/draw their answers to these questions).

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JESUS IS HERE!

Live it out

- Imagine that this scale 1-10 is how serious a problem **your** sin is. Not other people's, your own. Where would you put your sin on the scale? 1 is not a problem at all. 10 is the biggest problem ever. Do you want to tell us in a sentence why you chose that number?
- How do you feel about Jesus offering to forgive you?
- When do you feel not good enough, disappointed with yourself or guilty – how could this Bible story encourage you?

Extra stretch

Imagine each of these is a friend who you care deeply about. Is there a sentence or a question you could say to each of them to start a conversation about today's story?

- Asher is a Christian who carries her sin around with her like a heavy sack of potatoes. She often thinks about what she has done wrong. She lives with regret. It hurts every day. She sees the things in her life that could be different if she had acted differently.
- Jimmy just doesn't care about what he does or what he says. He sometimes seems to enjoy being unkind to others. Jimmy has had no contact with Church or Christian things before.
- Tom is just a really nice guy. He is polite, kind, fun and popular with kids and adults. He doesn't think he has any problems that Jesus (or anyone else) needs to fix.
- Jade is a Christian. She has no friends at all at school. She hates walking into school. She wishes she never had to go to school again. You go to a different school.

Pray

Thank God that he knows our greatest need and did not leave us stuck and helpless in our sin but sent his son to offer us forgiveness and to fix the gap between us and God. Thank God for his great love in sending Jesus.

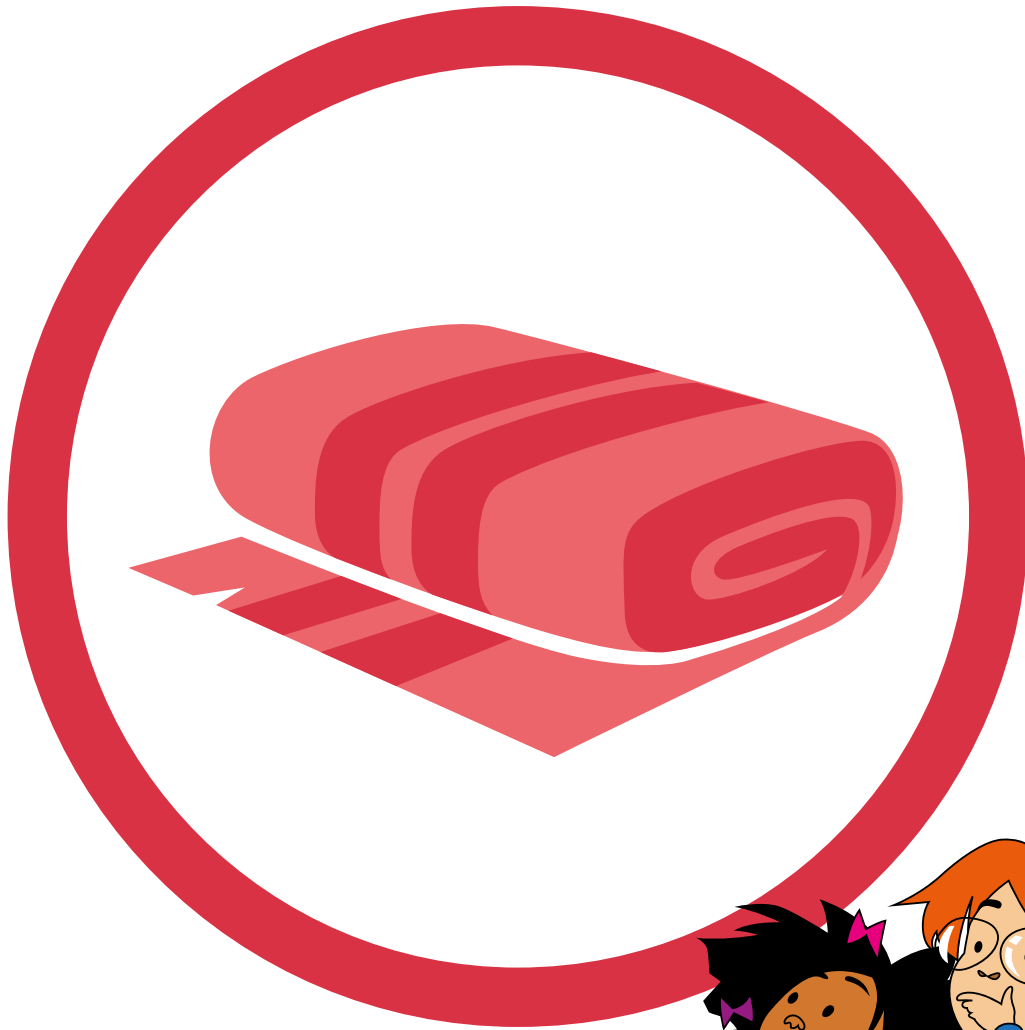


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JESUS FORGIVES

LESSON 3





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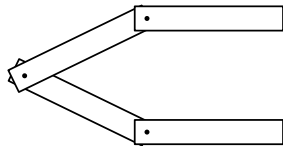


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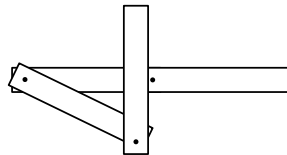
1

The man in our Bible story today was paralysed. That meant he couldn't use his legs. He couldn't run, jump or skip!



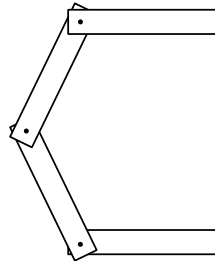
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But he had four very good friends. They had heard about a man named Jesus who was making people better.



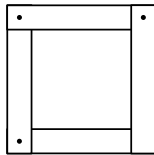
3

So the four friends carried their friend who couldn't walk on a mat to the house where Jesus was.



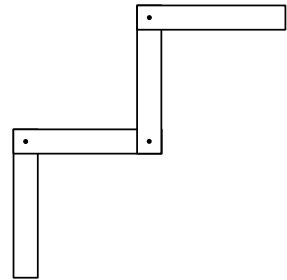
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But when the friends looked through the window, the house was packed. They couldn't get near to see Jesus.



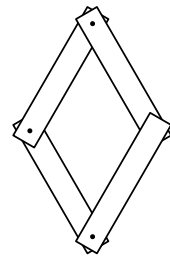
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The four friends didn't give up. They climbed some stairs up onto the roof of the house.



6

They began to make a hole in the roof until they could see Jesus ...



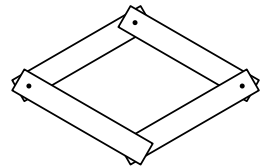
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... and the hole was big enough to use ropes to lower their paralysed friend on his mat down to Jesus.



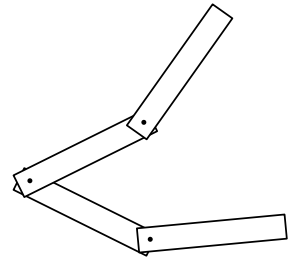
8

When Jesus saw the paralysed man he said, 'Your sins are forgiven.' No one understood what Jesus meant, they were shocked.



9

To show Jesus had the power to forgive sins he told the man to pick up his mat and go home. Immediately, the paralysed man picked up his mat and walked out. Everyone was amazed!

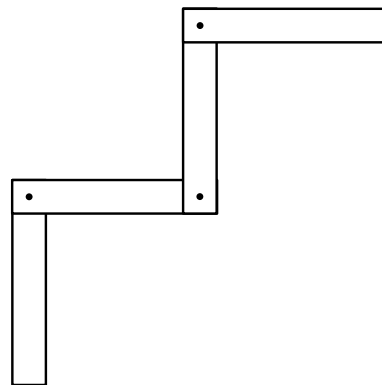
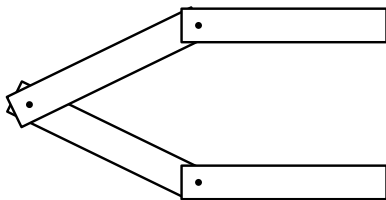
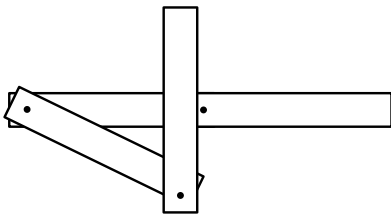
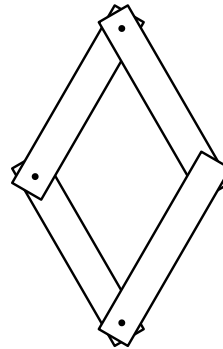
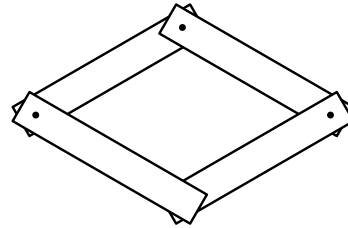
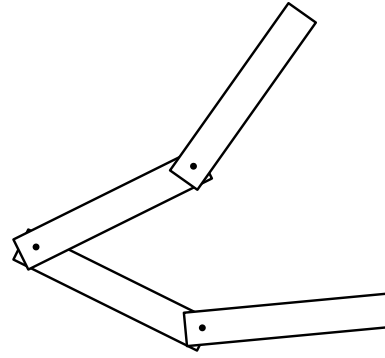
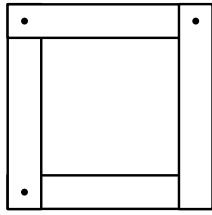


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GOOD NEWS

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JESUS IS HERE!





Heart & Hands Chat Time



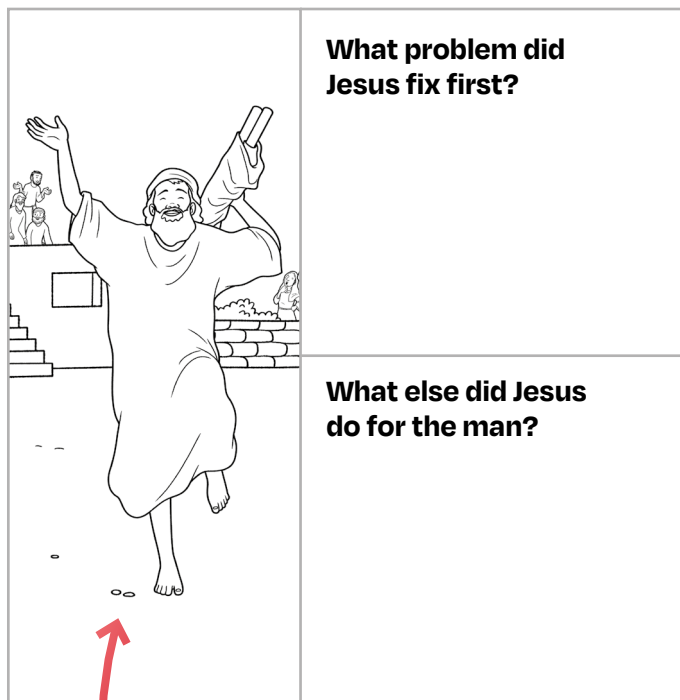
Did you spot it?

What problem did the man have that everyone could see?



Work it out

Why did Jesus think the man's greatest problem was his sin?



What problem did Jesus fix first?

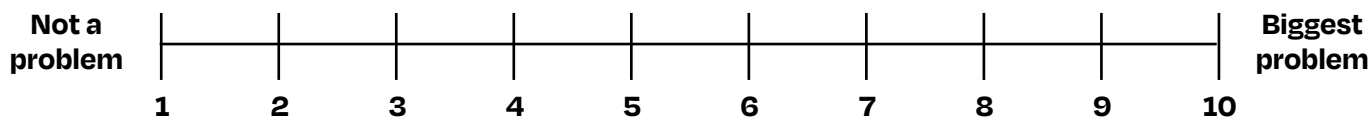
What else did Jesus do for the man?

What evidence did we see that Jesus really can forgive sin?



Live it out

Imagine that this scale 1-10 is how serious a problem **your** sin is. Where would you put your sin? Why have you chosen that number?



How do you feel about Jesus offering to forgive you?

When do you feel not good enough? How could this Bible story encourage you?



Take Home Sheet

Carry on the conversation at home and build faith with us!



Truth that changes me:

Good news! Jesus has the power to forgive sin.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are amazed and thankful for the forgiveness Jesus offers.



Look at the picture from today's story – you could colour it in, then choose a path to follow:

- "Talk together" gently starts a conversation about today's big truth.
- "Open the Bible" encourages you to read and apply the truth together.

Talk Together

Read the verses: *"But they could not get to Jesus because of the crowd. So they went to the roof above Jesus and made a hole in the roof. Then they lowered the mat with the paralysed man on it. Jesus saw that these men had great faith. So he said to the paralysed man, 'Young man, your sins are forgiven.'" Mark 2:4–5*

Use the picture and the verse to answer:

- What do you think life was like for the man on the mat?
- What did people hope Jesus would do?
- What did Jesus think was the man's biggest problem?

Jesus cared for the man and gave him the best gift ever, forgiveness for sin. Jesus proved he had the power to forgive sin by also healing his legs. The forgiveness Jesus offers is good news for everyone. Can you tell me...

- 3 friends who have helped you (or even 4 like the man in the story!)
- 2 problems you would like Jesus to fix.
- 1 piece of good news from the Bible story.

Live it out: Use your story sticks to retell the story together. Can you remember the amazing good news of what help Jesus has come to bring to everyone? *Forgiveness and fixing the gap between us and God.*

A prayer to pray: Dear God, thank you that Jesus has come to offer us forgiveness. We are sorry for all the ways we have not lived loving you. Please forgive us and help us. Amen.

Open the Bible

Read Mark 2:1-12 and use the picture to talk about some of the following questions:

7s and under

- What did the four friends do for their friend who couldn't walk?
- Why did they want to get him to Jesus?
- What good news is there in this story for you and your friends?

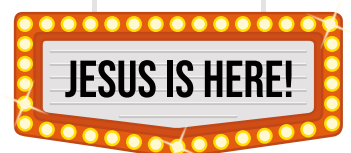
8s and over

- When the man was lowered down, what did you expect Jesus to do?
- Why do you think he offered forgiveness first?
- What would Jesus say is your biggest need? Do you agree?

Live it out: The man in today's story had a problem with an obvious solution. But Jesus knew that there was a bigger problem – a sin problem that we all have – and he fixed that first. This week, can you spot any problems and talk about some solutions that might help. Do you know which one would be best? Is there more than one good option? Jesus offers forgiveness for our sins, the perfect solution to our biggest problem – that is really good news for us all!

Pray: Thank God that Jesus has come to offer us forgiveness and make us right with him again, we are sorry for our sin, forgive us and help us.

GOOD NEWS
from Mark





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