



SESSION

1

Jesus heals



MEETING AIM

To understand that Jesus heals us, despite our obstacles.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 5:17-26



BACKGROUND

This story has so many elements to be discovered. Jesus does heal today. We have many barriers in our way and sometimes we might give up coming to him because of disappointments. We may need friends to support us on our journey. Or maybe we are judging others for the way they come to Jesus. Allow God to speak to you as you prepare, and follow the lead of the children's thoughts and reflections as you take the session.

+ CIRCLE TIME

5 As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. Ask the children if they have done anything this week that they want to tell the group about. Share something that you have done this week. Ask the children to share their most embarrassing and proudest moments from the week. If conkers are available, collect some beforehand and show the children how to have a conker contest.

+ PROP-MAKING

10 **You will need:** an old curtain; rope; string; chosen resources for making the 'room'; card; sticky tape; pens or stickers for crowns

Divide into smaller groups to make props for the story:

- The 'friends' group should make a stretcher out of an old curtain and some rope.
- The 'people' group should make a 'room'. This can be made out of chairs, tables, washing airers, material or pieces of wood, branches, leaves or ferns.
- The 'teachers of the law' group should make simple hats or crowns for themselves.

+ BIBLE STORY

15 **You will need:** stepladders; bowl of dust; props made earlier

Keeping the children in the same groups, everyone should act out their part. The 'friends' must choose someone small to lower down from the stepladders into the middle of the 'room'. Everyone squeezes into the room for the story apart from the 'friends'. You'll also need someone to play Jesus and someone to throw dust.

Everyone had heard that Jesus had come to Capernaum. Everyone wanted to hear him teach. With a squeeze, they all squished into one home.

There were people everywhere: hanging from the windows, up the stairs, squished under tables and chairs, and blocking the doorway. There was no room to move, let alone get through the crowd.

Some friends of a man who couldn't walk were trying to bring him to Jesus. They had heard that Jesus healed people and they desperately wanted their friend to be able to walk again. They carried his mat to the door, but there was no way they were going to get through it. Not with all those people in the way. "Let's work out a plan," they whispered. They gathered together and hatched a perfect plan.

Jesus continued teaching the people. Suddenly, some dust fell from the ceiling onto their heads. Everyone looked up. What was happening? Was there an earthquake? Some more dust fell and some of the roof tiles started cracking! Two eyes peered through the roof as the hole grew bigger. The people gasped! Who was doing this? Eventually, the hole was large enough for the friends to lower the man down to Jesus on his mat. They plonked him right down at the feet of Jesus.

Jesus saw the huge faith of these men. They were so confident that he would heal their friend that, they made a hole in the roof just to get to him! He said to the man: "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

At this, the teachers of the law gasped and began muttering to themselves. "Tut, tut, tut. Who does this Jesus think he is? How dare he say someone's sins are forgiven? Only God can forgive sins."

Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking and he called over to them: "Why are you thinking these things? Let me give you a challenge! Which do you think is easier? To tell the man his sins are forgiven, or to tell him to stand up, pick up his mat and walk? I'll prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins."

The teachers of the law didn't know where to look. How embarrassing! How could Jesus know what they were thinking? Jesus looked down at the man on the mat

and spoke to him: "I tell you, stand up. Pick your mat up and go home."

As soon as Jesus had finished speaking, the man stood up. He collected his mat, looking down at his legs in amazement and walked, barefoot (he'd never needed shoes before!), out of the house while everyone was watching him. They all made a path for him.

Everyone was amazed. While they clapped, cheered, danced and praised God for such an awesome miracle, the teachers of the law kept quiet and crept silently away.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER

5 Ask the group these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What do you think the people thought when the roof began to break above them?
- Which character in this story are you most like?
- What would you ask Jesus for if you stood in front of him today?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE

5 **You will need:** earlier props from the story; paper; pencils

Ask the children to find the prop they most identify with from the story. Ask them to draw a selfie of themselves with this prop and then return to their smaller groups and share why they chose that particular prop. Give an example: "I chose the stepladder because, although there might be difficult things in my life, nothing is going to stop me coming to talk to Jesus." Younger children may need support with this.

+ PRAYER

5 What would you ask Jesus if you were standing in front of him today?

Play some soft music and ask the children to find a space by themselves and listen to the music. When they are ready, one by one, help the children to walk up the stepladders (not to the top!) and ask their question to Jesus (aloud or silently) and then go back to their place.