Man Lowered Through the Roof

Scripture Reference: Mark 2:1-12

Suggested Emphasis: Good friends help us follow God.

Story Overview:

A man who could not walk wanted to be healed by Jesus. When the man’s friends carried him to the house where Jesus was staying, they found the house to be packed with people wanting to hear Jesus and be healed by him. The friends climbed up an outside staircase and dug a hole through the roof. They lowered their friend down to the place where Jesus was. Jesus was impressed by the faith of these men. First, Jesus did what only God can do – he forgave the man’s sins. Then, Jesus healed the man so that he could get up and walk.
Background Study:

Jesus had spent quite a lot of time in and around Capernaum. He must have made it sort of a home base because Mark refers to it as “home” (verse 1). He already had a reputation as one who could heal the sick and cast out demons (Mark 2:1-12). In the parallel passage (Luke 5:17-26) we find that Pharisees travelled all the way from Jerusalem to hear Jesus speak. News spread fast that Jesus was back in town and a huge crowd gathered. People packed the house where he was staying.

There are many kinds of paralysis, affecting different parts of the body or all of it. It seems this man was so disabled he could not walk. His bed probably was a simple mat carried by the corners.

The crowd of people was packed about the doorway, trying to get a glimpse of Jesus. There was no way four men could carry a man through that crowd and into the house through the door. The four men probably used an outside stairway to carry their friend up to the roof. Roofs were often flat. People could sleep on the roof when it was hot. To make the roof the builder would lay sticks close together over the beams and cover them with hard-packed clay. Sometimes a roller would be used to pack down the clay. This made for a hard clay roof. To make a hole, the men would have had to dig through the clay and remove some of the sticks. Probably the roof was so low that no ropes were needed to let the man down. People inside the house could reach up and take him as those outside let him down.

Jesus could see the four men had faith. They would not have done such an unusual thing if they had not believed Jesus could heal their friend. It was a common belief that sickness indicated personal sin, but everyone must have been surprised when Jesus said “You are forgiven” instead of saying “You are healed.”

It is miraculous that Jesus knew what the teachers of the law were thinking. They did not speak out loud, after all. They simply thought these things to themselves (Mark 2:6-8). They must have been shocked when Jesus confronted them.

The teachers of the law listening to Jesus were right to think that only God has the right (or power) to forgive sins. If anyone else had said this then it would have been considered blasphemy. Blasphemy is ridiculing or insulting God or claiming to be
God when you are not. The teachers thought Jesus was blaspheming when He claimed to do what only God can do.

Jesus did not have a theological discussion with the teachers. He simply showed them that he could “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk.” He not only claimed he had the power of God – he proved it. The surprised people praised God, for they knew only He could do such a miracle.

- 🔄 What happened before this story?
- 🔄 What happens after this story?
- 🔄 List of all Bible stories and themes on this website.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring real estate ads to class today. Help the children look through the photos and find the kind of house they like. Point out different types of roofs. Also point out houses that have more than one level and mention the fact that they would have to have stairs. After the children have looked at a few pictures ask them what kind of houses that Jesus might have stayed in. You might even have pictures from a bible encyclopaedia. Talk about the fact that houses in Jesus’ time would have had flat roofs made from sticks and dried clay. The stairs would have been on the outside.

The Story:

Jesus began to travel around and teach people about God. Sometimes he would perform miracles. Sick people would come to him and he would make them well. Soon everyone wanted to meet Jesus.

One time Jesus came to a town called Caesarea. He went to a house and began to teach people and make them well. So many people came to the house that soon the house was full. So many people were crowded into the house that not one more
person could fit inside.

The people who were close to Jesus were very happy. The people who could not fit into the house were sad. One of the people outside was a man who could not walk. The man’s friends had carried him to the house so that Jesus could heal him and make him walk. Now they could not even get their friend close to Jesus.

They were very disappointed. If they could not get their friend to Jesus then he would never be able to walk.

Then the men had a great idea! They found some stairs on the outside of the house and they carried their friend up the stairs all the way to the roof. The roof of the house was flat and made of clay. If they listened closely they could hear Jesus talking down below. The man’s friends began breaking a hole in the clay. Soon the hole became as big as a man.

The people inside must have been very curious to see a hole appear in the ceiling. They could probably see blue sky from inside the dark house. Soon something started appearing through the hole – it was a man! The man’s friends lowered him down through the hole. The man was lowered right in front of Jesus!

Jesus saw the man and he saw the man’s friends. Jesus was happy that these men believed in God. He was happy that the man had such good friends.

Jesus said to the man, “Your sins are forgiven.” When Jesus said that some of the Jewish teachers did not like it. They did not say anything out loud but inside their minds they were thinking that Jesus could not forgive sins. Only God could forgive sins. They thought it was wrong for Jesus to say that to the man.

Even though the teachers did not say anything out loud, Jesus knew what they were thinking. He knew that he could forgive the man’s sins because Jesus is God’s son.

So Jesus did something else that only God has the power to do. Jesus said to the man, “Get up, take up your mat and go home.”

No one could believe his or her eyes. The man just got up and walked all by himself. A miracle had happened. The man was healed! He and his friends must have been so
happy. Everyone started praising God and saying how good God is.

The man was happy that he had such good friends. Good friends really care about you. They want to help their friends follow Jesus.

Do your friends help you follow God? Do you help your friends follow God? I hope so because that makes you a really good friend.

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.

Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow. Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Why did the man’s friends carry him to meet Jesus? The man could not walk and they wanted him to be healed.
2. Why couldn’t they get close to Jesus? There were too many people crowded into the house.
3. How did the man’s friends get him close to Jesus? They climbed on the roof and made a hole in it. Then they lowered their friend down into the house through the roof.
4. What two things did Jesus do for the man? 1) forgave his sins 2) healed him so that he could walk
Song Suggestions:

- Ha-la-la-la
- Love is Something, If You Give it Away
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation)

Activities:

- Use a bible encyclopaedia to learn about houses in New Testament times. Use boxes, sticks and clay to make one in class.
- Act out the story. The kids will love holding a blanket at four corners and carrying one of their friends. With a large group you could bring two blankets and have a race.
- Let children use the white/chalk board to record the names of their school friends and then spend time praying for them in class. Older children can use a concordance to look up verses containing the work “friend”.
- Bring a small toy or object to class. Let the children sit in a circle and pass the toy from person to person in a circle. You (or an assigned child) can close your eyes, wait a few seconds, and then clap. The child holding the toy at the sound of the clap must tell the class one way to help a friend follow God. Play a few rounds of this as interest allows.

Crafts:

- Divide the students into pairs. Write “______ helps me love Jesus” at the bottom of large pieces of paper. Provide crayons, markers or paint and let the children paint a portrait of their partner. Discuss ways friends can help us obey Jesus.

Check the Teaching Ideas page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.
Click here for “Man Lowered Through the Roof” printables to print on A4 size paper
Click here for “Man Lowered Through the Roof” printables to print on Letter size (USA)

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheet about the man lowered through the roof (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page of friends lowering man through roof from sermons4kids.com
- Colouring page of Jesus and lame man christiananswers.net
- Video (3 minutes 26 seconds) of a teacher telling this story using simple paper props from youtube
- Craft: Printable craft using paper and string from auntiesbiblelessons.wordpress.com
- Craft: Make a New Testament home from a box from childrensministryideasunlimited.blogspot.com
- Online games from gardentofpraise.com
- Wordsearch from sermons4kids.com
- Multiple Choice quiz from sermons4kids.com
- Game: “Grab a corner of the blanket” sermons4kids.com
- Teacher’s Guide from ccquakertown.org

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