

Man Lowered Through the Roof

Scripture Reference: [Mark 2:1-12](#)

Suggested Theme: God cares about our friends.
Good friends help each other follow God.



Memory Verse: “Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourselves.” [Romans 12:10, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

A young man who could not walk wanted to be healed by Jesus. When his friends carried him to the house where Jesus was staying, they found the house packed with people. The friends made their way to the roof and dug a hole to lower their friend down to Jesus. Jesus was impressed by the faith of these men. Jesus forgave the man’s sins and then healed him so that he got up and walked.

Background Study:

Jesus had spent quite a lot of time in and around Capernaum. He appears to have made it his home base because, in the opening verse, Mark writes that He was “home.” 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 was likely 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 was 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.”

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 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.

But these teachers were not speaking out loud. They were speaking to themselves. It is miraculous that Jesus knew their thoughts. ([Mark 2:6-8](#)). They must have been shocked when Jesus confronted them.

Jesus did not have a theological discussion with the teachers about why He had the right to speak these things. Instead of discussing it, He went on to show them He had both the words and the power of God.

The surprised people praised God, for they knew only He could do such a miracle.

Bible Verses about Friends and Encouraging Others:

- Proverbs 17:17
- Hebrews 10:25
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

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 with more than one level and mention that they would have to have stairs. After the children have looked at a few pictures, ask them what kind of houses 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:

When Jesus came to a house in the city of Capernaum, many people wanted to come and listen to Him. The house where He was speaking from was so packed with people that there was not even room to stand inside. People even had to stand outside and listen through the doors and windows.

One man who wanted to come and hear Jesus was very disappointed. This man was paralyzed and could not walk. Four of his friends had to carry him on a mat. The man and his friends could not get inside the house where Jesus was preaching.

But the four men did not give up. They were determined to get their friend inside that house to listen to Jesus. What could they do?

Houses in those days had flat roofs that were made of clay and straw. They usually had stairs on the outside so people could climb on the roof to get some fresh air. The men had an idea. Maybe they could somehow get inside the house through the roof.

So the men climbed onto the top of the roof carrying the paralyzed man. They started pulling off the clay and straw to make an opening.

The men kept pulling off clay and straw, and soon, the hole became as big as a man's body. Now, it was time for their plan!

The people inside must have been very curious to see a hole appear in the ceiling. They could probably see the blue sky from inside the dark house. Soon, something started appearing through the hole - it was a mat with a man on it! The man's friends had lowered him down through the hole so that he ended up right in front of Jesus!

Jesus was impressed by all the trouble these men had gone to to get him inside the house. He knew they must really want to hear the words he was saying. When Jesus saw their great faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

The man must have been happy to hear Jesus say that his sins were forgiven.

But even though this man was happy, there were some people there who were not happy at all. The teachers of the law were always watching Jesus and checking to see if he made mistakes. They did not speak out loud, but they thought to themselves, “Why does this man say things like that? He is saying things that are against God. Only God can forgive sins.”

People cannot hear our thoughts. People can only hear words that we say out loud with our voices.

But Jesus is different from other people. What a shock to these men when he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to tell this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to tell him, ‘Stand up. Take your mat and walk’? Watch me now. I will prove to you that I have the authority on earth to forgive sins.”

So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, stand up. Take your mat and go home.”

Immediately, the paralyzed man stood up. He took his mat and walked out while everyone was watching him.

The man was happy. First, his sins had been forgiven, and now, he could walk! All of the people were amazed and praised God. They had seen a miracle take place. Jesus must have the power of God! Everyone was saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

And what about the man’s friends? If they had not had faith, they would have given up. They might have left without finding a way to bring their friend to Jesus.

And how about you? Will you be the kind of person that will bring your friends to hear about Jesus?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various 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 or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell 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.

[Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.](#)

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

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Review:

- Why did the man's friends carry him to meet Jesus? (The man could not walk, and they wanted him to be healed)
- Why couldn't the man's friends get close to Jesus? (There were too many people crowded into the house)
- 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)
- When Jesus saw that the man's friends had great faith, what did he do next? (He told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven)
- What two things did Jesus do for the man? 1) forgave his sins 2) healed him so that he could walk)
- What do you think the man's friends learned from bringing him to Jesus and seeing him healed and forgiven?
- What do you think the man learned after being forgiven and healed by Jesus?
- What did you learn about God from this story?
- What did you learn about Jesus from this story?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?

Reflection:

- What question would you ask God about this story?
- What surprised you about this story?
- What do you think it sounded like when the man's friends made a hole in the roof?
- What do you think the inside of the house looked like?
- What do you think the people inside the house were thinking when they realized people were making a hole in the roof? What about the owners of the house?
- The Pharisees realized Jesus could hear their thoughts. How would you feel if Jesus knew what you were thinking without telling Him?
- If you were one of the man's friends, would you have dug a hole in the roof or given up on helping him see Jesus?
- Who do you think you are most like in this story?
- What were the good things about the man's friends?
- Who do you know that you could share about Jesus with?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [Ha-la-la-la Song](#)
- [Hello Hello Song](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)

- [Love is Something If You Give It Away Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

Activities:

- Guide the children in acting 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.
- Ask the children to write down the names of their school friends and then spend time praying for them in class. You can write down and pray for your friends as well.

Older children can use a concordance to look up verses containing the word “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.
- Learn about houses in New Testament times. [Article at jesusstorynet.](#)

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- Use boxes, sticks and clay to make a model of a New Testament house.
- 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.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheet about the man lowered through the roof \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page of friends lowering man through the roof \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Colouring page of Jesus and lame man \(Christian answers\)](#)

- [Craft: Printable craft using paper and string \(Aunties Bible lessons\)](#)
- [Craft: Make a New Testament home from a box \(Children's ministry ideas unlimited\)](#)
- [Game: "Grab a corner of the blanket" \(Sermons 4 kids\)](#)
- [Video \(3 minutes 26 seconds\) of a teacher telling this story using simple paper props from YouTube](#)
- [Teacher's Guide from \(Quaker town\)](#)

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Date

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