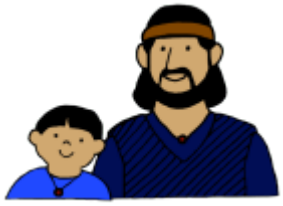
Healing of the Nobleman’s Son



Scripture Reference: John 4:46-54

Suggested Theme: Jesus’ words are truthful and wise, so we can trust Him.

Memory Verse: “Jesus did many other miracles before his followers that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you can believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, you can have life through his name.” John 20:30-31, ICB

Story Overview:

While Jesus was preaching in Galilee, a nobleman (royal official) from the city of Capernaum approached and begged Jesus to come to heal his dying son. Instead of going to Capernaum, Jesus told the nobleman to go back home. His son would live. The nobleman believed what Jesus said. He returned home to find his son well. The fever had gone at the same hour Jesus had said he would live.

Background Study:

Jesus has been travelling and preaching the Word of God. Originally, he performed his first miracle in the town of Cana in the Galilee region. In today’s story, he returns to Cana after travelling around Samaria.

Jesus noticed that the people in Galilee were different from those in Samaria. He had not performed any miracles in Samaria, yet many believed in him. The people in Galilee seemed to demand miracles before they would believe.

The nobleman in today’s story was probably a royal official in Herod Antipas’ court. This was the son of Herod, who was king of the Jews when Jesus was born.

The man had travelled all the way from Capernaum to see Jesus (verse 46). This would have been over 25 kilometres (about 15 miles). This shows the man’s love for his son as well as his faith in Jesus’ power. Jesus spoke of how people required signs and miracles to believe in him. Knowing his time on earth was limited, Jesus was about to demonstrate that belief would have to move beyond what was happening while He was physically present. By responding to this man, he would show that His power could be displayed even if he was not in the immediate vicinity.

The royal official would have expected Jesus to go with him and heal his son in person. Yet, Jesus told him that his son was now healed. These were not just empty words. The official accepted this and went back home. To say that he “took Jesus at his word” shows an intense trust (verse 50). He had travelled too far to turn back unless he really believed that what Jesus said was true.

Before reaching home, he received the message that his son was well. He found out the exact hour that the boy was healed. This was the same hour that Jesus had said he was healed.

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The truly incredible part of this story is not only the fact that Jesus healed the boy but that he did it from 25 kilometres away. Do we take Jesus at his word?

Way to Introduce the Story:

Use a map of your area to find a town or landmark just over 25 kilometres away. Talk about walking that distance. Discuss situations where you might have to walk that far (if you were lost and did not have a car or telephone). In New Testament times, people did not have cars to drive. A man in today's story walked that far. How long do you think it took him?

The Story:

The son of a royal official was sick with a fever. Even though the young man's father was a very important man, there was nothing that could be done to make his son well. The son was so sick he was going to die.

The father was worried about his son, and he needed to find someone to help him. Maybe the teacher, Jesus, could help. People were saying that Jesus was travelling from city to city, teaching people about God and performing miracles. Some said that Jesus could even make sick people well.

That is when the royal official heard that Jesus was in the city of Cana. The boy and his father lived in the city of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, so it would take all day to walk to Cana. But this was so important that the distance did not matter to the father. He set out right away so that he could go and get Jesus. Jesus could have made the boy well again if he had come to his house.

So the father travelled all the way to Cana to find Jesus. He was a royal official, so he was used to giving orders and telling other people what to do. However, when the royal official came to Jesus, he did not give orders to him. Instead, he begged Jesus to travel to Capernaum with him to heal his son.

Even though Jesus could make people well he knew the most important thing was that they listen to the words he was saying about God. "Do I have to do miracles for you to believe my words?" he asked.

But all the man could think about was his son." Please! You must travel with me to Capernaum and come to my house before my son dies!"

But Jesus did not go to the man's house. He surprised the royal official by telling him to go back home. "Your son will live." When Jesus said this, the man DID believe his words. He immediately set off for Capernaum. It was one o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus said these words.

On the way back to his home, the man's servants met him on the road. "Your son is alive," they exclaimed, "His fever went away!"

The father was so happy to hear this good news. "I have a question for all of you. What time did the fever go away?"

What time do you think the servants said? They said, "The fever went away at one o'clock in the afternoon."

One o'clock in the afternoon was the exact time that Jesus had said the words, "Your son will live." The royal official and everyone in his house now believed that Jesus' words were always true.

Jesus had said the words when he was in Cana and the son was far away in Capernaum. Jesus made the boy well even though he was far away.

Do you know someone who is far away from you? Jesus cares about them too. Jesus' words are important for people no matter how far away they are.

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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 nobleman want to see Jesus? (To ask Jesus to heal his dying son)
- What did Jesus say about the people in Galilee? (That they asked or needed to see signs and miracles before believing in him)
- Instead of going with the nobleman, what did Jesus say to him? (Go, your son will live)
- When the man arrived back home, what did he find out about his son? (His son began to get better at the very hour that Jesus had said he would live)
- What time was the nobleman's son healed? (1 in the afternoon)
- What happened after the nobleman and all the people of his house realized his son was healed at the time Jesus said he would be? (They all believed in Jesus)
- What do you think the nobleman learned about Jesus from this story?
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- How long do you think the nobleman had to travel to get to Jesus?
- What do you think the nobleman felt like when he arrived where Jesus was?
- How do you think the nobleman felt when Jesus said, "Go, your son will live"?
- If you were the nobleman, would you have believed Jesus when he said your son was healed? Would you still have asked him to come with you?
- What part of this story did you find most interesting?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?
- Is it easy or hard for you to believe in Jesus and his words?
- What is something you have a question about for Jesus?

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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:

- Yes! Jesus Loves Me
- One, Two, Three Jesus Loves Me Song
- Jesus' Love is a-Bubblin' Over Song
- J-E-S-U-S 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:

- Some Bibles show all of Jesus's words in red ink. If you can locate one of these "red letter editions," then bring it to class to show the children. Download a red letter version of John 4:46-54.
- Write today's memory verse on a large piece of paper. Have the children say it with you a few times. Have one of the children tear off one part of the paper (their choice of which part). Now say the verse together again, filling in the part that is torn off. Keep letting the children tear off pieces until you can say the verse without any written words. (This is a long verse. If it gets too hard, just put the pieces back together and start again next week).
- Write the letters B-E-L-I-E-V-E on the chalkboard, whiteboard or paper. Ask the children to list things about Jesus under each letter. Example: B-best friend, E-eternal, etc.
- Make a bulletin board with the name J-E-S-U-S written in big letters in the middle. You might also want to have a nice picture of Jesus. Each week add words and timeline pictures that depict the life of Jesus.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Have children draw the scenes of the story in cartoon form.
- Masking tape art project. Mask the letters B-E-L-I-E-V-E and then let the kids paint. Using a permanent marker, write the memory verse in the corner. *Thanks to Linda Z. for this idea!* Hint: After painting,

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carefully peel the tape away, leaving the word “BELIEVE” without paint.

- Find or draw a map of your area (this can be local to your town or cover a larger geographical area). Point out your location and then find the locations of other loved ones. This might be grandparents, cousins or even missionaries. Talk about how God can take care of people we know even if they are very far away from us.
- Older children can trace a simple map of Palestine (use an atlas or maps in the back of your bible). Each week during this term, locate and mark where the story takes place.

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 worksheets about Jesus healing the nobleman’s son (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page (Super coloring)
- Activity: Bee-themed lesson with activities to teach how to “bee” like Jesus. These printables were created to study the Book of Romans but could be adapted to today’s lesson on listening to Jesus. (Kids Bible Deb Jackson)
- A fun clickable map (Geology)
- Biblegateway allows you to select a “red letter” option for reading bible verses. Use this to print out scriptures for the children. (Bible gateway)

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