Peter and John Heal a Man Who Could Not Walk


Suggested Emphasis: Peter and John helped a physically disabled person. We should be sensitive to the needs of those with special needs today.

Story Overview:
A man who had been disabled since birth sat at one of the entrances of the temple begging for money. Peter and John saw him and gave him something he never expected—they healed him in the name of King Jesus. The Jewish leaders were angry so they had Peter and John imprisoned overnight. They released them the next day but warned them not to preach about King Jesus anymore. Peter and John said that they must obey God and preach.

Background Study:

Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts

These were exciting times in Jerusalem. Jews from near and far were still gathered in the city to celebrate the Pentecost Feast. Peter had recently preached a sermon to a large crowd and over 3,000 became Christians. It seems many who had come for the feast continued to stay on in Jerusalem to have fellowship with other new believers and to learn more from the apostles (The First Church). In today’s story we learn more about the types of things that happened to the apostles as they went about the business of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone around them.
Being disabled in the first century meant total dependence on family and friends. The man in this story was carried by someone and put at the temple gate each day to beg from those entering the temple courts. He had been crippled since birth (Acts 3:2) and was over 40 years old (Acts 4:22). Years of begging must have made this man feel dejected and disengaged. When he asked for money he must not have even been looking up because Peter had to get his attention and tell him to look at him while he talked (Acts 3:1-5).

Healing this man was most probably not on Peter and John’s “to do” list for their day. They were most probably on their way to join in the afternoon prayer time or possibly just trying to connect with more people in the temple area to tell them about Jesus. Later, Peter recalled it an “act of kindness” on the part of the apostles. It is God who turned this event into a wonderful opportunity to preach to many people.

Upon being healed the man did not praise Peter and John but God himself (3:8) because he knew where the power had come from. The people had seen this man many times so they realised what an amazing miracle this was and wanted to hear more. Peter and John must have thought back to Jesus and about how he once stood in this very place (Solomon’s Colonnade: John 10:22-24 and Acts 3:11) and said that the miracles he did in his Father’s name spoke for themselves (John 10:25-30). The apostles would eventually perform many miracles at Solomon’s Colonnade. It became a gathering place for believers.

When the crowd gathered Peter took the opportunity to preach. His sermon was much like his earlier one (Sermon on Pentecost). Acts 3:11-26.

It was always in God’s plan for His people to accept Jesus as their true king. This was not the message that the religious leaders wanted the people to hear. They must have been frustrated because they thought they had taken care of this “Jesus problem” earlier when they played a leading part in his crucifixion. To top it off some leaders, the Sadducees, didn’t even believe in resurrection and that was a major part of what Peter was preaching. They had Peter and John put in jail overnight.

Even while Peter and John were in jail the people must have been considering what they had said. Acts 4:4 records that the number of believers (only counting the men) rose to 5,000.

Caiaphas was actually the High Priest at this time but his father-in-law, Annas, still held the honorary title. They and other members of their family gathered with the other religious leaders to question Peter and John (Acts 4:5-14). The leaders were in an impossible situation. How does one argue against this when the healed man in question is walking and leaping about praising God? There was nothing they could say (4:14).

Peter’s response to an order to stop preaching was clear: “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” In the end all the leaders could do was release them.

The passage concludes with another mention of this man who had been disabled for over forty years. This act of kindness began with him walking, jumping and praising God. It ended with all the people praising God (4:21).
Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children if anyone has ever carried them anywhere. Talk about your own experiences or suggest times when a person might be carried. A baby has to be carried because they can’t walk. A parent might carry a child to bed when they are sleepy. A fireman might carry a person out of a burning building when they save them. Ask the children to think about what it would be like if you could never walk anywhere and someone would always have to carry you. In today’s story we are going to talk about a man who couldn’t walk. He didn’t have a wheelchair and someone always had to carry him.

The Story:

Today’s story is from the Bible Book of Acts. It takes place in the city of Jerusalem at the temple where many people came to pray and worship God. Most of the Jewish people in this time believed in God but not in Jesus. Some thought Jesus was a fake. Some had not even heard of him. They thought it was okay to believe in God but not believe in Jesus.

There was one Jewish man who went to the temple every day but he did not go into the temple courtyard like the other people. This man could not walk. He had never walked in his whole life.

This man could not work to make money. Instead, people would carry him to the temple gate every day and he would beg for money. Sometimes people would stop and give him money. Sometimes people would just pass on by on their way to the courtyard.

Peter and John were apostles and they liked to go to the temple too. They would go into the temple courtyard and tell people about Jesus. They wanted everyone to believe in and follow King Jesus!

One day when Peter and John were about to walk through the temple gate they noticed the man who could not walk. The man was asking everyone for money.

Peter looked at the man and said, “Look at me” so the man looked up at him. “I don’t have any silver or gold but I have something much better.” What do you think would be better than silver and gold? Peter said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!” Peter grabbed the man by the right hand and all of the sudden the man felt his feet and his ankles start to feel stronger.

He couldn’t believe it. Even though he had never walked in his whole life he jumped up and started walking around. It was amazing! It was a miracle. And all because of the power of Jesus Christ.

The man was so excited that he kept walking and jumping and calling out praises to God. He followed Peter and John into the courtyard. Everyone heard him and came to have a look because they knew this was the same man who had always sat beside the gate begging. Now he could walk.

Many people had gathered around so Peter started telling them about Jesus. He said that God had sent Jesus to help everyone in the whole world. The people felt happy to hear about Jesus but they felt sad too. They felt guilty that they had called Jesus a fake. They felt really guilty because, before this, they had thought that it was good that Jesus died on the cross. Now they were so sorry.

Peter told them that there was good news. Since God made Jesus their king through his death and resurrection, they could repent. Repenting means telling God that you are very sorry for the bad things you have done. It is saying that you don’t want to do the bad things anymore and that you want to follow Jesus now. Peter had already been telling everyone that they could tell God they were sorry and then be baptised. All of their sins would then just be washed away.
While Peter was talking to the people some priests and the captain of the Temple Guard overheard. They did not like what Peter was saying. They didn’t believe in Jesus and they didn’t want anyone else to either. They were very angry so they arrested Peter and John and put them in jail.

The next day all of the Jewish leaders and even the High Priest and his family gathered together for a big meeting. They asked Peter to tell them what happened. Peter answered their questions by giving a very good speech. He told them how God had sent Jesus to bless the whole world. God wanted the Jews to accept Jesus and say thank you. But many of them did not like Jesus and some of them killed him on a cross. But the good news was that Jesus did not stay dead. He had come alive again and became the world’s true king. It was by Jesus’ power that the man could now walk.

The leaders were astonished that Peter could make such a good speech. He had never even been to proper schools like they had but he spoke like a very important person. What should they do? They still did not want people to believe in Jesus but they couldn’t argue with Peter. They wanted to punish Peter and John but everyone knew that the miracle they had done was real. After all, the man that couldn’t walk was now walking and jumping around. So the leaders did the only thing they knew to do. They ordered Peter and John to stop teaching about Jesus.

Do you think Peter and John stopped teaching about Jesus? No way! Peter said, “Should we obey God or should we obey people?” Then they said, “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” They would never stop preaching about king Jesus!

There was nothing more to say so the Jewish leaders let them go. And guess what Peter and John did? They kept telling more and more people about Jesus. Even while they had been in jail the group of believers grew to 5,000 men. And this was only counting the men. I wonder what happened to the man who had been healed? He probably just kept walking and jumping and praising God!

So when you notice that someone needs your help do you help them? Maybe you could push someone’s wheelchair if they asked. Or maybe you could be a friend to someone who other people make fun of.

We can also help people when we tell them about Jesus like Peter and John did. Whenever we are kind and when we tell someone about Jesus then God is pleased.

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 the slideshow or Click here to download the pictures to print. 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. What was the man who couldn’t walk doing sitting by the gate to the temple? Begging for money
2. When the man who couldn’t walk asked Peter and John for money, what did they give him instead? In the name of Jesus, they gave him the ability to walk.
3. What did the man who couldn’t walk do after Peter healed him? He got up and then began walking, jumping, and praising God.

4. What did the Jewish leaders do to Peter and John after they healed the man who couldn’t walk man? Had them arrested and put in prison overnight.

5. When the Jewish leaders told Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus, what did they say? Peter and John asked if it was better to obey God or men. Then they said that they could not help speaking about what they had seen and heard.

Song Suggestions:

- Love is Something If You Give It Away Song
- Books of the New Testament Song
- 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:

- **Acts 3:1-10** is a great story to act out if the children in your class enjoy role play.
- Children can draw the scenes of the story on a chalkboard, whiteboard or paper. Or you could print this worksheet and they can fill it in with their own drawings Peter and John Help a Man Who Could Not Walk Drawing Paper.
- If you know a physically disabled person or someone who knows someone with disabilities ask them if they would speak to your class today. The speaker should be someone who is comfortable with children and who is open to honest questions from the children.
- Talk about how we can be a good friend if our friends have special needs. It is important that children understand that those with special needs are people just like us but have an extra challenge in life.

- Have the children perform a variety of tasks but ask them to try to do it without their full abilities. For example have them write their names using a pencil in their mouths. Talk about what a challenge this is for people who do not have the ability to use their arms.
- Discuss other disabilities. Blindfold a volunteer and place items in their hands so they can guess what the items are. Discuss how we can help and respect those who are blind.

Crafts:

- After talking about the man jumping and leaping and praising God guide the children in painting a picture.....with their toes! Be sure and spread a plastic cloth on the floor and provide plenty of clean-up
cloths. Children should write “Praise God” on the centre of the paper before they begin. If you are teaching outdoors, children could use their toes to draw in sand.

Check the Teaching Ideas page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.

Click here for "Healing of a Lame Beggar“ printables to print (A4 paper)
Click here for “Healing of a Lame Beggar“ to print (Letter size-USA)

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)
- Application Activity: This activity could be used to talk about fairness but also about how people with different needs need different kinds of help from all of us. [http://teach-from-the-heart.blogspot.co.nz](http://teach-from-the-heart.blogspot.co.nz)
- Questions and discussion starters from [http://sundayschoolsources.com](http://sundayschoolsources.com)
- A good selection of puzzles and games to print at [http://www.gardenofpraise.com](http://www.gardenofpraise.com)
- Teacher’s Guide from [http://ccquakertown.org](http://ccquakertown.org)
- Video to show children: “Jerusalem Temple at the Time of Jesus” by “Messages of Christ”. Youtube video just under 2 minutes.
- Video to show children: Virtual Reconstruction Of Second Temple Temple Mount (7 minutes 46 seconds) from youtube