Peter and John Heal a Man Who Could Not Walk



Scripture Reference: Acts 3:1-4:22

Suggested Theme: Jesus is powerful, and we can tell people about Him.

Memory Verse: “We cannot keep quiet. We must speak about what we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20 ICB

Story Overview:

As Peter and John passed through the temple gate, a man who could not walk begged money from them. Instead of giving him money, Peter miraculously healed him by the power of Jesus. Peter followed this by preaching a convicting sermon to the amazed people who had witnessed the healed man. Concerned that so many people were turning to Jesus, the Jewish leaders imprisoned Peter and John and instructed them to keep silent about Jesus. These two apostles refused to be quiet and said they must speak about what they had seen and heard.

Background Study:

Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts

These were exciting times in Jerusalem. Jews from near and far 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 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 what happened to the apostles as they shared the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone around them.

Being disabled in the first century meant total dependence on family and friends. Someone carried the man in this story and put him at the temple gate daily to beg 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 looked up because Peter had to get his attention and tell him to look at him while he talked (Acts 3:1-5).

This man was probably not on Peter and John’s “to-do” list for their day. They were probably on their way to join 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 as an “act of kindness” on the part of the apostles. God 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 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 how He

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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).

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. Peter's preaching would have been offensive to them. 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 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 healing when the healed man is in front of everyone, walking, leaping and praising God? There was nothing they could say.

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.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children if anyone has ever carried them anywhere. Talk about your 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 someone out of a burning building when they save them. Ask the children to think about what it would be like if they could never walk anywhere and someone would always have to carry them. Today's story will discuss a man who couldn't walk. He had no wheelchair, and someone always had to carry him.

The Story:

Today's story is from the Bible Book of Acts. It occurred in Jerusalem at the temple, where many people came to pray and worship God. Most of the Jewish people at 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 Jesus.

One Jewish man went to the temple daily but 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 pass by on their way to the courtyard.

Peter and John were apostles and 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."

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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’s right hand, and suddenly, the man felt his feet and ankles begin to feel stronger.

He couldn’t believe it. Even though he had never walked, 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, jumping, and praising 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 worldwide. The people felt happy to hear about Jesus but sad, too. They felt guilty that they had called Jesus a fake. They felt guilty because, before this, they had thought it was good that Jesus died on the cross. Now they were so sorry.

Peter told them that there was good news. They could repent since God made Jesus their king through His death and resurrection. Repenting means telling God that you are very sorry for the bad things you have done. It says you don’t want to do bad things anymore and want to follow Jesus now. Peter had already told everyone they could tell God they were sorry and then be baptised. All of their sins would 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 and jailed Peter and John.

The next day, the Jewish leaders and even the High Priest and his family gathered 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 the 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 through Jesus’ power that 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 who 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 someone needing 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 others make fun of.

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

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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:

- What was the man who couldn't walk sitting by the gate to the temple doing? (Begging for money)
- 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)
- What did the man who couldn't walk do after Peter healed him? (He got up and then began walking, jumping, and praising God)
- Why were the Jewish leaders unhappy with Peter and John? (They were preaching about Jesus and that He was raised from the dead. The leaders didn't want more people to follow Jesus)
- What did the Jewish leaders do to Peter and John after they healed the man who couldn't walk? (They had them arrested and put in prison overnight)
- 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 they could not help speaking about what they had seen and heard)
- What happened to Peter and John? (The Jewish leaders let them leave prison)
- What does this story show you about Jesus?
- What does this story show you about God the Father?

Reflection:

- How do you think the man's body felt as it was being healed?
- Why do you think Peter and John chose to heal this man?
- If you were the lame man, what would you have done first after being healed?
- How do you think Peter and John felt when Jesus healed the lame man through Peter?
- What did Peter and John preach about to the people? How do you think the people felt when they heard this message? (Repentance)
- What makes Jesus' name so powerful?

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- Do you think God still heals people today? Do you know any stories of people being healed or God answering their prayers to get better?
- Peter and John said they couldn't help but talk about Jesus and the miraculous things they saw. Is it hard or easy for you to talk about Jesus?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?

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 lifelong 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:

- ABC: Jesus Died for You and Me Song
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- 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 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:

- Have the children perform various 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 cannot use their arms.
- Talk about how we can be good friends if our friends have physical challenges like the man in this story did.
- Acts 3:1-10 is a great story to act out if the children you teach enjoy drama and role play.
- Children can draw the story's scenes on a chalkboard, whiteboard or paper. Or you could print this worksheet, and they can fill it in with their drawings. Peter and John Help a Man Who Could Not Walk Drawing Paper.
- To help children understand the large amount of information in this text, try "mind mapping." This can be done on a large whiteboard or table using a normal piece of paper. Draw a circle in the centre of the paper and then write "Jesus" in the circle. Ask the children to help you list all the facts you learned about Jesus from today's lesson. Next, draw a line away from the circle and then draw a new circle. Write "man who could not walk" in this second circle. As you did before, write what you learned about the man.

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Continue drawing additional circles and filling them in as the discussion continues. Circles could include Peter and John, the crowd and the Jewish leaders. Lastly, draw a circle and write “me” inside. This is a way of reflecting on the application. What have you and the children learned about yourself from this story? Fill in this last circle.

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

Crafts:

- Apply washable paint on the soles of the children’s feet. Make footprints on paper. Add the reference Acts 3:1-10 to the lower portion of the paper.
- After talking about the man jumping, leaping, and praising God, guide the children in painting a picture…..with their toes! Be sure to use washable paint and protect your clothes. You might spread a cloth or paper on the floor and provide plenty of clean-up cloths. Children should write “Praise God” in the centre of the paper before they begin.



- Children could use their toes to draw in the sand if you teach outdoors.

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 puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)
- Teacher’s Guide (Quaker town)
- Questions and discussion starters (Sunday school sources)
- Application Activity: This activity could be used to discuss fairness and how people with different needs need different kinds of help from all of us. (Teach from the heart)
- Video to show children: “Jerusalem Temple at the Time of Jesus” by “Messages of Christ.” The YouTube video is just under 2 minutes.
- Video to show children: Virtual Reconstruction Of Second Temple Temple Mount (7 minutes 46 seconds) from YouTube

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