

date: **3/19/17****Bible Passage: Mark 2:1–12**
(Healing of the Paralyzed Man)

God Forgives

REMEMBER VERSE

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I spent my mid-20s struggling with an eating disorder. It consumed me and started to affect almost every area of my life. My family and friends could see that something was wrong, but I refused to talk about it. I worked incredibly hard to hide what was happening and made up excuses about it. I certainly wasn't talking to God.

Eventually I reached a breaking point. Feeling alone, exhausted, and overwhelmed by all the lying and hiding, I told a friend. To my surprise, she didn't look horrified, nor did she judge me. She simply said, "I love you, and I want to see you let God into this with you." Her words gave me the courage to tell others.

One day I asked a few of my friends to pray with me. That day, I finally found the courage to ask Jesus for healing. I asked Him for forgiveness, and I asked Him to take my sin from me. I felt His forgiveness instantly. In that moment, I heard Him say to me, "I forgive you. I love you. I've been waiting to heal you; I just needed you to ask." My struggle didn't immediately subside; there was still work to do as I learned to live in forgiveness. God and I had a long journey ahead, and I slowly opened my heart to His healing.

Laura Weber
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

More than any other term, Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man. In Jesus' day, this term could have

been perceived two ways—the first being simply a man, and the second being the Messiah.

Ezekiel referred to himself more 90 times as the son of man. In Hebrew, “son of man” was a figure of speech indicating membership to a particular class. In the context of Ezekiel, the term “son of man” brings to light the contrast between humanity and Almighty God. Daniel used the term “son of man” to describe the One who will come on clouds from heaven, in glory and everlasting dominion (Daniel 7). All people will serve the Son of Man, and His kingdom will not be destroyed. Clearly this refers to a divine being, not just a mere man.

We can infer that when Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man, He was making a statement. He was declaring both His humanity and His divinity. Those who denied the deity of Jesus, such as the Pharisees and the religious leaders, saw His claim as blasphemous. However, for one to recognize Jesus as the divine Son of Man described in Daniel 7, one would have to have the conviction that Jesus was the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. Jesus was seemingly always trying to bring the question “Who do you think I am?” to the forefront, challenging those around Him to make a decision about His authority.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

The story is told of the Great Blondin, a famous tightrope walker who lived near the end of the 19th century. One of his most famous endeavors was the crossing of the Niagara Gorge, where legend has it that upon crossing the gorge back and forth pushing a wheelbarrow, with the crowds going wild, he asked the onlookers, “Who believes I can cross again with this wheelbarrow?” Everyone enthusiastically applauded with agreement. Then he asked, “Who, then, will get in the wheelbarrow?”

That is the definition of faith. It is staking all you have on the faithfulness of the One you are trusting. When we seek forgiveness and healing from God, it is the ultimate act of stepping into faith. Faith is not something comfortable. It stretches us in unforeseen ways. The faith of the paralyzed man and of his friends, to dig down through the roof of a house, probably upsetting the homeowner, demonstrated an heroic faith, a true faith. God calls us to step outside of what is easy and what is comfortable into a life that honors His faithfulness.

If you dare, ask God this week to deepen your faith. But be careful: The way faith grows is through opportunities to demonstrate that faith and dependence upon God. Pray that God would also deepen the faith of the children whom you lead, that He would take them out of their comfort zones and change them as only He can.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Because a crowd of people surrounded the house where Jesus was, the paralyzed man's friends had to find a creative way to get him inside. With the following activities, get children thinking about creative ways to get

somewhere.

Check-in with your group:

- How are things going as school?
- What are you most looking forward to this spring?
- What is your favorite thing about Timberwood Kids
- What is the best thing you've learned about God?

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse animation (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Connect

Question

When have you needed a friend to help you do something you couldn't do by yourself?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Mark 2:1–12

Storytelling Technique: Acting Out the Narrative
God Forgives

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- [House image](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Large bedsheet or blanket
- Small garden tools (4; trowels, cultivators, etc.)
- Backpack
- Small, heavy items (4–5; books, bricks, rocks, etc.)
- Paper (enough to wrap small, heavy items)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Marker
- Optional: masking or painter's tape

PREPARE AHEAD

Ask four adults to help you act out the narrative by carrying a child on a large sheet or blanket. (Each adult will hold a corner of the sheet.) Wrap the heavy items in the paper, and write a sin on each one (“lying,” “greed,” “selfishness,” etc.). Place the heavy items in the backpack, then the garden tools, and then the sheet.

SET UP

If you didn't do the Connect activity, use masking or painter's tape to create a large circle on the floor. Make sure the circle is big enough for all of the kids to stand inside for a brief moment.

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. If you didn't do the Connect activity, have the children form a crowd by standing close together in the center of the room or inside the tape circle on the floor. Put on the backpack and stand in the middle of the crowd of children. **Just before Jesus began His ministry, He was baptized and then tempted in the wilderness for 40 days. After His time in the wilderness, Jesus began traveling from town to town, preaching and ministering to people. The Bible tells us that in one town, the people “gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door” (Mark 2:2). What a crowd! But there were four friends determined to get to Jesus.**

Have the children take their seats, and invite the four adult volunteers to the front. Take the sheet out of the backpack, and lay it on the floor. **These four men had a friend who was paralyzed, which means he couldn't walk on his own. So the friends carried him on a mat.** Ask for a child volunteer to come to the front and lie on the sheet. Then have the four volunteers carry the child, inside the sheet, across the stage. **When they arrived at the house where Jesus was, it was too crowded to get in the door! But they didn't give up; they thought of a plan.** Have adults place the sheet with the child inside at the back of the stage. Pull out the tools and give one to each adult.

Back then, houses had flat roofs made of a straw-and-mud mixture. *Tech: Cue House image.* **So the men climbed up to the roof, brought up their friend, and started digging a hole in the roof!** Have the four adults pretend to dig a hole with their tools. **Everyone in the crowd must have wondered what they were doing! But the four men kept on digging. When the hole was big enough, they picked up their friend and lowered him down into the house.** Have adults pick up the sheet with the child inside and move it to where they “dug” the hole. The adults can then exit the stage.

Invite the children to open their Bibles to Mark 2:5. **When Jesus saw their faith, He turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5). Wait! What? “Your sins are forgiven”? Why would Jesus say that? That man had come for healing, but instead Jesus forgave his sins.**

Pharisees, or Jewish teachers, were also in the room. They claimed to follow the commandments of the Old Testament very closely and believed that following the laws would cause God to send His Messiah and conquer their enemies. They were so strict about their beliefs that they wouldn’t even go near sinners, the sick, or outcasts because they didn’t want the sin to rub off on them. Needless to say, most Pharisees didn’t like Jesus very much because He spent a lot of time with all kinds of people.

The Pharisees also believed that only God has the authority to forgive sin. So when they heard Jesus forgive the paralyzed man of his sins, the Pharisees were furious. Because Jesus is God, He knew what they were thinking and said (invite kids to follow along starting in Mark 2:9), “Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up, take your mat and walk”? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ So he said to the man, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home’” (Mark 2:9–11). Motion to the child lying on the sheet to stand up. The paralyzed man was healed! Everyone was amazed! Encourage the kids in the audience to act amazed. Then thank the child volunteer, and have him return to his seat.

Sometimes we try to hide our sin or pretend it doesn’t exist, but we still feel the huge weight of sin’s guilt and shame. Take off backpack and set it onstage. One by one, take out the weights inside as you show and read the label on each weight. **But through Jesus, we don’t have to carry the weight of our sin anymore!**

That’s why Jesus came. The Bible says, “The punishment that brought us peace was on [Jesus], and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). When Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment for our sins, and when we trust and obey Him, He forgives us! Share an age-appropriate story of a time you experienced true forgiveness from God, and share how free you felt.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

A time to engage in relationship, reflect on the lesson with spiritual conversation, and/or create a meaningful project or piece of art.

Reflect: God Forgives

Encourage children to look up the following passages in their Bibles.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **Why was the paralyzed man lowered through the roof?** Mark 2:2
- **What did Jesus do first for the man?** Mark 2:5
- **What are some examples of sin?** Colossians 3:8
- **Why do we need God to forgive us?** Romans 6:23
- **How can we ask Him for that forgiveness?** 1 John 1:9

Questions for Older Kids

- **Why was the paralyzed man lowered through the roof?** Mark 2:2
- **What did Jesus do first for the man?** Mark 2:5
- **What are some examples of sin?** Colossians 3:8
- **Why is God the only One with authority to forgive our sins?** Leviticus 19:2
- **Why do we need God to forgive us?** Romans 6:23
- **How can we ask Him for that forgiveness?** 1 John 1:9

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible
- Bedsheet or blanket (large enough for the group to stand under)

RELATE

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God. Invite parents or other adults to help hold the bedsheet or blanket above the children as they receive the blessing.

Open a Bible and read Psalm 32:1–2, 5:

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit ... I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Have the parents and adults lift up the sheet, and allow the kids to huddle under it as you finish with this blessing:

May you find grace and healing and trust that God's grace covers your sins.