

date: **5/14/17****Bible Passage: John 9**  
(Healing of the Blind Man)**Jesus Restores****REMEMBER VERSE**

**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.**

John 11:25–26a

**Inspire**

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

One summer, I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to Africa. A few days into the trip, we were asked to visit a woman who lived alone in one of the region's poorest townships. I tried not to act shocked as I stepped into her small shack.

We introduced ourselves and began to hear her story. Her husband had left her, and she rarely saw her children. On top of that, she had just been diagnosed with AIDS and could not afford treatment. She could barely walk across the room, let alone take care of herself.

We laid hands on her and prayed. I don't think I've ever prayed so fervently. Tears streamed down our faces as we cried out to God for over 30 minutes. As we opened our eyes, we saw her retreat to a corner of the room with her head lowered.

I turned to our translator and said, "Please, ask her if she felt anything." After a brief interaction between the translator and the woman, the woman did something I did not expect: She began to dance. The translator told us, "She felt as if a giant pile of stones was lifted off her back. She hasn't felt this good in years. She is praising God."

Jesus performed miracles in the New Testament. Because we don't see miracles very often, it's easy to believe they were phenomena in an era that has passed. But Jesus was not a magician creating a spectacle. His acts of healing served to restore creation to the way it was supposed to be. And He continues to restore today.

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## Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

God created man “from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7). Some think that by healing the blind man with mud, Jesus was demonstrating again that He is the Creator. He was revealing the truth of John 1:3: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

The divine source of this miracle must have been something grasped by the blind man, because he said in John 9:33, “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” This might be a confusing statement, considering the fact that we see magicians performing tricks throughout Scripture. However, the blind man realized, through faith, that Jesus was from God.

Jesus did not just heal the blind man physically; He also healed him socially. After the man was healed, his physical ailment no longer excluded him from his community or (according to the religious leaders) condemned him as a sinner. In John 9, we first saw the blind man as a beggar, condemned as a sinner by his community. Then we saw him progress to a state of dignity—even to the point of standing up to the Pharisees. Finally, Jesus loved and respected the blind man enough to restore him: mind, body, and soul. Then Jesus rejoiced with the man as he came to a state of belief, worshipping Jesus, the Son of Man.

## Support

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

Because of the fall, we live in a world that deals with the realities of pain, death, and separation from God. Therefore, suffering is connected to sin because it was original sin that brought forth the suffering in the first place. Even so, Jesus is the One who is able to restore our bodies, hearts, and lives to be whole in Him.

God's love compelled Jesus to heal the blind man. Because Jesus loved him so much, Jesus desired to restore his physical body. Jesus also desired to bring his soul into a place of connection with God.

God loves you so much that He desires to restore your body, your mind, your heart, and your soul. He longs to pour out His Spirit upon you and restore you to wholeness in Him. Where is there a place in your life where you need God's restorative power? Are you grieving? Are you in physical pain? Are you simply feeling bored or exhausted? With expectancy in your heart, ask God to restore you—your mind, body, and soul.

**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.*

God provides shelter for us to live in because shelter provides safety, warmth, and a sense of home. Abraham's shelter was a tent. Help children work together today to build shelters out of various materials.

## Before and After

### SUPPLIES

- [Before and After images](#) (see Resources)

### SET UP

Print the Before and After images. Divide the images into two stacks—"before" and "after," keeping the images in the same order in each stack. Keep the images facedown.

### RELATE

**When Jesus encountered the sick, He healed and restored them. What does *restore* mean?** Pause for kids to respond. **To restore something means to fix it or return it to its original condition. When Jesus healed the sick, He also restored their reputations and relationships with their communities.**

Pick up one of the "before" pictures and hold it up for the kids to see. **What would you do to restore this item? Why would you want to do that?** Pause for kids' responses. Then pick up the corresponding "after" picture and hold it up for the group to see. **Now that it's restored, what good can it be used for?** Repeat with each pair of "before" and "after" images.

## 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.

**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. John 11:25–26a**

## Connect

### Question

When was a time you played in the mud or got really muddy?


## The Big God Story

**Bible Passage:** John 9

**Storytelling Technique:** Making Mud

**Jesus Restores**

### SUPPLIES

- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Clear plastic storage container (medium-sized)
- Bag of potting soil 
- Watering pail filled with water
- Towel

### SET UP

Place the storage container, potting soil, water pail, and towel onstage.

### RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. Have the Storyteller and the Host playfully banter with one another. Use the example script below or be creative with language of your own.

**Storyteller: Last week we heard about how Peter walked on water with Jesus. Peter simply stepped out of the boat and walked toward Him!**

**Host: That's not how it went!**

**Storyteller: What do you mean that's not how it went?**

**Host: You know just as well as I do that Peter only stepped out of the boat after Jesus told him to come.**

**Storyteller: Nuh-uh! Peter asked Jesus to tell him to come. See? It says right here in Matthew 14** (point to the inside of your Bible).

**Host: Exactly! That's what I was trying to say all along!**

**Storyteller: Oh ... so we were both saying the same thing all along? Why were we arguing?**

**Host: I have no idea!**

**Storyteller: You know what this reminds me of? The next part of The Big God Story, when the Pharisees and a man Jesus healed of blindness got into an argument about Jesus. Let me tell you a little more about it—but I'll start from the beginning.** Host leaves stage.

Invite kids to open Bibles to John 9:1–3 and follow along. **The Bible says, "As [Jesus] went along, he saw**

a man blind from birth” (v. 1). The blind man was begging for money because he could not work. Jesus’ disciples also saw the man, and they asked Jesus, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (v. 2). Jesus showed this man love and respect by explaining that this blindness wasn’t about the man’s sin: “This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (v. 3). **Wow! Jesus was saying that this man’s life was going to bring God glory! That makes me think something good was about to happen!**

**After Jesus said this, He did something really interesting.** Go to the storage container and pour potting soil into it, enough to cover the bottom. Then spit into the dirt just once. Try mixing the dirt with your hands, using just the amount of water from one spit, and look back at the audience, concerned. Without saying anything, look around and act as if you have an idea. Pick up the watering pail and pour water over the dirt, and mix it up with your hands to form mud. **Jesus spit on the ground and mixed it with dirt to make mud.** Hold up your muddy hands toward audience, and motion with your thumbs as if you’re smearing mud onto someone’s eyes.

**Then Jesus put the mud on the man’s eyes.** Wipe your hands on the towel. Invite kids to go to verse 7. “‘Go,’ [Jesus] told him, ‘wash in the Pool of Siloam’ [si-LOH-uhm] (this word means ‘Sent’). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing” (v. 7). **Jesus restored this man’s vision! He could see! What does it mean to restore something?** Encourage responses. **Great thoughts. To restore something means to repair it to its original condition.**

**When the man’s neighbors saw him, they knew something miraculous had happened. So they took him to the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, to see what they had to say about it. The Pharisees asked the blind man “how he had received his sight” (v. 15). The man responded, “He put mud on my eyes ... and I washed, and now I see” (v. 15). This started an argument among the Pharisees, who thought the blind man was lying about being healed. So they called in the blind man’s parents to see if he had really been born blind. His parents said it was true, but the Pharisees still couldn’t believe it.**

**You might remember how God commanded the Israelites not to work on the Sabbath—to rest from working on one day each week. In Jesus’ day, the religious leaders followed that, but they also added a lot of extra restrictions that God never required.** Stick your hand into the mud again and hold it up. **These leaders believed that mixing mud was work. So the Pharisees thought Jesus had sinned, and they called the blind man back in. Wipe your hand off. Knowing Jesus had restored him, the blind man told the Pharisees, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (v. 25). “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (v. 33). The Pharisees were outraged and threw the man out!**

**When Jesus heard about this, He went to find the blind man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (v. 35). Remember, this was the first time the man had seen Jesus. The man responded, “Who is he, sir? ... Tell me so that I may believe in him” (v. 36). Then, “Jesus said, ‘You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you’” (v. 37). Wow! Jesus, the Son of Man, the Messiah whom Israel had been expecting for thousands of years, valued this man so much and showed him so much respect that He came to see the man personally. The man replied, “‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him” (v. 38).**

**Jesus restored the blind man’s sight and brought the man into relationship with Him. Jesus wants to restore things to how they should be—both physically and spiritually. And today, God still restores us because He loves us.** Tell a story of a time God restored something in your life, physically or spiritually.

God might have a plan to restore you or someone you love to better health. He might have a plan to restore your heart from pain and sadness to joy and peace. God wants His glory to be revealed through your life, and He will restore you.

## SMALL GROUP SECTION

# RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

*Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.*

## Reflect: Jesus Restores

Encourage the kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

### Questions for Younger Kids

- How did Jesus heal the blind man? John 9:6
- What does the word *restore* mean?
- How does God restore us today?
- Is there a place in your life where you need God to restore you? What is it?

### Questions for Older Kids

- What does the word *restore* mean?
- How did Jesus' healing show He was the Messiah? John 9:31–33
- Why do you think Jesus used mud to heal the blind man? John 9:6
- How can we be open to God's restoration?
- Is there a place in your life where you need God's restoration? What is it?

# 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

### RELATE

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Open a Bible and read 2 Corinthians 5:17–18:

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.**

Invite everyone to place one hand into the middle of the group and stack them on top of each other's hands as you bless the group.

**May you see God restore pieces of your own life, and may you experience God's redeeming love.**