



SESSION

1

Jesus heals



MEETING AIM

To discover that Jesus can forgive people and make them better.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 5:17-26



BACKGROUND

This story comes close to the start of Luke's account of Jesus' ministry. Those watching in the crowd must have been astonished by what went on. The Pharisees were outraged. Not only did Jesus heal the man who couldn't walk, he forgave his sins! Young children won't understand the significance of this, but we can introduce them to the idea that Jesus cares for every aspect of our lives. When we're sick, we can ask him to make us better; when we do something wrong, we can say sorry and he will wipe the slate clean.

+ CIRCLE TIME



Welcome all the children and share out any refreshments you have. Chat about what the children have done this week. What good times do they want to share? Ask if anyone has been to the doctor. Share a story of when you were ill and got better (make sure it's not too serious so the children don't get worried or upset).

+ FREE PLAY



You will need: hospital play equipment, such as toy medical kits, bandages and blankets

Show the children all the play equipment and invite them to play freely together. Encourage them to use chairs or the floor as beds to role-play hospital or doctor situations, and show them how to put on slings or (hypoallergenic) plasters etc.

Join in the play with the children and enjoy spending time with each other without any particular agenda. As you play, you could continue your conversations from 'Circle time'.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a child's hammock or large bed sheet

Gather the children together and explain that you're going to discover a story about Jesus.

Lots of people had heard about a special person. He had been walking around different towns and villages telling people about God. He had made people better. He had chosen friends to be part of his team. One day, this person - Jesus - came to a house and people came from far and wide to hear him. The house was full of people!

Encourage the children to squash together as if they were in that crowded house.

The house was so full, you couldn't get in. People were spilling out of the door! Outside, four friends were very sad. They had a friend who couldn't walk. They had carried him on a mat to the house where Jesus was. They wanted to ask Jesus to make him better, but now they couldn't get in.

They looked at the roof of the house. It was flat, like many houses at that time, and it had stairs leading up to the flat roof. They knew what to do. They would carry their friend up the stairs and onto the roof.

Lay out the hammock or sheet and invite a volunteer to lie on it. Pick the hammock or sheet up and, with the help of other leaders, carry the child around the room.

When they got up on the roof, they took the tiles off and made a large hole. They lowered their friend through the hole in the roof and placed him in front of Jesus.

Lift the child in the hammock or sheet up and then lower them down into the middle of the group of children. Make sure you can do this safely.

When Jesus saw that the friends believed he could make their friend better, he was very impressed! But he didn't make the man better straightaway. First, he said: "My friend, your sins are forgiven."

Everyone was confused. The religious people were angry. "Only God can forgive people!" they thought.

Jesus asked: "Is it more difficult to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to make someone better?"

Jesus looked at the man on the mat. "Get up!" he said. "Roll up your mat and walk!"

The man stood, gathered up his mat and went home, saying thank you to God.

Ask the child on the 'mat' to stand up and skip away, saying: "Thank you, God!" If the children would like to, retell the story with different children being the person on the mat.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Chat about the story, asking these questions. Encourage everyone to join in if they want to:

- What is your favourite part of this story?
- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- If you were one of the man's friends, how would you feel?
- What do you want to say to Jesus?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: rectangles of paper; string; scissors; play people

Give the children a rectangle of paper and some string. Help them tie some string to each corner of the paper to create the mat the man was lowered down on. Give out lots of play people and encourage the children to use their mats and the people to recreate the story. They can do this on their own or in small groups. Let the group retell the story as they like without correcting them, as this helps them interpret the story and what it tells them about Jesus.

Chat with the children. Ask them to tell you what's going on in their retold story. What is Jesus saying? What does the crowd think about what's happening? What about the man on the mat?

+ PRAYER



You will need: paper mats from 'craft and retelling'; felt-tip pens or crayons

Ask the children to think about what they want to say sorry for. Help them write or draw that on one side of the mat. On the other side, help them write or draw something or someone they'd like Jesus to make better.

Have a time of quiet, and ask the children to talk to Jesus about the two things they have written down. Don't forget to return to these in future sessions to see how Jesus has answered their prayers.

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