

January 14

STORY 59

# Get Up!

MARK 2

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 2.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

How does God forgive sins? In the Old Testament, God gave his people certain things they had to do. First, he asked his people to build him a tabernacle (later called the temple). In the temple was a holy place where our holy God would meet with his unholy people and they could seek forgiveness. Second, only certain people could go into this place on behalf of the rest of God's people. Do you remember Moses's brother Aaron? Only people from Aaron's family (from the tribe of Levi) could go into the holy place. Third, God instructed these men (called priests) to offer sacrifices for the sins of God's people in that holy place—that was how God forgave sins. Outside the holy place, there weren't signs that said "Restricted Access" or "Authorized Personnel Only," but everyone knew only priests could enter. So, in today's lesson when Jesus—who was outside the holy

place and not a priest from Levi's line—announced to someone, “Your sins are forgiven,” it makes sense that the religious leaders said, “Why does this man speak like that?” (Mark 2:7). They knew God alone—through his priests, in the temple—could forgive sins. So what is Jesus talking about, and who does he think he is? Let's find out.

## TELL THE STORY

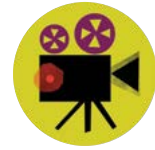
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus has  
the power to  
forgive sins.

Famous people are hard to get close to because they usually have crowds around them. Jesus had become famous, and crowds surrounded him all the time. He was not famous for being a great singer, actor, or politician. He was famous because of what he said and what he did. People came from all over to hear him teach and be healed by him.

Today's story starts with a packed house. Mark tells us that there were so many people in the house “that there was no more room, not even at the door” (Mark 2:2). The living room was packed. The bedrooms. Even the front hallway. As Jesus was teaching in that packed house, four men arrived carrying their friend on a stretcher. Their friend was paralyzed (he couldn't move from his back to his toes), so they carried him. They carried him to Jesus because they believed Jesus had the power to heal. They couldn't enter by the front door, but that didn't stop them! At the back of the house was a stairway that led to the roof, which was flat and made of straw, twigs, and dried mud. They carried him up, dug a hole through the roof, and lowered him down.

When Jesus “saw their faith,” he said something strange: “Son, your sins are forgiven” (2:5). The man wasn't there to have his sins forgiven but his body



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healed. The man and his friends were probably confused. The religious leaders, we know, were steaming mad! “Only God can forgive sins,” they thought to themselves. “What on earth! Does Jesus think he is like God in heaven? This man needs to have a priest offer a sacrifice in the holy place so his sins can be forgiven—not have an ordinary man say the words, ‘Your sins are forgiven!’” (see 2:6–7).

Well, they were right that only God can forgive sins. But they were wrong, because they didn’t know that Jesus is the God-man—so he can do what only God can do. To prove he had authority to forgive sins, he performed a miracle. He told the man, “Get up, take your bed, and go home” (see 2:11). Suddenly, his feet, legs, arms, and back were as strong as he and his friends’ faith. He did exactly what Jesus told him to do. He walked home. Maybe he skipped. Maybe he jumped up and down, then skipped! And the crowd responded, like we would, praising God and saying, “We never saw anything like this!” (2:12).

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

When Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven” (2:5), we don’t know what sins the man committed. But in the very next story, we are told about the sins of a man named Levi. He had a priest’s name, but he was a tax collector! What’s wrong with that? No one likes to pay taxes (money for the government), and Levi was the one who collected them. But he did more than that. He overcharged people. He squeezed his own people (the Jews) for money, gave some to the Romans, and kept the rest for himself. Because of this, the Jews hated tax collectors like Levi more than anyone.

But Jesus didn’t! He called Levi to leave behind his sinful life and follow him. And—miracle of miracles—he accepted Jesus’s invitation. More than that, he invited all his sinful friends to meet Jesus so they too could be loved and forgiven. When the Pharisees heard about this, they didn’t understand why Jesus would get together with such terrible people. They forgot what Jesus taught when he healed the paralyzed man. That he “came to call not those who think they are good but those who know they need a Savior” (see 2:17). Jesus came to forgive *sinners*—that’s the point. To experience the good news that Jesus has the power to forgive all sins, we must first recognize how much sinners like us need him.

### 3

## Engage

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Why were so many people trying to get to Jesus? Why were the friends of the paralyzed man trying to get to Jesus? Did Jesus say he came to call those who are good or those who know they need a Savior? Why did Jesus heal the paralyzed man?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus came to heal those who know they need a Savior.

2. **QUESTION:** According to the Old Testament, how would people find forgiveness for their sin? Who is the only one that could forgive sins? Why did it make the religious leaders angry when Jesus told the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven”? What did they get right? What did they get wrong?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus has authority to forgive sins.

### Memory Verse

The Son  
of Man has  
authority  
on earth to  
forgive sins.

MARK 2:10

3. **QUESTION:** If you break something of your parents, ask their forgiveness, and are forgiven by them, how do you feel? What about if you’re feeling really sick and a doctor gives you medicine that makes you feel better? How do you think the paralyzed man felt when Jesus healed and forgave his sins? How did the crowd respond?

**TAKEAWAY:** When Jesus heals and forgives, the people of God celebrate.

4. **QUESTION:** According to Jewish law, who should the paralyzed man have gone to for forgiveness of his sins? Who are we to go to for forgiveness of our sins? Why don’t we need to go to a temple anymore?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because of Jesus, we no longer need a temple priest to ask forgiveness for our sins; we can ask Jesus directly.

## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Pass the Man Race

*Supply List: ping-pong balls, small pillows*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into teams and have them stand in single file lines. Give each team a ping-pong ball (representing the paralyzed man) and a small pillow. Set the ball in the center of the pillow. On “Go” the first child in each line must pass the pillow between his legs to the person behind him. The children continue to pass the pillow in this way until it reaches the end of the line. It is then returned to the front by passing over the children’s heads to the person in front of them. If the ball drops, the team must start over. The first team to get the “man” back to the front wins. Remind children that the paralyzed man’s friends carried him to Jesus to be healed.

### Option 2: Friendship Tag

*Supply List: none*

Have children link arms with a partner. Choose one pair to disconnect. One of the “disconnected” kids is “It” and tries to tag the other child. To avoid being tagged, the runner can link onto one of the connected pairs. When he links onto a pair, the child on the opposite side of the link is now the runner. If a child is tagged, she becomes “It.” If the leader calls “Find a new friend,” all pairs must break apart and make new pairs. Anytime the children are not connected, they can be tagged and become “It.” Remind children that the paralyzed man had friends who brought him to Jesus. Continue play as time allows.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Pass the Man Race

*See above.*



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## Option 2: Shoebox Relay

*Supply List: adult-sized shoeboxes (two per team), scissors, packing tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut openings on top of the shoeboxes so children can slip their feet into them. Tape the tops of the shoeboxes to the bottoms.*

Divide children into teams of six or less and give each team two shoeboxes. On “Go” the first person on each team slips his feet into the boxes, walks to the other side of the room, then returns to his team to give the boxes to the next person. The first team to race all their members wins. Remind children that the ability to walk is a gift and that the paralyzed man struggled to get around.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Dress the Paralytic

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, glue, scrapbook/construction paper, pom-poms, buttons, sequins, felt, googly eyes, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print a simple outline of an 8-inch person. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a person paper, scissors, and glue. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the person and write “Jesus forgives sin” on the back. Have the children use the supplies to make clothes and decorate their person. Remind children that the paralyzed man had to have people help him do everything, including getting dressed, but that his greatest need was forgiveness.

### Option 2: Paper Weaving Bookmark

*Supply List: white cardstock, construction paper, scissors, tape, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper into ½" x 5" strips. Cut white cardstock into 3" x 9" pieces. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of white cardstock and scissors. Set construction paper strips, tape, and markers on tables. Have children fold the cardstock in half to



form a 3" x 4.5" rectangle. Have children make five evenly-spaced cuts that start at the folded edge and end an inch from the open edge. Unfold the paper. Have children weave in the paper strips by alternating over and under the lines they cut. Trim the strips as needed and use tape to secure. Have children write the Big Truth on the bookmark.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Paper Patchwork Quilt

*Supply List: paper, scrapbook paper, scissors, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print sample patchwork quilt templates. Print the Memory Verse (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of paper, Memory Verse, and scissors. Set quilt templates and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the quilt templates as inspiration to design their own quilts by gluing scrapbook paper pieces onto their paper. After their quilt design is complete, glue on the Memory Verse. Remind children that before Jesus healed the paralyzed man, he had to lie around and depend on others for help.

### Option 2: Paper Weaving Bookmark

*Supply List: white cardstock, construction paper, scissors, tape, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper into  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5" strips. Cut white cardstock into 3" x 9" pieces. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of white cardstock and scissors. Set construction paper strips, tape, and markers on tables. Have children fold the cardstock in half to form a 3" x 4.5" rectangle. Have children make five evenly-spaced cuts that start at the folded edge and end an inch from the open edge. Unfold the paper. Have children weave in the paper strips by alternating over and under the lines they cut. Trim the strips as needed and use tape to secure. Have children write the Big Truth on the bookmark.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.







# January 21

STORY 60

## Follow the Leader

MARK 3

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 3.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Followers of Jesus are called *disciples*. When they began to follow him, Jesus's disciples also became part of Jesus's family (see Mark 3:34–35). Last lesson we met Levi (also called Matthew), the tax collector. Remember when Jesus called him and Levi left his old life and followed Jesus? He became a disciple. There are millions and millions of disciples today; and there have been billions and billions throughout history. But Jesus started with twelve disciples. He picked twelve so they could share a dozen donuts for breakfast. Just kidding! He picked twelve because there had been twelve tribes of Israel that made up the people of God, and Jesus would use his twelve disciples (who were all from Jewish tribes) to form a new people of God (called the church). Today we learn a bit about them—their names, why they are important, and what Jesus called them

to do. “The household of God” (God’s family—the church) is “built on [the twelve disciples’] foundation” (Eph. 2:19–20), with Jesus himself as “the cornerstone” (the most important stone because all the rest are built on it).

## TELL THE STORY

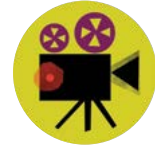
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus picked  
twelve ordinary  
men to do  
extraordinary  
things.

Do you know people, churches, or hospitals that have the names Peter, James, John, or Andrew? Maybe someone you know is named John. Maybe you were born in St. James’s Hospital in Ireland, have heard of St. Peter’s church in Italy, or watch professional golfers play at St. Andrews in Scotland. Those people and places are named after the first four disciples that Jesus called. Peter and Andrew were brothers, and so were James and John. All four were fishermen. Jesus called them to stop fishing for fish and start fishing for people.

One day, Jesus climbed a mountain and he asked his disciples to follow him. From that group, he chose twelve men whom he called “apostles,” a word that means “people sent out.” Once he trained them about the kingdom of God (they spent a lot of time with him!), he sent them out to share what they learned with others. God gave them the power to preach and cast out demons (see Mark 3:14–15). We might say their job was to announce the coming of the Snake Crusher and show his power over evil.

All the twelve apostles were Jewish, all spoke the same language, and all were from the same part of the world. (And it’s likely twelve out of twelve had beards!) But they were also very different. For example, James and John were fishermen who worked for their dad’s business, Matthew was a tax collector



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who worked for the Roman government, and Simon was a “Zealot” (a freedom fighter who worked against the Roman government). Not a lot in common! What these men—along with Andrew, Bartholomew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, Thaddaeus, Judas, and another James—all had in common was Jesus. When he said, “Follow me,” they all left everything and followed him. Jesus became their leader, teacher, and friend. And on the cross he became (for the eleven who continued to follow him) the Snake Crusher, who saved them from all their sins, freed them from the power of Satan, and filled them with the Holy Spirit so they might share the good news they received with all the nations.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

If you are a Christian, why are you a Christian? The simple answer is that, like Matthew, God called you. But, of course, there is more to it than that, isn’t there? God used other people to share the good news with you and show you the power of the gospel by their changed lives. Maybe your parents told you that God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus, that Jesus died for the sins of the world, and that now God calls everyone (even you!) to turn from sin (repent), trust in Jesus (believe), and follow him (become a disciple). The disciples did what your parents might have done—they were sent out by Jesus to tell people the good news about Jesus, and then the Holy Spirit worked in people’s hearts so they would repent, believe, and follow Jesus. The good news about Jesus may be an old story now, but it is new every day for thousands of people around the world. Jesus is still calling people everywhere to follow him. And those who follow him (no matter what language they speak) are part of the new people of God, children in God’s one big family.

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What did Jesus tell Matthew, James, and John to do when he met them? What do you call people who follow Jesus? Who can become a disciple?

**TAKEAWAY:** If you follow Jesus, you are his disciple.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
If anyone would  
come after me,  
let him deny  
himself and take  
up his cross and  
follow me.

MARK 8:34

2. **QUESTION:** How many men did Jesus call to be his first disciples? How many tribes did Israel have? What was Jesus trying to show by choosing twelve to be his disciples?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus chose twelve men as his first disciples to form a new people of God—the church.

3. **QUESTION:** What was another name for the twelve disciples? What does apostle mean? What did Jesus give the twelve apostles the power to do as he sent them out?

**TAKEAWAY:** The twelve disciples were sent out to preach the good news and cast out demons.

4. **QUESTION:** Where were God’s people from in the Old Testament? What’s different about God’s people in the New Testament?

**TAKEAWAY:** God’s family is now made up of people from all over the world, not just Israel.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Footprint Relay

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors*

*Before Class: On cardstock, print and cut out large footprints that have Jesus printed on them (one set per team).*

Divide children into teams and give each team one set of footprints. On “Go” the first person on each team places the footprints on the ground and puts one foot on each. The goal is to travel to and from the opposite wall by picking up and moving the footprints, only allowing one’s feet to touch the papers. Children then hand the footprints to the next person in line, who repeats the process. The first team to race all team members wins. Remind children that we should follow in Jesus’s footsteps.



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## Option 2: Jesus Called Twelve Race

*Supply List: paper plates, shaving cream, masking tape, bowls, pom-poms*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cover paper plates with shaving cream (one per team). Set plates on the floor on one side of the room. Using tape, mark a line 8 feet from the plates. Place bowls of pom-poms at the line.*

Divide children into teams and line them up on the opposite side of the room from the plates. On “Go” the first child on each team crabwalks to the line, takes a pom-pom, and tosses it onto the shaving cream (continue tossing until successful). The child then bear crawls back to his or her team to tag the next person. The first team to land twelve pom-poms on the shaving cream wins. Remind children that Jesus called twelve disciples to follow him.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Who’s the Leader?

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. Choose one child to be a “disciple” and to step out of the room. When the disciple is out of the room, choose one child to be the leader. Have the disciple come back into the room. Have the leader start doing an action (clap, snap, pat knees, etc.). The other children should follow the leader without being obvious about who the leader is. The disciple tries to guess who the leader is. When she guesses correctly, the leader becomes the disciple and a new leader is chosen. Remind children that Jesus chose disciples to follow him.

## Option 2: Jesus Called Twelve Race

*Supply List: paper plates, shaving cream, masking tape, bowls, pom-poms*

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person. The first team to land twelve pom-poms on the shaving cream wins. Remind children that Jesus called twelve disciples to follow him.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

### K–2nd

#### Option 1: Chain of Disciples

*Supply List: construction paper, heavy paper, pencils, scissors, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper into 6" x 12" strips (two per child). On heavy paper, cut out copies of a simple person outline, with arms extending outwards (6 inches high, 2 inches across). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two strips of construction paper and an outline. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children accordion-fold one paper strip, making folds every 2 inches. Using the template, trace the person on top of the folded paper (the hands should touch the folds). Have children cut along the drawn lines (not cutting the hands at the folds) and open the paper to see six joined men. Have them repeat the process with their second strip. Tape the two strips together to form the twelve disciples.

#### Option 2: Stuffed Paper Fish

*Supply List: cardstock, string, scissors, stamp pads, baby wipes, hole punches, paper towels, stapler*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print two matching fish templates (one set per child). Cut string into 8-inch pieces. Make sample craft.*

Give each child one set of fish and string. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out both fish. Using the stamp pad, have children make fingerprint “scales” on the fish until they are covered. Help children staple the two fish together. Before fully closing, have children stuff crumpled paper towels between the two fish. Punch a hole in the fish and tie string through for

hanging. Remind children Jesus told his disciples they would become “fishers of men.”

3rd–5th

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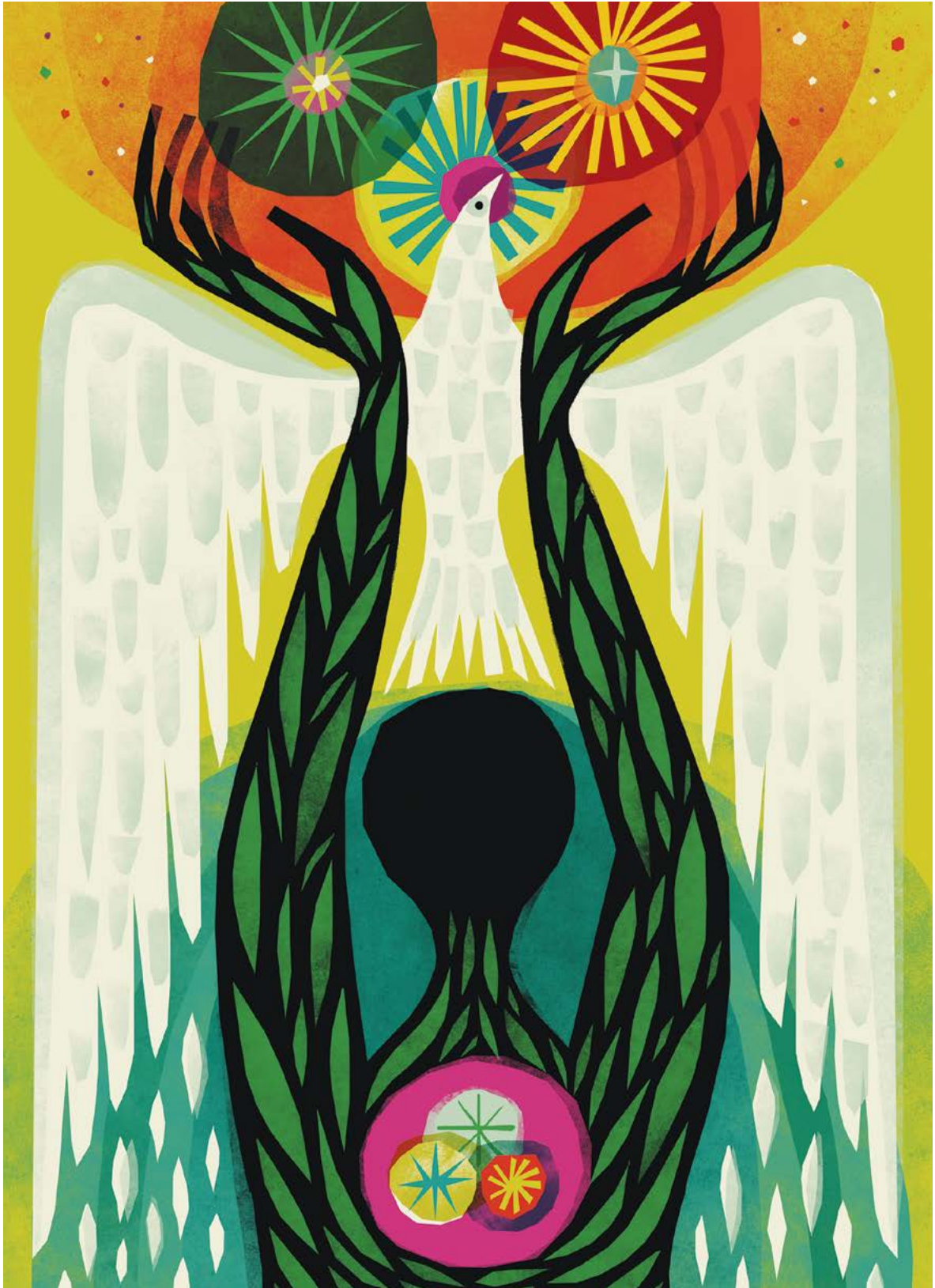


Story

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Mark 3





January 28

STORY 61

# A Story about Soils

MARK 4

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 4.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

One day a big red dragon with seven heads flew from his lair and landed in front of King Frederick the Great's great castle. The dreadful dragon spread his scary wings, and with his fiery breath blew down the front door. The castle guards fell dead and the princess was captured.

Jesus told stories. But *not* stories like that. He told a lot of stories a lot of the time. Some of his stories have scary endings, but none of his stories are about red dragons. He told simple, short stories about ordinary people and everyday events—a woman baking bread, fishermen casting their nets, a shepherd watching his sheep, a farmer sowing seed. These stories are called parables. Jesus often ended his parables, saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:9). He wanted people to listen and learn about the kingdom of God through

his stories. But he knew that people needed his help to understand what he was saying. The parable of the soils, which we will listen to today, teaches us about the ways people either accept or reject Jesus's teachings. Listen up!

## TELL THE STORY

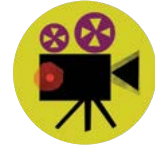
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus's true  
followers accept  
his word and  
bear fruit.

One day Jesus told a parable about four kinds of dirt. Dirt that was really hard. Dirt filled with rocks. Dirt overgrown with thorns. And dirt that was good for growing seeds. Do you want to hear the short story? Do you promise to *listen*?

Once there was a farmer who went around his farm and threw seed everywhere. Some seeds fell on the hard dirt pathway, and birds quickly swooped down and swallowed the seeds. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, and because the soil was so shallow, the hot sun quickly wilted the seeds. Some seeds fell among thorns, and when the seeds started to sprout, they were choked by the thorns that wrapped around the seedlings. But some seeds dropped down deep into good soil. Those seeds got all the nutrients they needed. And sure enough, after a few days, the tiny seeds sprouted. They produced thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times more than what the farmer first planted.

Jesus's disciples heard Jesus's parable, but they didn't understand it. They needed Jesus's help. Thankfully, Jesus explained. The seeds represent the good news about Jesus and his kingdom (the gospel). Each soil represents how people respond to the message. Some people hear the gospel, but before it can change them, Satan (like the birds) comes and snatches it away. Like the seed on the hard path, the truth of the gospel never takes root. Other people are happy to receive the gospel for a while, but when hard things come and they



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start to suffer for following Jesus, they don't want it any more. They are like the seeds thrown on rocky ground that have very small roots and don't get enough water. Then there are people who hear the gospel, and they start to think and act like Christians, but worries about life and money become more important than pleasing God. They never grow and produce any fruit. They are like the seed sown among thorns. Finally, there are the seeds that fall on good soil and produce a huge harvest. This soil represents those who hear the gospel, let it soak into their hearts, and their lives are full of fruit—like caring for the needy, loving the unlovely, and teaching others about Jesus.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Some people think there are only two responses to the good news about Jesus. You either accept it or reject it. But Jesus teaches us that there are some responses where someone seems like they are accepting the good news, but it ultimately doesn't bear any fruit in their lives. They liked Jesus for a little bit, but they weren't changed by him.

But Jesus taught that when we really believe the real gospel, it changes us. Not always in one quick swoop overnight, but steadily over a long time—like a farmer with his field. Does that mean that if we decide to be a Christian, we have to work really hard to be good enough for God's farm? No, if that were the case, none of us could be saved. Instead, we have to hold onto that gospel and let it go down deep into our hearts. The more we know the Jesus who died to rescue us from sin, the more we know the Father who sent his Son to rescue us, and the more God will bring change in our lives. Let's have good soil and hold tight to Jesus's gospel.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What kinds of stories did Jesus tell? Why did Jesus use parables to teach people?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus taught in parables to help separate good and bad listeners.

2. **QUESTION:** In the parable of the soils, where was the seed thrown? When Jesus explained the parable, what did he say the seed represented?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** The gospel is heard by hard and soft hearts.

3. **QUESTION:** What happened to the seed thrown on the hard pathway? What about the seed thrown on rocky soil? And what about seed thrown in the thorns? What does the parable teach us about how the gospel might not take root in our hearts?

**TAKEAWAY:** If our hearts are hard or we are distracted by hard things and worries, the gospel won't take root in our hearts.

4. **QUESTION:** What happened to the seed thrown on the good soil? How much fruit did it produce? What does the parable teach us about how the gospel can take root in our hearts?

**TAKEAWAY:** If our hearts are soft and ready to receive the gospel, it will take root and produce much fruit.

**Memory Verse**

I am the vine; you  
are the branches.  
Whoever abides in  
me and I in him,  
he it is that bears  
much fruit, for  
apart from me you  
can do nothing.

JOHN 15:5

---

**ACTIVITIES**

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

**Option 1: Pathway Relay**

*Supply List: paper, scissors, cups, obstacles (plastic toy hoops, cones, etc.)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and individually cut out the words path, rocks, thorns, and good. Put the words in a cup (one set per team). Make identical, simple obstacle courses using cones, hula hoops, and the like (one course per team).*

Divide children into teams of four. Have each child draw one word from the team's cup. If the word is *path*, the children must complete the obstacle course on all fours. If it is *rocks*, they must walk on their knees. If it is *thorns*, they must hold one arm behind their backs while crawling. And if it is *good*, they have no limitations. When the leader says, "Grow," the first child on each team races through the course according to the word he or she drew, then tags the second person. The first team to have all team members finish the course wins.



## Option 2: Who's Got the Seed?

*Supply List: large seed*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children sit in a circle with their hands behind their backs. Choose one child to go to the center of the circle and close her eyes. Hand a seed to one of the children in the circle, then have the child in the center of the circle open her eyes. Have the children discreetly pass the seed from person to person. The person in the center guesses who has the seed. If she is correct, the person with the seed trades places with the person in the middle and the game continues. Remind children that as we hear and obey the word of God, we bear much fruit.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Rocks and Thorns

*Supply List: none*

Divide children into two teams. Have teams line up facing one another in the center of the room. Identify one team as “rocks” and the other team as “thorns.” Explain that their respective bases are the walls behind their team. The leader will call “rocks” or “thorns.” If rocks are called, the thorns must turn and run to their base before being tagged by a rock (and vice versa). If someone is tagged, he must join the team who tagged them. Play continues until all children are on one team. Remind children that Jesus used a parable to explain that some people stop obeying God’s word when life gets difficult, thorny, and rocky.

## Option 2: Tossing Seeds in the Soils

*Supply List: paper, marker, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write path, rocks, thorns, and good on four pieces of paper and tape one word on each wall in the room.*

Choose one child to stand in the middle of the room, to close her eyes, and to count down from ten. Have the remaining children choose a sign to stand by. On zero, with eyes still closed, the person in the middle calls out one of the four words. The children by that sign are out. Play continues until one person remains. Remind children that Jesus told a parable that compared different soils to how people respond to God’s word.



## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Healthy Soil Bloom

*Supply List: coffee filters, muffin liners, craft sticks, markers, pom-poms, glue, spray bottle with water*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a coffee filter, muffin liner, and craft stick. Set markers, glue, and pom-poms on tables. Have children color their coffee filters with markers. Teachers then lightly spray the outside edges of the filter to blend colors. Have children glue muffin liners to the center of their filters, then glue pom-poms to the middle of the muffin liners. Have children color the craft stick green and glue to the flower as a stem.

### Option 2: Story of the Soil Wheel

*Supply List: paper, scissors, marker, crayons, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out 8-inch-diameter circles (two per child). Divide half the circles into four equal sections, and label them Path, Rocky Ground, Thorns, and Good Soil. In the other half, cut out a section one-fourth the size of the circle. Write the Big Truth on the remaining portion. Make a sample craft.*

Provide children with crayons and the circle divided into four sections. Have them draw something that illustrates each of the four sections, then help them fasten the circle with a section cut out of it on top with a brass fastener.





### Option 1: Good Soil Flower

*Supply List: tissue paper sheets, scissors, string, green pipe cleaners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut string into 8-inch lengths (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Have children choose six to eight pieces of tissue paper and lay them on top of one another. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children accordion-fold their stacked tissue paper into 1- to 2-inch folds. Help them tie the string tightly around the middle to secure the folds. Have children use scissors to shape both ends of the tissue paper (curved, fringe, etc.). Have children fan out both sides of the tissue paper and gently pull up each layer toward the string, one layer at a time. Have children create stems and leaves with pipe cleaners and attach by twisting them around the flower. Remind children that being hearers and doers of God's word helps us grow strong and beautiful in him.

### Option 2: Careful Where You Plant

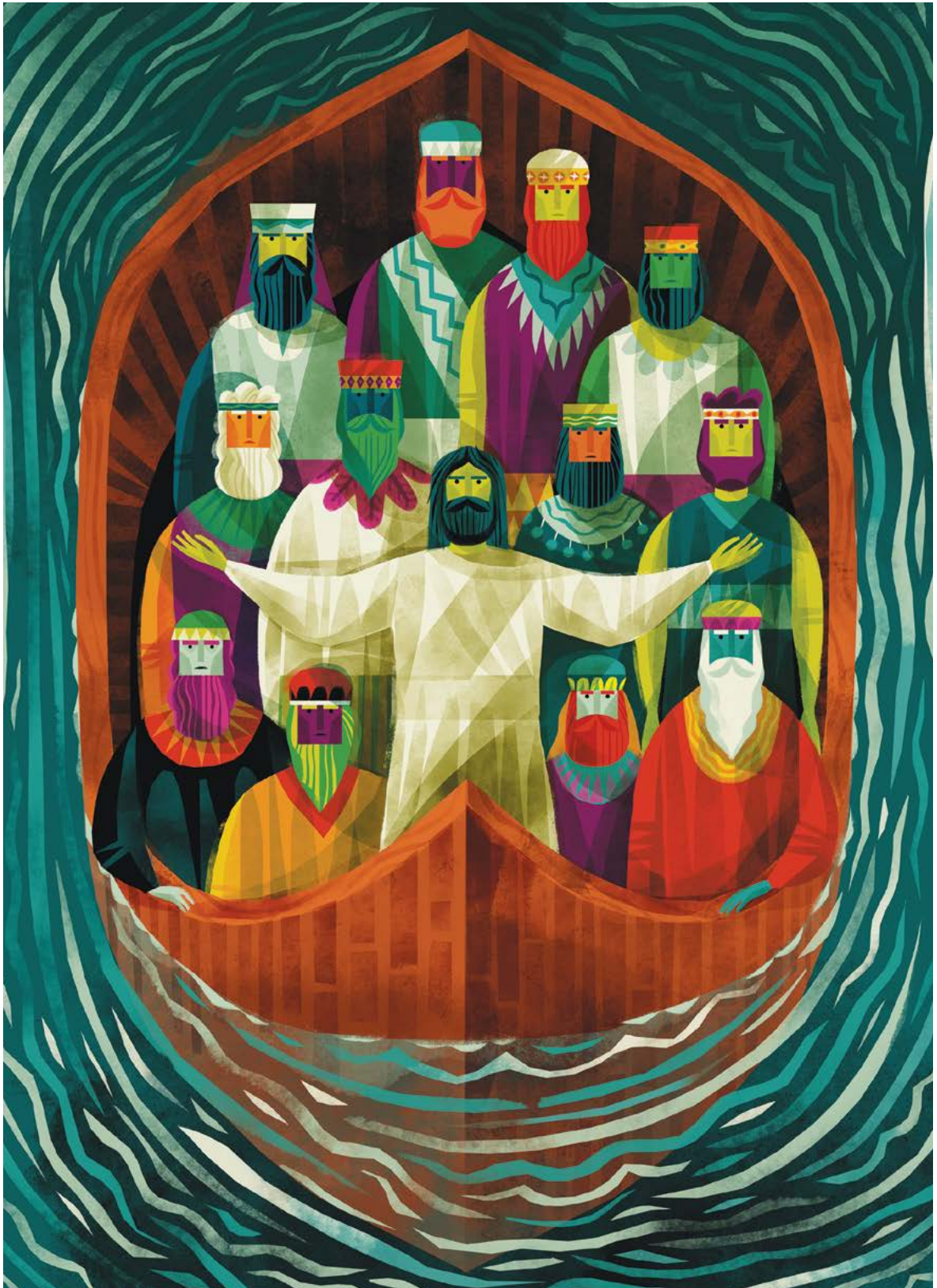
*Supply List: paper, glue, colored pencils, large seeds*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print Mark 4:14–20 (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set glue and colored pencils on tables. Give each child a blank paper and four large seeds. Have children fold the paper in half twice so it has four sections. Have them label the sections *Path*, *Rocky Ground*, *Thorns*, and *Good Soil*. Have them glue one seed in each section, then draw pictures to illustrate each section's label. Have children glue the Mark 4:14–20 paper to the back of the drawings, facing outwards.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



# February 4

STORY 62

# The Scary Boat Ride

MARK 4

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 4.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. He was tempted by the snake in the wilderness for forty days. (And he didn't give in!) Then, after John was arrested, Jesus walked up to a place called Galilee and he *said* and *did* a lot of things there. Like? He preached, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). He called his first followers and they followed. He "cast out many demons" and "healed many who were sick with various diseases" (1:34). He prayed to his Father in heaven. He cleansed a leper. He forgave the sins and healed the body of a paralyzed man. He dined with tax collectors and sinners and shared the good news with them. He taught large crowds, often using parables—those simple, short (but symbolic!) stories we learned about last lesson. Wow, that's a lot to say and do!

And it all drives us to a very important question: Who is Jesus? Do you think the disciples ever asked that question? In today's story, we'll find out what Jesus *said* and *did* that made them ask: Who is Jesus?

## TELL THE STORY

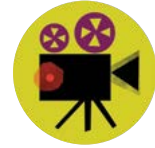
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus is so strong  
that those who  
trust him never  
have to be afraid.

Have you ever been really scared? Maybe a nightmare? Maybe your big brother snuck up behind you and said, “Boo!” Maybe a thunderstorm? Maybe a big wave that slammed you down to the ocean floor? One night, Jesus’s disciples were really scared. Do you want to know why?

Here’s what happened. After a long day of helping people, Jesus said to his twelve apostles, “Let’s sail across to the other side” (see Mark 4:35). So they got on a boat and pushed off from shore. As they were sailing, a terrible storm arose out of nowhere. The wind was blowing against them and pushing huge waves into the boat. The boat was starting to fill with water; the disciples were totally filled with fear! For even the experienced fishermen on board knew that they couldn’t save the boat from sinking if it filled with water. So the disciples rushed to Jesus. One problem—he was fast asleep. “Teacher,” they yelled, “Wake up! Don’t you care about us? We are all about to die!” (see 4:38). Of course, Jesus cares! He cared for them then; he cares for us now. But he didn’t fear the storm. When you’re as strong as Jesus, you’re even more powerful than the wind and waves. So he woke right up and he shushed the storm! “Peace! Be Still!” he commanded the waves. And you know what? They obeyed! The water stilled and the wind stopped. In an instant, the sea was like a sheet of glass—perfectly flat and still.





Story

62

Mark 4

Jesus rebuked the wind and waves, and then he rebuked the twelve: “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” (4:40). Jesus wanted them to trust him even in the storm. The disciples *had been* afraid of the storm, but now they were afraid (in a good way!) of Jesus. Mark ends this story, saying that the disciples “were filled with great fear and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’” (4:41). What a great question! But they’d have to wait until after Jesus’s death and resurrection to really get their answer. He is the Almighty Creator, the only Son of God, the Savior of the world. For now, they needed to learn a lesson we too need to learn: Jesus is so strong that those who trust him never have to be afraid.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you know what a boat’s mast is? It is the two poles that stick up in the middle of the boat where sailors set the sails. If you’ve ever seen one, you may know it looks like a cross. While Mark doesn’t tell us if the disciples’ boat had a mast or not (it likely did), he is making a connection between the shape of this story and what happened to Jesus on the cross. On the waters, Jesus saves his twelve disciples from drowning. A small salvation. But on the cross, he saves all his disciples (including us) from the punishment of eternal death for our sins. Our big salvation! In today’s story, Jesus brought peace to the wind and waves. On the cross, he brought peace between sinful people and a holy God! You see, this scary boat ride is not just to teach us how powerful Jesus is or that he can calm the storms we encounter on earth. It also teaches us who Jesus is (the Creator and Son of God) and what he came to do (save us).

---

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What are some of the miracles that the disciples had seen Jesus do? What happened on their boat ride to make them afraid? What do you think would have happened if the disciples told the wind and waves to be still? What happened when Jesus told them to be still? What does that tell us about Jesus?

**TAKEAWAY:** Even the wind and waves obey Jesus, because he is the Creator.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**

They were filled  
with great fear  
and said to one  
another, “Who  
then is this, that  
even the wind and  
the sea obey him?”

MARK 4:41

2. **QUESTION:** Do you remember what Jesus said to the disciples after he calmed the storm? Why do you think he said they had no faith? What would it have looked like for them to have faith during the storm? When we encounter scary things, like the storm, what can we remember?

**TAKEAWAY:** Faith in Jesus helps us face our biggest fears.

3. **QUESTION:** What would have happened to the disciples if Jesus hadn’t stilled the storm? What would happen if Jesus hadn’t died on the cross for us? What difference does it make that he stilled the storm and died for us?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus came to save us.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: “Peace! Be Still!” Dancing

*Supply List: music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children dance while music is playing. When the music stops, call out, “Peace! Be still!” Have children freeze until the music starts again. If the teacher sees a child move before the music starts back up, that child is out. Play continues until one child remains. Note: This can also be a nonelimination game to keep children active. If a child moves when music is off, they must do twenty jumping jacks before reentering the game.

### Option 2: Don’t Blow Me Down Game

*Supply List: tissues*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Give the children each an uncrumpled tissue and have them place it on their heads. Children should move around the room and try to blow tissues off other people's heads, all while keeping their tissue on their head. If a child's tissue falls off, he may not catch it but must sit down in that spot. Play continues until only one child remains. Remind children that Jesus calmed the raging winds with a word.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Bail Out the Boat

*Supply List: masking tape, blue paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Using tape, make the outline of a boat on the floor. Crumple blue paper into balls (at least five per child) and scatter them around the outside of the boat.*

Choose two children to be the “disciples” and stand inside the boat. Have the remaining children throw the paper balls into the boat while the disciples try to keep the “water” out. After 1 minute, shout, “Peace! Be still!” and have everyone freeze. Count how many pieces of paper are in the boat and record. Choose two new disciples and repeat the process. Continue until all children have had a chance to be the disciples. The winning pair is the pair that had the least amount of water in the boat after 1 minute.

### Option 2: Strong Winds at Sea Relay

*Supply List: balloons, straws*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate balloons (one per team and a few extra).*

Divide children into teams, line them up single file, and give each team a balloon. Give each child a straw. The first child on each team blows through his or her straw to move the balloon to a designated spot and back. The child then passes the balloon to the next player on the team, who repeats the process. The first team to have all players finish wins. Remind children that when Jesus commanded the winds and waves to be still, they obeyed.



Story

62

Mark 4



## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Winds and Waves Wind Sock

*Supply List: paper, crepe paper streamers, crayons, tape, hole punch, string*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On paper, print Mark 4:41: “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (one per child). Cut string into 20-inch lengths (one per child). Cut crepe paper streamers into 15-inch lengths. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a verse paper. Set crayons, tape, and streamers on tables. Have children decorate the verse paper with crayons. Have children roll the paper widthwise into a tube and secure with tape, decorated side facing outwards. Have children tape streamers to the inside bottom edge of the wind sock. Help children punch two holes directly across from each other at the top of the wind sock. Thread the string through both holes and tie the ends together for hanging.

### Option 2: Boat Baggie

*Supply List: plastic sandwich baggies, blue gel toothpaste, clear shipping tape, construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Squirt 2 tablespoons of blue gel toothpaste into baggies, seal shut, and reinforce with clear shipping tape (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a toothpaste baggie. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children press the toothpaste around in the baggie to spread it out to look like water. Have children use construction paper to cut a right triangle for the boat sail, a semicircle for the base of the boat, and a long, skinny rectangle to attach the two parts of the boat. Glue pieces together, decorate with crayons, and “sail” the boat on the “water” baggie.

**Option 1: Winds and Waves Wind Sock**

*Supply List: paper, crepe paper streamers, crayons, tape, hole punch, string*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On paper, print Mark 4:41: “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (one per child). Cut string into 20-inch lengths (one per child). Cut crepe paper streamers into 15-inch lengths. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a verse paper. Set crayons, tape, and streamers on tables. Have children decorate the verse paper with crayons. Have children roll the paper widthwise into a tube and secure with tape, decorated side facing outwards. Have children tape streamers to the inside bottom edge of the wind sock. Help children punch two holes directly across from each other at the top of the wind sock. Thread the string through both holes and tie the ends together for hanging.

**Option 2: Sea in a Bottle**

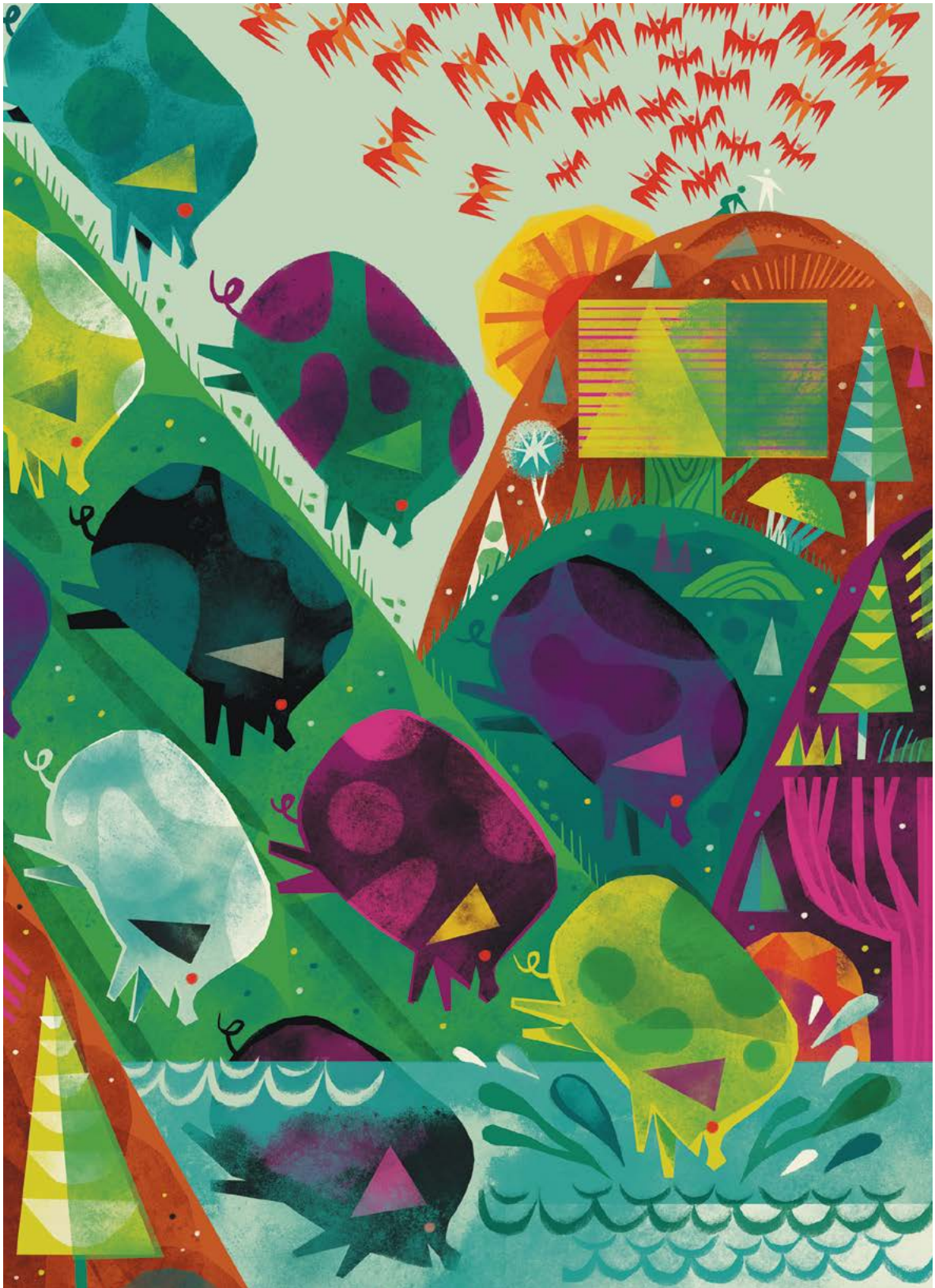
*Supply List: water bottles, funnels, water, baby or mineral oil, blue food coloring, small cork or foam balls, hot glue gun or duct tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an empty water bottle. Have children use funnels to fill their bottle halfway with water. Next, have them add a few drops of blue food coloring. Put on the lid and shake until well blended. Have children use the funnels again to fill bottles with baby or mineral oil, leaving about 1 inch unfilled at the top. Have children insert a small cork or foam ball. Have teachers secure the lid with a hot glue gun or duct tape. Encourage children not to shake the bottle but to hold it horizontally and raise and lower the top and bottom to create waves. Remind children that Jesus has power over winds and waves and that we do not have to fear.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



# February 11

STORY 63

## Send Us to the Pigs!

MARK 5

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 5.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Remember the boat ride from last week? That journey was memorable to say the least. There was a terrible storm with fierce winds and scary waves. Remember who calmed the storm? Jesus! And how did the disciples respond? They shook in their wet boots. They were "filled with great fear" (Mark 4:41). They also wondered, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (4:41). Our story today answers that question. We'll see Jesus rescue a scary man in a scary place. And we'll see what happens when he encounters an extremely powerful demon named Legion. Will Legion be a match for Jesus? Let's find out.

## TELL THE STORY

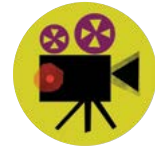
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Because Jesus  
has come to  
free us from the  
power of the evil  
one, we should  
celebrate and tell  
our friends.

After their scary boat ride, Jesus and the twelve arrived in the “country of the Gerasenes” (5:1). This country was a Gentile region. The Jews viewed Gentiles as unclean people. And the most unclean person in that place was about to meet Jesus. As soon as Jesus stepped off the boat, “a man with an unclean spirit” (5:2) rushed toward him. He was possessed by demons and lived in a tomb cut from stone that was filled with dead bodies (how very unclean!). If that’s not bad enough, there was “a great herd of pigs . . . feeding there on the hillside” (5:11). Now you might think, “Piglets are so cute.” But God’s law clearly stated: “And the pig . . . is unclean to you” (Lev. 11:7). So this is one unclean scene! There’s a demon-possessed Gentile living with dead bodies and pigs.

This super-unclean man needed some superstrong cleaning powers. But it was worse than that, because Mr. Super-Unclean was also Mr. Superstrong. “And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him” (Mark 5:3–4). His strength came because he was possessed by a large and powerful group of demons called “Legion” (5:9). In those days, the word *legion* described a group of six thousand Roman foot soldiers. Who was strong enough to crush that many demons? Could the Snake Crusher do it? Amazingly, the battle scene lasted only a few seconds. Who do you think won? It was the Snake Crusher! Jesus simply commanded, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” (5:8), and soon the thousands of unclean spirits came out. And where did they go? Into the unclean pigs. The pigs were so spooked that they stampeded down



the steep mountainside and crashed into the sea. With just a few words Jesus conquered the demons, showed he was the Son of God, and cleaned this man of his unclean spirit. What do you think that man did? He “began to proclaim . . . how much Jesus had done for him” (5:20). He had really good news to share!

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you know that we are in a spiritual war against Satan? We are! The Bible states that the “whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19) and that we “wrestle against . . . spiritual forces of evil” (Eph. 6:12). The good news is that Jesus is the Snake Crusher; he came to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8) and crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15).

So when we see demons being driven out of a person—like in today’s story—these are pictures of Jesus’s putting his foot on the snake. It is not until the cross that Satan’s head is crushed. And is it not until Jesus’s glorious return—where he will toss the devil and his minions into the “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:10)—that all evil in this world will be destroyed. Until then, we are in a spiritual battle. But, like the man in this story, we have been made clean and set free by Jesus. And like him we should tell our family and friends this good news of God’s mercy. The Lord has done so much for us!

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** In the story, where do we see Jesus showing his power? Why do you think Jesus is able to be this powerful? What hard things do you need Jesus’s power to help you with?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the all-powerful Son of God.

2. **QUESTION:** What was this man like before he met Jesus? How about after he met Jesus? How can you tell Jesus loved this man? How can Jesus’s love for you and power over sin change your life?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because Jesus loved this man, he set him free from sin and made him new.



Story

63

Mark 5

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
Go home to your  
friends and tell  
them how much  
the Lord has  
done for you.

**MARK 5:19**

- 3. QUESTION:** Have you ever felt really angry or sad or just yucky and you needed someone to come alongside you and help you? Who did you go to? Who can we always go to (whether we need forgiveness, or comfort, or help)?

**TAKEAWAY:** Even when we are unclean, we can come to Jesus.

- 4. QUESTION:** What did the man do after Jesus rescued him? What has Jesus done for you that you can share with others? Can you think of a specific person that you can tell about Jesus's work in your life this week?

**TAKEAWAY:** If Jesus has made us clean and set us free from the evil one, we should tell others the good news!

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Balloon Game

*Supply List: balloons, large sheet of paper/whiteboard*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per pair).*

Put children in pairs. Give each pair one balloon. Have pairs hit the balloon back and forth without letting the balloon fall to the ground. If the balloon falls, have the pair go to the whiteboard and write down (or have the teacher write) one thing that they can tell others about Jesus. Play continues as long as time allows.

### Option 2: Sin Snowball Fight

*Supply List: white paper, pens, masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide the classroom in half using a long piece of masking tape.*

Give the children each two pieces of paper. Have them write the name of a sin they struggle with on each of the papers, then crumple them up. Divide children





into two teams and assign each team to one half of the classroom. On “Go” have children throw their “sin snowballs” across to the other side. (They want to get rid of that sin!) At the end of 2 minutes, say “Freeze!” Count the snowballs on each side of the room. The team with the fewest snowballs wins. Have children shoot all snowballs into a trash can. Tell them Jesus takes all the sin in our lives, cleans us up, and makes us new.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Charades

*Supply List: notecards*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make situation cards about ways we show mercy to others. (Examples: One falls off a bike, and someone gets an adhesive bandage. One is crying, and someone comes over and comforts. One is getting bullied, and someone shows kindness.)*

Have children come up two at a time to act out one of the situations without using words. Have remaining children guess what they are acting. Continue play until all children have had the opportunity to act out a situation. Remind children that Jesus showed mercy to the demon-possessed man.

### Option 2: Sin Snowball Fight

*Supply List: white paper, pens, masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide the classroom in half using a long piece of masking tape.*

Give the children each two pieces of paper. Have them write the name of a sin they struggle with on each of the papers, then crumple them up. Divide children into two teams and assign each team to one half of the classroom. On “Go” have children throw their “sin snowballs” across to the other side. (They want to get rid of that sin!) At the end of 2 minutes, say “Freeze!” Count the snowballs on each side of the room. The team with the fewest snowballs wins. Have children shoot all snowballs into a trash can. Tell them Jesus takes all the sin in our lives, cleans us up, and makes us new.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Megaphone Craft

*Supply List: paper, crayons, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a megaphone template with the Memory Verse written on it (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a template. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out and decorate their megaphones. Roll the template into a megaphone shape and secure with tape. Encourage children to go and tell others what Jesus has done for them.

### Option 2: Butterfly Stained Glass

*Supply List: white cardstock, string, hole punch, crayons, cotton balls, vegetable oil, bowls, plastic bags*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On white cardstock, print copies of a stained glass butterfly template with the Memory Verse written underneath it (one per child). Cut 1-foot lengths of string (one per child). Place vegetable oil in small bowls. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a template and string. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children punch a hole at the top of the template and loop their string through for hanging. Have children color the different butterfly sections with crayons. Encourage them to press hard when coloring and to fill every space with color. Next, have children use cotton balls to rub vegetable oil over both sides of the entire butterfly. Send butterflies home in plastic bags and encourage children to hang them in a window. Tell children that just as butterflies change from caterpillars, so Jesus changes people into something beautiful.



### Option 1: Sin Paper Chains

*Supply List: black construction paper, scissors, white crayons, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Place supplies on tables. Have each child cut a piece of black construction paper into six strips. Next, have the children use a white crayon to write a sin that they struggle with on each strip. If they need help, give examples such as lying, anger, hatred, worry, jealousy, unkind words, or cheating. Using tape, make a paper chain with the strips. Remind children that just as the demon-possessed man was controlled by sin, sin controls us too. Remind children that the only way to break the “chains” of sin is through Jesus.

### Option 2: Butterfly Stained Glass

*Supply List: white cardstock, string, hole punch, crayons, cotton balls, vegetable oil, bowls, plastic bags*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On white cardstock, print copies of a stained glass butterfly template with the Memory Verse written underneath it (one per child). Cut 1-foot lengths of string (one per child). Place vegetable oil in small bowls. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a template and string. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children punch a hole at the top of the template and loop their string through for hanging. Have children color the different butterfly sections with crayons. Encourage them to press hard when coloring and to fill every space with color. Next, have children use cotton balls to rub vegetable oil over both sides of the entire butterfly. Send butterflies home in plastic bags and encourage children to hang them in a window. Tell children that just as butterflies change from caterpillars, so Jesus changes people into something beautiful.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



# February 18

STORY 64

## A Sick Woman and a Sad Dad

MARK 5

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 5.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1  
Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2  
Teach

Do you remember lesson 58? Probably not. How about the lesson called Mr. Clean, where Jesus cleansed the leper? Maybe you remember that. In that lesson, we learned that in the Old Testament, God gave his people a list of laws telling them what was clean and unclean. Certain animals were unclean. Bats and rats? Yes. Pigs? For sure. Squirrels? Them too. So, if someone ate an unclean animal, they became unclean. (And maybe sick too!) What else could make someone unclean? If someone touched a dead body, he was unclean. If someone was bleeding in a certain way, she was unclean.

In today's lesson Jesus does something remarkable. (Actually a few remarkable things.) He meets two people who desperately need his help. One is an unclean woman, and the other is a religious leader. Will Jesus do what they ask? Will they do what he asks? Let's find out!

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

### Big Truth

Jesus showed  
his power over  
disease and  
death, and one  
day he will  
defeat them for  
all who believe.

Does Jesus save only rich people? No! Religious people? No! Girls but not boys? No! Jesus came to save all people. And today's story (actually two stories woven together) makes that fact very clear. It also makes clear that Jesus has power over any disease and even death.

One day a great crowd surrounded Jesus. Suddenly, a man named Jairus pushed his way through, saw Jesus face-to-face, and bowed before him. That's not unusual. People should bow before King Jesus. The leper did this—others too. But what is unusual is that Jairus was an important religious leader: "One of the rulers of the synagogue" (Mark 5:22). Why would a religious leader bow before Jesus? He did so because he was desperate: "My little daughter is dying. But if you come," he begged Jesus, "and lay your hands on her she will live" (see 5:23). Wow! What faith. He believed that Jesus's touch could save his little girl.

As they journeyed to the man's house, a woman then pushed her way through the crowd and touched the edge of Jesus's robe. Why did she do that? Like the ruler, she was desperate for help and thought if she touched his robe, maybe she would be healed. For twelve years she had been terribly sick. Day after



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day, year after year, her body didn't stop bleeding which made her unclean. She went to the doctors. They couldn't help. In fact, she got worse. Her only hope was Jesus. And sure enough, as soon as she touched him, God touched and healed her. Jesus knew his touch had healed her, so he stopped and called her out, saying, "Daughter, your faith has saved you! Your disease is gone. Go in peace" (see 5:34). Two people with great faith. An important religious man and an unclean woman. Jesus healed the woman, but what about the man's daughter?

As Jesus continued his journey, people came from the ruler's house and told him awful news: "Your daughter is dead" (5:35). The end. No, not the end! What Jesus did next was amazing. He encouraged the sad dad ("Do not fear, only believe," 5:36) and then walked into the house, took the girl by the hand, and said, "Little girl, I say to you, arise" (5:41). And guess what? She rose from the dead! She got up, walked around the room, and then had something to eat. Maybe it was a piece of warm raisin bread or a chocolate snowball (a Jewish cookie!). What she ate doesn't matter. What does matter is that she was really alive. Everyone was amazed! Jesus came to save old and young, men and women, religious and unclean—anyone who believed.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Remember how the disciples in the boat feared they would drown and die? The man and woman in today's story both feared too. The woman feared she might never be healed from her bleeding; the man feared that his little girl was about to die. And sure enough, she did die! But both the woman and man had hope. They knew who Jesus was and believed he had the power to heal serious sickness. What they learned, however, was that Jesus has more power than they could imagine. He has power to conquer even death! And because of this, Jesus's command to the man is a command we should hear and obey: "Do not fear, only believe" (Mark 5:36). We don't need to fear death because Jesus has conquered it through his death on the cross, and has given us certain hope that we will rise from the dead someday just as the little girl did—and just as he did two thousand years ago. What wonderful good news! Praise the Father, Son, and Spirit for his gospel.



### 3

## Engage

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What foods were considered unclean by Jews? What other things made a person unclean? What happened when the unclean, bleeding woman touched Jesus? What are some reasons you might go to Jesus?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus's touch makes the unclean clean.

### Memory Verse

*Do not fear,  
only believe.*

**MARK 5:36**

2. **QUESTION:** Who were some of the characters in our story? How were they different? How were they the same?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus came to save all people.

3. **QUESTION:** What did the woman hope Jesus could do for her? What did the man hope Jesus could do for his daughter? What did Jesus show he has power to do?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus has power to heal and raise the dead.

4. **QUESTION:** What was the man afraid might happen to his daughter? Did that happen? What surprising thing happened after she died? If Jesus can raise us from the dead, do we need to fear death?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because Jesus conquered death, we don't need to fear it.

### ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

#### Option 1: Touch and Find Relay

*Supply List: boxes, newspaper/paper, adhesive bandages*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Fill boxes with crumpled paper and adhesive bandages (one box per team; at least one bandage per child).*

Divide children into teams and set boxes on the far end of the room. On "Go!" the first person on each team runs to his team's box, reaches inside, finds a ban-

dage without looking, sticks it to himself, and runs back to tag the next person. Remaining team members repeat the process. The first team to race all members wins. Remind children that Jesus is able to heal people's bodies and hearts.

### Option 2: Touch and Guess

*Supply List: none*

Choose five children to be "It" and have them stand in front of the room. Have remaining children sit at tables, close their eyes, put their heads down on the table, and put one thumb up. Have each of the five "Its" quietly press down the thumb of one person and then return to the front. The leader then calls, "If someone touched you, stand up." Have the children who stand take turns guessing who touched them (one guess per child). If a child guesses correctly, she becomes "It" for the next round and the person who chose her sits down. If she guesses incorrectly, the person who chose her remains "It." Remind children that Jesus knew who touched him because Jesus knows everything!

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Four Touch Ball

*Supply List: ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into two teams and have them form two lines facing each other. Assign each child a number so that each team has a player with each number. Place a ball halfway between the teams. The leader calls out two numbers. The children assigned those numbers race to the ball and try to grab it first. As soon as someone has the ball, all children can move around the room. The person with the ball must toss it to a teammate before getting tagged by someone from the opposing team. To score a point, the team must complete four total tosses without being tagged. If the person holding the ball is tagged or the ball is dropped, no points are scored and a new round begins. The first team to three points wins.

### Option 2: Touch and Guess

*Supply List: none*

Choose five children to be "It" and have them stand in front of the room. Have remaining children sit at tables, close their eyes, put their heads down on the



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Mark 5

table, and put one thumb up. Have each of the five “Its” quietly press down the thumb of one person and then return to the front. The leader then calls, “If someone touched you, stand up.” Have the children who stand take turns guessing who touched them (one guess per child). If a child guesses correctly, she becomes “It” for the next round and the person who chose her sits down. If she guesses incorrectly, the person who chose her remains “It.” Remind children that Jesus knew who touched him because Jesus knows everything!

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Great Physician Kit

*Supply List: cardstock, hole punch, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, cotton swabs, adhesive bandages, tongue depressors, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On the bottom half of a piece of cardstock, print a picture of a red cross symbol and the words “Great Physician Kit” (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a “Great Physician Kit” paper and two pipe cleaners. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold the paper in half so the words and symbol are in front, then punch two holes centered on the folded edge. Have children insert pipe cleaners through the holes and shape to make handles. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children glue the various items to the inside of their “medical kit.” Remind children that Jesus is the Great Physician.

### Option 2: Wake Up Puppet

*Supply List: lunch-sized paper bag, googly eyes, crayons, scissors, glue, construction paper, yarn*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper bag and two googly eyes. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children lift the bag’s flap and glue the googly eyes underneath. Have children use construction paper to make two fringed rectangles to represent



closed eyes and glue to the top of the closed flap. Have children design and cut out a nose and mouth and glue them below the googly eyes (so they can always be seen). Lastly, have them make and glue clothing, hair, and jewelry to the bag. Remind children that when Jairus's daughter died, Jesus healed her and she woke up.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Strong Faith Wall Hanging

*Supply List: tape, aluminum foil, construction paper, permanent markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pieces of aluminum foil slightly smaller than pieces of construction paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of aluminum foil and construction paper. Have children tape the aluminum foil to the center of the construction paper. Set markers on tables. Have children write FAITH in large bubble letters and decorate around the letters. Remind children that Jesus told the woman that her faith had healed her.

### Option 2: Get Up Girl!

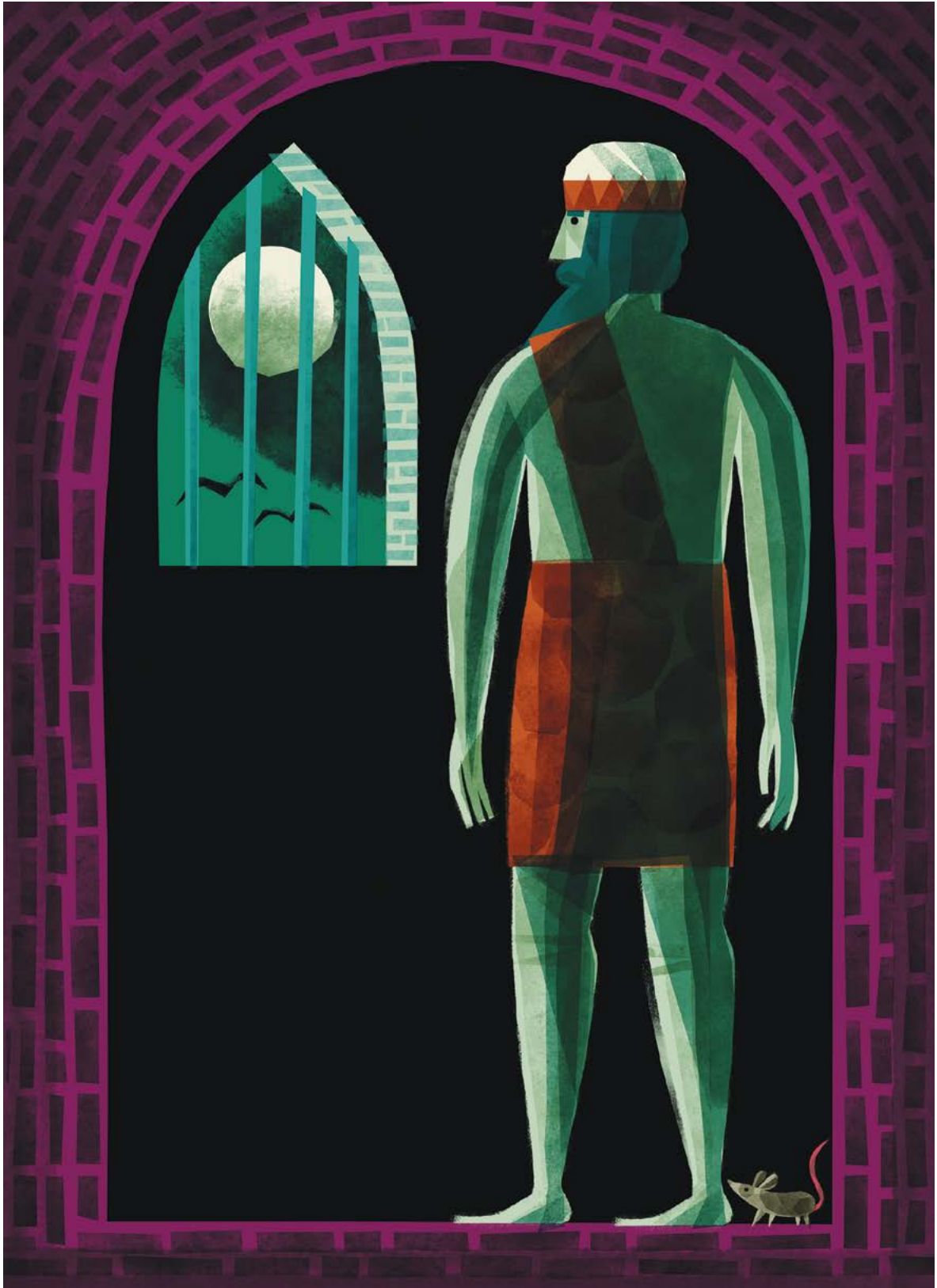
*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, straws, colored pencils, staplers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 3-inch squares of cardstock (two per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a straw and two pieces of cut cardstock. Set remaining supplies on tables. On one square, have children draw the face of a sad girl with closed eyes. On the second square, have children draw the same girl with open eyes and a big smile. Have children staple the squares together so faces are outward and attach to the top of a straw. Have children place the straw between their palms and quickly slide hands back and forth so the two faces seem to blend into one. Adjust speed to make eyes “open” and “close.” Remind children that when Jairus's daughter died, Jesus healed her and told her to get up.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



February 25

STORY 65

# The Voice Is Silenced

MARK 6

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 6.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Sometimes in this life, the good guys don't win. This is true of many of the heroes in the Old Testament. Righteous Abel was killed. Humble Moses was rejected and ultimately missed out on the promised land. The prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned and accused of being a traitor. Other prophets were tortured, mocked, whipped, chained, and imprisoned; others were stoned to death, killed by the sword, and even sawn in two! (see Heb. 11:35–37). These heroes of the faith did not receive all God's promises in their lifetimes, but they knew he had more to offer them. They knew he would provide for them, after their deaths, "something better" (Heb. 11:40).

Today's lesson is about John the Baptist, whom Jesus calls a great man (see Matt. 11:11). John was certainly one of the "good guys" also. And as one of the

good guys he did good things and spoke good words. He announced that everyone should repent and be baptized. He also told Herod—an evil king—that he should start living by God’s rules not his own. Over and over, he preached, “It is not right for you, Herod, to divorce your wife and marry your brother’s wife” (see Mark 6:17–18). How do you think Herod received that? What do you think might happen to John? Let’s find out.

## TELL THE STORY

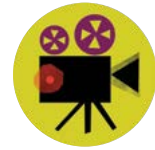
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
We need faith  
to believe Jesus  
wins—even when  
it looks like bad  
guys are winning.

King Herod liked to hear John preach, and he was even interested in learning about Jesus. But he didn’t want to hear about Jesus as the “King” of God’s people. Herod was the king of the Jews (or so he thought)! Also, he really didn’t like John’s message about his divorce and remarriage. King Herod ignored his words and refused to repent. In fact, he had his soldiers capture John and lock him in prison.

Herod didn’t plan on killing John. He just wanted John to stop preaching against him. Herod’s new wife, however, wanted him dead. So, when she had the chance to make that happen, she did. One night Herod was having a big birthday bash. All the important men of the city were there. This played right into the wicked plans of Herod’s wicked wife. Her daughter did a special dance in front of all the men. Herod was so pleased with the dance that he told the girl, “Ask me for anything, and I’ll give it to you.” He vowed to do whatever she wanted. So she went out of the room and asked her mom, “What should I ask for?” Her mom said, “The head of John the Baptist” (see Mark 6:24). Crazy, huh? Awful, right? Crazier and more awful still, the daughter then stood before Herod and said, “Cut off John’s head and serve it to me on a platter!” Now, because Herod





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had promised to do whatever she asked (and because he was afraid of what his important guests might think of him), he gave the order to do what she asked. John's head was cut off and brought to the girl, who brought it to her mother. A terrible and disgusting gift.

Jesus taught that we are blessed when we suffer for God's kingdom and that the reward for the righteous (like John!) is great in heaven (see Matt. 5:11–12). When the soldiers locked John in prison, I'm sure it was hard to suffer and trust God's promise. And when they came to cut off his head, he had to know that his reward would not be in this life. John's life on earth ended, but his life in heaven (that very moment) started. Though it might have looked like the good guy lost at Herod's party, good will triumph over evil in the end. When Jesus returns God's enemies won't win anymore and evil will be destroyed. Praise God that Jesus wins!

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Whenever people asked John the Baptist about who he was, he was quick to say he wasn't the promised king (see John 1:19–20). But he was like Jesus in one way—both of them died a cruel death. And with both of them, it seemed like evil had defeated good. But John the Baptist was right when he said that Jesus was far greater than him (see John 1:27, 30). Jesus rose up from the grave. Death and evil couldn't hold him. And the Bible ends with Jesus bringing in a perfect kingdom. In the end, good triumphs over evil. Jesus wins! His resurrection proves that. Hallelujah!

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### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Who were some people in the Old Testament that suffered even though they obeyed God? What did Jesus think about John the Baptist—was he a good guy or a bad guy? What happened to him?

**TAKEAWAY:** Until Jesus returns as King, sometimes the bad guys win.

2. **QUESTION:** Do you think John was scared when he was sitting in prison? How would you have felt? What do you think gave him hope when he was scared? What happens to those who trust Jesus when they die?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** Those who trust Jesus will live forever, even though they die.

3. **QUESTION:** How did Jesus suffer like John the Baptist? What gave Jesus hope when he suffered on the cross? How do we know Jesus conquered death? What will happen to evil when Jesus returns as King?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus's death and resurrection mean death is defeated and evil will be destroyed.

**Memory Verse**  
Blessed are  
those who are  
persecuted for  
righteousness'  
sake, for theirs  
is the kingdom  
of heaven.

**MATTHEW 5:10**

4. **QUESTION:** What do we need to remember when it looks like the bad guys are winning?

**TAKEAWAY:** We need faith to believe Jesus wins when it looks like bad guys are winning.

---

## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Called by Name Game

*Supply List: soft ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children stand in a circle. The leader throws the ball as high as possible straight up in the air and calls a child's name. The child whose name is called runs quickly to retrieve the ball. Once the child has it, she yells, "Freeze!" and everyone freezes. The person with the ball identifies a person she thinks she can successfully hit with the ball, then throws the ball at the target. If the ball hits the intended person, the person is out and remaining players make a smaller circle. If the thrower does not hit her target, the thrower is out. Continue this process until only one child remains. Remind children that sometimes good guys lose.

### Option 2: Jailbreak!

*Supply List: none*



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Choose one child to be the “Jailer.” Divide remaining children into pairs and have each pair link arms. Assign each child the number one, two, three, or four. The Jailer calls a number one through four, and anyone with that number must find a new partner who is not linked to anyone. If the Jailer calls “Jailbreak,” all children must find a new partner. While the children are finding a new partner, any child that is not linked can be tagged by the Jailer. The person who is tagged becomes the new Jailer. Remind children that John the Baptist was wrongfully put in jail because Herod didn’t like what John said.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Pass It Along

*Supply List: beach balls*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into two teams. Have children in each team lie in a line with their feet against the wall and space between each child. Using only his feet, the first child must roll a beach ball along the wall and pass it to the next person. After passing the beach ball, he must stand up and move to the end of his team’s line to keep the ball moving down the wall. Continue passing the ball until it reaches a predetermined finish line. The first team to reach the finish line and shout “Jesus is Lord!” wins. Tell children that we should boldly pass along the good news about Jesus like John the Baptist did.

### Option 2: Unscramble It!

*Supply List: index cards, marker, paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On index cards, write one word of the Memory Verse per card (one verse set per team). Print copies of the Memory Verse (one per team).*

Mix all index cards for teams together and spread upside down on the far side of the room. Divide children into teams. Give each team a copy of the Memory Verse. On “Go!” the first child on each team runs down to the cards, picks one up, brings it back, and tags the next child, who repeats the process. If a child returns with a word her team already has, the next person in line must run it back and get a different one. Teams continue to retrieve cards until one team finds all the words in the Memory Verse, puts them in order, and says it aloud together.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Point to Jesus Picture

*Supply List: paper, construction paper, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print the outline of a large arrow on paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an arrow paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children draw a picture of themselves on the arrow and decorate. Have them cut out the arrow and glue it to a piece of construction paper. Next to the arrow's point, have children write "Jesus." Remind children that, like John, we should point people to Jesus.

### Option 2: Sailor Hat

*Supply List: paper, newspaper, markers, glue, pom-poms, sequins*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print strips of paper that say, "Where Jesus leads, I will follow" (one per child). Find instructions on how to fold a sailor hat. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of newspaper and a printed paper strip. Set remaining supplies on tables. Demonstrate how to fold the newspaper into a sailor hat while children follow along. Have children glue the "Where Jesus leads, I will follow" strip to their hats, then decorate them with the provided supplies. Remind children that, like John, they can trust Jesus and follow him wherever he leads them.



### Option 1: All My Days Plaque

*Supply List: paper plates, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, water, cups, permanent black markers, hinged clothespins (two per child)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 9-inch paper plates in half (one half plate per child). Fill cups with water. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate half and two clothespins. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write “I will trust God all the days of my life” on one side of the plate with permanent marker. Have them use watercolors to paint over and around the words. Have them attach two clothespins to the bottom of their plate to make a stand. Remind children that John trusted God and pointed others to Jesus all the days of his life.

### Option 2: Sailor Hat

*Supply List: paper, newspaper, markers, glue, pom-poms, sequins*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print strips of paper that say “Where Jesus leads, I will follow” (one per child). Find instructions on how to fold a sailor hat. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of newspaper and a printed paper strip. Set remaining supplies on tables. Demonstrate how to fold the newspaper into a sailor hat while children follow along. Have children glue the “Where Jesus leads, I will follow” strip to their hats, then decorate them with the provided supplies. Remind children that, like John, they can trust Jesus and follow him wherever he leads them.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





March 4

STORY 66

# The Happy Meal That Kept on Going

MARK 6

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 6.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1  
Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

2  
Teach

God loves his people. And he shows his love in many different ways. One way he shows his love is by providing food. Food? Yes, food! The garden of Eden was filled with the freshest fruits. Adam and Eve could eat from all the trees but one. That's a lot of mangoes, cherries, olives, almonds, and coconuts. Then, in the wilderness, God provided daily bread from heaven. It must have tasted wonderful. Finally, the promised land was called a land flowing with milk and honey. Imagine how yummy a honey milkshake would taste after wandering through the dry desert.



So, when God's people thought about the coming Christ, they pictured someone who would save them from sin, sickness, and even death and the devil. But they also thought about food! They believed with the coming of the promised king would come some meals so satisfying they would fill you with joy—true happy meals! So, it is no surprise that when the promised King came, he showed God's love to God's people in ways they expected: healings from his hand and all the food they would ever need.

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus is the  
bread of life.

Have you ever said, “I’m starving!” We all say that from time to time when we’re really hungry. But we aren’t really starving to death. What is the longest amount of time you’ve gone without food? Have you ever skipped breakfast, lunch, and dinner? If you did, you still wouldn’t be starving, but you sure would be hungry.

One day, there were lots of hungry people gathered around Jesus. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd for a few hours so he and his disciples could rest and grab a bite to eat. They took a boat to the other side of the lake to get a break. But the people just followed them on land, so when Jesus and the twelve landed onshore, they were surrounded. But Jesus—being so compassionate—wanted to care for the people. He did so by teaching them and providing food for them.

Regarding the food, however, there was a minor problem. Well, major problem! There wasn’t any. Or, there wasn’t much. As the sun was setting, Jesus



Story

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Mark 6

turned to his disciples and said, “Give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37). They looked for leftovers. There weren’t any. Then, they questioned Jesus, “That makes no sense. We can’t feed all these people. It would cost us thousands of dollars.” There were five thousand men there, plus lots of women and children. It would be like feeding a crowd in a huge basketball stadium. Jesus had an idea. He asked his disciples, “How many loaves do you have?” (6:38). They had none, but as they asked around, Andrew found a boy who was willing to share his five loaves and two fish. “What good are these two fish burgers?” someone might have asked. “Such a small amount of food can’t possibly feed this huge crowd.” Jesus had another idea. He took the bread and fish, said a prayer, and then something amazing happened. As the disciples started to feed the people, the five loaves and two fish turned into ten, then the ten into thousands. There was so much food that everyone ate and was totally stuffed. There were even twelve baskets of bread left—twelve, like the number of apostles and the tribes of Israel. The people were amazed and thought, “Maybe Jesus is the prophet and king we have been waiting for” (see John 6:14, 15). Maybe he is that and more!

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

What do we need more than food? That’s a tough question because we all know we need food to live. When Satan tempted Jesus, he said, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (Matt. 4:3). That wouldn’t be a temptation if Jesus just ate from the all-you-can-eat fish and bread buffet near the Sea of Galilee. But that was not the case. He’d had no food for forty days. He was starving. Really starving! And because of that, the Snake Crusher’s answer to the serpent was surprising. He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Another time in Jesus’s ministry (actually right after he fed these five thousand), he said something just as surprising. He said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Wow, what a claim! Wow, what a wonderful promise. What do you think? Do you believe in Jesus? Have you come to him for everything you need, even eternal life?

## 3

## Engage

## DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What's the longest you've ever gone without eating? When you're really hungry and tired, how do you act toward other people? How did tired and hungry Jesus act when the crowd surrounded him and the disciples?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is compassionate and cares for our needs.

2. **QUESTION:** Where have we seen God provide food in the Bible? How much food would it take to satisfy five thousand men, plus women and children? How much food was Jesus given to feed that many people? And what was he able to do with it that no one else could? Why?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus, the promised King, provides food that satisfies.

3. **QUESTION:** How did Satan tempt Jesus when he was starving? What did Jesus tell Satan was more important than food? What do you and I need more than food? If Jesus is the bread of life, what should we do to be satisfied by him?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the bread of life and anyone who comes to him and believes in him will be satisfied.

## Memory Verse

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

JOHN 6:35

## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

## Option 1: Fishing for Food

*Supply List:* dowel rods, string, magnets, scissors, paper clips, cardstock, paper lunch bags

*Before Class:* Gather supplies. Make "fishing poles" by tying a string with a magnet to the end of a dowel rod (one per team). On cardstock, print and cut out pictures of five loaves and two fish (one set per team). Attach a paper clip to each picture.

Divide children into teams and give each team a paper lunch bag. Across the room, set fishing poles and the sets of fish and loaves. On "Go" the first person



on each team runs down, grabs a fishing pole, “catches” one item, takes it off the fishing pole, and runs back to drop it into the team’s bag. The next child repeats the process. Play continues until a team has five loaves and two fish in their bag, winning the game. Remind children that Jesus multiplied one boy’s food to feed thousands.

### Option 2: Fishy Relay

*Supply List: large bowl, spoons (one per team), goldfish crackers, bowls (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Fill a large bowl with goldfish crackers and place it in the center of the room. Divide children into teams. Give each team a spoon and a bowl. On “Go!” the first person on each team takes the team’s spoon, runs to the large bowl, scoops out some goldfish, and carefully returns to his team to drop the goldfish into the team’s bowl. Any crackers that fall off must be left on the floor. The spoon is then passed to the next person in line, who repeats the process. Play continues until all goldfish are gone from the large bowl. The team with the most goldfish in their bowl wins.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Lunch Bag Relay

*Supply List: paper, scissors, clothespins, tape, chairs (one per team), paper lunch bag (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out pictures of five loaves and two fish (one set per team). Tape each picture to a clothespin.*

Divide children into equal-sized teams and give each team a set of fish and loaves clothespins. Next to each team, set an open paper lunch bag on the floor next to a chair. On “Go!” the first child on each team kneels on the team’s chair and drops one clothespin from eye-level into the team’s bag. The child must drop all seven clothespins into the bag successfully before tagging the next player. If she misses, her teammates hand her the clothespin to try again. Play continues until all children on one team successfully complete the challenge, winning the game.

## Option 2: Fishy Relay

*Supply List: large bowl, spoons (one per team), goldfish crackers, bowls (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Fill a large bowl with goldfish crackers and place it in the center of the room. Divide children into teams. Give each team a spoon and a bowl. On “Go!” the first person on each team takes the team’s spoon, runs to the large bowl, scoops out some goldfish, and carefully returns to their team to drop the goldfish into the team’s bowl. Any crackers that fall off must be left on the floor. The spoon is then passed to the next person in line, who repeats the process. Play continues until all goldfish are gone from the large bowl. The team with the most goldfish in their bowl wins.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Beaded Fish

*Supply List: pipe cleaners, beads*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Have each child choose a pipe cleaner. Have children thread 24 beads onto the pipe cleaner. Have children fold the pipe cleaner in half and twist the ends together at the end of the beads to form a fish shape.

### Option 2: Torn Paper Picture

*Supply List: paper, construction paper, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a paper with five loaves, two fish, and the Memory Verse on it (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set construction paper and glue sticks on tables. Give each child a printed paper. Have children tear the construction paper into small pieces and glue them onto the pictures of loaves and fish. Remind children that Jesus multiplied one boy's food to feed thousands.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: God Provides Mobile

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, yarn, clear tape, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print pictures of five loaves and two fish (one per child). On cardstock, print copies of the Big Truth and cut them out in strips. Cut varying lengths of yarn (seven pieces per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set tape, scissors, crayons, and cut yarn on tables. Give each child a fish and loaves paper and a Big Truth strip. Have children tape the ends of the Big Truth strip together to form a circle. Have children color and cut out the five loaves and two fish, then tape each one to the end of a piece of yarn. Attach the yarn pieces to the Big Truth circle to make a mobile. Add a piece of yarn to the top for hanging.

### Option 2: Jesus Provides Basket

*Supply List: paper, paper lunch bag, colored pencils, glue sticks, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a paper with five loaves and two fish. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a printed paper and a paper lunch bag. Set remaining supplies on tables. Children should cut the bag so it stands about 6 inches high, then color it to resemble a basket. Write the verse “And they all ate and were satisfied” (Mark 6:42) on the basket. Have children use the part of the bag they cut off to make a handle and then attach it to the top of the open basket. Have them color and cut out the five loaves and two fish and place them in their baskets.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.

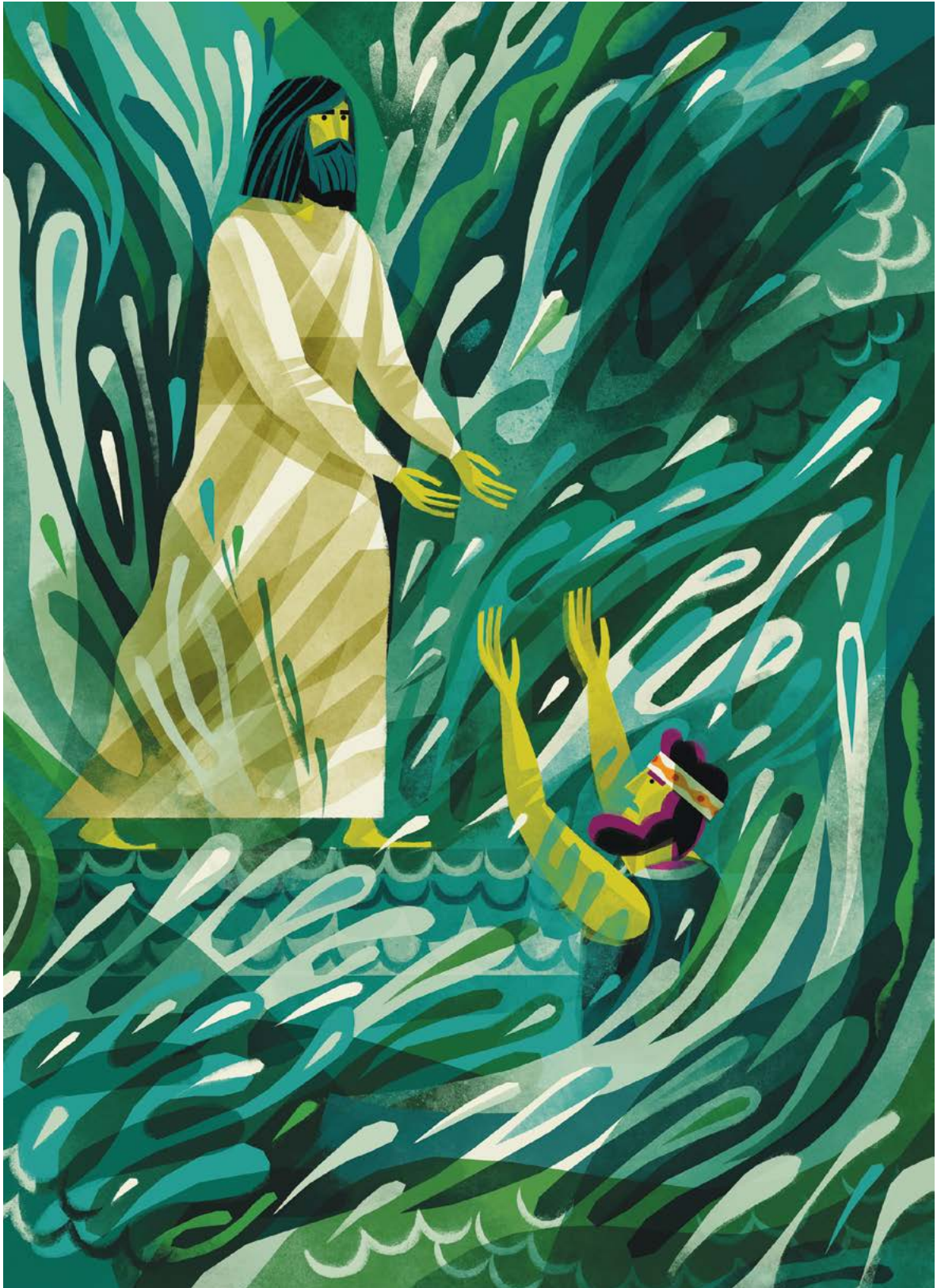


Story

66

Mark 6





March 18

STORY 67

# A Walk on the Water

MATTHEW 14

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 14.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

A lot has happened since Jesus's birth. He was baptized by John the Baptist. He was tempted in the wilderness and said no, no, no to the snake's temptations. He called twelve apostles to follow him. He taught the good news of God. He healed many sick people. He drove out demons. He raised the dead. He calmed the wind and waves, saving the twelve from a deadly storm. He fed thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. A lot has happened.

Jesus needed a break. He was exhausted. He needed physical rest. He needed spiritual rest too. To find it, he told the fully fed crowds to return home. He also sent his apostles away. "Get on the boat," he instructed them, "and sail to the other side of the sea. I'll meet you there soon" (see Matt. 14:22–23). Then Jesus climbed a nearby mountain. At the top, he was finally alone. Well, not really.

His Father was there. Up on the high mountain he talked with his Father in heaven. We call that prayer—talking to our Heavenly Father. But that’s not the end of the story.

## TELL THE STORY

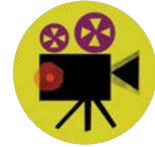
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Because Jesus is  
the Son of God, he  
can save us when  
we cry out to him.

As Jesus was praying, the sun started to set. So he hiked down the mountain. By the time he reached the shore, the twelve were on the boat “a long way from the land” (Matt. 14:24), and it was dark. Why was it taking them so long to reach the other shore? Another terrible storm! The boat was being “beaten by the waves,” and “the wind was against them” (14:24). Because of the wild winds, they couldn’t use the sail. It would be too dangerous. So they rowed and rowed with all their might. But it was useless. They were in big trouble! Just then, Jesus saw them. Wait, how could he see them? “They had rowed about three or four miles” out (John 6:19). That’s a long way to see, even if the moon was fully lit. That’s not the only odd detail of this story. Guess what Jesus did next? He walked on the water! Yes, that’s what the Bible says: “He came to them, walking on the sea” (Matt. 14:25). With wave-parting, wind-ceasing, superhuman speed, Jesus was defying gravity. Incredible!

When the frightened disciples saw him, they screamed, “It’s a ghost!” Who could blame them for being so scared? And who could blame them for thinking it was a ghost since only a spirit could glide across the waters? But Jesus was not a ghost. He yelled to them, “It’s really me! Don’t be afraid.” Peter cried out, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water” (14:28). So Jesus invited him. Peter got out of the boat, and (this is the oddest part) he started to



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Matthew

14

walk on water. Just like Jesus! But suddenly, he took his eyes off Jesus, saw the fierce wind, got really scared again, and started to sink. He cried out, “Lord, save me” (14:30). Jesus wasted no time. He reached out, grabbed him, and brought him onto the boat. He saved him. While Jesus was saving him, he also taught Peter that he can trust him no matter what. For all of us, trusting Jesus is the smartest and safest thing to do. “Peter, why did you doubt? You should have kept on believing” (see 14:31). What a good lesson for us to learn too: keep on believing—even when you see the big waves.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

The story didn’t end with the call to believe. When Jesus and Peter got back in the boat, suddenly the wind stopped and the waves calmed down. The twelve must have looked at each other in amazement. This time Jesus didn’t say, “Peace, be still,” but they knew he stilled the sea. They also just saw him walk on water! They knew Jesus was no ordinary man. So, one after the other (or maybe all at the same time), they fell at his feet and confessed, “You really are the Son of God” (see Matt. 14:33).

This confession is also what the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus said after Jesus died (27:54). And it’s the confession we will make too when we see Jesus clearly! Jesus showed that he was God’s Son and our Savior in many ways. He multiplied bread and fish to feed over five thousand people. He healed every sickness imaginable. He raised the dead. And he walked on water and calmed storms. But his greatest demonstration of power was actually the one the Roman soldiers saw when he died on the cross. That showed God’s power because it’s the way God saved us from our sins. Jesus’s death was unlike any other. He died in our place. Let’s fall down before him and trust him completely, even when the waves seem big. He’s strong enough to save us. Truly he is the Son of God!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

**1. QUESTION:** What are some miracles we’ve seen Jesus do? What did Jesus do in our story today that is amazing?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is no ordinary man.

3

Engage



Memory Verse  
Truly you are the  
Son of God.

MATTHEW 14:33

2. **QUESTION:** When Jesus was walking on the waves, were they still or choppy? How did the disciples feel when they saw him? What did Jesus say to them?

**TAKEAWAY:** If Jesus is with us, we don't need to fear—even when things are scary.

3. **QUESTION:** Why did Peter begin to sink when he was walking on the water? What did Peter cry out as he sank? And what did Jesus do? Will Jesus ever turn us away when we come to him for help and salvation?

**TAKEAWAY:** Even when we doubt God's promises and are afraid, if we cry out to Jesus, he will save us.

4. **QUESTION:** How did the disciples know Jesus is the Son of God? Then how did they respond to him? How should we?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the Son of God; let's fall down and worship him.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

*Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.*

Have children line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, the children move forward. When the leader holds up the red sign, the children freeze. Any child who does not immediately freeze must return to the start. The first child to reach the leader wins. Remind children that when Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he did not sink into the waters.

### Option 2: Sink or Swim

*Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)*



*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.*

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Sink or Swim

*Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.*

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

### Option 2: Captain's Orders

*Supply List: none*

Tell children the room is a ship and they must follow the captain's orders. If the captain shouts "Bow," the children run to the front wall. If "Stern," they run to the back wall. If "Port," they run to the left wall. If "Starboard," they run to the right wall. If the captain shouts "Hit the deck," the children drop to the floor. The last child to the correct wall (or floor) is out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children the disciples were on a boat when Jesus came to them by walking on water.



## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Eyes on Jesus Binoculars

*Supply List: toilet paper rolls (two per child), scissors, yarn, markers, stickers, stapler*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut yarn into 18-inch lengths (one per child). Make sample craft.*

Give each child two toilet paper rolls and a piece of yarn. Put remaining supplies on tables. Have children decorate the toilet paper rolls and then staple the rolls together to form binoculars. Staple yarn to the sides so they can hang around the child's neck. Remind children to keep their eyes on Jesus.

### Option 2: Waves of Life

*Supply List: paper, scissors, blue construction paper, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out Matthew 14:27, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (one per child). Cut ½" x 9" strips of blue construction paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give children the verse and a full-sized piece of blue construction paper. Set paper strips and glue sticks on tables. On the full-sized paper, have children make waves by gluing down both ends of a strip to form a long arch. Next have children glue down the arch in one or two places to form waves. Have children add strips until the page is covered with waves. Glue the verse in the middle of the waves. Remind children that Jesus came to the disciples by walking on water in the middle of a storm.



### Option 1: Waves of Life

*Supply List: paper, scissors, blue construction paper, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out Matthew 14:27, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid” (one per child). Cut ½" x 9" strips of blue construction paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give children the verse and a full-sized piece of blue construction paper. Set paper strips and glue sticks on tables. On the full-sized paper, have children make waves by gluing down both ends of a strip to form a long arch. Next have children glue down the arch in one or two places to form waves. Have children add strips until the page is covered with waves. Glue the verse in the middle of the waves. Remind children that Jesus came to the disciples by walking on water in the middle of a storm.

### Option 2: Walk with Jesus

*Supply List: bowls, blue paint, marbles, white cardstock, boxes, spoons, construction paper, markers, scissors, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Put paint in bowls and add marbles. Make a sample craft.*

Have children take turns putting a piece of white cardstock in a box and then using a spoon to add some marbles. The first child shakes the box to spread paint around the cardstock to resemble waves. He then removes his paper when complete. Return the marbles to the bowls for the next child. Set markers, scissors, glue, and construction paper on tables. Have children trace their footprint onto construction paper, cut it out, and write “I will walk with Jesus” on it. Have children glue the footprint to the marble-painted paper. Remind children that Peter had faith to step out of the boat and walk to Jesus.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



March 25

STORY 68

# A Dogged Faith

MARK 7

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 7.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Do you know what the word *circumlocution* means? What about *epistolary*? Could you define *idiosyncratic*? Likely not! Part of growing up means learning lots of new words and what they mean. As we work through the Biggest Story, we have been learning lots of new words and ideas, along with lots of names—like Saul and Samson, Zechariah and Zelophehad. Those are some of the people you might now know from the Biggest Story. How about words? What new words have you learned? *Exodus*. *Covenant*. *Prophecy*. *Scapegoat*. *Repent*. *Idolatry*. *Parable*. Those might be a few. Today's lesson will focus on two important words: *Jew* and *Gentile*. Can you say those words? The Jews were the children of Abraham and the people of King David. They had the Scriptures, filled with all God's promises.

The Gentiles were everyone else—those who weren't Jews. What could Jews and Gentiles have to do with our story? Let's listen and find out!

## TELL THE STORY

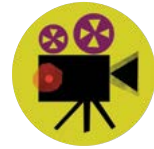
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus saves  
anyone who  
believes in him.

Up until this point, Jesus has spent all his time in the promised land, teaching and healing the Jews. One day, Jesus decided to go on a long journey “to the region of Tyre and Sidon” (Mark 7:24). That might not seem like a big deal to us, but it was back then. Tyre and Sidon were outside the promised land and *Gentiles* lived there. Even worse, these cities had a bad reputation. In the Old Testament these cities are where God’s enemies—the Canaanites—lived. So, what is Jesus doing in enemy territory?

Let’s keep listening. When he got to that region he slipped into a house. He “did not want anyone to know” where he was (7:24). But that didn’t last long. When word got out that Jesus was in town, a *Gentile* woman knocked on the door. She was a mother whose little girl was possessed by a demon. How horrible! She needed help.

She “fell down at [Jesus’s] feet . . . and begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter” (7:25–26). Usually, Jesus heals people as soon as they ask. This time he did something strange. He replied to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (7:27). What did he mean? He was telling her that he first came to provide healing for the Jews (“children”) not the Gentiles (“dogs”). Ouch! But Jesus didn’t say this to be mean and to call her names. He was testing her, because she had something special that he wanted everyone to see. “Yes, Lord,” she said, “I see your point.



Story

68

Mark

7

But even the dogs under the table get to eat the crumbs that fall” (see 7:28). That was her way of saying, “I may be a Gentile, but I trust you will have mercy on me too.” Wow! What a *dogged* faith! She passed the test and showed all of us what true faith is. Jesus loves such faith. He declared, “O woman, your faith is great!” (see Matt. 15:28). And then, at that very moment, the demon left her daughter.

Jesus has come to love and save both Jews and Gentiles. He doesn’t save us because of how worthy we are; he saves us when we realize we are low and needy. This Gentile woman knew that. And she was the one Jesus used to show us what great faith looks like.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

If someone asked you what the gospel is, what would you say? Here are three options: you might focus on (1) *who* Jesus is (the Son of God who the Father sent into the world), (2) *what Jesus did* (he lived, died, and rose again), or (3) *what we receive* if we believe in Jesus (the forgiveness of sins and eternal life). When the Bible talks about the gospel in Romans 1, it talks about those three things—*who* Jesus is (“the Son of God” and “our Lord,” 1:4), *what he has done* (“resurrection from the dead,” 1:4), and *what we receive* if we believe (“salvation,” 1:16). But it also adds something else, a fourth important part of the gospel. It talks about *who* the gospel is for. The wonderful answer is “everyone” (1:16)! The good news about Jesus is for “all the nations” (1:5). So, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, like this Gentile woman we can come to Jesus, bow before him, and receive mercy.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What do you think the two words are that our story focused on? What are some things we know about the Jews? Even though they were God’s people, did they still sin? What about Gentiles? What did both Jews and Gentiles need?

**TAKEAWAY:** Both Jews and Gentiles are sinners who need forgiveness and faith.

3

Engage



**Memory Verse**  
Everyone who  
calls on the name  
of the Lord will  
be saved.

**ROMANS 10:13**

2. **QUESTION:** What was wrong with the woman's daughter? How do you think this mother felt? Whom did she go to for help? What are some times we might go to Jesus for help?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should go to Jesus for help.

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus tested the woman and said he came to heal the Jews and not the Gentiles, how did she respond? Did this Gentile woman believe he came to save and heal Gentiles too? Was she right?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus saves everyone who believes in him.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Dragon Tag

*Supply List: streamers (one per team), tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into teams of four. Have each team form a single file line, and have children hold onto the shoulders of the person in front of them. Attach a streamer to the back of the last person in each line. On “Go” teams run together to try to pull the “tail” (streamer) off other teams while avoiding getting their tail pulled by other teams. If a team's tail is pulled, or if a team breaks apart, they are out. Continue play until one team remains. Remind children that, in Christ, Jews and Gentiles are no longer enemies but family.

### Option 2: Jew, Gentile, Jesus!

*Supply List: masking tape*

*Before Class: With masking tape make a line that gives ample space for all children to stand.*



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Have children stand on the line facing the same direction. Explain that if the leader calls out “Jew,” they jump to the right of the line. If “Gentile” is called, they jump to the left. And if “Jesus” is called, they jump onto the line. If a child jumps incorrectly, she is out. Have a leader randomly call out “Jew,” “Gentile,” or “Jesus” until one child remains. Remind children that Jesus came for everyone and that we should run to him in faith.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Jews and Gentiles

*Supply List: two plastic toy hoops, balls (five balls of the same color for each team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide the room in half and set a hoop on the far end of each side. Put five balls of the same color in each hoop (e.g., five red on one side, five blue on the other side).*

Divide children into two teams, the “Jews” and the “Gentiles,” and assign each team to one side. On “Go” teams try to steal balls from the other side and place them inside their own hoop without being tagged by the opposing team. Any child who is tagged is out and must return any balls in his possession to the opposing team’s hoop. Once a ball has been successfully stolen, it cannot be stolen back. The first team to steal all the opposing teams’ balls and place them inside their team’s hoop wins. Remind children that even though Jews and Gentiles were divided, Jesus came to save them both.

### Option 2: Oh Crackers!

*Supply List: crackers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Give each of the children a cracker, and have them place it on their heads. When the music plays, the children must walk around the room while balancing the cracker on their heads. If the music is slow, they must walk slowly. If the music is fast, they must walk quickly. If the music stops, they must freeze. If the cracker falls off a child’s head, he is out. Play continues until one child remains. Remind children that the Gentile woman begged for crumbs from Jesus’s table and had great faith.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: For Everyone!

*Supply List: paper, scissors, watercolor paint, paintbrushes, cups, water, construction paper, crayons, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a simple outline of the world about 8 inches in diameter. Make a sample craft. Put water in cups.*

Give each child a world paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the world and then paint the land (continents) green and the water (seas/oceans) blue. Children then write “Jesus came for everyone!” on a piece of construction paper and glue the painted world to the construction paper.

### Option 2: Dog Mask

*Supply List: paper plates, scissors, craft sticks, pom-poms, glue, construction paper, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut paper plates in half (one half per child). Cut two eye holes in each half-plate toward the top of the curved edge. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a half plate. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children attach a craft stick to the left side of their plate. They then design and cut out dog ears from the construction paper. Have them glue the ears to the sides of the plate and glue on a pom-pom to make a nose. They can add spots or colors to the mask as desired. Remind children that Jesus used an illustration of dogs and bread to talk with a Gentile woman about saving faith.



### Option 1: “For God So Loved the World” Magnet

*Supply List: cardstock, red paper, scissors, blue and green paint, paper plates, paintbrushes, glue, magnets*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On white cardstock make copies of 8-inch-diameter circles. On red paper make copies of a heart (that will fit in the circle) with John 3:16 typed inside it. Make a sample craft. Put blue and green paint on paper plates.*

Give each child one circle and one heart paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the circle and heart. They then paint the circle until it resembles a globe. Next, the children glue the heart to the center of the globe and attach a magnet to the back.

### Option 2: Faith Acrostic

*Supply List: paper, markers or colored pencils, stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write FAITH vertically in large letters on the left-hand side of their paper. As a group, brainstorm words that describe Jesus, using the letters from FAITH. Have each child choose the words she likes best and write them next to the corresponding letter on her paper. Children then decorate their acrostic using provided materials. Remind children that the Gentile woman had great faith in Jesus and in his power to heal her daughter.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



April 8

March

STORY 69

# Confessing Christ

MATTHEW 16

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 16.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

The Bible is filled with questions: "Did God really say?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Are you the king of the Jews?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But it's not just the Bible that's filled with questions, life is as well: Do you want fries with that? Is your room cleaned? What is your favorite show? Why did you do that? What color are your eyes? Where is the farthest place you have traveled? Where do babies come from? Do you like video games? Do you feel sad? Does God love us? So many questions!

That last question is a very important one, isn't it? In today's lesson, we hear another important question: Who is Jesus? How would you answer that question right now? Was Jesus just a great teacher, a good man, an amazing



miracle-worker, or another God-sent servant like Abraham, Moses, and David? Or was he something (someone!) more? Let's find out the right answer.

## TELL THE STORY

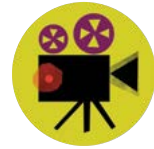
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus is the  
Christ, who came  
to suffer, die, and  
rise again.

One day Jesus and his disciples traveled to a place with a *big* name: Caesarea Philippi. It was a *big* name because it was named after some important people: the Roman Emperor (Caesar) and the Jewish ruler of that region (Herod Philip). But its importance didn't stop there. It had not one but two temples. One was the Temple of Augustus built to honor a Roman Emperor. The other was a temple to the Greek god, Pan. Not Peter Pan, just Pan—the god of the goats. Yep, the god of the goats! Anyway, it was in this *big* place—a place filled with worship of the wrong rulers and dead idols—that Jesus asked his disciples a *big* question: Who is Jesus?

First, he asked, “Who do *people* think I am?” The disciples replied: “Some people say you are John the Baptist risen from the dead. Others think you are the prophet Elijah who has returned. We’ve also heard people say that you are another prophet like Jeremiah or Isaiah” (see Matt. 16:13–14). Then Jesus asked a second question, “But who do *you*—my close followers—say that I am?” (see 16:15). Peter, who was like that kid in class who always raises his hand first, answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). A great answer; the right answer! But there was one important element Peter was missing.

He understood Jesus was the Christ, but he didn't yet understand what Jesus came to do. He thought the Christ (the long-awaited King) would rule like most earthly kings ruled—with power and might. The farthest thing from his mind



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was that the Christ would be killed on a cross. But that's precisely what Jesus told him was about to happen. "I must go to Jerusalem," Jesus said, "to suffer and die" (see 16:21). Peter didn't like this direction one bit. "No!" he rebuked Jesus. "This shall never happen to you" (16:22). Peter was upset. But Jesus was more upset. He was sad Peter's mind was so far removed from the mind of God. Peter's plan was that the Christ would rule in power now, without any suffering and death. God's plan was that his Son would rule in power *through* his sufferings, death, and then resurrection. It's good to know that Jesus is the Christ. It's better to know how this Christ would rescue his people.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

A lot of questions we ask are not life or death questions. Your answer to the question of your favorite ice cream flavor doesn't determine if you'll live forever. But there is a question that does—Jesus's question: "Who do you say I am?"

The gospel clearly teaches that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the always-existing Son of God. We need to know *who* Jesus is, just like Peter did. But we also need to know *what* he came to do. Did he come to rule as earthly kings ruled? No. Jesus came to suffer and die; Jesus also came to rise from the dead. And through his suffering, death, and resurrection he took the penalty we deserve and brought the kingdom of heaven down to earth. First comes the cross, then comes the crown. If we trust in Jesus—that he came for us, suffered and died for us, and rose from the dead for us—we will live forever in his perfect kingdom.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What were some questions you were asked before you came to church today? What's the most important question in our story? What was Peter's answer to that question? Why is that the most important question?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2. **QUESTION:** What did people think the Messiah would be like? How was Jesus different than they expected? What do you think you would have ex-

3

Engage

pected the Messiah to be like? Why is God's plan of Jesus's coming to suffer and die better?

**TAKEAWAY:** God's ways are better than our ways.

### Memory Verse

You are the  
Christ, the Son of  
the living God.

MATTHEW 16:16

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus told his disciples he would suffer and die, what did Peter do? Jesus rebuked Peter because he knew Satan was tempting him to skip the suffering and go straight to ruling as king. What would have happened if Jesus had decided to skip the suffering and death on a cross? Who would pay for our sins?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus came to suffer, die, and rise again for sinners.

4. **QUESTION:** What are some ways that Satan might tempt you to take the easy path? Jesus resisted Satan and took the hard path to the cross. If Jesus suffered, do you think we will too? What will we receive if we follow Jesus even if it involves suffering or death?

**TAKEAWAY:** Following Jesus often means suffering before blessing—the cross before the crown.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Charades

*Supply List: none*

Select a child to act out a person or thing of choice (e.g., firefighter, doctor, elephant). The child has thirty seconds to act it out while the remaining children guess who or what it is. Whoever guesses correctly has the option to either be the next person to act or to choose which student goes next. Remind children that we don't have to guess who Jesus is—God's word tells us.



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## Option 2: Rock Stacking Relay

*Supply List: tables, bowls, rocks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Set up tables on the far end of the room and place a bowl with five smooth, flat stones on each table (one table per team).*

Divide children into teams, and have each team line up single file. On “Go” the first child runs to his team’s table and stacks the five rocks on top of one another. The rocks must stay stacked for three seconds. If the rocks fall, the child must try again. The child then puts the rocks back in the bowl and runs back to tag the next person in line, who repeats the process. The first team to have all team members finish wins. Remind children that though following Jesus can be hard and slow it still is the way to go.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Rock, Paper, Scissors

*Supply List: masking tape*

*Before Class: Using masking tape, divide the room in half and mark a safe zone on each side.*

Divide children into two teams. Teams will play “Rock, Paper, Scissors” using their bodies. For “rock,” children cross arms on their chest with closed fists on opposite shoulders. For “paper,” children put arms straight up in the air with palms flat. For “scissors,” children put arms out in front, crossed at the wrists. Have each team meet briefly to decide if they will be rock, paper, or scissors. Then have the teams line up facing each other on either side of the masking tape. When a leader says, “Rock, Paper, Scissors, Show,” both teams must show their choice. Rock beats scissors, paper beats rock, and scissors beats paper. The team that loses must run to their safe zone before being tagged by someone from the other team. If tagged, the child joins the opposing team for the next round. Play continues until one team is eliminated. Remind children that Jesus defeated Satan every time he was tempted by him.

## Option 2: Never Have I Ever

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle and hold up five fingers. Ask children to think of something they have never done that most people have done. Then pick a child to start, who will say, “Never have I ever . . .” (been on an airplane, gone on a roller coaster, gone fishing, etc.). Everyone who *has* done the named thing must put down one of his or her fingers. Continue around the circle with children taking turns making “Never have I ever” statements. Once a child has put all five fingers down, he is out. The last person remaining wins. Remind children that Jesus did something no one else has ever done when he lived a perfect life and died on the cross for our sins.

## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

*Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

### Option 2: Name Rocks

*Supply List: large, flat, smooth rocks (one per child); permanent markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*



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Set supplies on tables. Each child chooses a rock, draws a cross on it, and writes his or her name under it. On the other side have children draw a crown with Jesus's name under it. Then they can decorate their rocks. Remind children that when we follow Jesus, the cross comes before the crown.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

*Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

### Option 2: Known and Loved

*Supply List: paper, colored pencils, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Children should write their name in large block or bubble letters in the center of a piece of paper and then decorate their names. Next, children can walk around the room and write one word to describe the child whose name is on each paper. Encourage children to write kind, descriptive words with creative lettering.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.







April 15

STORY 70

# Glory Mountain

MATTHEW 17

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 17.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

In the Biggest Story some big things happen on mountains. Do you remember what happened to Noah's Ark? After many days, "the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat" (Gen. 8:4). From there God told Noah to bring his family and all the animals off the ark. Do you remember what happened to Abraham when he took Isaac to Mount Moriah? God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, and God provided a ram in Isaac's place. Do you remember what happened to Moses on Mount Sinai? He received the Ten Commandments. Do you remember what happened on Mount Carmel? God sent down fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice. There are other important mountains in the Bible, like Mount Zion (where Jerusalem sits), and Mount Eremos, where Jesus is believed to have preached the Sermon on the Mount. Today's story takes place

on another mountain. It's officially called Mount Tabor, but we'll call it Glory Mountain because of something glorious that happened there. Before I tell you the story, I'll give you one hint. It involves a strange word: *transfigured*. Not *transformed*. Not *Transylvania*. *Transfigured*.

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus is the  
glorious Son  
of God, who is  
perfectly holy.

Have you ever climbed a big hill? How did you feel when you reached the top? Were you out of breath? One day Jesus took Peter, James, and John on a long hike up a high mountain. We don't know if they were out of breath when they reached the top, but we do know that they saw something awesome. Jesus was *transfigured*! That word means he was changed. But he wasn't transformed from a robot into a semitruck or a caterpillar into a butterfly. Jesus wasn't transformed into another thing. He stayed human; he just showed himself to be who he really was. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in all his glory. He was human but he was more than just human. "He was transfigured," Matthew writes, "and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matt. 17:2). Talk about a light show! This was a light show that *showed* Jesus is as pure and glorious as God. The transfiguration showed that Jesus is God's very own Son.

But the light show wasn't over. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, Moses and Elijah appeared and started talking with Jesus. But they didn't look normal either. They also "appeared in glory" (Luke 9:31). Peter and his two friends were seeing a glimpse of what Jesus's forever kingdom would look like. And Peter liked it. Remember, he wanted Jesus to get the crown without the cross. So,



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in a moment of confusion, he said, “This is great. I’ll set up a tent for each of you. We can make this last for a while” (see Matt. 17:4). But that was the wrong thing to say. Jesus had just told him how there could be no crown without the cross. No Glory Mountain without Mount Calvary. Peter needed to listen to Jesus. And that’s what led to the third glorious moment. Right after Peter spoke, a thick cloud rolled in. A talking cloud! God the Father himself was speaking. And here’s what he told Peter, James, and John: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matt. 17:5). The disciples fell on their faces in fear. Jesus “touched them” and said, “Do not be afraid” (see Matt 17:7). When the disciples looked up, everything was back to normal. The “glory” was gone. And Jesus continued his trek to Mount Calvary.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Last lesson we looked at the right answer to Jesus’s all-important question, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15), and we learned that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God. Here, on Glory Mountain, what else do we learn about Jesus? We learn that he is the *glorious* Son of God, who—like God the Father and Spirit—is perfectly holy (like the brightest light in the universe). That’s who Jesus is.

Now think about this. It would be surprising if a good man died for our sins. It would be amazing if a very important person—like a king or queen—would take the punishment that we deserve. It, then, is truly astounding that Jesus—the King of glory—should lay down his life for us and die in our place. Peter, James, and John were confused, afraid, and surely stunned on the day Jesus took them atop the mountain. And while we should be amazed, we should not be fearful because we can take comfort in knowing Jesus died for us on Mount Calvary, a hill outside Jerusalem. He showed his glory to us by dying and rising again. What a glorious King!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What important things happened on mountains in the Bible? Whom does Jesus bring on the mountain to learn more about who he is?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God uses mountains in the Bible to teach important things about himself.

2. **QUESTION:** What did prophets do? Who were the two greatest prophets in the Old Testament? Why do you think they appeared with Jesus on the mountain? Who was the only prophet left after God spoke?

**TAKEAWAY:** Although Moses and Elijah were great prophets, Jesus is greater because he speaks as God's Son.

3. **QUESTION:** What did God say about Jesus on the mountain? And what did he tell the disciples to do? How do we obey God's command today?

**TAKEAWAY:** God commanded his people to listen to Jesus.

4. **QUESTION:** What happened to Jesus on the mountain? What was the disciples' response? How do you think you would have responded? Why do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to see him transfigured?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus showed his glory at the transfiguration.

### Memory Verse

#### For the LORD

is a great God,  
and a great King  
above all gods.

In his hand are  
the depths of the  
earth; the heights  
of the mountains  
are his also.

PSALM 95:3-4

### ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10-15 minutes}

K-2nd

#### Option 1: Caterpillar Race

*Supply List: none*

Divide children into groups of five or six. Each team chooses a team name and then forms a "caterpillar" by standing in a single file line and placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them. On "Go" the first person in each line takes one step forward. The second person then takes one step and so on until every team member has taken one step. After taking her step, the last person in line yells out the team's name. The first person can then take another step. This process repeats until one team reaches a designated finish line. If a team breaks apart or steps out of turn, they must return to the start and begin again. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butter-

flies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

### Option 2: On the Mountaintop

*Supply List: none*

Have children lie on their backs. When the leader says, "Jesus went up on the mountain," children must jump up to a standing position. The last child to stand is out. Have the leader also yell out silly statements like "Jesus went up on the monkey" or "on the Mickey Mouse." Any child who starts to stand for one of the silly statements is also out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children that when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in his glory, they fell on their faces in fear. Jesus told them, "Get up, don't be afraid."

3rd–5th

### Option 1: On the Mountaintop

*Supply List: none*

Have children lie on their backs. When the leader says, "Jesus went up on the mountain," children must jump up to a standing position. The last child to stand is out. Have the leader also yell out silly statements like "Jesus went up on the monkey" or "on the Mickey Mouse." Any child who starts to stand for one of the silly statements is also out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children that when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in his glory, they fell on their faces in fear. Jesus told them, "Get up, don't be afraid."

### Option 2: Crazy Caterpillar

*Supply List: plastic toy hoops*

*Before Class: Set an odd number of hoops around the room.*

Divide children into two teams. Have each team form a "caterpillar" by lining up shoulder-to-shoulder and holding hands. On "Go" each team runs to a plastic toy hoop with hands joined. The first person picks up the hoop with her free hand and puts it over her head. The team must then work together to move the hoop down the line without letting go of each other's hands. When the hoop gets to the last person, he holds the hoop and yells "Butterfly!" Teams continue to collect hoops until they are all collected. If hands separate at any point, the



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team must start over with the hoop they are working on. The team that collects the most hoops wins. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Handprint Butterflies

*Supply List: scissors, pencils, construction paper, glue, large craft sticks, permanent markers, googly eyes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Have children use a pencil to trace their hands onto construction paper (with help, if needed). Children then cut out the hands and glue them to a craft stick so the palms overlap and the fingers point outward like wings. Have children add googly eyes to the craft stick and draw in a mouth with permanent markers. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

### Option 2: Egg Carton Caterpillars

*Supply List: cardboard egg cartons, pipe cleaners, plastic tablecloths, tempera paints, paper plates, paintbrushes, cups of water, glue, googly eyes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut egg cartons into three-egg strips (one per child). Poke two holes at the top of the strips. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Cover tables with plastic tablecloths. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an egg cup strip. Set supplies on tables, with paints on paper plates. Have children flip their strip so the outside of the carton is facing up. Children then insert the pipe cleaners into the premade holes and bend them





to make antennae. Have them glue googly eyes under the antennae and then paint their caterpillars. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Glory Mountain

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, yarn (white, gray, brown, yellow, and orange), glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a simple mountain scene: a large triangle-shaped mountain, a circle for a sun, and the Memory Verse (one per child). Cut random lengths of yarn. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a mountain scene. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children glue white, gray, and brown yarn pieces to fill in their mountains, and yellow and orange yarn pieces to fill in their suns.

### Option 2: Coffee Filter Butterfly

*Supply List: coffee filters, clothespins, watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, tiny googly eyes, glue, pipe cleaners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a coffee filter and clothespin. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold their coffee filter in a tight accordion fold and secure in the middle with a clothespin. Have them use paintbrushes to drip different colors of paint onto their coffee filter until it is completely covered. They then carefully open and fan out the two sides of the coffee filter, keeping the clothespin in place. Next, the children can glue two googly eyes to the clothespin, bend a pipe cleaner, and glue it above the eyes to make antennae. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



April 22

STORY 71

# The Kids Can Come Too

MARK 10

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 10.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

What makes Jesus different than anyone else in history? He cured the blind? That's true. He calmed a storm? That's true too. What is also true, and what really sets him apart, is that though he is a glorious king (the very Son of God!), he came to earth and lived like a poor man. He was made a human, born of a poor woman, raised in a small town, worked as a carpenter for most of his life, and ministered to the sick, dying, and demon possessed. The people that he called to follow him were fishermen, tax collectors, and other outcasts. Of course, the greatest thing he did (and the humblest!) was dying for us. The apostle Paul describes it like this: "Though he is fully God, he set aside his heavenly glory and became a man. More than that, he lived the life of total obedience to his Father and day-by-day service to others, even serving God's people by dying a

criminal's death on the cross for them" (see Phil. 2:6–8). Such an unusual king! With a king like this, what is his kingdom like? Who belongs in such a king's kingdom? Let's listen in for Jesus's answer.

## TELL THE STORY

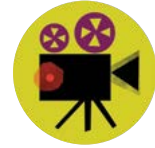
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus wants  
us to come to  
him like little  
children—needy  
and helpless.

Throughout the four Gospels we read about people coming to Jesus. A leper came to him to be cured of his awful, yucky skin disease. Four men came to him to heal their paralyzed friend. Large crowds came to him to be cured of every type of sickness. One day, some parents brought their children to him. Why? Were the children sick? No. Were they hungry? No. Were they dying? No. They brought their children to Jesus so he might lay his loving hands on them and give them a special blessing. How beautiful! It is beautiful that these parents wanted that. It is beautiful that Jesus wanted that too. Not many powerful people want little children around. Little children can be noisy, messy, and, well, sometimes stinky. None of that bothered our Lord, who “took them in his arms and blessed them” (Mark 10:16).

But it bothered his disciples. When they saw this, they told the parents to stop. They thought Jesus was too busy, too important, and too powerful to waste his precious time with children. But, boy, were they wrong. When Jesus saw what his disciples did, “he was indignant” (10:14). *Indignant* is a big word that means angry, upset, or furious. Why was Jesus so upset? There were two reasons: (1) Jesus welcomed children to be part of his kingdom, and (2) everyone (even an adult) needs to be like a child to be part of the kingdom. He put it this way:



Story

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Mark

10

“Let the children come to me . . . for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (10:14–15). Jesus didn’t mean everyone should act like selfish, spoiled children crying for candy at the supermarket. Rather, he meant that we should come to Jesus knowing that we are small, helpless, weak (like a newborn baby), and in need of his blessing.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Right after those children came to Jesus, Mark tells a story about a rich man who also came to Jesus. This man wanted the answer to the question, “How do I live with God forever?” Jesus tested his heart, saying, “Have you obeyed the Ten Commandments?” This man replied, “Yes, my whole life!” He may have thought he obeyed all ten all the time, but no one (except Jesus!) has ever done that. So Jesus tested him by seeing if he could keep—right then and there—the first commandment (love God above all) and the last (do not covet). “Sell all that you have and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me” (10:21). The rich man, we are told, “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (10:22). He couldn’t let go of his stuff! Jesus doesn’t test everyone like he did this man, but he does ask everyone to be totally dependent on him whether we are rich rulers or tiny children. The gospel is for everyone in the world. Because everyone in the world is small, helpless, and weak compared to God. What this rich ruler didn’t understand is that no one can live with God forever until they realize they are as weak and helpless as toddlers. That’s how God wants us to come to him. And when we do, he will take us in his arms and bless us.

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What are some amazing things that Jesus has done? Even though Jesus is a glorious king, what is surprising about how he lived on earth and whom he spent time around?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is a glorious king and a humble servant.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
Truly, I say to  
you, whoever  
does not receive  
the kingdom of  
God like a child  
shall not enter it.

MARK 10:15

2. **QUESTION:** Why did parents want to bring their children to Jesus? Why didn't the disciples want them to? What was Jesus's response to the disciples? Are little children welcome in God's kingdom?

**TAKEAWAY:** Children are welcome in God's kingdom.

3. **QUESTION:** What does it mean that the kingdom of God belongs to little children? What did the rich man need to do to enter the kingdom of God, which he was unwilling to do? What sort of people does Jesus want in his kingdom?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus's kingdom is for the weak, not the strong.

4. **QUESTION:** Can a rich man come to Jesus? How should he come? How should we all come to Jesus?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus wants us to come to him like little children—needy and helpless.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Keep Away

*Supply List: beach ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children form a large circle. Choose one child to stand in the center of the circle. Give a beach ball to a child on the circle and have her toss the ball to someone on the opposite side while the person on the inside tries to intercept it. When the “insider” gets the ball, he switches places with the person who threw the ball. Continue play as long as time allows. Remind everyone that the disciples tried to keep children away from Jesus, but Jesus welcomed children and blessed them.





Story

71

Mark

10

## Option 2: Children Come!

*Supply List: none*

Put children into pairs. Have one person from each pair stand in an inner circle and the other person stand in an outer circle. Children on the inner circle walk clockwise and the children on the outer circle walk counterclockwise. After about 10 seconds, call out, “Children come!” Children must find their partners as quickly as possible and link arms with them. The pair that links arms last is out. Play continues until one pair remains. Remind children that we can run to Jesus any time—he is never too busy or bothered.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Obstacle Course Relay

*Supply List: various items to make obstacles (cones, chairs, ropes, etc.)*

*Before Class: Set up identical obstacle courses (one per team).*

Divide children into teams and have them line up. Have the first person on each team maneuver through the obstacle course in both directions before tagging the next player in line. The first team to get all its players through the obstacle course wins. Remind children that they should never let anything stop them from getting to Jesus.

## Option 2: Connect Four Relay

*Supply List: masking tape, sticky notes, marker*

*Before Class: Use masking tape to create a grid on the wall that has seven columns and five rows. Draw hearts on two different colors of sticky notes.*

Divide children into two teams (Team 1 and 2), and give each team one of the colors of sticky note hearts. Have the first person on Team 1 attach a heart of her team’s color to the grid. As in the game Connect Four, the grid must be filled from the bottom up. After Team 1’s turn, the first player on Team 2 attaches a heart. Play continues with each team’s taking a turn until one team wins by getting four of its hearts in a row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Tell children the hearts remind us that Jesus values children and his love for them is great—in all directions, at all times.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: “Jesus Loves Children” Headband

*Supply List: construction paper, paper, scissors, tape, glue, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper in half lengthwise. Make copies of the words “Jesus loves children.” Make copies of pictures of children of different ethnicities. Make a sample craft.*

Place scissors, tape, glue, crayons, and printed copies on tables. Give children two strips of construction paper each, and have them tape them together to make one long strip. Children then color and cut out the words “Jesus loves children” and the pictures of the children, and they glue them to the strip of paper. Help children tape the two ends of the strip together to fit their heads.

### Option 2: Heart in Hands

*Supply List: paper, pencils, scissors, pink and red construction paper, glue, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Have children fold a piece of paper in half so the short ends meet. Trace around one of their hands with fingers spread out, angling their hand so the tips of their thumb and pointer finger touch the edge of the fold. Next, they cut out their traced hand, being sure not to cut off the folded tips of the thumb and pointer finger. Children can then open the paper to reveal the heart shape that has formed in the middle of the two hands. Have the children glue this paper to a piece of red or pink construction paper and write “Jesus loves me” above the hands.



### Option 1: “Jesus Has Time for Me” Clock

*Supply List: paper plate, cardstock, scissors, markers, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print two arrow shapes on cardstock, one arrow longer than the other (one copy per child). Make sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate, scissors, arrow paper, and brass fastener. Place markers and glue on tables. Have children write “Jesus Has Time for Me” on the plate and decorate with markers. Instruct them to cut out and attach the base of the two arrows to the center of the plate using the fastener, allowing the hands to move around the plate. Have them write the numbers 1 to 12 around the outside of the plate like a clock. Remind children that Jesus took time to bless the children and that he has time for each of them.

### Option 2: Soooooo Much Love!

*Supply List: construction paper, paper, pencil, scissors, markers, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 1-inch-wide strips of construction paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of paper and pencil. Set paper strips and remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold their paper in half so the short ends meet. On one side of the paper, children should trace their hand with fingers spread out. Then they cut out their traced hand to form two handprints. Next, they tape together two strips of construction paper to make one long strip. On the strip, have them write, “Jesus loves me soooooo much!” Instruct them to accordion fold the strip from end to end and glue one end of the strip to each handprint. Children can open and close the handprints to display the message of Jesus’s great love for them.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



April 29

STORY 72

# Who Is My Neighbor?

LUKE 10

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Luke 10.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Remember how Jesus's disciples were upset that children were coming to Jesus? They thought Jesus was too busy, too important, and too powerful to waste his precious time with children. They misunderstood the King and his kingdom, so Jesus corrected them. The disciples weren't the only ones who misunderstood the King and his kingdom. They weren't the only ones Jesus needed to correct. There was also another group. But this second group was trickier and meaner than the disciples. They didn't like Jesus; they wanted him dead. Sometimes they'd ask him questions to get him into trouble. In today's lesson, they ask him one of those trick questions. But Jesus isn't tricked. Instead, he uses their question to correct their wrong views about his kingdom.

## TELL THE STORY

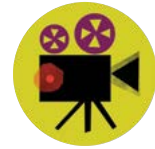
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

**Big Truth**  
Loving God  
means loving  
our neighbors,  
which involves  
showing mercy  
to those in need.

One day “a lawyer” tried to test Jesus. He asked a trick question, trying to trip Jesus up. This lawyer was not a lawyer in the way we talk about lawyers. He was an expert in the *law* of Moses. The lawyer asked, “What do I have to do to live forever?” (see Luke 10:25). This is a good question—a question everyone should ask, because everyone will one day die. Some people might have asked that important question because they wanted an answer. However, the Bible tells us that this man asked it to test Jesus, hoping it would show that Jesus didn’t know the law as well as the lawyer did.

But Jesus (who was far wiser than this lawyer) answered his question with another question, “How does the Bible answer your question?” (see 10:26). The man replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (10:27). “That’s right,” said Jesus. “If you perfectly love God and love your neighbor you will live forever.” Ah, Jesus was now testing him! Do you think this lawyer could perfectly love God and his neighbor? Of course not. Only God loves like that. At this point the lawyer decided to ask Jesus a follow-up question, “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29). He wanted Jesus to answer the question how he himself would answer it. “My neighbors,” the man thought, “are people like me and people I like.” Then Jesus shared this shocking story to correct him and show him that our neighbors include anyone in need. He told this *Jewish* religious leader the parable of the good *Samaritan*.

A man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, some robbers beat him up, stole all he had, and left him on the road to die. Soon after, a





priest saw him. But instead of helping, he walked right by him. Then, a Levite passed by, and did the same thing. Finally, a Samaritan saw him. And do you know what he did? Even though Samaritans and Jews didn't like each other, this Samaritan had compassion on this helpless man. He poured oil and wine on his wounds (to clean them), wrapped him in his own clothing, and brought him to an inn. The next day, the Samaritan gave the innkeeper money and said, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back" (10:35).

After the parable, Jesus asked, "Which man loved his neighbor?" The answer was obvious. "The one who showed him mercy" (10:37), the lawyer admitted. "Right," Jesus said, "Now go and do the same."

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Think again about what the Samaritan did in the parable, and then think about what Jesus has done for us. Like the Samaritan, Jesus came to the rescue. The Samaritan just crossed the road to do so; Jesus came all the way from heaven! The man who was beaten was rescued from dying; we were already dead in our sins when Jesus came for us. It cost the Samaritan some money to restore the dying man back to life; it cost Jesus his very life to restore our relationship with God. Jesus suffered for us. Jesus bled for us. Jesus died for us.

We are to follow the example of the good Samaritan, but more importantly we are to follow Jesus, our always good Savior. The right answer to the lawyer's first question ("What do I have to do to live forever?") is to follow Jesus—the only person to ever love God and neighbor perfectly.

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What question did the lawyer ask Jesus to test him? How did Jesus respond? Even though the lawyer wanted to test Jesus, how did Jesus test that man's heart? How does his story test your heart?

**TAKEAWAY:** People sought to test Jesus, but it is Jesus who tests our hearts.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**

You shall love the  
Lord your God  
with all your heart  
and with all your  
soul and with all  
your strength  
and with all your  
mind, and your  
neighbor as  
yourself.

LUKE 10:27

2. **QUESTION:** How did the man answer Jesus's question about how to summarize the law? What happens if you perfectly love God and your neighbor? What keeps us from doing that? Who is the only person who can do that?

**TAKEAWAY:** The whole law is summed up by loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself, and only Jesus can do that perfectly.

3. **QUESTION:** Who were the three men who saw the wounded man on the road to Jericho? Which one helped the man? Why is that surprising? In what ways is Jesus the Great Samaritan?

**TAKEAWAY:** The parable of the good Samaritan reminds us that Jesus came to save his enemies; he is the Great Samaritan.

4. **QUESTION:** What's the final question that Jesus asked the lawyer? What was his answer? The whole story was to answer the question "Who is my neighbor?" So what is the answer? If we love God and want to follow Jesus, what must we go and do?

**TAKEAWAY:** Loving God means loving our neighbors, including our enemies.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: TP Bandage Relay

*Supply List: toilet paper (one roll per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into teams of three to four, and give each team a roll of toilet paper. Have each team choose one child to be "hurt." On "Go" each team must wrap the hurt person with toilet paper. The first team to use the entire roll of toilet paper wins. Remind children that Jesus told a story about a hurt man who was helped by an unlikely good neighbor.



Story

72

Luke

10

## Option 2: Bandage Tag

*Supply List: bag of bandages*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Choose one child to be “It” and one to be the “good Samaritan.” Give the good Samaritan a bag of bandages. Begin a game of tag. If a child is tagged, she must freeze until the good Samaritan comes and puts a bandage on her hand. Once she has a bandage, she can rejoin the game. If a child is tagged a second time, she must remain frozen because each person can only be saved once per game. After a few minutes, restart the game with a new “It” and “good Samaritan.”

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Bandage Relay

*Supply List: bandages, table*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Set a table on the opposite side of the starting line, and spread out bandages on the table.*

Divide children into teams of five to six. Have each team choose one child to be “hurt,” who will then stand in front of the bandage table directly opposite from his team. On “Go” have the first person on each team skip down to the bandage table, take a bandage, stick the bandage somewhere on his team’s “hurt” person, and skip back to tag the next person in line, who will repeat the process. After five minutes, the team that has placed the most bandages on its “hurt” person wins. Remind children that one way to love our neighbors is by helping people when they are hurt.

## Option 2: I Love My Neighbor!

*Supply List: chairs*

*Before Class: Set chairs in a circle (one less than the number of children playing).*

Choose one child to stand in the middle of the circle, and have the rest sit in chairs. The person in the middle says, “I love my neighbor, especially the ones who . . .” (the child then calls out a characteristic like “are wearing blue,” “have a sister,” or “like pizza”). If the statement is true of a child, he or she must stand

and find a new place to sit. While those children are moving to a new seat, the person in the middle also tries to get a chair. The child who does not get a chair is the new person in the middle. Continue play for a predetermined time, ensuring that all children get to participate. Remind children that Jesus wants us to love our neighbors.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Sign Language “I Love You”

*Supply List: construction paper, pencils, scissors, colored pencils, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Set supplies on tables. Demonstrate how to say “I love you” with your hand in sign language. Have children take a piece of construction paper and trace around one of their hands with their fingers spread out. Children should then cut out their traced hand and glue the middle and ring fingers down to say “I love you” in sign language. Have children write Luke 10:27 on the front of the handprint. Remind children that when we love God, we want to love others like Jesus did!

### Option 2: “Love One Another” Beaded Craft

*Supply List: cardstock, pipe cleaners, string, scissors, tape, pony beads*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 6-inch pieces of string. On cardstock, print the words “Love One Another” (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set copies and supplies on tables. Have children thread pony beads onto a pipe cleaner, leaving 1 inch unbeaded at each end. Then they can shape the pipe cleaner into a heart, twisting the unbeaded ends to secure. Have them cut out the words “Love One Another” and attach them to the back of the heart with tape. Last, they should tie a piece of string to the top for hanging.



### Option 1: Heart Chain

*Supply List: construction paper, paper, scissors, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 2-inch-wide strips of construction paper (eleven per child). Make copies of a paper that has five hearts, with each heart containing one word from the phrase “I Can Love My Neighbor” (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set strips, heart papers, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the paper strips and glue to make a paper chain with eleven links. Have them cut out the hearts and glue them on every other link so the paper chain reads “I Can Love My Neighbor.” Remind children that when we show love and mercy to others, we are like Jesus.

### Option 2: Love Dangler

*Supply List: cardstock, string, red paper, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print simple pictures of a cross, a heart, and a hand. On red paper, print three small hearts that say “Love God,” “Love others,” and “Serve others.” Cut 15-inch pieces of string. Make a sample craft.*

Set copies and supplies on tables. Instruct children to color and cut out the cross, heart, and hand. Children should then cut out the three hearts and glue the “Love God” heart to the cross, the “Love others” heart to the heart, and the “Serve others” heart to the hand. Have children line up the shapes facedown with space in between them, and then they can tape a piece of string to the backs of the shapes so they will hang vertically. Leave extra string at the top to form a loop for hanging. Remind children that when we love God, we will love and serve others.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





May 6

STORY 73

# Lost and Found

LUKE 15

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Luke 15.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1  
Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2  
Teach

Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan to answer the lawyer's questions. And while the lawyer may have gotten an answer to his big question about living forever, there were still many more people with many more questions. There were also more people trying to catch Jesus doing something wrong. People who didn't like what Jesus was saying and doing. Jesus didn't like that they grumbled about God's grace or about his spending time with people who were lost. And so Jesus told more stories to show them why he came to be with sinners. He told them a story about a man who went to rescue his lost sheep. He told them about a woman who scoured her house looking for a precious coin. After telling stories of a lost sheep and a lost coin, he told one about a lost son. He told them these parables because the Pharisees and scribes were complaining about how

really bad people (“tax collectors and sinners,” Luke 15:1) were coming to Jesus, eating with him, listening to him, and following him. His stories helped show why there is much joy when lost things are found—and why spending time looking for the lost is good. How will the Pharisees respond to the stories? Will their grumbling against Jesus turn to joy? Will they begin to seek the lost with hope that they will be found? Let’s find out!

## TELL THE STORY

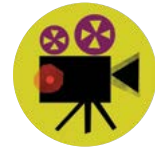
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Jesus came  
to rescue and  
redeem lost  
sinners.

This is the famous story of the prodigal son. Of course, most people don’t know what “prodigal” even means. It means wasteful or reckless. A prodigal is someone who recklessly wastes money. But there is more to the famous parable of the prodigal son than the story of a son who wastes money. He certainly does that! He spends all his father’s money. But he also has an amazing transformation.

The story goes like this. Once there was a rich man who had two sons. The younger son said, “Father, give me right now all the money I will receive when you die. My inheritance!” His father agreed. The boy then took the money and traveled far from home. Before long he spent every single dollar on selfish things with sinful people. Now he was poor and hungry and needed a job. The only job he could find was feeding pigs. Oink. Oink. Ugh. Ugh. He was so hungry he dreamed about eating the pig slop. Yuck. Yuck. Especially for Jews who want nothing to do with “unclean” pigs. Suddenly an idea came to him: “Why starve to death? Why not go home? Even your father’s hired servants have more than enough to eat.” As he walked home, he rehearsed what he would say to his father: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to



be called your son” (15:18–19). What an amazing transformation—from prodigal to humble and repentant. But how would his father respond? Before he reached the front door, his father noticed his son walking in the distance. Did he lock the door? No. Send out the guard dogs to sic ‘em? No. The father loved him and forgave him. He ran to his son, hugged and kissed him, and ordered his servants to give his son new shoes, clothe him with the best robe, and put a ring on his hand. Then he gave this order: “Let us eat the biggest and best cow and celebrate. Steaks for everyone! For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (see 15:23–24). The father had been longing for just such a transformation. He rejoiced to have his son back home.

How do you think the Pharisees reacted to this story? We’re told they responded by ridiculing Jesus (Luke 16:14). Instead of learning from Jesus, they remained upset with Jesus for seeking the lost. Their hearts toward the “sinners” remain unchanged. How sad.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you know that not everyone was excited when the prodigal son returned home? When the older brother heard the music and saw the dancing (and likely smelled the tasty steaks on the grill), he was angry and refused to join in the celebration. He complained just like the Pharisees and scribes did. He told his father, “What are you doing? Look, all these years I have faithfully served you and never disobeyed you, and you have never thrown even a little party for me. But you have thrown a big party for this sinful son of yours, who did terrible things and spent all the money you gave him. Why?” (see 15:29–30). He thought we earn the Father’s favor, so he begrudged when it was an undeserved gift. The father replied to the older son, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found” (15:31–32).

The older brother’s thinking is common even today. It’s easy to think we deserve God’s salvation because we’ve done enough good things. We’re not as bad as others (so we think). Jesus told the three “lost” parables to correct such thinking. All heaven rejoices when someone repents of their sins and returns to God. When the lost are found. That is why Jesus came and spent time with sinners—to seek and save the lost, like us. When we understand the true gospel, we rejoice that God came to rescue sinners of all kinds.

### 3

## Engage

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus? Whom did Jesus come to save?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus came to find lost sinners.

2. **QUESTION:** In the last parable, what was lost? What had he done to ruin his life? How did the son think his father would respond when he returned? How did his father respond when he returned to him? What does the story teach us about our Father in heaven?

**TAKEAWAY:** We are never too lost to return to our Father in heaven.

3. **QUESTION:** What are some of the things the father did when his son returned home? Why did he do them? What does this teach us about how God feels when a sinner repents and returns to him?

**TAKEAWAY:** God rejoices when someone repents of sins and returns to him.

4. **QUESTION:** How did the older brother feel when his brother returned home and his father rejoiced? Would you have felt the same way? What did his father encourage him to do? How should we feel if Jesus has found us?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should rejoice that we have been found by Jesus and rejoice when others are saved.

### ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

#### Option 1: Gather My Sheep

*Supply List: poster board, marker, tape, cups, cotton balls, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a large rectangular “sheep pen” on poster (one per team), and tape it to the wall opposite the starting line. Fill each cup with one hundred*

#### Memory Verse

There is joy  
before the  
angels of God  
over one sinner  
who repents.

LUKE 15:10



Story

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Luke

15

*cotton balls (one cup per team), and place the cups along the starting line across from the sheep pens.*

Divide children into teams of five or six, and have each team line up behind a cup. Give each team a glue stick. On “Go” the first person on each team must take the glue stick and one cotton ball out of his team’s cup, run to glue the cotton ball inside the sheep pen, and run back to hand the glue stick to the next player in line. Play continues with each player’s gluing one cotton ball at a time. The first team to glue all their cotton balls inside their “pen” wins. Remind children that Jesus will find all his sheep.

### **Option 2: Pass the Snort and Baa**

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. One child starts the game by looking at the child on her left and making a pig snort noise without laughing. That child must then pass the snort to the person on his left, and so on around the circle. If the person snorting or receiving the snort laughs, he is out. When the snort has been passed around the circle, continue play by passing a sheep’s baa around the circle without laughing. Continue play (alternating between snorts and baas) until one child remains or until time is up. Remind children that Jesus told a parable about a lost sheep and a parable about a lost son who was so hungry he dreamed about eating pig slop!

3rd–5th

### **Option 1: Coin Hunt**

*Supply List: paper plates, crayons, fifty to one hundred coins*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Hide coins around the room.*

Have each child write his or her name on a paper plate and place it in the center of the room. Tell children that there are coins hidden all around the room and that their goal is to find as many as possible. On “Go” have children begin looking for coins. When a child finds a coin, he must place it on his plate before finding another one. Play continues for a couple minutes or until all the coins have been found. The child with the most coins wins. Remind children that Jesus came to search for the lost.

## Option 2: Lost and Found

*Supply List: random objects, dry rice, large bucket*

*Before Class: Gather objects like buttons, bouncy balls, clothespins, and the like. Mix the objects with rice in a large bucket. Make note of the objects in the box.*

Divide children into two teams, and have them line up facing each other with the bucket of objects in the middle. When you call out one of the objects, the first person on each team runs to the bucket to find the object named. The first person to find the object gets a point for her team. Continue calling objects until all children have had the opportunity to participate and all objects have been found. The team with the most points wins. Remind children that Jesus came to seek what was lost.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Party Hats

*Supply List: paper, scissors, streamers, staplers, markers, glue sticks, sequins*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a large semicircle pattern with the words “Rejoice! The lost are found!” printed inside it (one per child). Cut streamers into 5-inch lengths. Make a sample craft.*

Set copies, streamers, and remaining supplies on tables. Children first cut out a semicircle and decorate one side. Then they shape the semicircle into a cone, stapling along the seam to close. Have children glue streamers to the point of the hat.

### Option 2: Paper Bag Pig

*Supply List: paper, paper lunch bags, scissors, glue sticks, tape, crayons, pencils, pink pipe cleaners, googly eyes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a pig nose and two pig ears (one set per child). Make a sample craft.*





Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Children first color and cut out a pig nose and two ears. Then they glue the nose, ears, and two googly eyes to the bottom flap of the bag, creating a pig puppet. Have them add a tail by wrapping a pink pipe cleaner around a pencil and taping the tail to the back of the puppet. Remind children that the lost son was so hungry he dreamed of eating pig slop!

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Coin Collage

*Supply List: paper, variety of coins, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of the words “I was lost, but now I am found,” with FOUND in block letters (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set copies, coins, and crayons on tables. Have children place a coin under the found paper so the coin is inside one of the block letters. Gently color on top of the coin with a crayon. Have children continue this process with different coins and colors until the block letters are filled in.

### Option 2: Lost Things Story Wheel

*Supply List: paper, scissors, colored pencils, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of an 8-inch-diameter circle divided into three equal sections (one per child). Make copies of another 8-inch-diameter circle with a one-third section marked (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child one of each circle. Set remaining supplies on tables. Children first cut out the circles, then take the circle divided into three sections and label the sections “A Lost Sheep,” “A Lost Coin,” and “A Lost Son.” Have children draw pictures to go with each parable. Instruct children to cut out the one-third section on the other circle and fasten this circle on top of the first using a brass fastener. Have them write, “God rejoices when the lost are found” on the top circle. Children can rotate the top circle to remind them of each parable.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



May 13

STORY 74

# Debts and Debtors

MATTHEW 18

## BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 18.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

## THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

A couple weeks ago we looked at Jesus's parable of the good Samaritan and learned that we should love our neighbor, especially when he is in great need. Then we looked at Jesus's parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. And we learned that, like God, we should rejoice when someone repents and receives God's forgiveness. Today we will look at the parable of the unforgiving servant. In the next lesson we will look at the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. That's a lot of parables, isn't it? Why did Jesus teach so often with these short stories? Thankfully, Jesus answers that question. He says that he taught in parables to reveal and conceal. To *reveal* means to make something known that was hidden; to *conceal* means to hide or cover something up. To those who want to be Jesus's disciples and to whom God gives ears to hear

and understand, Jesus's parables show us great truths about God's kingdom. To those who don't want to be disciples, parables fall on deaf ears. They cannot hear. They do not listen. God's truth is hidden. For today's parable let's ask God to open our ears and our eyes!

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
We should  
forgive others  
just as God  
forgave us.

What should you do if someone steals something from you or tells a lie that gets you in trouble? One day Jesus taught his disciples what to do if someone sins against them. If a person admits his fault and asks for forgiveness, Christians should forgive. When Peter heard this teaching, he had a follow up question: “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” (Matt. 18:21). Jesus replied, “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (see 18:22). In other words, “Stop counting how many times someone sins against you. You are to forgive them every single time!” Jesus told a story to explain why.

One day a rich king decided to require his servants to pay back money they owed him. One servant owed him ten billion dollars. Wow, that's a big debt. Astronomical! Because he obviously couldn't pay back that astronomical amount, he fell on his knees and begged the king to be patient. The king decided to be more than patient; he would be merciful. He forgave the whole debt!

That's shocking. But what happens next is even more shocking. Shockingly sad. The servant who was forgiven remembered that another servant owed him money—about fifteen thousand dollars. That's still a lot. (More than you get from your grandma on your birthday, right?) But that's not anywhere close



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Matthew

18

to ten billion dollars! Now here's what the forgiven servant did. He grabbed his fellow servant and started to choke him. "Give me the money you owe me," he screamed. The man begged him to be patient: "Give me some time to repay you." "No way!" the first servant said. "Off you go to debtors' prison." When the king found out what happened, he called the forgiven servant and said, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (18:32–33). The king tossed the man into debtors' prison until he could pay every last penny (which might just take an eternity!).

The point of the parable is that because God (like the king) has forgiven our many sins (like the first servant's debts), we should forgive others (like the second servant's much-smaller debt) when they sin against us.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you know the Lord's Prayer? It starts, "Our Father in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). After we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," the very next thing we ask God to do for us is to "forgive us our debts" (or trespasses or sins). Just like we need daily bread to live, we need daily forgiveness too. Our trespasses or sins are like debts we owe God. Our debt is as massive as the first servant's debt in the parable. We owe God ten billion dollars. So what are we to do? *We can't do anything* to earn our salvation. But thankfully *God has done something* about our debt problem. He sent Jesus to pay it all. Jesus gave his "life as a ransom" (20:28), a full payment. We, through faith, can accept that good news. And forgiven people forgive others. That's how it works. In fact, after Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, he taught that Christians are to "forgive others their trespasses" (6:14). Jesus even implied that if we haven't forgiven, we probably haven't truly been forgiven (see 6:12, 14). The forgiven must be forgiving! We are to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one other, as God in Christ forgave" us (Eph. 4:32).

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What did Peter want to know about forgiveness? How many times did Jesus say Peter should forgive someone who sinned against him?

3

Engage

What did he mean by that? How many times will God forgive you for sinning against him?

**TAKEAWAY:** There is no limit to God's forgiveness of sins.

**Memory Verse**

Be kind to  
one another,  
tenderhearted,  
forgiving one  
another, as  
God in Christ  
forgave you.

**EPHESIANS 4:32**

2. **QUESTION:** How much money did the first servant owe the king? Could he ever pay that debt? Why did the king forgive the debt? How much money did the second servant owe the first? What should he have done when the second servant asked for time to pay his debt?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because God has forgiven us, we must forgive others.

3. **QUESTION:** What did the first servant do to the servant who couldn't pay him back? What was wrong with that? What did the king say and do to punish him? What lesson is God trying to teach us?

**TAKEAWAY:** If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us.

4. **QUESTION:** What do we ask God to forgive in the Lord's prayer? And what do we tell him we will do to others? What should we do when we struggle to forgive others?

**TAKEAWAY:** When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: String Search

*Supply List: string, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut one extremely long length of string, and sixty different lengths of string, from a couple inches to a foot. Hide the sixty lengths of string around the room.*

Show the long length of string, and explain that it represents Jesus's forgiveness of sins. Tell the class that you have hidden strings all around the room.





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Matthew

18

On “Go” have children collect as many as they can. Once all the strings have been found, have each child line up the strings he or she found to form one long string. The child with the longest string wins. Show children the string that represents Jesus’s forgiveness. (This string should be much longer than any of theirs.) Remind children that we need to forgive like Jesus—way more than we think we should.

### Option 2: Swat away Unforgiveness Game

*Supply List: masking tape, paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place a piece of masking tape down the center of the play area to divide it into two sections.*

Divide children into two teams and assign one team to each side of the tape. Distribute an equal number of pieces of paper to each team, and instruct children to crumple the paper into balls. Explain that the paper represents sins committed against us and that we don’t want to hold onto unforgiveness. We need to let go of hurts and trust God. On “Go” have teams try to keep crumpled paper balls off their side by continually tossing them to the other side. Continue play for 3 to 5 minutes. When the time is up, the team with the least number of paper balls on their side wins. Remind children that when we are unforgiving, we lose. Instead, we should keep on forgiving others, like Jesus forgives us.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Balloon Stomp

*Supply List: balloons, string, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons and tie a string to the knot of each balloon (one per child).*

Tie a balloon around each child’s ankle. Have children spread out around the playing area. On “Go” have children try to stomp on and pop other children’s balloons while protecting their own from being popped. The last child with an unpopped balloon wins. Remind children that in the parable, the servant only looked out for himself.

## Option 2: Ball Battle

*Supply List: ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children stand in a circle with their feet slightly more than shoulder width apart and with the edges of their feet touching their neighbors'. The object of the game is for players to use their hands to hit the ball between other players' legs while blocking balls from coming through their own legs. If a ball passes through a child's leg, he gets a "one." If it passes through a second time, he gets a "two." This continues up to "seven." Once a child gets to seven, the game restarts. Jesus taught that we should forgive someone not seven times but seventy-seven times.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Heart Puzzle

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a large heart pattern (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Set crayons on tables. Give children a heart pattern and scissors. Have them cut out the heart and then cut it into two pieces to make a broken heart. Children then write "Jesus forgives my sins" on one half, and "I can forgive others" on the other half. Remind children that sin breaks God's heart, but he still forgives us. Sometimes our hearts are hurt by the sins of others, but we should forgive like God has forgiven us.

### Option 2: King's Crown

*Supply List: construction paper, scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a zigzag line lengthwise down the center of a piece of construction paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.*



Give each child one piece of construction paper. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut along the zigzag line and then tape the pieces together to form one long piece. Have them write “Jesus is a forgiving and merciful King!” and then decorate it with markers, jewels, and sequins. Have children tape the two ends of the long piece to form a crown.

**3rd–5th****Option 1: Keep on Forgiving Spiral**

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, markers, hole punch, string*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a spiral template (one per child). Cut 6-inch lengths of string (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a spiral template. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write “Keep on forgiving” on their spiral and then color it with markers. Have children cut along the lines to make a long snakelike spiral. Have them punch a hole in the middle of the spiral, then thread and tie a piece of string through the hole for hanging. Remind children that forgiveness is not something we need just once but something we need again and again.

**Option 2: Stained Glass**

*Supply List: cardstock, thin washi or masking tape, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, cups, water*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a small square (centered on the cardstock) with the Memory Verse printed inside it (one per child). Fill cups one-fourth full with water. Make a sample craft.*

Set copies, cups of water, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the washi or masking tape to divide the space surrounding the square into at least eight different sections. Using the watercolor paints, have children paint the sections different colors. Once all sections have been painted, have children remove the tape to display a stained-glass picture that highlights the Memory Verse.



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