

LESSON 6

FOUR GOOD FRIENDS

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Houses in Biblical Times

A typical house during biblical times was built of stone. It had a flat roof made of materials that included mud, straw, and tiles (Lk 5:19) and that roof could be reached by an outside stairway. People often walked on their rooftops for fresh air or slept on their rooftops on hot nights to enjoy the cool breeze. Sometimes, they even spread their laundry or fruit and grain on the roof to dry. In this story, the four friends likely brought the paralyzed man to the roof using the stairway. Then they had to take apart the mud, straw, and tile mixture to create a hole big enough to lower the man down.

The Power to Forgive

When the Jewish leaders heard Jesus' claim that He was able to forgive a man's sins, they were shocked. They knew that only God had the power to forgive sins. To them, Jesus was a blasphemer. According to the law, the punishment for blaspheming the name of God was death (Lev 24:15-16). However, they did not understand that Jesus' claim was true. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins because He is God.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

The four friends in this story could have easily given up. When they saw the huge crowd, they could have left the man there and hoped that he would eventually be able to see Jesus. But they did not do that. They took action themselves, and Jesus was moved by their great faith, determination, and love.

Your students may give up very easily on simple tasks. When the task becomes too troublesome, they will abandon the work and let someone else finish the job. When it's time to pray, they may give up when they are too tired. This is a good time to discuss the importance of determination, responsibility, and being a true friend. The four friends were determined to help no matter how difficult it would be. They were very courageous people. They completed what they started. Jesus wants your students to be responsible Christians and good friends, too. Discuss some ways they can help their friends. Giving them an example from your life would make the experience more real for them. It may also benefit them to do some role-playing. Let them step into the shoes of a person who needs help. How do they feel when others do not offer them any assistance? How do they feel when others do offer them help? No matter how small the aid may be, remind them that God keeps track of every one of them. Let your students feel the intrinsic rewards of being a good friend.

BIBLE TEXT

Mark 2:1-12

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus is kind and has the power to forgive sins.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage and pray for others in church.
2. To be determined and not give up when helping others.
3. To understand that Jesus looks at our faith.

MEMORY VERSE

"Honor your father and mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

(Matthew 19:19)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, we know that You are a kind and loving God. Thank You for being there for us. We need friends to help and support us in the same way that You constantly guide us. Also, we must learn how to be good friends to others. Lord, please help us in our determination to show kindness and love to our friends so that we can give all glory to Your name. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

paralyzed: unable to move and control your muscles

paralytic: someone who is paralyzed

determination: the decision not to give up; to decision to keep trying

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and people did not like him. Why? (He cheated people out of their money and kept the extra for himself.) When he heard that Jesus was coming to town, he wanted to see Him. However, Zacchaeus was short, and there was a huge crowd around Jesus. He had to climb a tree in order to be able to catch a glimpse. When Jesus came to the tree where Zacchaeus was, He told Zacchaeus to come down because He would be staying at his house. Zacchaeus was overjoyed that Jesus wanted to be his friend. However, the people complained that Jesus was visiting the house of a sinner. When Zacchaeus heard this, he felt sorry for all that he had done wrong. He told Jesus that he would change and give back the money to the people. Jesus forgave him and was very happy that he had repented.

We learned that we also need to repent when we make mistakes. God is always ready to forgive us if we are sincere. We can also learn from Zacchaeus' determination to see Jesus. We must also be determined to get rid of whatever is blocking us from seeing Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Dear students, think about somebody that you really love and care about. [Give them some time to think.] Who is it? [Have them go around and share.] Now, imagine that this person is very, very sick and can't even move. How would you feel?

Today, we are going to learn about a paralytic and how much his four friends cared about him. They were determined to bring him before Jesus to be healed. They encountered many difficulties, but did not give up.

[Have students turn their Bibles to **Mark 2:1-12**. Either read it through with them while explaining, or have the class read the reference verses together throughout the story-telling. Emphasize the quoted parts of the reference verses.]

"Carried by four" (Mark 2:3)

One time, Jesus was preaching in an area called Capernaum. Many people came to see Him and hear His teachings. He was speaking inside a house, and so many people came that the house was completely filled. There wasn't even room near the door.

There were four friends who had heard about Jesus' arrival in town. They had also heard stories of how He healed sick people. They were very eager to meet Him because they had a very sick friend. He was paralyzed and had to lie down all day on a mat. The four men knew that if they brought their friend to Jesus, He would be able to help. So they each held a corner of the mat and carried

their friend to the house where Jesus was staying.

When they arrived at the house, they realized that there was no way they could get into the house. A huge crowd was before them. However, they were not about to give up that easily. The four men came up with a plan.

"They uncovered the roof" (Mark 2:4)

They managed to reach the top of the house with their friend. Then, they began to take apart the tiles and other materials that were used to make the roof. They kept taking apart the roof until they made a hole big enough to fit their friend who was lying on the mat. The four men began to lower their friend down into the house! They carefully let him down until he reached the floor where Jesus could see him.

"Jesus saw their faith" (Mark 2:5)

When Jesus saw the man and how much faith his friends had, He was deeply moved. They went through so much trouble just to bring the man to Him. He knew they had faith that He could heal the paralytic. Jesus also knew that the paralyzed man needed more than just to be healed. He needed to be forgiven of his sins, of all the wrong things he had done in the past. Jesus was very willing to help him.

"Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5)

Jesus said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Now, among the crowd were some Jewish leaders and

scribes. When they heard what Jesus said, they began to wonder to themselves, "Why does this Man speak like this? Does He think that He is God? Only God can forgive sins." Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking, but what they didn't know was that Jesus was God.

"Why do you wonder about these things in your hearts?" Jesus asked. No one dared to say anything. Jesus continued to speak, saying, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?'" To prove to the people that He had power on earth to forgive sins, Jesus said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house."

Everyone looked with anticipation at the man lying on the mat. Immediately, the man got up, took up his mat and went on his way home.

"All were amazed and glorified God" (Mark 2:12)

Everyone who saw this miracle was amazed. They praised and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!" The man and his four friends went home happily, praising God. Now, unlike before, the man could walk with them. The four friends were glad they brought the man to see Jesus. The man glorified God because Jesus had healed him and forgiven him of his sins.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. How many friends carried the paralytic?** Four.
- 2. Why couldn't the four friends go through the front door to see Jesus?** There was a crowd that filled the whole house.
- 3. What did the four friends do to the roof in order to get the paralytic in the house?** Uncovered it, took it apart, and broke through it.
- 4. What was the first thing Jesus said to the paralytic? (Hint: What did Jesus forgive him of?)** "Son, your sins are forgiven you."
- 5. What were the Jewish leaders and scribes thinking in their hearts when Jesus said this?** They thought Jesus was blaspheming because only God could forgive sins. However, Jesus is God. Therefore, He has the power to forgive sins.
- 6. In the end, what happened to the paralytic?** He was healed!
- 7. What did all the people do after they saw the paralytic walk?** They were amazed and glorified God.
- 8. Why did Jesus think it was more important to say the man's sins were forgiven?** So that others could know that Jesus had the power to forgive sins on earth.
- 9. How can you be a good friend to others around you?** Have you ever done acts of kindness that you want to share with everyone as an example? Answers may vary.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Honor your father and mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 19:19)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. sins
2. False; they believed that only God had the power, but they did not know that Jesus was God.
3. True
4. C
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. Answers may vary.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

We should be determined when helping others.

As we learned from the story today, the paralytic needed the determination, love, and faith of the four good friends in order to be brought before Jesus and healed. There are often spiritual paralytics who are in need of our love and the love of other brothers and sisters. These may be people who have a hard time coming to church, concentrating when they are praying, or keeping up a good relationship with God. In fact, many times, we are also spiritual paralytics ourselves, in need of other people's help.

Let's take some time to think about this: How might you be a spiritual paralytic? [Give your students some time to think and answer.] Think about some people you know who might be spiritually paralyzed. How can we help them? [Students can think to themselves or share with the class.] Here are some teachings we can keep in mind. [Write the following three points on the board.]

1. Encourage and pray for the people in church.

One way to help "carry" others is to encourage them with kind words. Kind words can cheer up people who may be spiritually low, sad, or filled with worries (Prov 12:25). Can you come up with a list of encouragements you can say to your friends and family in need? [Give your students some time to think and write them down. Ask them to think about encouraging Bible verses.]

- *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

As Jeremiah 29:11 says, God has a beautiful plan for us. No matter what we are going through right now, we can have faith that God will take us through any difficulties and bring us to a better place.

- *"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up like wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*

Isaiah 40:31 reminds us that the Lord gives us new strength every day. Let tomorrow have its own worries, God will take care of them all.

- *"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."*

Deuteronomy 31:6 encourages us to be strong and of good courage. Nothing can harm us when God is by our side, guiding and protecting us. He will never leave us or lead us down the wrong path!

Another way to "carry" others is to pray for them. It took four loving friends to carry the paralytic. In the same way, when several people pray for someone in need, it will be very powerful. Let me share a testimony with you.

Many years ago, a disastrous earthquake struck Taiwan. Many homes, commercial buildings, and public facilities were destroyed overnight in the affected areas, and many lives had been taken away. It was an extremely chaotic time for those affected by the earthquake; some searched all over for their lost family members, while others rushed to different hospitals and shelters. On the news, all we saw were people crying over wounded bodies, crushed homes, and desperate souls. It was heartbreaking to watch. That night, I remember receiving a phone call from a church council member. He was calling every church member to ask for our prayers for our church in the affected areas in Taiwan, as well as for other victims in this tragic event. He also said that our church chapel would be open for members to pray that whole week.

The next day, I decided to drop by church after work. When I first saw the chapel, my eyes began to tear up. It was a weekday with no service, but so many members came to church to pray! I can't remember how many hours I prayed for, but I prayed for a long time. When I left, I saw that many brothers and sisters who were there when I first arrived were still there, praying. I will never forget that moment. I could feel the power

coming out of the chapel.

On the following Saturday, an announcement was made about our church in Taiwan for which we had been praying. They said that our church in Taiwan had been able to reach every member, and thank God, they were all safe and sound. Even though many of them suffered material loss, God protected them all from being hurt. After the announcement was made, many members said out loud, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" A sister sitting behind me whispered softly, "God listened to our prayers." Suddenly, I realized that praying for others is not merely an action of care and sympathy. God actually listened to our prayers and protected His church and His children. Thank God that not only did I witness God's protection during that time, I also learned a very important lesson about the power of effective prayer. May all the glory be unto Jesus' name. Amen.

2. Don't give up.

The four friends had to face a large crowd, go up to the roof, break through the roof, and lower their friend down. These are all big difficulties they had to face. When we are seeking God or trying to encourage and pray for others, we may also face difficulties. However, just as the four friends did not give up, we must not give up. If we do not give up, Jesus will see our determination and faith and answer our prayers. Let me share another testimony with you.

James had been happily married for eleven years. During these years, even though James' wife was not a True Jesus Church member, he went to church every Saturday. He tried to bring his wife to church a few times, but she had no interest in our church. She attended a Catholic school when she was younger and had not gone to church in a very long time.

All these years, James never ceased praying for his wife. He prayed that God, in His timing, would bring his wife back to His fold. James had no idea when his wife would start going to church with him, but he had great faith that God would answer his prayers one day. For eleven years, James prayed for his wife every day. He was determined to bring his wife to church.

One day, he was having dinner with his wife and her relatives. They started talking about God. After that conversation, James' wife, as well as her relatives, began to show interest in True Jesus Church. James had Bible studies with them often to introduce our doctrines and basic beliefs to them. In 2013, James' wife and her relatives got baptized. Thank God, one by one, four souls were added to God's fold that year. Not only did God give James wisdom and strength to preach, He also answered James' prayers after eleven years.

3. Jesus looks at our faith.

When the four friends saw the huge crowd before them, they did not turn back. Instead, they went to the roof, tore through all the tiles and mud to uncover it, and lowered their friend down to see Jesus. They were willing to do all this without hesitation because of their faith in Jesus. They knew that He could heal their friend and that He was the only one on earth with the power to do it. Their actions revealed their faith. However, Jesus saw their great faith not only by looking at their outward actions, but also by looking into their hearts. The four friends did all these actions because, in their hearts, they had great faith in Jesus. In the same way, if we put our faith into our actions, Jesus will recognize that, just as he recognized the four friends' great faith.

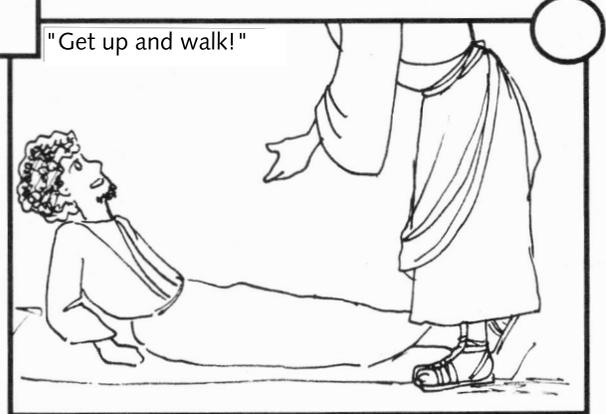
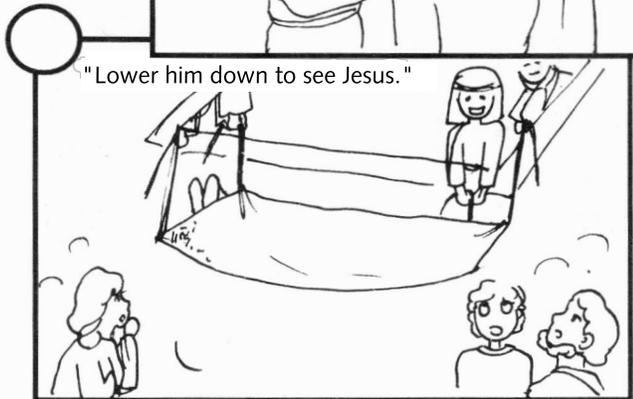
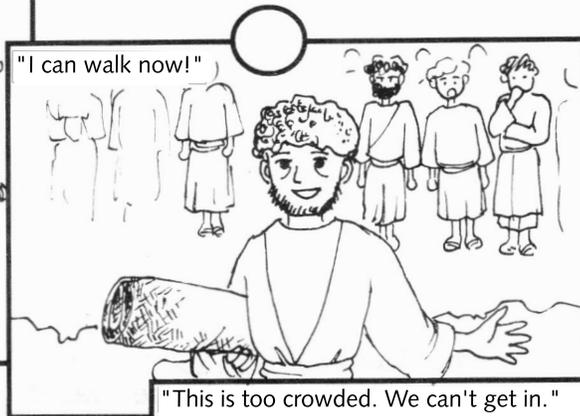
As we encourage and pray for other brothers and sisters, as well as pursue God ourselves, we will encounter many difficulties. However, we must not give up! Jesus will see our faith and determination, and He will reward us.

ACTIVITY

Four Good Friends

Objective: To help the students recall the events of the story.

Instructions: Look at the pictures. Number them in the order that they happened in the story. Check with a partner to make sure you have the correct sequence.



E1 Year 2 Book 4 Lesson 6—Four Good Friends

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: Jesus is kind and has the power to forgive sins.

Lesson Objective: To be determined when helping others.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Matthew 19:19)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Fill In the Blank

1. Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, your _____ are forgiven you."

True or False

2. The Jewish leaders and scribes believed that Jesus had the power to forgive sins. _____
3. Jesus has the power to forgive sins because He is God. _____

Multiple Choice

4. _____ : Why couldn't the four friends carry the paralytic through the door?
a. The door was not big enough.
b. The door was locked.
c. There was a large crowd.
5. _____ : How did the four friends get their friend into the house where Jesus was?
a. They paid money to get into the house.
b. They uncovered and broke through the roof, and lowered their friend in.
c. They discovered a back door and carried their friend in.
6. _____ : After the paralytic was healed and went out in the presence of all the people, everyone _____.
a. Was angry and wanted to hurt Jesus, saying "Blasphemy!"
b. Was sad and felt it was unfair, saying "How come you didn't heal other sick people?"
c. Was amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"
7. _____ : According to the Bible, Jesus healed and forgave the paralytic when He saw _____.
a. How well the friends dug through the roof.
b. The faith of the friends.
c. How well the friends carried the paralytic on the mat.
8. _____ : We should have determination when we seek God and help others. What is determination?
a. To keep trying no matter what happens.
b. To be amazed and glorify God.
c. Not being able to move or control your muscles.

Life Application

9. Think of one person you can help, encourage, or pray for. Write down this person's name and what you specifically want to do for this person.

Name of this person: _____

What you will do for this person: _____

Did you do it? _____