

Semicontinuous
Job 42:1–6, 10–17
Ps. 34:1–8 (19–22)

Complementary
Jer. 31:7–9
Ps. 126

Heb. 7:23–28
Mark 10:46–52

Helping Others

Goal for the Session *From the story of Bartimaeus and Jesus, children will explore how they can meet the needs of others.*

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on Mark 10:46–52

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” A. K. M. Adam

The directness with which Jesus accepts the connection between the “Son of David” and the Anointed One should caution us not to construct invidious distinctions between “political” and “spiritual” messiahship. In the final verse of the pericope, Jesus indicates that Bartimaeus’s faith has “made [him] well” (NRSV), or “healed” (NIV) or “saved” (NJB) him. The Greek verb in question, *sōzō*, serves for salvation from both physical and spiritual dangers. Although both meanings resonate in Mark’s usage, the more ordinary Greek sense (“rescue”) should prevail.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Victor McCracken

The Bartimaeus episode serves as the culmination of a section of Mark’s Gospel in which Jesus confronts not only the physical blindness of Bartimaeus but, more significantly, the spiritual blindness of his closest followers who have failed to fully grasp the upside-down kingdom that Christ has brought near to the world. Thus, while the healing of blind Bartimaeus is first of all about Jesus’ response to Bartimaeus’s need, theologically the story serves as a metonym for the work of Christ, who in his journey to Jerusalem is seeking to cure the spiritual blindness of his disciples. This interplay between the blindness of those Jesus confronts on the way to Jerusalem and the sight-giving power that Jesus enacts in word and deed heightens the christological claim at the heart of the passage: not even the blindness of his closest followers can impede the work of Christ in the world.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Cynthia A. Jarvis

Following Jesus, we need not scold those who have no idea what they want Jesus to do for them, nor call their faithfulness into question. Rather, as we call the community to attend to the other’s cry for mercy, whether the other is as distant as Darfur or as close as the closet, we obediently gather a crowd around what God is doing in the world “to make and keep human life human.” The cry of need that caused Bartimaeus to be shunned by many becomes the occasion for their glimpse of God’s final intention for creation in ordinary time.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Lincoln E. Galloway

Bartimaeus is a model of discipleship because he is a person of faith (10:52). His capacity to see and comprehend reminds us that the disciples seem not to perceive or understand, to see or to hear (8:14–21). In this passage, Jesus draws attention to the faith of Bartimaeus (cf. 2:5); and we are invited through the words of Jesus to see the relationship between faith and wholeness, faith and salvation. These elements are powerfully combined when we hear and respond to the words of mercy: Go, your faith has made you well. Go, your faith has healed you. Go, your faith has made you whole.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Mark 10:46–52

Focus on Your Teaching

Bartimaeus stood out from the crowd because he shouted loudly to Jesus for help. The closer children come to adolescence, the less they want to stand out from their peers. Signs of this desire to look like and be like their friends begins early. You may have noticed it in your group when activities are selected or teams chosen. In today's multireligious and multiethnic society, children may need to develop empathy for those who do stand out for any reason. The story of Bartimaeus provides a reason for thinking about those who are different in some way.

God of all creation, may my eyes be opened to ways I can love everyone, even those most difficult to accept. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- green cloth
- Bible
- offering basket
- white Christ candle
- matches or battery-operated candle
- Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022; CD player
- Color Pack 3, 15, 16, 27, 29
- Resource Sheet 1

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2, aluminum kitchen foil, scissors
- option 2: Color Pack 15, paper, pencil

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, place a bookmark at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark in the worship center Bible. For option 3 in Responding, get information about Lifesaver Action at www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/youth-activism/lifesaver.

When some children arrive, invite them to arrange the worship center with the green cloth, Bible, offering basket, and Christ candle.

When it is time to begin, gather at the worship center. Light the Christ candle and lead the children in these opening words:

Leader: *Come, Holy Spirit, and give us your power.*

Group: *Come, Holy Spirit, come.*

Recall that the church calendar calls the Sundays between Pentecost and Christ the King Sunday Ordinary or Common Time. During these months, the church thinks about and studies how to follow Jesus.

Receive the offering, if that is your routine.

Sing “Jesus Loves Me!” (Color Pack 27; track 14 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022).

Extinguish the Christ candle.

Show Color Pack 15. Ask:

- ✪ What do you think is happening in this picture?
- ✪ What do you think happened to cause that?
- ✪ When do you shout?

Explain that someone shouts loudly in today's Bible story.

Costumes, even the simplest kind, make a drama more exciting. Headbands and shawls help children pretend to be someone else.

Jesus Loves Me!

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
In his love we shall be strong.

Refrain

Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know,
As he loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to me."

Refrain

Jesus loves me, still today,
Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give
Light and love to all who live.

Refrain

EASY
PREP

EXPLORING

Invite a child to get the Bible from the worship table and open it to the bookmark at the Gospel of Mark. Note that the stories continue to be from the Gospel of Mark. Review previous stories (healing the Syrophenician woman's daughter, answering "Who am I?", last being first, blessing the children, and the man who wanted eternal life). Also locate the areas where Jesus traveled on Color Pack 3 (Galilee, Capernaum, Judea), ending with Jericho where today's story takes place.

Tell the story based on Mark 10:46–52 on Resource Sheet 1 (Show Me Mercy). Show Color Pack 16 and invite the children to tell you what is happening and whether they think this is Jesus and Bartimaeus.

Before talking about the story further, have the children pantomime it as you tell it. Select one child to be Bartimaeus and one to be Jesus. Other children can be the people of Jericho or Jesus' disciples. Pantomime it two or three times with other children as Bartimaeus and Jesus. Ask:

- ✿ Why was Bartimaeus sitting by the side of the road?
- ✿ What do you wonder about this story?
- ✿ How did Jesus know how to help Bartimaeus?
- ✿ How do we know when to help people?

RESPONDING

Offer at least two options so children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children who can work on their own.

1. **Foil Sculptures** Bartimaeus asked Jesus for help and received it. The children can also ask Jesus or God for help as they manipulate foil sculptures. Each child needs a copy of Resource Sheet 2 (Foil Sculpture), two sheets of 12" x 24" aluminum kitchen foil, and scissors. Read the directions aloud and demonstrate how to cut and shape a human figure. Help children as needed. When everyone has a sculpture, ask children to pose their sculptures as though they are asking Jesus for healing as Bartimaeus did. Then have them pose the figure as if it were someone asking Jesus for help today. Invite children to take the figures home and talk with families about ways they can ask for help for themselves or others and how they might provide help.
2. **Praying for Others** One way children can answer shouts for help is to pray for people. Show Color Pack 15. Ask the children to imagine that this boy is shouting for help. Invite their ideas on the kind of help he needs. Encourage them to think of ways to help him. Then suggest that he and many other people in the world need help, but we are far from them and cannot provide personal help. Recalling previous sessions about prayer, remind the group that they can pray for people who need help. Help them pray a bidding prayer. As each child names a person or group who needs help (my aunt who is sick, the children who are starving in Africa, the people who sleep on the street), the group responds: "Jesus, have mercy." Write their prayer requests and give them to worship leaders to anonymously include in congregational prayer.

If you register your group with Amnesty International at <http://tinyurl.com/ot2f8bl>, you will receive a new Lifesaver Action each month. You will also receive updates.

- 3. Advocates for Others** The story of Bartimaeus provides an impetus for Christians of all ages to help people in need. This project involves writing letters and may be more suitable for older children. Tell the children about Amnesty International, a group that works for justice and advocates for others globally. A primary act it requests is writing letters to government officials to advocate for someone imprisoned. Provide the information you found on their Web site about Lifesaver Action. Invite children to write a letter, according to the instructions on the Web site.
- 4. Sight-Impaired People** This option will help children understand the daily lives of sight-impaired people. Invite a social worker or a caregiver in a residence for older people to talk with the children about ways sight-impaired people compensate for the lack of vision and how they can help or assist someone who vision is impaired. Another possibility is to gather information about the guide dog program to present to the group. Look around your community for other groups that assist such people, young or old.

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

I have decided to follow
Jesus;
I have decided to follow
Jesus;
I have decided to follow
Jesus;
No turning back, no
turning back.

Though none go with me,
still I will follow;
Though none go with me,
still I will follow;
Though none go with me,
still I will follow;
No turning back, no
turning back.

My family with me will
follow Jesus;
My family with me will
follow Jesus;
My family with me will
follow Jesus;
No turning back, no
turning back.

CLOSING

Gather at the worship center. Light the Christ candle.

Sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (Color Pack 29; track 11 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022).

Invite the children to think quietly about asking for and giving help and when they might need help and give help this week. Pray:

*Loving God, as we go through the coming week, we have decided to follow
Jesus and be helping, serving hands. Amen.*

To each child, say, “Thank you for coming. See you next week.”

Show Me Mercy
based on Mark 10:46-52

As Jesus and the disciples walked to Jerusalem, they came to the village of Jericho. (*Point to Jericho on Color Pack 3.*) As they walked through Jericho, people followed Jesus, trying to get his attention to heal someone, hoping to hear him tell a story to teach them about God. As they came near the edge of Jericho, a beggar who was blind sat by the side of the road, asking for money or food. He was Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus.

When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was coming through town, he shouted, "Jesus, son of David, show me mercy! Heal me!"



The people around him said, "Quiet, Bartimaeus! Don't shout like that!"

But Bartimaeus just shouted louder. "Jesus, son of David, show me mercy! Heal me!"

When Jesus got close enough to hear Bartimaeus, he said, "Bring that man to me."

Then the people yelled, "Come on, Bartimaeus. Jesus is calling for you. Come this way!"

Bartimaeus tossed his coat aside, jumped up, and hurried to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" asked Jesus.

Immediately Bartimaeus said, "Heal me so I can see."

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has made you well."

At that moment Bartimaeus could see, and he followed Jesus on the way to Jerusalem.

Foil Sculpture

How might it feel to need healing? To ask for healing? To offer healing? To have been healed? You can express these feelings in a foil sculpture.

YOU WILL NEED

- aluminum kitchen foil
- scissors

Directions:

1. Lay a 12" x 24" inch piece of aluminum kitchen foil on the table so that it looks tall.
2. Cut slits in the foil as shown by the dotted lines in the diagram. Be careful not to cut all the way across!
3. Crumple each section of foil to form the body part listed on the diagram. Bend and shape the foil figure into any position.
4. Make a second figure by repeating Steps 1, 2, and 3.
5. Make a sculpture of Jesus with a person who is asking for healing. You can change your sculptures' shapes as you tell a story about God's restoring love.

