

# A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

## Lowered Through the Roof

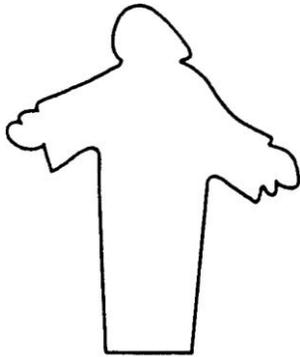
Adapted by:  
Brenda J. Stobbe

**Illustrations by:  
Jennifer Schoeneberg**

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## **LOWERED THROUGH THE ROOF .... MATERIALS**

- large wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden Jesus figure
  - wooden Pharisee figure
  - wooden crowd scene
  - 4 wooden figures of friends
  - wooden paralytic figure
  - wooden house with removable roof piece
  - tan felt mat and ropes



Jesus



Pharisee



Paralytic



Friends

## LOWERED THROUGH THE ROOF .... LUKE 5:17-26

### ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

During the few seconds of silence, gently stroke one or more of the wood pieces to center yourself and the children.

Place the house, with the open side facing the children, slightly to center right in the storytelling area.

Place the Jesus figure just inside the house, on the right and rest your hand on it for a few seconds.

Place the crowd of people blocking the front of the house, slightly to the right, so the children can still see.

Place the Pharisee figure to the left of the crowd.

Place the four friends and the paralyzed man on the felt mat behind the crowd, away from you.

Touch the paralytic and shake your head sadly.

Move the four friends near the crowd, but show that they were blocked by the people.

### WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this story.

One day when Jesus was teaching, the power of God was with him to heal.

There were crowds of people around.

Some of them, Pharisees, were leaders in the church who often became angry with Jesus.

Some men came close who were carrying their friend.

They carried him because he was paralyzed; he couldn't walk.

But when they tried to get into the house where Jesus was teaching it was too crowded and they couldn't get through.

Line the four friends up along the left side of the house. Place the paralytic on his mat just to the left of them. Remove the roof piece and place it in the story basket.

By holding the felt ropes between your thumb and index finger on each of your hands, lower the paralytic on the felt mat through the roof until he rests on the floor just to the left of Jesus.

Touch the friends as you speak.

Move the crowd slightly to the right before you speak.

Touch the Pharisee as you speak.

Touch the Jesus figure and smile.

Touch the Pharisee as you speak.

Turn Jesus to face the paralytic.

Make the paralytic stand. Roll up the mat and place in the story basket. Move the paralytic to the far left.

Touch the crowd, the friends and the Pharisee.

So they climbed up to the roof and cut a hole in it.

Then very carefully they lowered the man on his mat down through the roof so Jesus could see him.

Jesus saw how much the friends of the man believed in him.

He said to the paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven."

The leaders of the church said, "You can't do that! Only God can forgive sins!"

When Jesus heard their questions he said, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Rise and walk'?"

Then he turned to the church leaders and said, "So you will know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, I will do this. "

Then he turned to the man who couldn't walk and said, "Stand up, pick up your bed and go home. "

Then the man who couldn't walk stood up, picked up his bed and went home, praising God the whole way.

And everyone who had seen this was amazed. They praised God and said, "We have seen strange things today."

## **WONDERING QUESTIONS:**

I wonder if the friends were afraid they might drop the man who couldn't walk when they let him down through the roof?

I wonder if the paralyzed man was afraid?

I wonder how it feels to walk for the first time?

I wonder if you've ever had a time you couldn't walk?

I wonder how you forgive sins?

Very carefully return all the pieces to the basket, being certain to replace the roof piece.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to handle them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Be certain each of the children has had an opportunity to choose his or her work before dismissing them all together.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and choose what each of us will do.

## **LOWERED THROUGH THE ROOF .... TEACHER HELPS**

This story is a favorite of children because it combines the caring of friends with an understanding of resourcefulness and ingenuity. Children can understand helping a friend who can't do something. They also rejoice in the friends not being discouraged by the apparent end to their plans.

The writer of the Gospel of Luke gives us several important teachings in this passage. First, is the understanding that Jesus Christ was God's son and had the same powers as God. For us this is a very simple understanding that has grown, as we have, in our perception of who

Jesus was. But for the first century Jews, it was a blasphemy to act in God's name and with God's authority. For Jews, no one but God could have these mighty powers. Luke's whole point is that God's power rested on Jesus.

Second, is Luke's belief in Jesus' ability to appeal to and minister to all kinds of people. In the beginning of the text we are told that people had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. Although scholars believe it highly unlikely that Jesus had such a large following this early in his ministry, they do agree that Luke emphasized at every possible opportunity Jesus' appeal and ministry to Gentiles as well as Jews. (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible, edited by Charles Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, p. 680)

Third, is the emphasis on mission and witness. When the paralytic is healed he returns home glorifying God. Those who saw the healing also glorified God. Christian witness gives the glory for all that we have and all that we do to God.

The tenacity of the friends is the fourth teaching, and one that gives us all encouragement. Just because we aren't successful in coming to Jesus the first time and in the most ordinary way, doesn't mean we should give up. Perhaps our gifts lie in climbing stairs and cutting a hole in the roof, rather than in barging through a crowd. There is so much grace in God's love that we can come to God in more than one way and receive wonderful blessings for our choices. What would have happened if the friends had given up and told the paralytic that he just wouldn't be able to see Jesus that day?

Two notes about living in Jesus' day will help enhance the understanding of this story. One is about beliefs. In Jesus' day, it was believed that people were sick, handicapped or otherwise afflicted because they had sinned. Or perhaps their parents had sinned. When Jesus forgave the sins of the paralyzed man, he healed the reason, in the man's mind, for his condition. This allowed the paralytic to accept the power of Jesus' forgiveness. Jesus understood that the man would not have accepted that he could be made well until his sins had been forgiven.

Now about roofs in Jesus' day. The roofs would be covered with a kind of cement that got hard in the heat of the sun. They would often crack. If that happened the owner would spread a layer of grass on those roofs. It was also common to use a layer of bricks or tile on the roof. This is apparently what was used in the story today. All homes had steps up one side to allow entrance onto the roof. There was a low rail to protect people from falling off.

The wondering questions deal, first, with the feelings of the friends who carried the paralytic and then the feelings of the paralytic himself. We wonder if any of them were afraid. As much as the paralytic wanted to be healed, and as much as the friends wanted him to be

healed, they must have both been afraid of the movement down through the roof. So easily, the friends could have slipped or held the ropes unevenly and the man would have plunged to the floor below. Identifying fear and admitting that it is part of our lives allows children to deal with fear themselves. It also helps them to understand that everyone is afraid sometimes.

As we talk about walking for the first time the children will realize that much happened in their lives that they cannot remember. Some of them will have experienced being on crutches or in a cast, and for them the joy of walking normally again will be an experience they can bring to this wonderment. The next wondering question fits nicely here. There will be a time when each of them couldn't walk; a twisted ankle, or a skinned knee that kept them hobbling will help them to appreciate the gift that Jesus gave to the man who couldn't walk.

When we wonder how you forgive sins we will be able to talk about forgiving the sinful or unkind acts of our friends, siblings, parents or teachers. Jesus modeled for us that to forgive is to forget. Though we may not be able to put the action completely out of our minds, we will be able to keep it from being operative in our daily life.

This is a lesson of friendship, the authority of Jesus and the joy of one man who walked for the first time.

Do be aware of children in your classroom who have physically handicapping conditions. This story may prompt questions from them or about them. Some questions may be more appropriately answered "one on one" during the time of work/art response that follows the story presentation. Remember, it is ok not to have all the answers.

### **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:**

Imagine you are the man laying on the mat. What would you feel as you were lowered through the roof?

Act out the lowering. Place two sturdy tables parallel to each other. Leave enough space between them so you can take turns lowering each other to the floor on a blanket held securely on all four corners. Talk about the trust you needed to lay there and let your friends help you. Then talk about the responsibility of holding onto the blanket and not dropping a friend.

Jesus understood that people in his day believed someone was handicapped because they had sinned. We don't believe that and neither did he. If God is a loving God why do bad things happen?

What gifts do people with handicapping conditions bring to us?