

Trusting Jesus

The Gentle Touch

Upper Primary

The first in a series of four

Aim:

To learn about Jesus and how the sense of touch brought comfort to those He healed.

Scripture:

Mark 5:21-43

Memory verse:

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped.
Psalm 28:7

Thought for the teacher:

We see, in this lesson, Jesus reaching out to the outcast and touching the lives of ordinary people.

We want the children to know that Jesus is reaching out His love to 'touch' *each* child in your class today.

Bible focus

My son enjoys 'spot the difference' puzzles - two pictures that appear to be identical, but contain a few small differences. Today's passage is, in one sense, the reverse of 'spot the difference'. Two stories that seem quite different, but do, in fact, contain some similarities. Let's spot some similarities!

Spot the similarities

The two stories are interwoven into a single passage; the incident with the sick woman sandwiched between the story of Jairus and his daughter. The first common element is that both stories involve someone with little status and few rights (women and children in those times had very limited rights under Jewish law). Secondly, both would have been considered 'unclean'. The girl, because she was dead (Numbers 19:11), the woman, because she was bleeding (Leviticus 15:19-27). Under Jewish law, even accidentally touching someone who was 'unclean' made that person 'unclean' too. This brings us to the third similarity: in both instances, Jesus sets aside this constraint of the Jewish Law for a more important purpose. Here is a foreshadowing of what Jesus would later do on the cross. Although sinless, He would allow Himself to be so stained by sin that even the Father would have to turn away from Him: 'My God, my God, why have You deserted me?' (Matthew 27:46). Yet, just as by 'defiling' Himself Jesus healed the woman and raised the young girl back to life. By 'defiling' Himself on the cross, He cleanses us and gives us new life. The fourth similarity is that Jesus treats both the woman and the girl with tenderness, using terms of endearment to address them (vs 34, 41).

Authority and power

Some people demand respect, loudly and insistently; others command it without a word, simply by being who they are. Jesus belonged to the latter category. He didn't go around barking commands or flaunting His powers. On the contrary, He often opted to work in secret, yet His very presence and personality radiated power and authority.

Jairus was no ordinary citizen. He was a 'ruler of the synagogue' an important 'church official'! Falling down on your knees was something you did before God or your king; for a man like Jairus to fall on his knees in this

manner tells us that Jairus recognized Jesus' authority. As someone who was ritually unclean, the woman had no right to even be present in such a crowd, let alone touch Jesus. Her daring testifies to a recognition of Jesus' power. Do you recognize the presence and power of God as you walk through your day, your home, your work place, or your neighbourhood?

Health and wholeness

The woman's problem was not purely physical, it was also religious. Her ceremonial uncleanness prevented her from entering into the full experience of worship. She also faced heartbreaking social problems. She could not touch (or be touched by) another human being without 'contaminating' that person. Marriage would have been impossible; friendship fraught with difficulties; she could never hold a child in her arms or hug someone in trouble. Loneliness was probably her greatest problem.

As the woman touched Jesus, 'she knew she was well' (v. 29). But Jesus wanted to do more than just heal her body; He wanted her to be a whole person. After this close encounter with Jesus, the woman experiences total healing (v. 34). We sometimes associate healing with purely physical problems, but, as modern medicine teaches (and as God has known all along!), mental, emotional, spiritual and physical problems are often interlinked. It is not simply good health that God wants for us, but wholeness.

Tanya Ferdinandusz

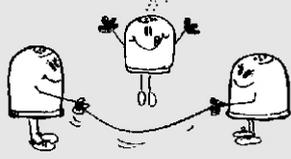


Prayer

Lord Jesus, touch me today and make me whole. Holy Spirit, empower me to become a channel of Your healing touch to the people You may bring into my life.

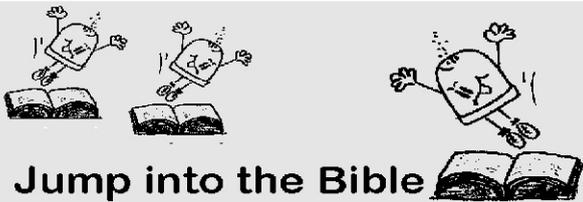
Amen.

Jumpstart



-  Choose someone to be 'chief monkey'. Explain that the other players must try to touch the chief in order to be allowed to join the troop of monkeys.
- All the others wear blindfolds and walk around the room trying to find the monkey chief.
 - When a blindfolded player touches someone, they say, 'I'm looking for the monkey chief.' The person touched must reply either, 'You've found them!' or 'Not here!' Once a player has found the monkey chief, they must hold on to them by the hand to start to form a chain of people.
 - If a blindfolded player touches anyone in the chain, they reply, 'You've found them!' and the player adds themselves to the end of the chain.
 - The game ends when everyone joins the chain.

Explain that this game demonstrates how touching others increases a sense of 'belonging'. Comment that in life it is not always easy to move from being an 'outsider' of a group to being fully accepted by others. This was something that had seemed impossible for one person in today's Bible passage, but everything was changed by a touch.



Jump into the Bible

 Ask for volunteers to read Mark 5:21-43. Spend a few moments talking about the importance of being 'clean' and 'unclean' in Bible times. Mention that even touching someone 'unclean' would make that person 'unclean' too. (*Any person experiencing bleeding, for example women during times of menstruation, was considered unclean as were bodies of the dead. Both the woman and the girl would fall into this category.*) Also talk a little about the status of women and children in Jewish society.

Say that, although the two stories in today's passage may seem quite different, in fact, they contain some similarities. Give out pens and paper and ask the young people to work in small groups to spot some of these similarities, e.g. both of the people healed were female; the girl was twelve years old and the woman had suffered for twelve years; a touch healed in both cases; both the woman and the girl would be

considered unclean; Jesus, Himself, would have become 'unclean' as He touched them. Faith and determination were demonstrated in both stories.

Come together and discuss the groups' findings. Do the young people think that Jesus really knew who had touched Him but wanted the woman to come forward herself? Ask them why they think Jesus put the woman in the position of having to 'own up'. Note that Jesus took the opportunity to commend her for her faith. Look at Jesus' words to Jairus (v.36) and notice that He encourages Jairus' faith (v. 34). Encourage them that no situation is hopeless when we invite Jesus to be in it with us!

Teach the memory verse: The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. Psalm 28:7

Talk about how Jairus and the sick lady trusted in Jesus and were helped. How can we trust Him to be our strength and shield too?

 What kind of feelings do they think Jairus might have had when Jesus was delayed by the woman? How do they think he may have felt when, after being told his daughter was dead, Jesus said, 'Don't worry. Just have faith!'?

Life can be a series of ups and downs but God is always in control. It's not always easy to trust in God when things appear to be going wrong, or there's an impossible situation confronting us. What have we learned about trusting in God from the story today?

The better we know God, the more we can trust Him just as we would trust a good friend. How can we learn to trust in God more? Discuss.

Extra time:

Tell the class they are to be 'Bible News' reporters. Using their Bibles to remind them of the important points, they must describe the scene, the feelings of people involved and the miracle, itself.

Talk about the way Jesus touched people's lives. You could summarize with the young people writing a short text message (*as they would on a mobile phone*) about this Jesus - the miracle healer. What would they say about Him?



Jump into Life



- ☺ Both the woman and the girl were considered 'unclean' but Jesus, by His touch, made them clean again, even though this made Him 'unclean' in the eyes of the crowd. Explain that on the cross, Jesus became 'unclean', not with His own sin, but ours. And because of that, we can be 'clean'. We get a new start.

Distribute sheets of white paper and red felt-tip pens and ask the group to imagine that the paper is their new life in Jesus. Discuss how we 'spoil' or 'dirty' the paper. Have young people draw red dots to represent things that we do wrong, our sin.

Tip: Ensure that the young people realize that, in God's eyes, all our sin is the same.



Is the paper still clean? How can it be made clean? Say that they can try erasing or Tip-Exing, but it's not really effective because it leaves telltale marks. Let them try it out themselves!

Point out that what they really need is a fresh clean sheet of paper. Give them a clean sheet. Then say that this is what Jesus does each time we ask for forgiveness; He completely takes away any trace of our sin and gives us a new start. You may want to illustrate this using the following Bible references, Psalm 103:11-14, Isaiah 1:18, Micah 7:18,19.

Close with an appropriate song if desired.

Some of the group may not have asked Jesus into their life. Invite anyone who wants to know more to talk with the leader after the session.

Extra time:

If Jesus touches the 'unclean', how should we react to those who are shunned by society? For example, those people who are not popular in school? It's not easy to follow Jesus, and it's not easy to be friends with people we'd rather not speak to! What problems might that give us? And what good things might happen?

Ask them to think of someone at school who isn't very popular. Suggest they start praying for that person. Maybe they could think of one or two ways to include them this week.

(There may be young people in the group who are unpopular at school. Encourage them to share their difficulties but be aware that they may not want to speak about it.)



Words of Life

Memory Verse:

Psalm 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped.

Explain to the class that we can communicate by touching as well as through words. Think of ways we communicate by touch: handshake, a hug, a pat on the back, high five, pat the dog, etc.

Have the class think of ways to act out the verse using touch. Remind them that in our lesson Jesus touched the lives of a sick woman and a young girl.

Resource pages:

- 6A - Touching lives
- 6B - Rap; Being unpopular; memory verse.



You will need:

- Jumpstart: Blindfold
- Jump into the Bible: Bibles, pens, paper
- Jump into Life: White paper, red pens, rubber
- Activity option: Scissors, scrap paper, pens

Song suggestions:

- ♪ My God is so big
- ♪ Reach out and touch the Lord
- ♪ Praise God, Alleluia
- ♪ I believe in Jesus

Activity option:

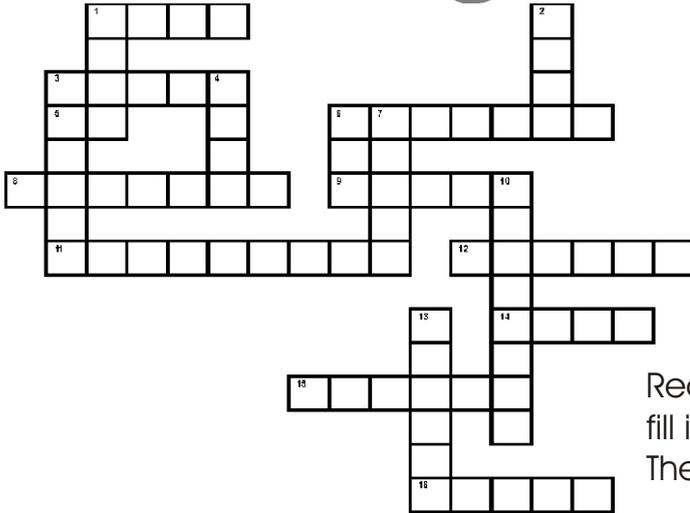
Talk about the different ways we need healing, explaining that everyone, even people who are healthy, can be helped by Jesus. It is good to pray that God will touch our lives.

Ask the children to draw round their hand and cut it out. Punch holes in one side. They should then write a prayer. It could be for someone they know who is unwell or unhappy.

You may wish to discuss how God answers the prayers of people who ask for healing. Sometimes, someone terminally ill who has been prayed for by lots of people may recover completely, baffling doctors and medical science. Why doesn't this always happen?

The prayers could then be strung together into a 'hand' book and used during prayer time.

touching lives..



Read the passage in Mark 5: 21-24 and fill in the blanks. Then complete the puzzle.

When _____ (3A) had again _____ (8A) over by boat to the other _____ (4D) of the lake, a _____ (7D) _____ (9A) gathered around Him while He was by the _____ (2D). Then one of the _____ (11A) _____ (12A), named _____ (3D) came there. Seeing Jesus, he _____ (1A) _____ (4A) His _____ (1D) and _____ (6A) earnestly with Him. My little _____ (10D) is _____ (16A). _____ (15A) come and put your _____ (14A) on her so that she will be _____ (13D) and live. So Jesus went with him.

Jesus was often asked if He would come and heal someone who was sick. Jairus was an important Jewish leader and he asked Jesus to come and help his dying daughter.

Fill in the missing letters to find out what he asked Jesus to do.

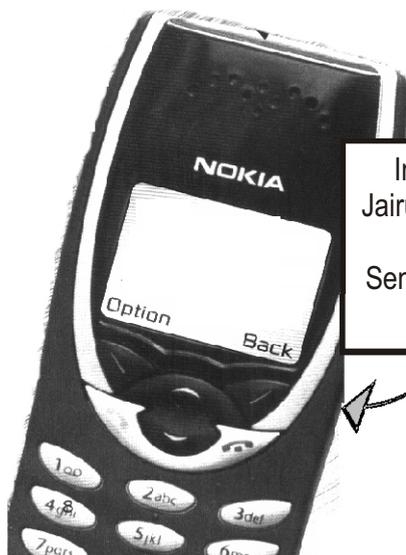
Daugh_er
Cr_wd
Jes_s
Pla_e
Fat_er

S_e
W_ll
Jai_us

Before Jesus reached the house, He heard news that the girl had died. Was He too late?

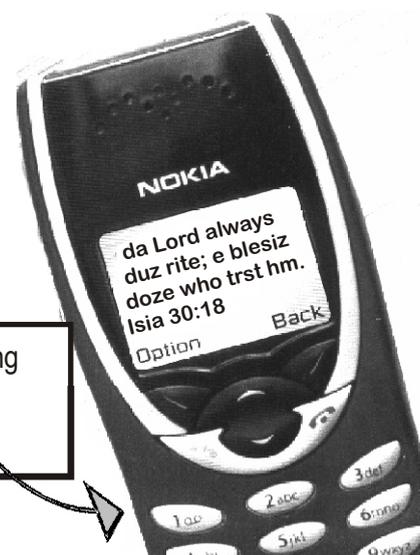
(Read Mark 5:42 to find out.)

Use each of these letters:
t, h, e, o, u, h, r, c.



Imagine that you live next door to Jairus' daughter and you want to share the news that she didn't die. Send a short text message to a friend.

Your friend replies by sending back a verse from the Bible. Can you read it?



There's this
kid



There's this kid at school,
He's a fool, Not cool,
Total waster, bit of a twit,
The kind of kid who gets hit
And no one wants to be his friend.
I saw him crying,
He's so wet, and yet,
Felt sorry for him.
Said to my friend,
'Let's wait, and walk home with the kid...
That bully is hid
Round the corner...
Going to get him if he's on his own,
Alone.'
He said, 'Hey! No way!
Make friends with someone no one likes?
Not wise... Not cool...
You'll make enemies in school.'
'OK,' I said.
But you know what?
It's not OK.

One day a sick woman decided that she would get to Jesus and touch the hem of His cloak, no matter what it took! Even though she was a social outcast!

Read Mark 5:24-34 to find out how Jesus treated her.

How do you treat those who are different and unpopular?

What would you like to do differently from now on?

Do you believe in Jesus?

Steps of faith:

1. **Belief...** in fact, supported by evidence. *'I believe that Jesus' acts prove He is the Messiah.'*
2. **Trust...** and confidence in the 'object' of faith. *'I trust Him to help me as He helped the people in the Bible.'*
3. **Action...** in 'doing what is expected of me. *'I will obey Him in the daily things because I know I can trust Him.'*

Th_ L_rd _s
my str_ngth
nd my sh _ld;
my h_ _rt tr_sts
_n H_m, _nd _
_m h_lp_d.

Psalm 28:7

Look up the reference in the Bible and fill in the missing vowels to complete the verse.