READY TO USE ALL-AGE SERVICE

# Jesus heals

MEETING AIM

To see that Jesus heals the paralysed man, but only after fixing his eternal problem.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 5:17-26

BACKGROUND

This service is designed to be used with a congregation in a church building. However, with some adaptation, you should be able to use it on Zoom or other video conferencing software.

This story comes close to the start of Luke’s account of Jesus’ ministry. Those watching in the crowd must have been astonished by what went on; the Pharisees were outraged. Not only did Jesus heal the man who could not walk, he forgave his sins! Sometimes we can focus on the physical healing and miss the eternal focus on what Jesus does for the man, as well as what this means about who Jesus is. Try to help people of all ages start to engage with this idea – Jesus can forgive our sins!

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## WELCOME – 5 mins

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week. Try to have a mix of ages and backgrounds on your welcome team.

## OPENING ACTIVITIES – 10 mins

**OPTION ONE: First-world problems**

**You will need:** captioned photos printed onto card (see below, enough for one per person); noticeboard; pens; drawing pins

Do an internet search for captioned photos of devastated-looking people with ‘first -world problems’, for example:

“I wanted to listen to Spotify, but I didn’t charge my ear buds.”

“I tried to spread cold butter on my toast and the bread ripped.”

“My diamond earrings keep scratching my iPhone.”

Print these onto cards and display them on a board. In groups, ask everyone to take one and talk about what an actual problem in the world today might be, writing it on the back of the card. Pin the cards back to the board as an act of giving these problems to God.

**OPTION TWO: Jump the gap**

**You will need:** chalk or masking tape; two signs – ‘GOD’ and ‘PEOPLE’

Mark two lines on the floor, more than jumping distance apart. Behind one line, tape the word GOD and behind the other, tape the word PEOPLE. Ask people to try to jump the gap – they shouldn’t be able to. If you’ve a small congregation, everyone can have a go; if you’re a larger church, you can do this as an illustration from the front. Talk about the fact that, left to our own devices, all of us would end up separated from God because we are not perfect. Jesus comes to give us his perfect so that we can get across the gap. Think quietly about those people that we know who don’t yet know Jesus and are separated from God. Pray that they would meet Jesus.

## BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** roof tile; karaoke track of ‘Happy’ by Pharrell Williams and the means to play it; someone to lead the singing

Show the roof tile as a prop and ask if anyone can guess what today’s story is about. Have someone read Luke 5:17-26 in an easy-to-read version. This story is a familiar one, so invite the congregation to join with you in singing the story! Sing this song together, perhaps with some dance moves or actions to go along with the words. Display the following lyrics on your screen:

Verse 1:

It might seem crazy what I’m about to say,

Jesus is here, I could get a break!

So I’m lowered through the roof and into space

And then he’s there, and he cares for me, by the way

Chorus:

Because I’m happy!

Clap along if you were healed in a room without a roof.

Because I’m happy!

Clap along if you feel like Jesus is the truth.

Because I’m happy!

Clap along if you know what forgiven means to you.

Because I’m happy!

Clap along if you feel like that’s what you wanna do.

Verse 2:

Here come the priests talking this and that. (Yeah!)

Well, dissing Jesus Christ, sayin’ he is bad. (Yeah!)

Well, I am gonna tell you I am just fine. (Yeah!)

No offence to you, don’t waste your time –

Here’s why!

Chorus

Bridge:

(Happy!) Bring me down,

Can’t nothing bring me down.

My faith is too high!

Bring me down,

Can’t nothing bring me down.

I said (let me tell you now)…

Repeat bridge

Chorus (x2)

Bridge

Chorus (x2)

## SMALL GROUPS – 10 mins

**You will need:** copies of the questions below; Bibles

Encourage people to discuss these questions in smaller groups. Give each group a copy of these questions:

* Which part of the story did you like the most?
* Why did Jesus forgive the man before he healed him?
* What kinds of things do we need Jesus to forgive us for?
* Is there anyone who you would like to lower through the roof to be healed by Jesus?
* Why were the Pharisees so cross about the whole thing?
* If you were going to put yourself into the story, who would you be? The man, the man’s friend, someone in the crowd, a Pharisee?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if they need to.

## REVIEW – 5 mins

**You will need:** roving mic (if needed)

Get some feedback on the questions from ‘Small groups’, using a microphone to hear people’s contributions if your meeting space is large.

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES – 10 mins

Set these three activities up in different parts of your meeting space or in different breakout rooms.

**OPTION ONE: Praying for healing**

**You will need:** large cardboard box; art materials; scissors; slips of paper; pens

Make a house out of the cardboard box – it can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. Cut a hole into the flat roof. Place the house in the centre of the group. Give everyone some small slips of paper, no bigger than business cards. Ask people to draw a person on one side and then think about those who need God to heal them – it might be physical, mental or emotional. Invite them to write their name on the back of the slip. They can come and post their people through the roof of the house as they give them to God for healing.

**OPTION TWO: Reflection**

**You will need:** plastic building bricks (such as Lego)

Give everyone two bricks. Say that by forgiving the man, Jesus was making sure that he wouldn’t be separated from God who loved him. When we choose to follow Jesus, we know that we’ll never be separated from him, but sometimes we can feel far away from him when we do wrong things. Ask everyone to pull their bricks apart and think of times this week when they have felt far from God. Say together: “Thank you, God, that you don’t want us to be separate and alone.” Then put the bricks back together.

Take the bricks apart and ask everyone to think about people they know who don’t know Jesus and are separated from God. Say together: “Thank you, God, that you don’t want us to be separate and alone.”Put bricks back together.

Take the bricks apart and ask everyone to think of a person they are separated from because they have fallen out (or other people they know who are separated from each other because of relationship breakdown). Say that God can restore friendships and bring us back together when we are able to forgive one another. Say together: “Thank you, God, that you don’t want us to be separate and alone.”Put bricks back together.

Encourage people to take their bricks away with them and continue to use them to pray in this way during the week.

**OPTION THREE: Discussion**

**You will need:** volunteers to facilitate discussion; paper and pens

Gather people together in small groups, each one with a facilitator, and challenge them to think about the impact that what they have discovered today will have.

## CLOSING – 5 mins

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

is a mum to teenagers, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting young people and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.