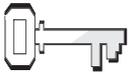


Healing at the Pool of Bethesda



References

John 5:1-15; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 201–204



Memory Verse

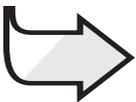
“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that God sees their needs.

Feel loved and cared for by God’s grace.
Respond by thanking Him for giving His love freely.



The Message

Jesus sees our needs and helps us.

Monthly Theme

God’s love is a gift; we don’t earn or buy it.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus is in Jerusalem and is walking alone near a pool called Bethesda. A man, crippled for 38 years, lies on a mat near the pool. He believes that he can be healed if he can be first into the water when it stirs. But because he is crippled, he is never the first. Jesus has pity on him and asks him if he wants to be healed. The discouraged man tells Jesus that he has no one to help him into the pool. Jesus tells him to get up, pick up his mat, and walk. The man’s hope is kindled. In faith, he obeys and is healed.

This is a lesson about grace.

Jesus sees a need, has compassion, and heals the crippled man. Today, He sees our needs, has pity on us, and helps us. His wonderful grace heals our hearts and minds and bodies. We don’t deserve it; we can’t earn it or buy it; but God showers us with His love anyway.

Teacher Enrichment

“At certain seasons the waters of this pool were agitated, and it was commonly believed that this was the result of supernatural power, and that whoever first after the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters, would be healed of whatever disease he had” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 201).

“Important textual evidence may be cited . . . for omitting the words ‘waiting for the moving of the water,’ and the whole of [verse] 4. Thus the story of an angel’s bestowing supernatural healing powers upon the water of the pool appears not to have been part of the original gospel text, but was probably added in an attempt to explain [verse] 7. . . . This passage evidently preserves what was a popular opinion regarding the waters of the pool (see DA 201).

“The rippling of the water was real (DA 202), but there is evidence implicit in the account . . . that this popular belief had no further basis in fact. . . .

“Jesus apparently made no attempt to refute the superstition regarding the pool, nor did He question the causes of the man’s disease. Rather, by a positive approach He enjoined the man to

demonstrate his faith” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 948, 949).

“His disease was in a great degree the result of his own sin. . . . Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God’s mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 202).

“Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ But the man’s faith takes hold upon that word” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 202, 203).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5. Add a blue sheet (from Lesson 6) to represent the pool.

Program Overview

Lesson Section

Minutes

Activities

Materials Needed

Welcome

ongoing

Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled

none

1

Readiness Options

up to 10

A. *Diagnose the Disease*
B. *Crutch Walk*

none
crutches or canes or “walking” sticks

Any Time

Prayer and Praise*

up to 10

Fellowship
Songbook
Mission
Offering
Prayer

none
Sing for Joy
Children’s Mission
gift box
none

2

Bible Lesson

up to 20

Experiencing the Story
Memory Verse

Bible Study

blue sheet
adhesive bandages or paper and scissors, marker
Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

up to 15

Scenarios

none

4

Sharing the Lesson

up to 15

Bedroll or Mat

light-colored craft foam or cloth; scissors; markers; string, ribbon or yarn

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Diagnose the Disease

In advance, think of some diseases that are common in your area. Tell the children they are going to pretend they are doctors and need to diagnose their patient’s signs and symptoms. For example, say: **Your first patient has red spots that itch a lot.**

What disease do you think he has? Allow the children to guess. (chickenpox) Repeat with different diseases.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Was it easy or hard to know what disease I was describing? Which disease have you or someone in your family had? Our Bible story today is about a man who had been crippled for 38 years. Our story tells us what Jesus did for him.**

Jesus is always ready to help people. He wants to save all of us. The Bible says: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NIV). Jesus did more than help that man; He saved him. Grace means that Jesus loves us so much that He died in our place and will save us if we will accept Him as our Saviour. Our message tells us that:



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

Say that with me.

B. Crutch Walk

Have the children do a relay race or obstacle course while using the crutches or canes, or “walking” sticks.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Was it easy or hard to use the crutches or cane as you walked? Do you know someone who has had to use crutches, or uses a cane? How fast do they get around? Our Bible story today is about a crippled man who couldn’t walk at all. We will learn how Jesus helped him.**

Jesus did more than help the man; He saved him. The Bible says: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NIV). Grace means that Jesus loves us so much that He died in our place, and He will save us if we accept Him as our Saviour.

You Need:

- crutches or canes or “walking” sticks

Today's message tells us that:



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

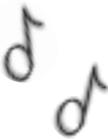
Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"Wide, Wide as the Ocean" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 32)

"Wonderful, Wonderful" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 39)

"He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 40)

"O, How I Love Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 114)

"I'm So Happy" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 65)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize that Jesus' grace saves us.



Offering

Continue to use the gift box to collect the offering. Say: **Our offerings will go to help others know about God's grace and healing.**

You Need:

- gift box



Prayer

Ask the children to get in a circle, hold hands, and close their eyes. Start the prayer by saying one thing you are thankful God has done for you (saved me, forgives my sins, loves me, cares for me, etc.). The person next to you says one thing, and so on around the circle. If someone doesn't want to speak, they squeeze the hand of the person next to them and that person will continue the prayer.

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- blue sheet (see Room Decorations)

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Jesus, crippled man, two children to shake sheet to represent stirring of water; all other children can be other sick people lying or sitting around the “pool”

Setting the scene:

Have all but “Jesus” sit or lie beside the blue sheet.

Read or tell the story.

Jesus has come to Jerusalem to attend a feast. As He walks by Himself on a Sabbath morning, He is deep in thought. Soon He finds Himself near a place called the Pool of Bethesda. There are five beautiful covered porches around the pool. This is the kind of place that should be peaceful and be decorated with lush green plants and colorful flowers. Instead, it is a place of moaning and smells of sickness. All around the pool, lying in all angles and sitting hunched over are a great number of sick people.

Jesus stops. As He looks around, He sees blind, deaf, and crippled people. He sees people with stomach problems, skin diseases—all kinds of sickness. There are old people and children, and people of all ages in between.

All are here hoping for a miracle. But this is a place of little hope. Mostly it is a place of disappointment. The people are waiting for the water in the pool to move. Some believe it will be stirred by an angel. And whoever is first in the water when it stirs will be healed. Jesus knows that this is not so. But the people wait and watch. When the water does move, the eager people, desperate for healing,

rush forward and trample those in front of them who are smaller or weaker.

Instead of a place of healing, this is a place of death.

As Jesus looks over these crowds of sick people, He has compassion on them. He wants to heal all of them! He is tempted to do just that, but it is Sabbath. He knows if He heals them all today, it would cause a great commotion among the Jewish leaders. They are looking for reasons to harm Him. They would kill Him if they could.

Jesus knows each person’s name and their sickness, but He especially notices one man who has been crippled for 38 years. Jesus knows that this man is crippled mainly because of sin in his life. Jesus also knows that this man is sad because he has no one to help him reach the water. He is lonely and discouraged, and feels that he is shut out of God’s mercy.

Jesus quietly kneels beside him. He bends over to see his face and gently asks, “Do you want to be healed?”

Hope jumps in the man’s heart. Of course he wants to be healed! Doesn’t everyone here? He doesn’t know who Jesus is. He doesn’t know Jesus can heal him in an instant. The man thinks that his only hope of being healed is to get into that water. So he tells Jesus, “Sir, I don’t have anyone to help me get into the pool. Whenever I try, someone always gets in before me.”

Jesus doesn’t ask the man to believe in Him, or even to know who He is. Even though the man doesn’t feel worthy of God’s love, Jesus wants to pour His grace out on this man. So Jesus says, “Get up! Pick up your bed and walk.”

The man doesn’t hesitate. He obeys immediately. He wants to be made well. Nerves and muscles that hadn’t been use-

ful for years spring to life! The man jumps up! He rolls up his rug and blanket. Then he looks around for the One who just healed him. But Jesus has slipped away into the crowd.

Later, the man and Jesus meet in the temple. The man is overjoyed to know Him and tells people all around the good news. Jesus has healed him!

That day Jesus healed a man's body. And Jesus' healing and loving grace brought the man into harmony with God. Jesus says to us with such love and pity, "Will you be healed?" He wants us to be healthy in body and spirit too. His grace is a gift of love for all of us.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What was the name of the pool?

How long had the crippled man been unable to walk?

Why didn't Jesus heal all the people at the pool?

How do you think the man felt when Jesus talked to him? How do you think he felt when Jesus told him to get up? How did the man show faith in Jesus?

Our lesson says the man was brought into harmony with God. What does that mean?

Does Jesus heal people today? How do you know?

Do you want Jesus to "heal" you from your sins? Do you have faith to know that He will do that for you, that He wants you to live with Him forever?

Let's say today's message:



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

Memory Verse

In advance, write the memory verse on adhesive bandages, one word on

each, or cut out paper in the shape of adhesive bandages. Have the children arrange them on a table or the floor in the correct order and then all say it together. Repeat several times. The memory verse is: **"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).**

Be sure the children understand the meaning of the word *grace*.

Bible Study

Say: **Let's find out what happened after Jesus healed the crippled man. Find John 5:8-15.** Ask volunteers to read the text. Adults assist as needed.

Debriefing

On what day did Jesus heal the man? (Sabbath) The Pharisees had made up many rules for keeping Sabbath. These were not God's rules. What rule of theirs did they say the man was breaking? (He was carrying a burden on the Sabbath.) What did the Jewish leaders want to do to Jesus? Why?

Now let's look at verses 17-24. What do these verses tell us about Jesus? (He is the Son of God; He has the same power God has; He has the authority to heal; He will do greater things than heal the crippled man; etc.)

Let's read verse 24 again. What promise does Jesus make? (Whoever hears Jesus' words and believes the God who sent Him has eternal life.) Is that promise for us today? (Yes!) When we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, we trust Him to help us and to save us so we may live with Him forever when He comes again. Let's say our message together:



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

You Need:

- 18 adhesive bandages or paper and scissors
- marker

You Need:

- Bibles

Applying the Lesson

Scenarios

Ask the children to answer your question at the end of each scenario, or form four groups and have each discuss one scenario and then report to the class.

1. Tara has a bad sore throat and fever. She aches all over. Her mother takes her to the doctor. The doctor examines her and says she has strep throat. So the doctor gives her antibiotics to make her well. How has God shown Tara His grace? (By giving her a mom who cares, medical care, antibiotics, etc.)

2. Justin's dad died. Justin is very sad and misses doing things with his dad. Justin's Uncle Bill spends time with Justin, playing catch, and talking with him. Even though Justin still misses his dad, Uncle Bill's love has helped him. How has God shown Justin His grace? (By giving him an uncle who cares and can spend time with him.)

3. Jamal was born with Down syndrome. This means he has difficulty learning and looks a little different. Jamal's mom spends a lot of time with him, has found a good, special school for him, and gives him a lot of love. Jamal's older sisters spend time playing with him. Jamal's dad spends time wrestling with him and teaching him about Jesus. Jamal is very affectionate and loves his family. How has God shown Jamal His grace? (By giving him a family who love him, providing a school for him, helping his family teach him

about Jesus, helping him to be thankful for his family and express love to them, etc.)

4. Isabella is in a store looking at stuffed animals. She really wants one but has no money, so she hides one under her coat and takes it home. Later, her mother sees it and asks where she got it. Isabella knows she has done wrong and tells the truth. Her dad talks to her and reminds her that Jesus will always forgive our sins if we ask. She prays and asks Jesus to forgive her. Then she and her parents return the toy to the store. She is embarrassed, but feels much better afterward. She decides she will never steal again. How has God shown her His grace? (By forgiving her, giving her His peace, giving her loving parents, helping her learn a lesson she can use later in life, etc.)

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **How does Jesus heal our bodies? How does He heal our minds? How does He heal our hearts?**

What does "Jesus sees our needs and helps us" really mean? Our memory verse tells us the answer. Let's say it again.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).

Let's say our message again:



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

Sharing the Lesson

Bedroll or Mat

In advance, cut the foam or cloth into strips about 4 x 6 inches (10 x 15 cm) in size. Cut pieces of string, ribbon, or yarn about 7 inches (18 cm) long.

Have the children write the memory verse or message on the foam or cloth with a marker. Then have them roll it up like the mat or bedroll the crippled man carried and tie it with a piece of string, ribbon, or yarn. The memory verse is:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).

Debriefing

Say: **Think of someone with whom you might share the mat or bedroll you just made. Sometime this week take it to them and have them unroll it and read it. Tell them about the faith of the crippled man and how Jesus healed him. Remind them that because Jesus loves us, He will save everyone who has faith in Him. And remember to share our message with them:**



JESUS SEES OUR NEEDS AND HELPS US.

Closing

In a short prayer, thank God for showering us with His grace and love. Ask Him to help the children see God’s grace in their lives this week.

You Need:

- light-colored craft foam or cloth
- scissors
- markers
- string, ribbon, or yarn

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

References

John 5:1-15; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 201–204

Memory Verse

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).

The Message

Jesus sees our needs and helps us.

Have you ever been the last to finish a race, or the last one to learn to tie your shoes, or the last to finish your work at school? The man in our story knew what it was to be the last one in the pool.

Jesus has come to Jerusalem to attend a feast. As He walks alone on a Sabbath morning, He is deep in thought. Soon He finds Himself near a pool, the Pool of Bethesda. Five beautiful covered porches surround the pool. This is the kind of place that should be peaceful. It should be surrounded with lush green plants and colorful flowers. But it is a place of sickness and misery.

All around the pool, people are struggling. Sick people lie in all angles or sit hunched over. So many people! Jesus stops. He looks around. He sees the blind, the deaf, the crippled. He sees some with stomach problems and skin diseases. Some suffer from mental health problems. His heart goes out to the elderly, the children, and those of all ages in between.



All are here hoping for a miracle. But this is a place of little hope. Mostly it is a place of disappointment. The people wait for the water in the pool to move. Many believe it will be stirred by an angel. And whoever is first in the water afterward will be healed. Jesus knows that isn't true. It is a false hope, but the people wait and watch. And when ripples appear, the eager people rush forward. Desperate for healing, they trample the smaller or weaker. Instead of a place of healing, this is a place of death.

Jesus looks over this crowd of sick people, and He has compassion on them. He wants to heal all of them! He is tempted to do just that, but it is Sabbath. He knows what would happen if He healed them today. The Jewish leaders would be very angry. They would even try to kill Him. But His time has not come. His work on earth is not yet finished.

Jesus knows each person's name and their sickness. He especially notices one man who has been crippled for 38 years. He knows that sin has caused his illness. Jesus also knows that the man is sad. He is lonely, and feels that he is not worthy of God's mercy. Quietly, Jesus kneels beside him and bends over to see his face. Tenderly, He asks, "Do you want to be healed?"

Hope jumps in the man's heart. Of course he wants to be healed! Doesn't everyone here? He doesn't know who Jesus is. He doesn't know that Jesus can heal him. He believes his only hope is to get into that water. So he tells Jesus, "Sir, I don't have anyone to help me. I can't get into the pool fast enough. When I try, someone always gets in before me."

Jesus doesn't ask the man to believe in Him. He doesn't even tell the man who He is. He knows the man doesn't feel worthy of God's love. But Jesus wants to pour His grace out on this man. So He says to the man, "Get up! Pick up your bed and walk."

The man doesn't hesitate. He obeys. He wants to be made well. Nerves and muscles that haven't been useful for years are brought to life! The man jumps up! He rolls up his rug and blanket. Then he looks around for the One who just healed him. But Jesus has slipped away into the crowd.

Later, Jesus meets the man in the temple. The man is overjoyed. And he tells everyone he meets the good news about Jesus.

That day Jesus healed a man's body. Jesus' healing grace also brought him back to God. With love, Jesus says to us, "Will you be healed?" He wants us to be healthy in body and spirit. He wants to pour out His grace on us too. Will you accept Him today and let Him be your Saviour too?

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go with your family to a place where you can enjoy flowing water or a fountain. What do you see around the water? Find a quiet place and read your lesson story together.
- Study your memory verse together. Ask: What does it mean to be "saved by grace"? (See John 3:16; 1 John 1:9.) Sing "Amazing Grace" together; then thank God for His wonderful grace in your life.

Sunday

- Share the bedroll you made in Sabbath School with someone today. Tell them about Jesus and the crippled man. (Or make a bedroll by cutting a strip of cloth or paper to represent a blanket. Write the memory verse and message on it. Roll it up and tie it with a ribbon, string, or yarn.)
- Draw a picture of the Pool of Bethesda. Write your memory verse on the water part. Use this to teach the verse to your family.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss John 5:1-9. Why couldn't the man get into the water before others? Imagine that you are that man. What would it be like to have no friend to help you? Name some friends you can count on when you need help.
- Think of someone you know who needs a friend. How can you be their friend today? Ask Jesus to help you.

Tuesday

- For worship today, read John 5:1-9 again. What did many people believe about the water in the pool? Was this true?* How was this man healed? (Hint: See your memory verse.) Now read John

5:10-16. Why didn't the man know who had healed him? How can sin make people sick?

- Sing praise songs such as "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 40). Then thank Jesus for His healing power. Ask Him to help you to have faith in Him too.

Wednesday

- With your family, read John 5:1-9 again. How long had the crippled man been sick? Talk about sickness in your family. Who has been sick for a long time? What happened to them? What is the longest time you've been sick? Who took care of you? Thank the people who take care of you.
- Try walking around your house with crutches or a cane. How would these help people who use them all the time? Count while you do as many jumping jacks as you can. Thank God for your health.

Thursday

- Read and discuss John 5:10-16 with your family today. Ask: What law had the man been accused of breaking? Who made this law? Now read Exodus 20:8-11. What does God's law say about keeping the Sabbath? Read Matthew 12:9-13. What did Jesus say about doing good on the Sabbath?

Friday

- For worship tonight, read from *The Desire of Ages*, pages 201-203 (chapter 21, paragraphs 1-7). Then act out the lesson story.
- Ask to use a cup and 18 raisins or nuts. Pretend the raisins or nuts are pills. Drop one "pill" into the cup for each word as you say the memory verse. Repeat. Then eat the "pills."
- Sing a "thank-You" song before prayer.

*It was not true. For more on this see *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 948.