

Growing in God's Love

A Story Bible Curriculum

Healings and Miracles



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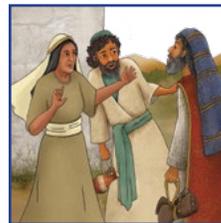
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The free At-Home Kit Guide provides instructions and suggestions for at-home faith formation. Download it at www.pcusastore.com/StoryBibleCurriculum or www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/StoryBibleCurriculum. Click on the unit title, and then click on the download button found at the bottom of the product page for this unit.

© 2020 Westminster John Knox Press

First edition
Published by Westminster John Knox Press
Louisville, Kentucky

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Printed in the United States of America

Connecting

Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl

Luke 8:40-56

Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible, p. 252

✦ **Goal:** To learn about hope.

Connecting with the Biblical Text

This story from Luke about the healing of two women is also told in Mark 5:2–43. The form is a story within a story. It begins with Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, asking Jesus to come to his home because his daughter is dying. Then Luke seemingly interrupts the action and moves to the story of the woman with a hemorrhage that no doctor has been able to treat. Both people seek Jesus' healing touch. Notice the differences in their approach to Jesus. Jairus, powerless in the face of his daughter's illness, asks Jesus for help. The woman, powerless to control her condition and probably weary from constant illness, does not ask for help but rather reaches out, touches the hem of Jesus' clothes, and instantly is healed. Jesus immediately knows what has happened. When he asks who has touched him, she reluctantly comes forward. He tells her that it is her faith that has healed her, and he blesses her. Then the text returns to Jairus, who learns that his daughter has died. Jesus tells Jairus to have faith, to not be afraid: his daughter will be healed. And that is what happens. Notice Jesus' response to the woman and to Jairus. Also notice the reactions of those witnessing these events—Peter, the person from Jairus' house who brings the news of the daughter's death, those gathered inside the house. Compare their reactions to others in the story.

Connecting with the World

- ✦ Many churches offer worship services for health and healing. If your church does not, talk with your pastoral staff about how they might be added.
- ✦ Praying is a hopeful spiritual practice. Have a small bowl or basket or box on your dining room table. Have sticky notes and a pen nearby. When

you learn about a prayer request from someone you know, write it down and place it in the bowl, basket, or box. Be intentional about praying each day for someone.

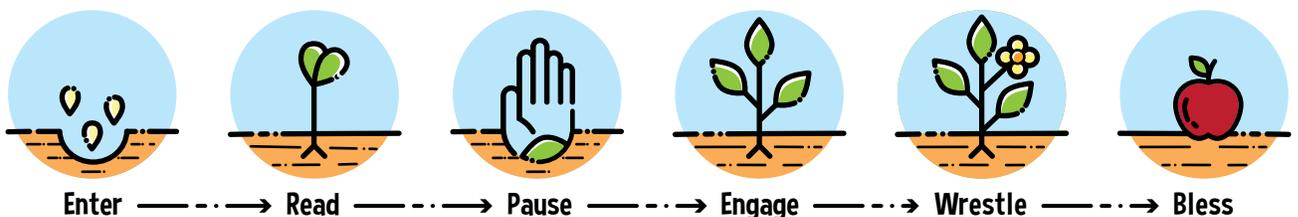
Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Children

These two stories of healing provide opportunities for talking about the difficult issues of sickness and death. Children have a lot of why questions, sometimes so many that adults just don't know how to respond. Like why did Jesus pause, allowing the young daughter to die? Why didn't he go quickly to Jairus's house? Older children might be thinking about the difference between the healing of the woman and the miracle of awakening Jairus's daughter from sleep. A child may ask if miracles happen today. Be comfortable with their questions. Help them see, make connections, and wrestle with both text and life. This is such an important way to support the development of their spiritual lives.

Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Adults

You may have experienced the life situation of Jairus or the woman, praying to God for healing for someone you love. You, too, may have yearned: "If only I could just touch the hem of Jesus' clothes, if only . . ." It's good to remember the difference between healing and curing. Some illnesses can be cured; people can be healed and recover. And sometimes there is only healing, times when God's peace sustains us or the presence of the healing touch of friends gets us through illness or even death. Our faith in God's healing mercies sustains us in difficult times.

Healing God, for the peace you bring, for the healing touch of friends and family, we are grateful. Amen.



Gathering Supplies

Based on your choices, you will need:

- ✓ *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*
- ✓ Sculpting supplies, such as play dough, pipe cleaners, and aluminum foil
- ✓ *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2006)
- ✓ Internet-connected device
- ✓ Resource Pages 1
- ✓ Copies of Resource Page 2
- ✓ Plastic ziplock bags
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ 4–5 bean, pea, or yellow squash seeds for each child
- ✓ Half sheet of poster board for each collage group
- ✓ Variety of old magazines

Preparing to Lead

Read the story from your own Bible, Luke 8:40–56. As you read, make notes of questions it raises for you. Then read the story “Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl” in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* (p. 252).

In what ways do you engage with this passage?

- ✓ Why do you think the woman believed touching Jesus would heal her?
- ✓ Why do you think she was afraid to tell Jesus that she was the one who touched him?
- ✓ Have you had the experience of praying for a loved one to be healed?
- ✓ What is the difference between healing and curing?
- ✓ What is the difference in status between the daughter of a leader of the synagogue and the woman who has been sick for years, with no notable connections. Did Jesus treat them any differently?
- ✓ What do you learn from Jesus’ words and actions in the story?
- ✓ What unanswered questions does this story leave you with?

As you think about this text and other healing stories of Jesus, what do you wrestle with when trying to connect them to our lives today and the ways in which we deal with sickness and healing? Although healing stories can be difficult for children to grapple with, especially if they have had an experience of someone they know not being healed, there are two

key positive themes in this story that can be lifted up for them: (1) Both of the people healed in the story were equally important to Jesus, no matter their circumstances or station in life. (2) Both healings show people exhibiting hope in hopeless situations. Consider how you see both of these themes exhibited in this story and how they can be applied to our lives today.

Recall the names and faces of the children you will teach. What do you know about them? Pray for them.



Enter into sacred space together.

Greet the children as they arrive. Invite them to sit in a circle with you on the floor. Explain that you will open the session with a body prayer. Invite everybody to stand and repeat your words and actions after you. Begin and end the prayer with three deep breaths.

O God, you are above, (*reach hands up to the sky*) /
 you are below, (*bend down and touch toes*) /
 you are inside us, (*place hands over heart*) /
 and all around us. (*spread arms wide*) /
 I worship you. (*reach hands up to the sky*) /
 I give myself to you. (*bend down and reach up and outward from toes*) /
 I love you (*place hands over heart*) /
 with all that I am. (*spread arms wide*) /
 Amen. /

Invite the children to move over and sit at the table where there are sculpting supplies. Encourage everyone to use them during the session for illustrating anything that they are hearing or considering as they engage with the story of “Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl.”



Read a story of God's people.

Tell the children that the story they are about to hear is two stories. One story begins and then gets interrupted. Wonder how they might feel when they have something urgent or important to say and get interrupted and have to wait.

Explain that in the story a woman touches a piece of Jesus' clothes. This was very surprising because in Jesus' time the woman would have been afraid to admit that she was the one who touched him for a couple of reasons: (1) People who were sick for a long time would have been excluded from everyday community life, so she shouldn't have even been in the crowd. (2) It was inappropriate for a woman to touch a man she didn't know.

Invite the children to listen to a story about Jesus healing a woman and a girl. Read the story from *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* (p. 252).



Pause to let God's Word enter into hearts and minds.

Invite the children to think quietly about how each of the people in the story exhibited hope in difficult circumstances. Invite them to think about the differences between the people in the story who Jesus healed. Encourage them to use their curiosity and imagination as they ponder this story. Suggest that they may sit or use the sculpting supplies quietly to illustrate an image or feeling from the story.



Engage curiosity and imagination with God's story.

Healing stories can be difficult for children (and adults) to process. They raise difficult questions about why some people are healed and others are not. If such questions come up, it is important to acknowledge that even adults don't have all the answers. It is OK to tell the children that you don't know the answer or that it is a question you have asked as well. But even as we acknowledge the mystery, we can and should affirm certain theological truths to the children: (1) God loves everyone. (2) Having faith in Jesus helps us get through sickness and injury and other difficult times. (3) God and Jesus are with us in our pain.

Engage the children's curiosity in the story. Wonder together about the interruption of the story:

- What was Jesus doing when Jairus approached him?
- What interrupted Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus felt with all the people pressing in on him and wanting something from him?

- Why do you think the woman was so certain touching Jesus would heal her?
- Why do you think the woman was afraid to tell Jesus that she was the one who touched him?
- What do you think Jairus was feeling when Jesus stopped to talk with the woman?
- Why do you think the people laughed at Jesus when he said Jairus's daughter was only sleeping? Do you think you would have laughed if you had been there?
- Why do you think Jesus didn't want them to tell anyone that he healed Jairus's daughter?
- Think about the two people Jesus healed.
 - How were they different?
 - How were they the same?
 - Did who they were have any bearing on whether Jesus healed them or not?

Choose one or both options:

Differences

- Read the story *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox, or watch the YouTube video "Read-Aloud of Whoever You Are by Mem Fox" (bit.ly/WhoeverYouAre, 3:07).
- Wonder together how the ideas in this book relate to today's Bible story. Talk about all the ways in which people are different from one another in our world, and invite them to consider if those differences impact how much God loves each person. Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves and someone else they know who is different from them.

Viewpoints

- Ask the children to consider what it would have felt like to be the different people in the story:
 - the woman who had been sick for years
 - members of the crowd clamoring to see Jesus
 - Jairus, who was scared for his daughter's life
 - the people in Jairus's home who witnessed a girl being brought back to life
 - Jesus
- Form five groups, or work as one group, and act out the scenes from the viewpoints of those described above. Encourage the children to put themselves in the character's position and see what they might have seen, hear what they might have heard, and respond how they might have responded.



Wrestle with our place in God's story.

Have a conversation about hopelessness and hope. Wonder together what those words mean, and think about situations where we, or others, may have experienced either of them. Invite the children to consider the woman's and the girl's situations and the sense of hopelessness and hope:

- ✦ What signs are we given that tells us they were hopeless situations?
- ✦ How did the woman and the girl's loved ones exhibit hope anyway?

Hope and hopelessness are abstract concepts for children. Help them know that a Christian understanding of hope is not about wishing for something; it's bigger than that. It is a confident expectation of God's promises, because we know that God is faithful.

○ Planting Seeds of Hope

- ✦ Show the children the picture on Resource Page 1 of the plant growing in cracked earth. Invite them to ponder where they see hope and where they see hopelessness in the picture. Ask the children what plants need to grow (*soil, water, sunlight*). Explain that they will have the opportunity to try to sprout seedlings using only the seeds, a damp paper towel, and a plastic ziplock bag. Ask them if they think the seeds will sprout that way or if it is hopeless.
- ✦ Give each child a plastic ziplock bag, a paper towel, and seeds. Have the children write their name on their bag with permanent marker. Following the instructions on Resource Page 2, guide the children through the steps to sprout seeds.
- ✦ Decide whether you will have the children take home their seeds and report back the following session on whether or not they have sprouted, or if you will take them all home with you and bring them back to the next session for the children to discover the results. If the children take home their seeds, make sure that you have at least two bags that you take home with you, tend to, and bring back to the next session.



Bless one another with God's grace.

Wonder together:

- ✦ What do you want to remember from today?
- ✦ How do you think you can spread hope to other people?

Gather the children in a circle, and hold up Resource Page 1, the picture of the plant growing in cracked ground. Invite the children to look at it in silence for a few seconds and think about what it is they hope for—for themselves, for their community, or for their world. Starting with yourself, go around the circle and have everyone share one thing they hope for.

Close with the following prayer, having the children repeat after you:

Dear God, /
thank you for bringing hope to all people /
through Jesus Christ. /
Help us to bring hope to the world. /
Amen. /



Grow with more.

○ Creating a Hope Collage

- ✦ Show the children the picture on Resource Page 1 of the plant growing in cracked earth. Invite them to ponder where they see hope and where they see hopelessness in the picture. Wonder together what are other examples, illustrations, or symbols in their world of hope in the midst of hopelessness. Be prepared to offer some examples from both humanity and nature, possibly showing them examples of your choosing.
- ✦ Form groups of two to four children, or work as one group, to create hope collages. Invite the children to find pictures and words in the magazines that convey hope to them. Have them find the letters *H*, *O*, *P*, and *E* in magazines to use on their collage. Tell them to cut out and glue pictures, words, and letters to poster board to form a collage. Display the collage somewhere in the church where people can see their images of hope.

Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl
Resource Page 1



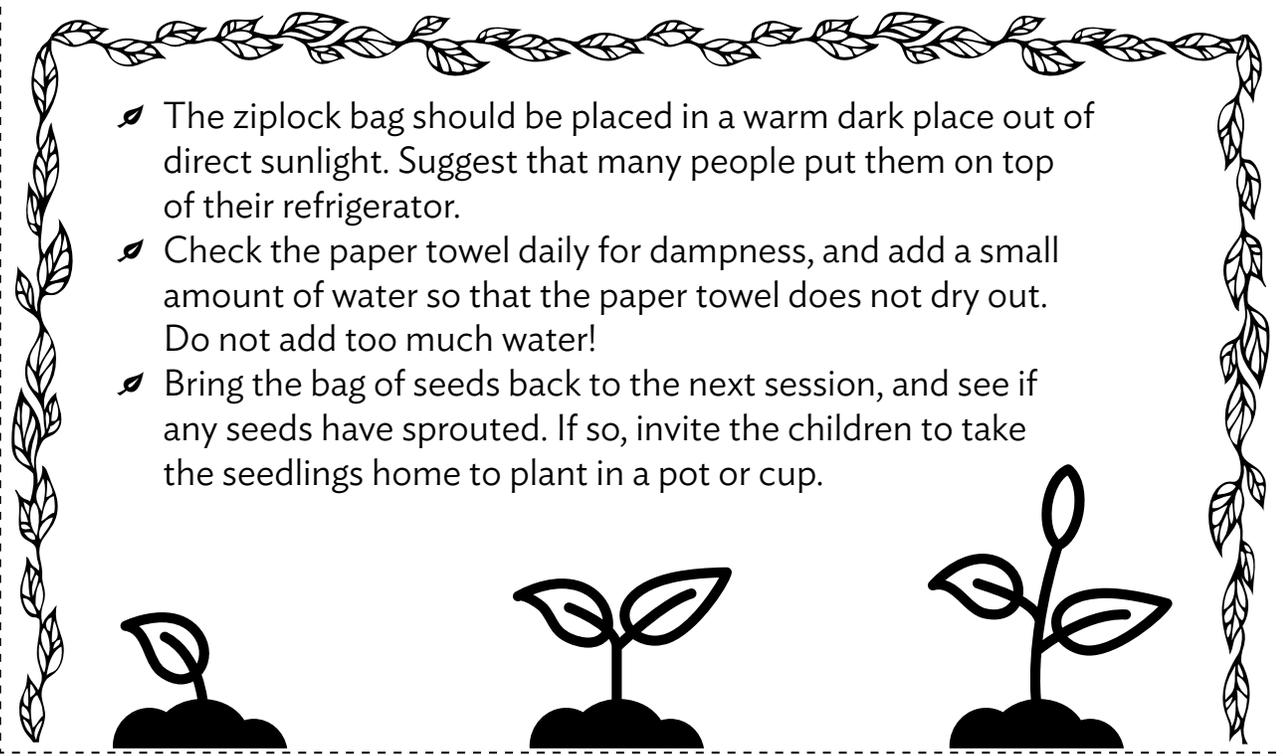
Sprouting Seedlings

Supplies:

- ✦ Plastic ziplock bags
- ✦ Paper towels
- ✦ 4-5 bean, pea, or yellow squash seeds

Instructions:

1. Dampen a towel (not too wet or the seeds may mold).
2. Arrange the seeds on the bottom-third of one side of the paper towel.
3. Fold the rest of the paper towel over the seeds.
4. Slide the paper towel with seeds carefully into the ziplock bag. Do not seal the bag.
5. If the children take home their bags, send home a copy of the card below.



- ✦ The ziplock bag should be placed in a warm dark place out of direct sunlight. Suggest that many people put them on top of their refrigerator.
- ✦ Check the paper towel daily for dampness, and add a small amount of water so that the paper towel does not dry out. Do not add too much water!
- ✦ Bring the bag of seeds back to the next session, and see if any seeds have sprouted. If so, invite the children to take the seedlings home to plant in a pot or cup.

