

Unit 21 • Session 1  
**Jesus' Early Miracles**

**Bible Passage:** Mark 1

**Story Point:** People came to Jesus, and He healed them.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Big Picture Question:** What makes people special? People are special because we are made in God's image, as male and female, to know Him.

**Leader Bible Study**

Early in His ministry, Jesus and His disciples traveled to Capernaum, a town on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum became Jesus' home and headquarters. (See Matt. 4:13.) He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, when people would gather to hear and learn from the Scriptures.

Jesus quickly set Himself apart from the scribes and other religious teachers. Unlike the scribes, who relied completely on traditional interpretations of the Torah from other teachers, Jesus spoke with authority. His teaching came from His own authority as the Author of truth, and it had a profound effect on His listeners—they were astonished!

The early miracles recorded in Mark 1 demonstrate Jesus' power and authority as the Son of God. Jesus drove an unclean spirit from a man in the synagogue; even the demons obey His commands. Then Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, and that evening the people in the town brought to Jesus all those who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits. What did Jesus do? He healed them! (Mark 1:34)

Jesus' miracles continued, and He healed a man with leprosy. Leprosy is a skin disease that would have marked a person as "unclean," requiring him to be separated from the community. Jesus had compassion on the man and healed him immediately.

Jesus' miracles brought many people to faith in Him. They also proved that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. These miracles strengthened people's faith and met their needs. Isaiah prophesied that the promised Messiah would bear our sickness and carry our pain. (Isa. 53:4) Jesus fulfilled this prophecy as He healed people.

Help kids make the connection that through Jesus, God did what is impossible for us to do on our own. He provided forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life for all who would trust in Him.

**The Bible Story**

Jesus traveled to Capernaum (kuh PUHR nay uhm) with His disciples Simon, Andrew, James, and John. He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. The people there were very surprised. Jesus' teaching was not like the scribes' teaching. He spoke with authority. Just then, a man with an unclean spirit shouted, "What do You have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" Jesus commanded the spirit to be quiet and come out of the man. The spirit yelled again and then came out. Everyone was amazed! "Who is this Jesus?" they asked. "He teaches with authority, and the unclean spirits obey Him!" News about Jesus spread quickly throughout all of Galilee.

Next, Jesus and His disciples went to Simon and Andrew's house. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. Jesus went to her, took her hand, and healed her. She got up and began to serve them. That evening, large crowds of people came to the house with others who were sick or bothered by evil spirits, and Jesus healed them.

Early the next morning, Jesus went out by Himself to pray. Simon and the other disciples found Him and said, "Everyone is looking for You." Jesus said, "Let's go on to the nearby villages so I can preach there too. This is why I have come."

Jesus traveled throughout Galilee. He preached and drove out demons. A man with a skin disease came to Jesus. He got on his knees and begged: "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus was willing, and He healed the man.

**Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles proved that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. They strengthened people's faith and met their needs. Through Jesus, God did what is impossible for us to do on our own. He provided forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life.

**Part One: Introduce the Story**

**Welcome time**

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss ways they can help others.

**Say** • Those are some great ideas about helping others. When we help other people, it shows them that we love them. Today we will learn about some of the people Jesus helped in the beginning part of His ministry on earth.

### **Activity page** (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Helpers Gonna Help” activity page. Ask kids to match each helper with the one who needs help. Discuss different ways people help one another.

**Say** • Some jobs are all about helping people. Doctors help people get well, teachers help people learn, and moms and dads help kids in a million ways. Today we will talk about the greatest help people could ever receive. Jesus came to save us from sin. How else did Jesus help people?

### **Session starter** (10 minutes)

#### **Option 1: Listen, watch, follow**

Instruct the kids to stand on one side of the room. Stand opposite them and instruct them to mimic your movements and obey your commands. Begin making simple movements, such as waving a hand, patting your belly, or standing on one foot. Sprinkle in spoken commands, telling the kids to do something you are not doing.

**SAY** • It was a little bit difficult to follow both my words and my actions, especially when I wasn't doing what I said. You had to listen carefully and watch closely. Today we will learn about some things Jesus did that caused people to listen carefully to His words and watch closely His actions. And still some people misunderstood who He is!

#### **Option 2: Help-o-matic**

Provide each kid with paper and a pencil. Ask kids to draw a picture of a machine that could help them do something they have trouble with or really don't like doing. Allow kids opportunities to share about their machines. What do they do? How would their machines work? How much might they cost?

**Say** • It can be fun to imagine machines that help us in our everyday lives. Maybe someday you all will even find a way to invent your machines for real! Today we are going to learn about some things Jesus did to help people and heal them. But He did not need special machines or technology because He is God and has power to do miracles.

### **Transition to teach the story**

#### **Teach the Story**

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate the room to look like the inside of a hospital. Paint foam board to look like an ambulance parked in a receiving bay. Set medical equipment toys on a table on the stage. Cover a table with a sheet to look like a gurney. You may display the theme background slide.

#### **Introduce the session** (3 minutes)

[Leader enters wearing navy blue cargo pants and a short-sleeve white

button-down. He or she is carrying a first aid kit.]

**Leader** • Hey there! It looks like most of you are in good health, so you must not be here because of an emergency. Oddly enough, things are kinda slow right now, so if you were hoping to see some medical drama, you might be a tad disappointed. On a busy day, you might see all the hard work EMTs—that's Emergency Medical Technicians—like me do to get patients to doctors and nurses, who can provide longer term care. Sometimes it even amazes me. I love being a part of it. I was just about to go on my break, and I'd love to tell you about an even more amazing situation. EMTs use medical technology to help people, but Jesus used His power as God to help people. I'll tell you about it.

#### **Big picture question** (1 minute)

**Leader** • As we get to the story, I want to ask a big picture question. While listening to the story, see if you can figure out the answer. What makes people special? As we hear our story, you'll see that Jesus cares a lot about people. I want you to think about why that is. I'll make sure we all know the answer after you hear the story.

**Leader** • After sin entered the world, God could have said “too bad, you had your chance.” It would have been fair for Him to say that. Instead, God had a plan to defeat sin and death forever. It required a Savior, and after hundreds and hundreds of years, that Savior was born in Bethlehem. Jesus—the fully God and fully human Savior—grew into a man. He was wise and perfectly obeyed God. He was baptized and then resisted temptation to sin in the wilderness. John pointed to Him, and He called disciples to follow Him. Now, Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing was coming into full swing. Today we will learn about “Jesus' Early Miracles.”

#### **Tell the Bible story** (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Mark 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus' Early Miracles.”

**Leader** • People came to Jesus, and He healed them. I want to make sure you noticed two things: first, Jesus consistently had compassion on people who were sick; second, Jesus specifically said that the reason He came was to preach.

Jesus saw the pain and suffering of the people around Him, and He worked to help them. He did not just say, “Oh, that's sad. I'm sorry you are sick.” He actually met their physical needs by healing them. Jesus is compassionate and kind. He cares about people and wants to help us. Even though Jesus' miraculous healings and command over evil spirits were incredible, He wanted His teaching to be the focus of His work. When Jesus wanted to move on, He specifically said that He came to preach. His message of repenting of sin, loving God, and loving people

was more important than His power to heal.

It is easy for us to focus only on what God can do for us. We don't always do a good job remembering what God has commanded us to do. Jesus loves us, and He is able to heal and restore, but He also wants us to love and obey God. The most important healing is not physical, but spiritual. Jesus heals us from the damage caused by sin.

What makes people special? People are special because we are made in His image, as male and female, to know Him. Jesus cares about people because He created us. He wants what is best for us, and that is to love and obey God.

### **Christ connection**

**Leader** • All of us are born as sinners. The Bible says we are dead in sin. We cannot save ourselves. Thankfully, God's perfect plan was to send His Son, Jesus, to die for our sin and give new life to everyone who believes in Jesus. Jesus' miracles proved that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. They strengthened people's faith and met their needs. Through Jesus, God did what is impossible for us to do on our own. He provided forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 21, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about who can work miracles. Guide them to discuss ways we see God at work today.

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the "Better Than Basketball" missions video.

**Leader** • Every sport you play and every hobby you enjoy can be used to share the love of Jesus. In the Bible, we read that people came to Jesus, and He healed them. Jesus heals people today, too, by forgiving their sins and offering eternal life. This week, let's think about all the different ways God can work in our lives to spread the good news about Jesus.

### **Key passage** (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 3:16. Then sing "In This Way (John 3:16)."

**Leader** • This key passage might be one of the most well-known verses in the entire Bible. Many people have heard it, memorized it, or seen it as a bumper sticker. In a way, this key passage sums up the whole Bible. God loved us and showed His love by sending Jesus. Everyone who has faith in Jesus won't be punished for sin, but will live forever with God.

### **Sing** (4 minutes)

**Leader** • Jesus healed people who were sick, and He made the way for us to be forgiven of sin and healed of the damage it causes in our lives. He is the Messiah.

Sing together "Jesus Messiah."

### **Pray** (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**Leader** • Father, thank You for sending Jesus. We can hardly understand Your love. Help us love You back. Give us the courage we need to obey You in difficult circumstances. Fill our hearts with compassion for others. Amen.

### **The Gospel: God's Plan for Me**

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide I'm a Christian Now! for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

### **Dismiss to apply the story**