

A MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

BELIEVE SAVE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS PHYSICAL BLINDNESS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

John 9

LESSON OBJECTIVE

That the preadolescents comprehend what spiritual blindness is, and that they know that this type of blindness is much more serious than physical blindness

MEMORY VERSE

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:16-18, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

We live in a world of darkness. People desperately go to many places in search of answers, peace, and tranquillity (freedom from strife). Self-help books, material stuff, education, drugs, religion, fun, etc., are some of the things that people turn to try to have a full life.

Today, many people confuse “spiritual blindness” with acceptance and tolerance. Preadolescents are often taught to be tolerant. But many times they are not taught to respect the rights and opinions of others, while accepting that any belief is correct and right. Also, they are taught that there are no absolute truths, that everything is relative, that what is “good for others” is “good for me.”

This lesson emphasizes that Jesus is the true light in a world that lives and shines in darkness.

Preadolescents are deciding who and what they’ll believe. They need to know that, if they allow him, Jesus will illuminate their lives and open their eyes to the truth.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The young lady arrived at the gala party in her golden carriage, her hair perfectly arranged, wearing her carefully chosen dress. The moment she entered the great hall, all eyes turned to look at her. "Who is that beautiful woman?" they asked. Despite their doubts, they had to admit it: yes, it was one of the servants, Cinderella. Those who had ignored or treated her with cruelty should now recognize her royalty.

In the same way, when the man in the Bible story returned to his home, all eyes were fixed on him. He walked without help. His neighbors, who knew him as the "blind beggar," approached to see him. A murmur began to circulate among the people: "No, it cannot be. He was blind from birth, but yes, he looks like him. Could it be him?"

The one who had been blind spoke immediately and said it was he. His neighbors wanted to know, and demanded to know, who had healed him.

In biblical times, there was a belief that diseases were punishments for sins committed. "There is no suffering without there being iniquity and sin," some rabbis said.

Many believed that the sins of the parents marked the children. Others believed that a child could sin before birth. In this way, a miraculous healing like that of a blind man had its physical and spiritual effects.

Jesus rejected the prejudices of his days. In addition, healing a blind man should not have been an unexpected miracle. Isaiah had predicted this would be one of the signs of the Messiah.

Without knowing exactly who the Messiah was, the healthy man told the crowd about his health, the mud, the pool, and how he had received his sight. Faced with surprise and skeptical looks, the man clung to his story ... Jesus had healed him!

He was brought before the Pharisees for more questioning, which led everyone to a theological debate. These were legalists, and they had a long list of "you should nots" for the Sabbath. They considered it work to put on some mud and heal, and that was forbidden.

But the Pharisees' real problem had to do with their prejudices and jealousy towards Jesus. They did not feel they had sufficient proof to convince themselves that Jesus was good, or that he could perform miracles no matter what day it was. They decided to remain "blind" to the truth.

So the Pharisees questioned the parents of the former blind man. The parents affirmed the identity of their son, and assured the questioners that the miracle had happened. But because of fear of what the Pharisees could do to them, they decided not to express their faith.

What was their son doing in the meantime? Although the Pharisees had questioned him, made fun of him, and threw him out, the man remained faithful to his story and to Jesus. Verse 27 suggests that he already considered himself a disciple of Jesus. His faith continued to increase.

Then Jesus appeared again. This time he came to heal the soul of the man who had been blind and lead him to the kingdom of God. On both occasions, the man by his own will accepted that Jesus worked in his life until his faith, at last, became worship (v. 38). The transforming power of Christ can make us new creatures, bringing light into our dark life. But as with the blind man and the Pharisees, each of us has the option to choose. We cannot help being physically blind. But we can refuse to "be blind by choice."

Teacher, for your personal reflection, consider these questions:

What differences do you find between the health of your life now and the one you led before you met Jesus?

Have you allowed Christ to remove all the "blind spots" of your life, or are there still areas where you're "blind by choice"?

Which of your students need to see what Christ can do in their lives?

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What would your life be like if you could not see?

Say to the group: "Blindness is something serious. Most people rely on their ability to see to do everything they do, from getting dressed, to riding a bicycle, or reading a book. Blind people learn to function in life, but it is not easy. Our Bible story today is about a man who was born blind. We'll also see how Jesus called some people blind who were not physically blind." Then ask: "What do you think the Lord meant by calling them that?" (allow several responses)

Encourage the group to imagine and think about what their lives would be like if they could not see. Tell them to also think about what it would be like if, because they were blind, they could not dress themselves, eat, go for a walk, go to school, or play their favorite sport. What would they do in a similar situation? How would their lives be affected?

You can ask them to walk, write, or perform some other action with their eyes closed for a few moments.

TEACH THE LESSON

The Sunday newspaper

Ask: "How would you feel if everyone thought that your parents sinned since you're blind, or that you're blind because you disobeyed God before you were born?" Ask the students to respond. (Do not let them mention names of people who have a physical problem.)

Then read John 9:13-34.

Explain that the Pharisees tried to keep the law of Moses perfectly. That's why they had created many rules so that people would not break the laws. For example: the fourth commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Moses had told his people that on the Sabbath they should not work. The Pharisees had written many rules, describing what activities were included as work and which ones they could do. For the Pharisees, mixing saliva with a little dirt was work. Work also included healing people. That's why, for them, Jesus had not respected the day of rest and, consequently, was a bad person.

Ask one of the students to summarize in his/ her own words what happens in this passage.

Finally read John 9:35-41.

Explain that the Pharisees' real problem was that they loved their own rules more than God. They worried more that their little rules were followed than applying the great commandment that God had given them to love others as oneself.

Say: "They could not accept that they were wrong. They were "blind" to the truth. And instead of believing in Jesus, they decided to hate him and became jealous upon seeing the kind of person he was."

Ask: "What did Jesus heal the blind man from?" (He healed his eyes so he could see. But later he also healed his spiritual blindness, helping the blind man understand that he, Jesus, was sent by God to save him and everyone.)

"Why didn't the Pharisees believe in the healing Jesus had done?" (They refused to believe that he was the Son of God and could do miracles. They were blind to see the truth about Jesus.)

"Who was truly blind in this story?" (The man was physically blind, but he believed in Jesus. The Pharisees remained blind because they refused to believe in Christ.)

Finish by asking: "Why is it important that we can 'see' spiritually?" (We need to know the truth about Jesus Christ. We must believe in him to develop a relationship with God.)

"What can we do if we're 'spiritually blind'?" (Ask Jesus to help us know him, to believe in the truth, and to love him.)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #398-A. Have the students draw a picture or write a description of the challenges they might face if they were blind.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #397-B (The Day of Rest Gazette). Allow time for the students to read the passage of John 9:1-12 as a group.

Ask: "How would you feel if everyone thought that your parents sinned since you're blind, or that you're blind because you disobeyed God before you were born?" Ask the students to respond. (Do not let them mention names of people who have a physical problem.) Also ask the students to write their answer on the activity sheet.

Then read John 9:13-34.

Explain that the Pharisees tried to keep the law of Moses perfectly. That's why they had created many rules so that people would not break the laws. For example: the fourth commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Moses had told his people that on the Sabbath they should not work. The Pharisees had written many rules, describing what activities were included as work and which ones they could do. For the Pharisees, mixing saliva with a little dirt was work. Work also included healing people. That's why, for them, Jesus had not respected the day of rest and, consequently, was a bad person.

Ask the students to write in their own words what happens in this passage.

Finally read John 9:35-41.

Explain that the Pharisees' real problem was that they loved their own rules more than God. They worried more that their little rules were followed than applying the great commandment that God had given them to love others as oneself.

Say: "They could not accept that they were wrong. They were "blind" to the truth. And instead of believing in Jesus, they decided to hate him and became jealous upon seeing the kind of person he was."

Ask: "What did Jesus heal the blind man from?" (He healed his eyes so he could see. But later he also healed his spiritual blindness, helping the blind man understand that he, Jesus, was sent by God to save him and everyone.)

"Why didn't the Pharisees believe in the healing Jesus had done?" (They refused to believe that he was the Son of God and could do miracles. They were blind to see the truth about Jesus.)

"Who was truly blind in this story?" (The man was physically blind, but he believed in Jesus. The Pharisees remained blind because they refused to believe in Christ.)

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #397-C (Which is worse?). Discuss the differences between physical and spiritual blindness. Ask: "Why is it important that we can 'see' spiritually?" (We need to know the truth about Jesus Christ. We must believe in him to develop a relationship with God.)

What can we do if we're 'spiritually blind?'" (Ask Jesus to help us know him, to believe in the truth, and to love him.)

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Continue repeating the parts of the memory passage given in the previous session and add the portion for today's lesson (2nd session).

1st class session: For God so loved the world / that he gave his one and only Son, / that whoever believes in him / shall not perish / but have eternal life.

2nd session: For God did not send his Son / into the world/ to condemn the world,/ but to save the world/through him.

3rd session: Whoever believes in him / is not condemned, / but whoever does not believe / stands condemned already / because they have not believed / in the name of God's one and only Son. / (John 3:16-18)

4th session: Practice the whole text.

Practice several times playing different ways, such as:

Get in a circle and passing a ball or bag full of seeds from child to child, while repeating the parts of the text.

March around the room or the building and sing to the rhythm of a rap or hip-hop song.

Have competitions between girls and boys.

Mix the parts to assemble the text as if it were a puzzle.

Write the words on the board and delete them while they learn the text.

See the truth

Discover the key word of the last student activity of this session by completing Student Activity Sheet #397-D (See the Truth).

WRAP-UP

Pray

It is very important that each student understands the meaning and importance of spiritual blindness. Let them know that at some time in our childhood most of us recognize we're "spiritually blind." Then, one day we meet, believe, and accept Jesus into our lives. And then we receive healing and could begin to really see. Also guide the students to understand the urgency of being

able to help all those around them who are “spiritually blind,” because they do not know Jesus, to receive spiritual sight. Tell them to pray for others, asking God to help each person believe in God. Everyone who believes in Jesus is healed from their spiritual blindness.

Encourage

Finish by singing an appropriate chorus or hymn.

Invite

Be sure to tell the students something about the next session to encourage them to attend. Tell them that visitors are welcome.