January 15, 2017

Basic Truth: Jesus wants to be my friend forever.
Bottom Line: Jesus is there when I need Him.
Bible Words: "You are everything I need." Psalm 119:57, NIrV
The Four Friends • *Mark 2:1-12*

Story Time

Gather children on a rug or in a specific area of the classroom to tell the story. Some kids *(especially the younger ones)* may wander. That's OK. They're still listening and learning!

What You Need: Preschool Bible, butcher paper, markers, and tape

What You Say:
LEADER: "Hello friends! I'm so glad to see you because I have an awesome, true story from the Bible *(hold up Bible)* to tell you, and it's all about some friends! In fact, it's about FOUR friends. *(Draw four friends on butcher paper.)*

"One day, FOUR friends went to see Jesus. They carried their friend on a mat because he couldn't walk. His legs didn't work. *(Draw man on a mat.)* They believed that Jesus could help their friend. Do you think Jesus could help their friend? *(Pause.)* Let's find out.

"When the FOUR friends got to where Jesus was, the house was FULL of people. *(Draw house with people in front.)* It was a BIG crowd. They tried to go through the front door. But there were too many people! Oh, no! What were they going to do? The FOUR friends couldn't get their hurt friend to Jesus! Do you think they gave up and went home? *(Pause.)*

"Of course not! These friends really believed Jesus would help, so they had to find another way in. They climbed up on the roof and cut a hole in it to lower their friend down into the house where Jesus was. *(Draw friends on top of the roof.)* What? They lowered him down from the roof. That is AMAZING!

"Do you think Jesus helped the man on the mat? *(Pause.)* Yes! Jesus told the man to get up and walk and he did! The hurt man got right up off the mat and walked. *(Draw man dancing.)* Jesus helped him. Jesus is always there when we need Him. And He wants to help us all the time. I'm SO glad that Jesus was there to help the man who couldn't walk! And Jesus is there for us too. **Who is there when you need Him?"**

CHILDREN and LEADER: *[Bottom Line]* **"Jesus is there when I need Him.**
LEADER: "Again! **Who is there when you need Him?"**
CHILDREN and LEADER: *[Bottom Line]* **"Jesus is there when I need Him."**

Craft Time

Gather small groups of children around you at a table for toddler craft time. Depending on the size of your group, you may lead the craft two or three times. Not every child may want to participate in craft time. That's OK. Feel free to send home the craft materials for them to complete with their mom or dad.

What You Need: "Thumbprint Friends" Activity Page, stamp pad, crayons, and wipes

What You Do:
Before the Activity: Copy "Thumbprint Friends" and cut on the dotted lines. Each child needs one strip.

During the Activity: Retell the story as the children put a thumbprint on each person.

What You Say:
During the Activity: "Today we heard a story about FOUR friends. They took their hurt friend to see Jesus because he couldn't walk. They had a hard time getting their hurt friend to Jesus because there were so many people in the house. The FOUR friends had to go on the roof and make a hole! Then they lowered their friend on the mat down to Jesus.

"Did Jesus help their hurt friend? *(Pause.)* Yes! Jesus told them man to get up and walk and he did! The hurt man got right up off the mat and walked. Jesus helped him. Jesus is always there when we need Him. And He wants to help us all the time.

"I have a fun activity for us today. Look at your paper. How many friends do you see? One, two, three, four. Good job. We had four friends in our story today, didn't we? Let's put a thumbprint on each of these friends. Good job. Now you can draw their faces. They should be smiling because Jesus helped their friend walk again."

After the Activity: "I'm SO glad that Jesus was there to help the man who couldn't walk! And Jesus is there for us too. **Who is there when you need Him?** *[Bottom Line]* **Jesus is there when I need Him.**"