

Youth Worship Lesson – September 26, 2021

ALL MY RELATIONS

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:38–50

PURPOSE: To discover that God’s Spirit works in many ways through many people.

Youth issue:

Responding to differing beliefs.

Preparation

Worship Table – **GREEN CLOTH**

Pictures and materials for story and Integrating the Theme are at the end of the lesson.

Lighting of the Christ Candle: We light this candle to remind us that God is always with us.

Opening Prayer

One: The sun and the moon and the stars sing praises to God.

All: All my relations!

One: The rocks and mountains shout for joy.

All: All my relations!

One: The plants and trees and all growing things show God’s generosity.

All: All my relations!

One: The animals and birds, the fishes, and tiny insects are precious in God’s sight.

All: All my relations!

One: All the people of the earth are part of God’s unending circle of love.

All: All my relations!

Introducing The Theme – A World of Faith



As we headed out to come to church this morning, other people were leaving their homes to go to worship too, but not at this church. Can you name some of the other churches in our community? **(The yellow pages of a telephone book can help. Some small towns have a sign at the entrance to town that lists all the churches in town.)** As well as churches, which are what we Christians call our places of worship, many communities also have temples and synagogues and mosques where people worship God. Muslims worship on Friday. The Jewish Sabbath is Saturday, but they gather to worship at sundown on Friday. Christians worship on Saturday evening or on Sunday, Sikhs worship on Sunday morning. Do you have friends who attend another church or synagogue or temple? Have you ever visited a church of another denomination or a synagogue or temple? **(Encourage them to share any experiences.)** Hand out “A World of Faith” activity sheet. Can they connect the symbols with the faith it represents and what each calls their place of worship? **(Answers (clockwise from top): Muslim (mosque), Sikh (temple),**

Native Spirituality (**medicine wheel/4 directions**) Christian (**church**), Jewish (**synagogue**), Hindu (**temple**).

Exploring the Theme – “Whoever is not against us is for us”

(Hand out copies of the Bible and turn to Mark 9:38–41. Have a volunteer read the passage aloud.)

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone^{pl} casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

- Who was doing the healing in this story?
- Why do you think this upset the disciples?
- How did Jesus respond?
- What do you think about Jesus’ response that “whoever is not against us is for us”?
- How does this relate to the idea of an open or closed circle?
- What example did Jesus give of an act of faith?
- Do you think Christians today are judgmental of others like the disciples in this story?
- Why is that so, do you think?
- Do all the people in your church believe exactly the same thing?
- How do you feel about that?

God’s Spirit at Work in Our World

(Hand out Resource sheet “**God’s Spirit at Work in Our World.**”) Ask for volunteers to read the stories aloud.

- How was God at work in each of these stories?
- Why do you think that the man in the first story completely missed that it was God reaching out to him?
- In what ways might our ideas about God be keeping us from seeing God at work in our world?

God’s Healing Today

Think about the healing in the Bible story and “A Knock at the Door.” Think about your own experiences of God’s healing.

- Where can God’s healing be found in the world today? Who or what is bringing healing?
- Who or what is being healed?
- How do people respond to healing when it comes in unexpected ways?
- What does the passage we read this morning say about healing? (**e.g. that it comes in many forms, that all healing comes from God**)

If you have a “healing touch” group in your church you might talk about what it does and how people have various responses to the concept of healing touch.

Memory Verse: *For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. Mark 9:41*

Integrating the Theme - "Blessing Bags

Homelessness among youth is a prevailing problem. Have your children put together bags of products that would be useful for people their age. Items to consider include T-shirts, Chap stick/hygiene products, snacks, socks and more.

Closing Prayer

One: Creator God, we give you thanks for healers and healing in our world.

All: All my relations!

One: Help us to remember that you work in many ways, through many people.

All: All my relations!

One: Help us to be open to accepting the healing you offer.

All: All my relations!

One: We pray for us and others in the name of Jesus.

All: All my relations!

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A World of Faith



Can you match the symbol to the world religion that it represents? (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Native Spirituality) What does each faith call the place where they worship? (Temple, Synagogue, Mosque, Church, Meeting Place/no particular name)

God's Spirit At Work in Our World

Waiting for God

(A modern-day parable)

In a small village in a beautiful valley lived a man who liked to tell everyone about his deep faith in God.

One Spring, after a winter of a heavy snowfall, the Spring run-off combined with Spring rains to produce strong flood warnings. The villagers were asked to leave their homes to go to higher ground until the danger was past. But our man of loudly proclaimed faith refused to leave his home. He told his neighbors, "I believe in God. God will take care of me. If you really had faith you would stay here too." The neighbors tried in a caring way to persuade him to go with them but to no avail.

By evening the rivers had started to overflow their banks. But the man was not worried. When water covered the first floor of the houses the firefighters came by in their boat, to take him to safety. He refused to go and quoted the Bible to them, "Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest, and put it in barns; yet God cares for them! Aren't you worth more than birds?" Then the man declared loudly, for all to hear, "I know that God will take care of me!"

By midnight the wind was blowing fiercely and the water was almost to the tops of the houses. A helicopter came by and lowered a rescuer to save the man who was now perched on the roof of his house. But still he refused to go, insisting that God would take care of him. "If I got into your helicopter I would be showing that I didn't believe in God."

Later that night the man drowned in the swirling flood waters. When he met his Maker he demanded an explanation. "I believed in you all my life. You said you would take care of every hair on my head. Why then God, did you let me die?"

God answered, "But I did care for all your needs. First I sent your neighbors to urge you to leave your home. Then I sent the firefighters in their boat. And finally I sent a rescue team in a helicopter. Why did you reject all my efforts to save you?"

Sarah's Ministry

(A true story)

I knew that Bill's wife's death had not been a surprise – she had been failing for several years and the last six months were especially hard for her. Yet I still knew that Bill missed her greatly, and as he walked slowly into church that Sunday morning we were all aware that this was his first time back since the funeral. We were also aware that, even though Helen had not sung with the choir for quite some time because of her illness, still somehow her absence was more pronounced this morning as Bill sat there, quite alone. I think I noticed a few tears, too.

Worship began and we stood up to sing the first hymn. I barely noticed my daughter, Sarah, aged 4, as she slipped from our pew and went up to where Bill stood. She gently eased in beside him and reached up for his hand. He managed a kind and gentle smile as he took her little hand in his, and while I couldn't really hear him I got the sense that Sarah's act of kindness lifted his heart to sing a little louder, and to proclaim his faith a little more boldly.

Discussion Questions

1. How are these two stories the same? How are they different?
2. What do these stories say about God's healing in our world (e.g. what form it takes, who is part of it, how it is to be received)?
3. Who in each story is offering healing? By whose authority?
4. What is the response of those receiving the healing?
5. If you have ever felt that God was working through you to help someone else, how did you respond?
6. If you have ever felt God helping you through the actions of someone else, how did you respond?