

## GOSPEL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON for March 22

***This is intended for elementary age kids, but there's probably food for thought here for both younger and older folks!***

A COMMENTARY for grownups wanting to think it through...

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### NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY...

In our Sunday lectionary, this is the third of three stories from John's Gospel: Nicodemus, the Woman at the Well, and the Young Man Born Blind.

### TOPICS

John's Gospel is heavy on symbolic language. In previous weeks, we noticed how John uses darkness and light, and images of "living water". This week's story explores blindness - both literal and metaphorical... and it's clear that Jesus sees literal blindness as simply a physical challenge, but metaphorical blindness - people who refuse to see the truth that's right in front of them - is problem!

### THINGS TO KNOW...

- The Man Born Blind may have only been in his late teens. This is suggested by the fact that the religious leaders call on his parents to talk about what happened to him, and that his parents stress that he is old enough to speak for himself.
- Remember that people didn't have access to modern medicine, or lots of the other things that help people with disabilities. If somebody was born with a disability or difference, there was little to help them. They would probably become a beggar.

### THE STORY:

See the script, below, on its own pages! This is kind of a long story, but it's also dramatic and kind of funny. Try reading it with someone! Even though there are a lot of parts, you can do it with two people. Or do different voices and read it to yourself!

### TALKING ABOUT IT....

Some kids may resonate with the (Young) Man, who has to keep telling his story over and over again to grownups who don't believe him and try to bully him...!

If the kids wonder about the spit/mud thing - There isn't really any explanation. Jesus has magic spit? What do the kids think about it? ...

The Pool of Siloam might have just been the closest water, though John obviously thinks its name ("Sent") is significant too.

Talk about Jesus' final line, and what we think it means. It could be a good time to remind the kids of "literal" and "metaphorical."

Look back over all three stories this month, and wonder together: Who was drawn to Jesus? Who was confused by Jesus? Who was mad about Jesus? And why?....

## **The Man Born Blind (John 9:1 - 41)**

- NARRATOR As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been born blind. He couldn't work and made his living as a beggar. Everyone looked down on him. The disciples asked Jesus,
- FRIEND 1 Teacher, we know that bad things happen to people who do bad things.
- FRIEND 2 This man is blind, which must be a punishment from God. So who did bad things, this man or his parents?
- JESUS You are wrong! That's not how God works. Blindness is not a punishment. But it is a chance to show God's power.
- NARRATOR Then Jesus spat on the ground and made mud, and spread it on the man's eyes, and told him,
- JESUS Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.
- NARRATOR Siloam means Sent. The man went and washed, and when he came back, he could see!
- MAN Hooray!!!
- NARRATOR The neighbors, who had seen the blind man when he was a beggar, were surprised and confused.
- NEIGHBORS Isn't this the man who used to sit here and beg?
- NARRATOR And the neighbors began to argue.
- NEIGHBOR 1 It is him! He has been healed!
- NEIGHBOR 2 No! It's somebody else who looks like him!
- MAN It's me! It's me!
- NEIGHBOR 2 Then why aren't you blind anymore?

MAN The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me to go wash. When I did that, I could see!

NEIGHBOR 1 Where is that man now?

MAN I don't know!

NARRATOR Now, it was the Sabbath day, when people were supposed to honor God by not doing any work. So the neighbors took the man to the religious leaders, to tell his story.

MAN He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.

NARRATOR And the leaders began to argue.

LEADER 1 This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.

LEADER 2 How can he do such things, if he is not from God?

NARRATOR Some of the religious leaders didn't believe that the man had been blind but could now see, so they called his parents.

LEADER 1 Is this your son, who you say was born blind?

MOM & DAD Yes, this is our son.

LEADER 2 If it is your son, why can he see now?

MOM We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But we don't know how it is that he can see now.

DAD Ask him! He can speak for himself!

NARRATOR His parents were afraid to say that Jesus had healed their son, because the religious leaders didn't like Jesus. So the leaders questioned the man again.

LEADER 1 We know this man Jesus is a sinner, a bad person! Admit it!

MAN I don't know whether he is a sinner. I know one thing: I was blind, and now I can see. You keep asking me about him! Do you want to follow him and be his disciples too?

LEADER 2 We follow Moses, the great teacher of the Law! God spoke to Moses, in ancient times. But we don't know anything about this Jesus fellow.

MAN It has never happened before that a person who was born blind, was healed and began to see. If this man Jesus were not from God, he could not do something like this.

LEADER 1 Are you trying teach US about God?!?!?

NARRATOR And they drove him away. Then Jesus came and found him.

JESUS Do you believe in me?

MAN Lord, I believe.

JESUS I came into this world so that those who are blind may see - and that those who think they see clearly, and know everything, may realize how little they understand.