

the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

A little servant girl and the proud general

The little slave girl and Naaman, from 2 Kings 5

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

- ☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.
- ☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “We have been looking at the life of David, the shepherd king. We also memorized some words that David wrote in one of his songs or psalms.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Psalm 16:8 — ‘I keep my eyes always on the LORD. I will not be shaken.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Our story today comes from the book of 2 Kings in the Old Testament. Someone in our story today is given a great gift. Who likes being given gifts? Raise your hand. Thank you, hands down.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To introduce the idea of grace.

Materials: A large beautifully wrapped box – inside the box place the cards for the next activity, and either your copy or the CD of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (you may also like to include a small gift for each child, but this is optional).

1. Displaying the wrapped gift box, say: “I have a very large gift here. Actually it is a gift for you. If you win our game today, you get the gift. Without this gift we will not be able to read our story today. Please stand and line up by the wall.”
2. Divide the children into two or three teams. Taking the gift box with you, stand by the opposite wall and put it down. Say: “We’ve played a game like this one before. You must get to this side of the room, but this time you have to do it without touching the floor. The first team to arrive here wins the gift. In your teams, you have 2 minutes to think about and decide a way to do that. Your 2 minutes start now.”
3. After 2 minutes, say: “Time is up. Come across the room and get this gift without touching the floor. Go!”
4. The teams will hopefully have thought of all sorts of elaborate ways to do this – though, of course, the task is impossible – and as they try, you should keep pointing out that they can’t get the gift that way.

5. When they are close to giving up, prompt them to try harder. When they have actually given up, ask each team in turn what is wrong. Get each team to admit that they cannot do it, that it is impossible, that there is no way they can get the gift, etc.

6. At that point, have another teacher say: “I think I’ve thought of a way to do this! They can’t get to you, but you could come to them!” Pretend not to understand and ask the children if they can think of how that would help. When they have “explained,” cross the room with the gift box.

7. Ask the teams to open it and hand you your copy or CD of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (they can also each take their gift if you have provided that option). Say: “Excellent, now we can start. Let’s get back into the circle.”

8. Once everyone is settled, put the gift box in the center of the circle. Say: “Some things are impossible to do, no matter how hard we try. It was impossible for you to get the gift; you told me you could not do it. But I could come to you and give it to you even though you had not completed the game. You got the gift even though you had done nothing to earn it. In today’s story, someone is given a great gift; let’s find out what it is and what he did to earn it.”

Story Time

7 min. 

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 136–143 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 3.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

In the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5, notice how everyone with power and worldly status is oblivious to matters concerning salvation, while the servants and underlings show wisdom concerning it. This reversal is a major pattern in the Bible.

But the main point of this story is that salvation and a relationship with God is not something you achieve—it is something you receive. You do not need to prove your worth. You just get it. You don't have to go on some sort of quest. You receive it by grace. This is threatening to some people—Naaman being a perfect example.

Naaman, a Syrian general, is stricken with leprosy. He hears via a young slave girl about the powerful God of Israel, so he goes to Israel to seek healing and salvation. You can tell by the text that Naaman understands himself to be on a quest. He goes with gold and treasure to purchase whatever he needs, with a sword ready to do some great deed because he is a man of prowess and valor, and with letters of recommendations from his king.

When he arrives at the prophet's house, Elisha doesn't even come out to meet him. Instead, the servant of Elisha tells Naaman to go wash in the Jordan River. Naaman is absolutely furious, and he goes away angry. His servants go after him and say, "If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" And that is the point! Naaman is like all people—if there is salvation, we are going to earn it. We have to prove our worth; we have to bring out our sword; we have to do some great deed; we have to be good people.

Naaman expected Elisha to tell him to perform some incredible feat or to purchase his healing at great cost or to recount all the things he had done to deserve it. He surely thinks, "Any idiot can wash in the Jordan River; any child can wash in the Jordan River. What kind of God sets the bar of salvation so low?"

The answer is that we have a God so incredibly loving that salvation is all of grace. But that bar is actually not low. Naaman thinks it is too low for him, but it is actually too high for him.

There are two things that the offer of free grace demands you give up. It demands and requires that you lose your pride, because you have to admit you are a sinner and need to be saved by grace. It also demands that you give up control of your life. If you could win your salvation or the kingdom or eternal life through some great quest, then you would have your rights. But if you owe absolutely everything to God's mercy, then you owe him everything, your whole life.

Pride and control are both characteristics Naaman personified. But he had to give up both of them to receive the free grace that was being offered to him. And why is it that Naaman is saved? It is because he has a suffering servant in his life who forgives him—the little slave girl from Israel. In this story it is this little slave girl who points to the Suffering Servant who forgives us.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand grace.

Materials: 2 identical sets of large cards with a missing word written/printed on each (see below); gift box from previous activity; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, ask: “What did Naaman get as a gift? Correct, he was healed from his illness. Let’s look at the story again.”
2. Assign half the circle as team 1 and the other half as team 2 and give each a set of cards out of the gift box. Ask the children to spread out the cards in front of them on the floor so that they can see what is written on all the cards.
3. Explain the game: You are going to call out the main events in the story but there is a word that will be missing. Each team must decide together which card has the missing word. One person from the team should then run with the missing-word card to the center of the circle and say the word aloud (they should take turns to do this around the circle). The team that gets their player to the center first with the correct card gets to answer a bonus question as a team.
4. Read aloud the story in the following table, pausing where there is an ellipsis (...). Allow the teams to choose the missing-word card and two players to run to the center and say the word. Ask the bonus question to the team that gets there first and use the comments. Then ask the players to put their cards in the box and sit back down. Say “Ready?” before moving on to the next part of the story.

STORY	MISSING WORD	BONUS QUESTION AND COMMENTS
Naaman thought he was very ...	IMPORTANT	Naaman was an important man, but what did Naaman do? Stand up if you think he was a shepherd. Stand up if you think he was in the army. Yes, he was in the army. Sit down.
But Naaman was very ...	SICK	Naaman was very sick. What was the illness called? Say it all together. Yes, leprosy.
There was a little slave girl who worked for Naaman, and she knew someone who could save Naaman. But there was a problem; Naaman was her ...	ENEMY	Why was Naaman an enemy of the little slave girl? Who thinks they know? Correct, Naaman had taken her family away and made her a slave.
But instead of hurting Naaman, the little girl ... him.	FORGAVE	Because she forgave him, she told him about a man in Israel. What was his name? Say it all together. Yes, Elisha.

STORY	MISSING WORD	BONUS QUESTION AND COMMENTS
Naaman decided to go to Israel. But he didn't go to Elisha. He decided that someone as important as him should get healed at the ...	PALACE	Naaman went to the palace of the king to get healed. Raise your hand if you think the king could heal Naaman. Raise your hand if you think the king could not heal Naaman. Correct, hands down.
Naaman asked the king to heal him, but the king replied, "Only ... can heal."	GOD	Why did Naaman go to the king first? Who thinks they know? Yes, he thought since he was so important, it would take someone important like a king to heal him.
Just then a message from Elisha arrived, so Naaman hurried to Elisha's house. But Elisha didn't come out; instead Naaman was greeted by a ...	SERVANT	How did Naaman feel when a servant greeted him instead of Elisha? Stand up if you think Naaman was angry. Correct, sit down.
The servant told Naaman to wash in the ...	RIVER	How did Naaman feel about that? Stand up if you think Naaman was angry. Correct, sit down.
Naaman rode off very angry because he thought he should have to do something important for God to ... him.	SAVE	Did Naaman need to do something important for God to save him? Raise your hand if you think yes. Raise your hand if you think no. Correct, hands down.
Finally Naaman agreed to wash in the river and instantly he was saved from his illness. Naaman wanted to pay Elisha, but Elisha said: "God healed you. It's ..."	FREE	Naaman thought he had to do something important so God would save him or that he had to pay something, but Elisha explained that it is free. Why is it free? Who thinks they know? Yes, it is a gift from God.
So Naaman was saved by God because of a little servant girl who forgave him.		Announce: "The End!"

5. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "You can see a picture of Naaman on your paper. Look at the questions near him."

6. Read the first question and possible answers aloud; then give a moment for the children to circle the correct answer, explaining that there may be more than one correct answer. Ask the children what they circled. Say: "Correct, you should have circled answers 'a' and 'b.' Naaman thought he could be saved by the king or by doing something important. But look at the next question: How was Naaman saved?"

7. Again, read the possible answers aloud; then give a moment for the children to circle the correct answer, explaining that there may be more than one correct answer. Ask the children what they circled. Say: "Yes, only answer 'c' is correct; Naaman was saved by a free gift from God. Last question: How are people today saved?"

8. Again, read the possible answers aloud; then give a moment for the children to circle the correct answer, explaining that there may be more than one correct answer. Ask the children what they circled, then say: “Only answer ‘c’ is correct.”

9. Say: “I had to come to you in the first game and give you the gift — there was nothing you could do to get it yourselves. God comes to us and gives us the gift of saving us — there is nothing we can do to get it ourselves. Like Naaman, some people think God will save them because of the things they have done — like going to church or being good or doing important things. But God saves us not because of anything we have done but because of something Jesus has done.”

Note: If you do not have enough time to complete the activity, skip all except the last two bonus questions.

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher. Each circle will then need to be divided into two teams, each team with a set of cards. Each teacher can then facilitate the activity with their circle, checking for understanding.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “Remember the end of the story: ‘Years later God was going to send another Servant, to forgive as the little servant girl did.’ That Servant is Jesus.”

Say: “Only Jesus can forgive us; only he can save us, and it is all a free gift. There is nothing we can do to earn it.”

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that we do not need to do anything to be saved, that it is a free gift. We can do nothing to earn it.

Ask a few of the children to pray, saying thank-you to God that Jesus is the one who forgives and saves.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “Our verse to memorize comes from the book of Isaiah. We are going to learn more about Isaiah next time, but his words tell us about how we are saved.”

☉ Announce the verse: “So, your verse to learn at home is Isaiah 53:6 — ‘The LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group. Explain that the “him” in the verse is Jesus.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.