

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany



The Children's Illustrated Bible

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Jesus and the disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught with authority, and not as the scribes. Just then a man with an unclean spirit cried out, "What are you doing with us? I know you are the Holy One of God." But Jesus said, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, shaking and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once Jesus' fame began to spread throughout Galilee.

—Mark 1:21–28 adapted

Jesus Cares for Us

Share the story of Jesus healing the man with an "unclean spirit" from Mark 1:21–28, showing Jesus in Capernaum in *The Children's Illustrated Bible*.

Discuss: In Jesus' time, people who were sick were thought to be sinners or overtaken by devils. They were cast out of their villages and not accepted by others. People described the man who yelled at Jesus as having an "unclean spirit." How would we describe the man today?

Jesus healed people everywhere he went. He healed the yelling man to restore him to who he really was. The people were excited that "evil spirits obeyed Jesus," but the greater miracle was that Jesus saw the good in the man and took the bad "spirit" out of him. Do we see others as separate from their behavior, illnesses, or differences?

Identify everyone around the room by name. Then invite them to "act up," making noises, kicking around (not hurting anyone), growling, snarling, or other. Ask them to stop. Discuss: Was that you or was that your behavior? How are the two different? Do you ever choose to do things that aren't really who you are?

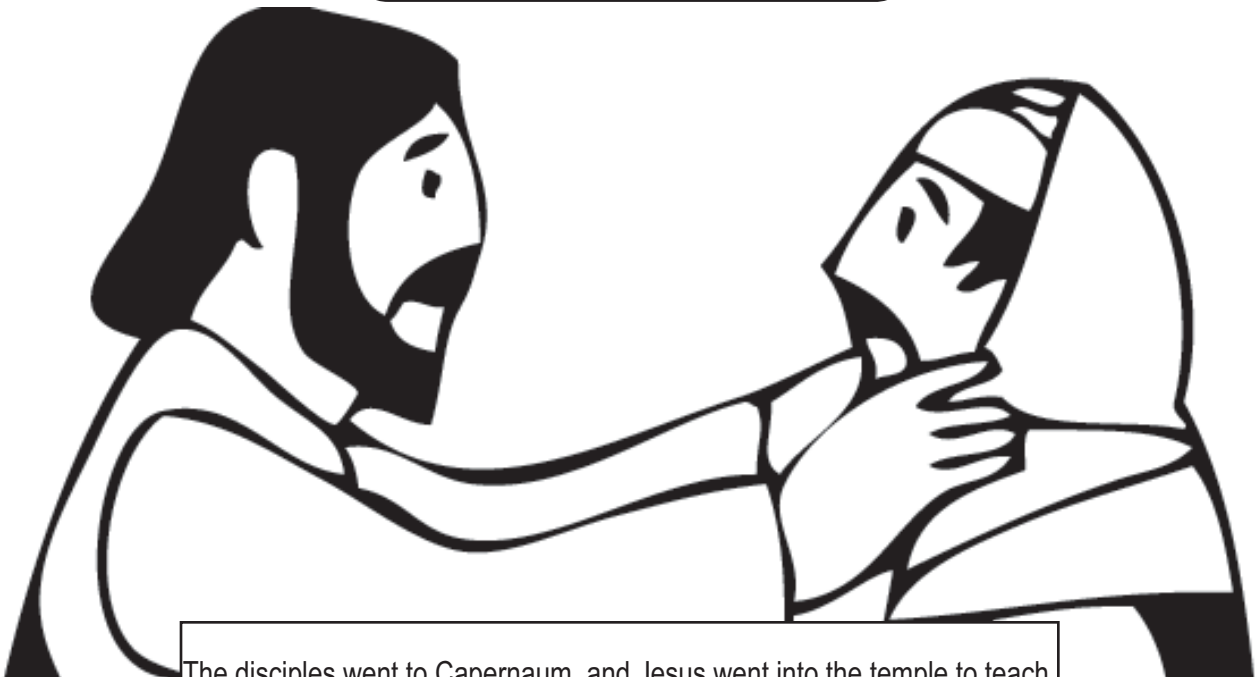
Who You Really Are

Give kids a sheet of paper to draw a picture of themselves. When they are done, tape a sheet of clear acetate or tissue paper over their drawings and have them write or draw on it (with crayon) bad choices or actions they sometimes make. When all are done, talk about how these choices "cover them up," making it hard to see who they really are. Begin a circle prayer asking Jesus to take away their bad choices. They ask each kid to pull off the overlay paper, wad it up, and see that the behaviors are gone. You are the way God created you! Jesus heals you to be who you really are!



"P" for Praise

Read Psalm 111:1–4, 9, 10, a beautiful psalm of praise. Have kids write their own psalm (or poem) starting with the word "Praise." Create psalm paper by writing the first "P" very large and in outline format (you may create this paper before class, or kids may do this). Kids can then add their psalm to the paper and decorate the letter "P" as is seen in Renaissance illuminations of the scriptures.



The disciples went to Capernaum, and Jesus went into the temple to teach. He taught with power and authority. A sick man filled with a bad spirit came up to him and said, "What do you want with us, Jesus?" But Jesus said, "Come out of him!" and the bad spirit left the man. Everyone was amazed at Jesus' power and his fame spread around Galilee.
—Mark 1:21–28 adapted

What does Jesus want us to do?

Fill in the missing letters.

Be h__mble.

Do go__d thing__.

Treat people fair__y.

Liste__ to Go__.

Lov__ those who are differe__t.

Make the wor__d great!

He__p others.

Pra__.

