

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

22. A LAME MAN IS HEALED

Bible Base: Acts 3: 1-31

Key Christian Belief: The Holy Spirit helps us to care for others.

Aim: To discover that Christians believe that God helps us to care for others.

You will need

- the PowerPoint presentation attached

Introduction

Choose volunteers to take part in some challenges to help you find out who has the strongest legs. E.g.

1. Who can jump the farthest from a standing start?
2. Who can stand on one leg for the longest time?
3. Who can stand with their legs farthest apart?
4. Sitting back to back with arms linked together, which pair can stand up fastest?

All of these exercises involved the volunteers using their legs. But suppose for a moment that you could not use your legs. How would you manage to get about? What help would you need? What would you miss being able to do?

Bible Story

Our story today is about a man who could not walk. Since the day he had been born, he had never been able to use his legs. He needed others to carry him wherever he wanted to go. He needed others to bring him anything that he needed. Growing up, he had not been able to take part in many of the sports and games that others around him enjoyed. But worst of all, now that he was grown up, he could not get a job as others did to earn the money he needed to look after himself. And so here he was, sitting outside the big temple in Jerusalem begging.

It was a good place to sit - there were lots of people coming and going throughout the day and on a good day his begging bowl would have lots of coins in it - mostly copper or silver. Once or twice he had found a gold coin in there amongst the rest but that was very unusual. He used to try to guess which of the people coming towards him would be the most generous - but he could never tell. Some rich-looking people would walk straight past him as if he wasn't there; others who didn't look as if they had very much themselves would reach into their pockets and take out a silver coin to put in his bowl.

He dreamed of what he would do if he had lots of silver and gold - some fancy new clothes, a tasty meal at a five-star inn, some new rugs or carpets for the house, perhaps. But mostly he had just enough for some bread and fish to eat each day and some oil for the lamps at home. He hadn't been able to buy any new clothes in ages.

One afternoon, Peter and John, two of Jesus followers, were going up to the temple to pray. They saw the man sitting there as usual and went over to speak to him.

'Hallo' the man thought to himself, 'I wonder how much they are going to give me?'

‘We haven’t any silver or gold’ Peter said and immediately the man’s heart sank. ‘But we will give you what we do have.’

‘I wonder what that can be’ the man thought to himself.

‘In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth’ said Peter, ‘stand up and walk!’

All of a sudden a strange feeling came into the man’s legs - something he had never felt before.

‘That’s odd’ he thought ‘I can wiggle my toes...I can bend my knees...I can lift my feet off the ground...I can stand...I can walk...I can jump!’

And there he was now in front of everyone walking and jumping and shouting praises to God at the top of his voice.

Soon a crowd had gathered round to see what had happened.

‘How come this man is able to walk now?’ they asked Peter and John in amazement.

‘It is by the power that comes from Jesus that this man has been healed’ said Peter. ‘Jesus was put to death on a cross - but God raised Him to life again. He is now in heaven and it is from there that he has sent us the Holy Spirit, just as He promised, so that we can bring God’s love to others just as He used to do when He was on earth.’

‘We cannot see Him but He is here all the same. The fact that this man has been healed shows that Jesus is alive and that all the promises He gave us are true. He is the One we must listen to and follow. If we put our trust in Him, God will forgive us for all the wrong things we have ever done and help us live as His friends now and forever!’

‘It’s true’ shouted the man. ‘Jesus really is alive! He gave His followers the power to make me well! Praise God!’

And off he went, skipping, jumping and dancing all the way home.

Conclusion

Before Jesus went back to heaven He gave His followers an important job to do. They were to care for others and share the Good News of God’s love with them just as He had done. He told them that He would send them an invisible helper, called the Holy Spirit, whom we heard about last week. With His help they would be able to do all that Jesus had done and more! They would be able to care for others in amazing ways.

One of the ways they would know the Holy Spirit was with them would be when He helped them do things for others that they would not have thought possible.

This does not mean that followers of Jesus are always able to make sick people better - although it does still happen - but Christians believe that as we pray for others and ask God to show us what we can do to help them, He will often answer our prayers and use us to make a difference in ways that will surprise us - and help us to know that the Holy Spirit is with us just as Jesus promised He would be.

It may be that He helps us to know exactly the right thing to say to someone. It may be that He puts it in our hearts to speak to someone, or to call them at just the right time. It may be that as we pray for someone, things begin to change.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps us as we learn to pray for others and care for them as Jesus would. Who will you reach out to and pray for this week?

Prayer

Song

You might use the song 'Silver And Gold Have I None' to finish the assembly.