

# all age main course

## the four friends

### THE FOUR FRIENDS

#### AIM

To explore the story of 'The four friends' as a story of friendship, and see what it says to us about our friendships.

#### YOU WILL NEED

- Copies of the handouts for this Bible study so everyone has one;
- Some coloured pencils, pens or crayons, and pencils or pens to write with.
- Some refreshments about half way through the session
- Small blank cards for 'friendship promises'

#### APPROACH TO THE BIBLE

You can use one of four approaches to the Bible with this Bible study. The one you choose will depend on your situation, the experience and style of the facilitators, the preferences of the group members, their ages and abilities and group size, for example.

You could

**Read** out the Bible passage from a written version of the Bible (Mark 2:1-12);

**Read** a story version of this passage from an illustrated Bible or children's Bible;

**Use** a Remembering the Bible strategy to remember the story together (see training materials on Remembering the Bible);

**Use** a retelling strategy where one person (or more) retells the story as they remember it to the whole group (this is Remembering the Bible for groups in which most people are struggling to remember or are not so confident at sharing what they remember).

#### TO BEGIN

Begin by asking people about their friends. This is not a competition to see who has the most friends. Rather it is about 'what makes a good friend?' Ask people to reflect on their own friends, old and new, to discuss, in small groups at first and then together, what they think about this question and their experiences of friendship.

#### THE BIBLE

Using your preferred method read, tell or retell the story of the Four Friends (the written version can be found at Mark 2:1-12 but if you are concentrating on the friendship aspect, you may want to stop after verse 6, depending on the age and ability of your group).

#### EXPLORING THE BIBLE STORY A BIT MORE

Give out the handouts, pens, crayons, etc and invite people to look at the pictures illustrating this story on the sheets. They may want to do this individually or in pairs or small groups. Invite people to think about the actions of the four friends. In each picture ask them to think about what it says about friendship? Consider questions like 'How do the friends feel now?' and 'How does the man feel?' and 'How does Jesus feel?' People might like to colour in the pictures and/or write stuff in the spaces provided. Working together may help those who struggle to do colouring or writing.

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At the end of the sheet there is a box 'What does this story tell us about friendship?' Words or pictures may feature here. When everyone has completed their sheets call the whole group back together and have a time of sharing of the responses. Allow plenty of time for this and if possible provide refreshments at this point to encourage the group.

### TAKING ACTION

We probably all like to think we are good at friendship, but it's not necessarily as easy as it looks. From what you have shared today, invite people to think about what they will now try to do as a friend. This can be an action

- Inside the church or outside;
- With one person or with several people.

Give out the small blank cards and invite people to write down their friendship promise. Offer help and encouragement as necessary.

Ask people to take their cards home to remind them of this pledge. You may want to refer back to these promises in a few weeks time to see how people are getting on.

### FINISH WITH PRAYER

God our friend  
As the four friends tried hard to help their friend meet Jesus,  
Please help me to keep my friendship promise.  
Amen

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more all bible studies you will find others on the website.

*[This is based on a bible Study by Joyce Berry, of Manor Road URC altered and expanded by Janet Lees]*

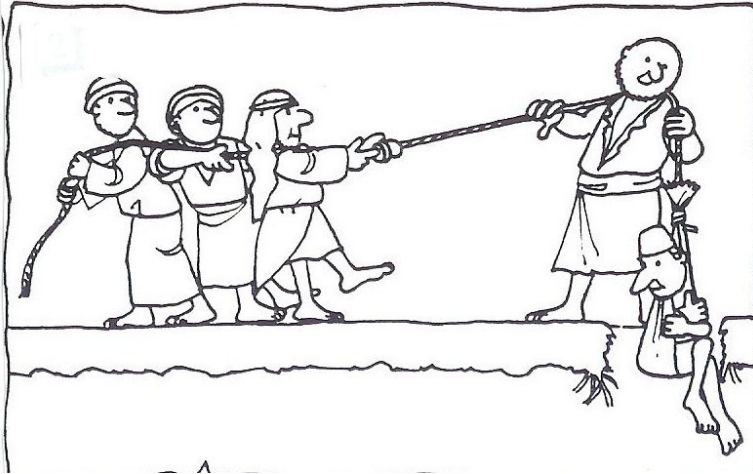
## JESUS THE HEALER



This story takes place in a house in Capernaum.  
It is a story of friendship and healing.

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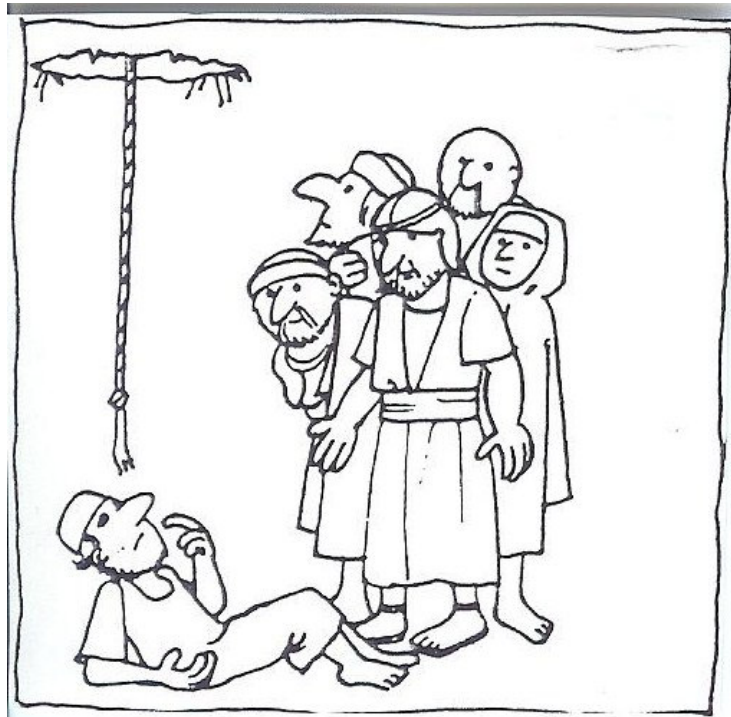
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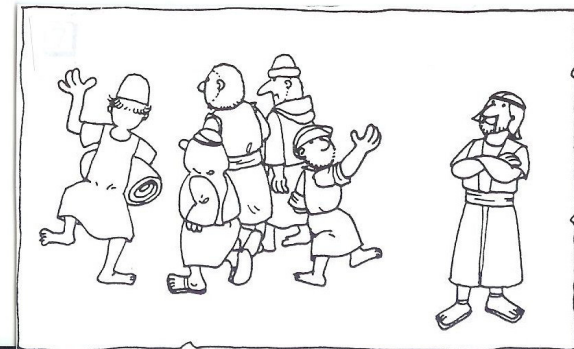
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What can we learn from this story about friendship?

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