

## Grade 6—Unit 9

# The Ministry of Jesus

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Jesus lived a life of compassion and service. He reached out to those without status, regardless of what others thought of him. With great compassion, Jesus healed those who were sick in mind, body, and spirit. Those actions challenged the cultural, religious, and political structures of Jesus' day and inevitably led to the cross.

### LESSONS

1. Making Friends with Outsiders
2. He Had Compassion on Them

# Unit 9: The Ministry of Jesus

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God. Some of the disciples might have hoped for a high position in the ruling party. Jesus showed a different way. Jesus made it clear that this was not a kingdom with a well-established pecking order or hierarchy. The little ones, weak ones, and powerless ones were invited to be a part of this kingdom—a kingdom of equality. Out of compassion, Jesus ministered acceptance and healing.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### Jesus Makes Friends with Outsiders

Jesus began his ministry by reading Scripture in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:14ff). The reading from Isaiah notes the types of people Jesus was eager to help: the poor, the blind, the prisoner, and the oppressed. Jesus identifies himself as the one to fulfill the messianic hopes in this prophecy.

As in any society, social rules in Jewish circles controlled the interactions between various groups in the society. Jesus crossed social boundaries to minister to people that other messianic movements ignored.

Donald B. Kraybill, sociologist and author of *The Upside Down Kingdom*, likens social relationships to a game of checkers. In any society, people and groups of people fit in certain social boxes. As in checkers, there are rules about crossing boundary lines between squares. In the game of social checkers, Jesus ignored the boundary rules. He did not allow social stratification and stereotypes to keep people out of the kingdom he was inaugurating.

Jesus was accused of eating with tax collectors and sinners. In his culture, table fellowship was socially significant. Eating with others was an act of blessing and showed spiritual fellowship. By eating with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus gave them honor and respect and included them in the kingdom of which he spoke.

Jews hated tax collectors because they cooperated with the Romans, who in the eyes of most Jews had no right to be rulers and collect taxes. The Romans gave tax contracts to the highest bidder. The tax contractor supervised others who did the collecting. Zacchaeus was likely one of these upper-level tax contractors. Tax collectors, limited only by their greed, demanded more than was due to the Romans. The term “tax collector” came to be synonymous with “thief.”

The term “sinners” covered a broad category. Sinners were almost anyone—from adulterers to those who did not keep the laws of religious purity by using proper washing procedures. Certain occupations put one in the sinner category. Tanners were despised because of their smelly, filthy work with the skins of dead animals.

Shepherds were considered a disreputable lot. The common people, known as the “people of the land,” were considered wretched sinners as well. The “social checkers” rules of Jesus’ day made these people outsiders. Jesus disregarded the rules about ritual purity, welcomed sinners, and proclaimed salvation to the household of the repentant Zacchaeus.

Women were another groups of outsiders. In Jesus’ time, the birth of a daughter was greeted with sorrow. The girl would grow up forbidden to study the Torah, excluded from public life, and destined to a position no higher than a slave in a future husband’s household. While there were probably exceptions to this low conception of women, the prevailing view was none too favorable.

Jesus wreaked havoc with the “social checkers” rules in his relationships with women, too. He commended Mary for sitting at his feet to listen to his teachings (Luke 10:38-42). He also allowed a group of women to follow him (Luke 8:1-3). Though a bleeding woman’s touch was considered unclean, Jesus had compassion for the woman who touched his hem—a woman whose 12-year hemorrhage had made her an untouchable in the community (Mark 5:25-34). Anything or anyone this woman touched would be made unclean. Those who were considered unclean were seen as unacceptable to God. They were forbidden to worship at the temple.

Many other things and people were unclean as well. Samaritans are a good example. Bread made by Samaritans, animals killed by Samaritans, the saliva of a Samaritan woman, any place where a Samaritan had slept, and any food or drink that had touched that place were considered unclean. A whole village became unclean if a Samaritan woman stayed there. Samaritans returned the favor by despising the Jews as well. Each thought their own temple was the best place to worship God. Samaritans had been a source of tension since Ezra and Nehemiah’s time. As in Ezra’s day, intermarriage was strictly forbidden.

Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan challenged the common Jewish view of Samaritans (Luke 9:25-37). It was easy to see through the callousness of the priests and Levites, who did not want to mess with a man who might die on their hands, thus making them unclean. Jesus could have made the hero of his story a Jew. Instead, he left everyone shaking in their sandals by choosing a despised Samaritan as the good guy.

In relating to the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus broke major “social checkers” boundary rules (John 4:1-42). Social custom allowed no conversation with this woman, but to her Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah.

Devout Jews did not want to be associated with Gentiles, either. Yet even Gentiles benefited from Jesus’ kindness and power. A Syrophenician woman (*a Gentile*) near Tyre (*an enemy city despised by the Jews*) brought her daughter to Jesus for healing (Mark 7:24-30). Jesus’ response to this woman appears to be rather sarcastic. He seems to be mocking the views of other persons in the room. Jesus promptly showed love by healing the child.

In another story, a Roman centurion (*a Gentile and member of the occupying forces*) is commended for his faith (Luke 19:1-9). The Gerasene man from whom Jesus exorcised demons was also from the Gentile side of the Sea of Galilee. Kraybill writes: “There can be no doubt. The new kingdom transcended the Jewish box . . . . The social barricades between Jew and Gentile crumbled in the presence of Jesus, the Messiah” (*The Upside Down Kingdom*, p. 213).

Time and again Jesus put aside his reputation to include those the rest of society considered unworthy. He touched these people in love and compassion. In order to heal lepers, Jesus also came into contact with unclean persons. A devout Jew avoided

lepers, both for health reasons and because the Law of Moses (Leviticus 13-15) declared them to be religiously unclean.

Though Jesus showed open-hearted commitment to the socially stigmatized, he did not avoid the respectable members of society or withhold invitation into God's kingdom from them. He debated with doctors of the law, conversed with the Pharisee, Nicodemus, and healed a synagogue leader's daughter. Jesus did not turn the well-bred members of society away. Rather, they were often scandalized by Jesus' inclusion of the poor, blind, and the oppressed. As we read the stories of Jesus' ministry to Samaritans, women, Gentiles, demon-possessed, tax collectors, sinners, and the diseased, we need to remember just how radical and scandalous the good news of the kingdom appeared to the people of that day.

### **Jesus Heals**

There are frequent stories of healing in the synoptic gospels, and they leave the impression that Jesus ministered to the whole person. That is, he was not a magician who simply fixed assorted ailments. Rather, he restored individuals in mind, body, and spirit.

Jesus healed out of love and compassion for the sick. Unlike many people, he did not believe the body was somehow bad and did not matter. He viewed a person's spirit, soul, and body as a whole. Unlike much of the world, both then and now, Jesus did not believe that sickness was a punishment for sin. Jesus showed us that we have a loving God. He did not believe sickness was somehow good for people. He did not ask if they had learned the proper lesson from their sickness. Because of deep love and compassion Jesus reached out, touched, and healed. He did not heal to prove he was the Messiah, although healing was a powerful sign of the kingdom of God. Jesus did not heal because someone had enough faith to deserve it, although lack of expectation on the part of the community negatively affected his healing ministry (Mark 6:5). In Jesus' ministry, we see the kingdom of God bursting forth to bring love, healing, and wholeness.

The early church continued Jesus' healing ministry as an integral part of their life together. Though Christian healing has never been totally extinguished, historical events and intellectual streams have pulled the church away from healing. The strongest intellectual stream in our world is materialism. Out of it have arisen two theological distortions concerning healing. One misconception is that healing just happened at that time and place to show Jesus' power and to give the church a jump start. This is known as *dispensationalism*.

The second misconception views healing acts in the Bible as something other than supernatural. This is called *theological liberalism*. The first approach gives us a God who resembles a business establishment offering a grand opening promotion to get people into the store. Later, the prices go up and business goes on as usual. The second approach gives us a God whose actions are limited to the accomplishments of human beings.

Both of these distorted views leave us distant from God and alone in our suffering. Christian healing can and should be a part of vital Christianity.

This background cannot begin to cover the many questions this issue raises. In the book *Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing*, Morton T. Kelsey summarizes the history of healing and gives an intelligent defense of Christian healing today. The loving care of a physician is part of God's healing, as well as anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and prayers. Sometimes the physical body is healed. Sometimes the spirit is healed of deep emotional pain. One of the most difficult questions is why some are healed and others are not. Kelsey quotes Ephesians 3:15b-19: "That

out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Kelsey then writes: “Healing, however sporadic in effect and however incompletely understood, is an important evidence of that love. To offer religious healing is one way in which Christians can express that love which is so much needed by people today” (p. 296).

Jesus, manifest in our hearts, has the power to change our lives. In our sin, we could each be considered an untouchable. Yet Jesus opens his loving arms and invites us in.

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Jesus’ ministry of compassion included the sick, forgotten, and socially stigmatized.
- Jesus wants us to value and include everyone.
- Christians should continue Jesus’ healing ministry.

## WORSHIP

Use any of the following songs:

“Lord, I want to be a Christian” (Lesson 1), p. 295

“For we are strangers no more” (Lesson 1), *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #322

“In your sickness” (Lesson 2), HWB #585

“Woman in the night,” verses 2 and 4 (Lesson 2), HWB #223

“When Jesus wept, the falling tear” (Lesson 2), HWB #234

## MEMORY PASSAGES

Luke 4:17-20 (Lesson 1)—main memory passage

James 5:16 (Lesson 2)—bonus memory verse

### Luke 4:17-20

*And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.*

*He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*

*Because he has anointed me*

*To bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives*

*And recovery of sight to the blind,*

*To let the oppressed go free,*

*To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.*

*The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.*

### James 5:16

*Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another,*

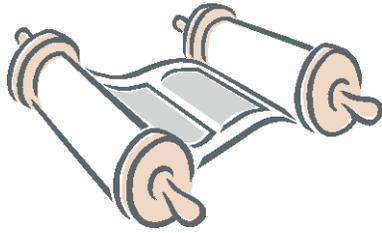
*so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.*

## **MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS**

When Jesus quoted Isaiah in the synagogue and introduced himself as the Lord's anointed, his public ministry began. The students have studied the Old Testament until this point, so this memory passage serves as a link between their previous studies and their new study of Jesus Christ. The quoted portion of Isaiah also summarizes Jesus' ministry and purpose on earth. In James 5:16, prayer is affirmed as an integral element of healing ministry—healing between people, personal healing, and physical healing.

## **ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING**

In Part 2 of the Unit 9 quiz, students describe examples of Jesus' healing ministry in their own words. In Lesson 1, students identify social stratification in their communities. This task is a delicate one, in that students must speak of other social groups with respect, even though society does not. Throughout this unit, students should learn to speak sensitively about outsiders. Watch for the language used in their responses to Part 3 of the Unit 9 quiz, and follow up with any students who do not honor others in their responses. Part 3 includes an action component, where students are expected to actively live out the example of Jesus. This requires internalizing Jesus' teachings and applying them to one's own situation.



And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah  
was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found  
the place where it was written:  
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he has anointed me  
To bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim  
release to the captives  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To let the oppressed go free,  
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."  
And he rolled up the scroll, gave it  
back to the attendant, and sat down.  
The eyes of all in the synagogue  
were fixed on him.

Luke 4:17-20

# The Ministry of Jesus

## LESSON 1: MAKING FRIENDS WITH OUTSIDERS

### Objective

Students will recognize how Jesus included outsiders and consider how they can do the same.

**Text:** Luke 4:17-20

### Key Concepts

- Jesus befriended people regardless of their social standing.
- In the kingdom of God, every person is someone important.
- God wants us to include persons who might be considered outsiders.

### Essential Questions

- How did Jesus treat outsiders in his time?
- How can you follow Jesus' example and include people who might be considered outsiders?

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Student Bibles
- “Social Boxes” handouts (pp. 291-294)
- “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian” (p. 295)
- Overhead projector or computer projector
- For Extend the Lesson: “Tony and the 2:00 Birthday Party” (p. 296)

### Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of the “Social Boxes” handouts, enough to give each student a copy of his/her role.
- Write the following questions on the board:
  1. Tell us about the people in your box. Who are you and where do you fit in society?
  2. I understand that you met Jesus. What would you like to tell us about that?
  3. Was there anything surprising about the way Jesus related to you?
- Make an overhead transparency or project the image of the song, “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian.”

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Give several minutes** for students to list the people their families invited into their homes in the last year. When they have finished, compile the lists in general categories on the board—grandparents, cousins, neighbors, best friends, church friends, etc. Then ask students to name general categories of people in their local area, such as upper-class, middle-class, impoverished, homeless, college students, immigrants, etc.

With sensitivity, ask the students to compare the two lists. Would any of the people in the first list also fit in the second list of categories? Why or why not? Is

it likely that certain people might not appear in certain categories? Identify the natural tendency of people to associate with people of similar interests and social position.

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Luke 4:17-20.** In Jesus' day, the social structure was as complex as it is for us today. In every society, some groups of people have more power and are valued more than others. But Jesus shows us who is valuable in God's kingdom. He sought to break down social barriers and welcome everyone into God's kingdom; he did not just associate with people of similar interests and social position.

Read the verses aloud. Jesus is stating his purpose and the types of people to whom he was sent. Explain that this is the memory work for this unit. Students will need to know it for the assessment at the end of the unit.

**3. Explain the social order** in Jesus' time: People and food were placed in categories of *clean* and *unclean*. To us, clean means the opposite of dirty. In Jesus' culture, something could be absolutely free from dirt and still be unclean. The best way to understand it is to think of foods you find acceptable and unacceptable. How many students just love grasshoppers for dinner? How about roast hamster? Chicken? Ham? Jewish people put animals in clean and unclean categories. Clean included acceptable meat animals, such as grasshoppers, but excluded ham. Jews also extended the categories of clean and unclean to groups of people or certain practices.

Today we also place people in "boxes." Those boxes could relate to religion, ethnic group, occupation, nationality, or wealth. In every society there are understandings about who associates with whom. In every society some boxes have more power than others. Some are more valued than others. Jesus shows us, however, what is valuable in the kingdom of God.

**4. "Social Boxes."** Students will learn about the social boxes during Jesus' time by being part of a group that belongs to a certain box. The groups will have time to read about the people from this box during Jesus' time. They will need to be ready to answer the teacher's questions about the people in their box.

Divide students into 7 groups and distribute the handouts so that each group represents a different social box. (*All students in the same group should have a copy of the same handout.*) They will need to read the descriptions of their different social identities and discuss responses to the questions on the board. (*See Teacher Preparation, step 2.*) After groups have discussed the questions and their roles, interview them about their position in society and their encounter with Jesus.

**5. Identify the social boxes** that exist in students' lives today. In a school setting, students are often categorized by their grades, their extracurricular activities, or family backgrounds. Be sure that students are sensitive and honor all people as equals when they discuss these social boxes.

**6. Lead a time of silent prayer**, inviting students to tell God one tangible way they will follow Jesus' example and interact with outsiders in their lives. Assign them the task of doing this, explaining that they will report about their experiences in the Unit 9 quiz.

**7. Sing "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian,"** projecting the image of the music.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Plan a field trip** in which students can interact with persons who are not usually in their social circles. This could include a trip to a retirement home, soup kitchen, or community day care facility.
- **Read “Tony and the 2:00 Birthday Party”** (p. 296). Ask students to share their responses to his unusual idea. Would they have wanted to participate in throwing the 2:00 birthday party? Invite them to share actual stories or new ideas of ways their churches—or better yet, your class—can follow Jesus’ example in a similar way.
- **Memory work.** Give time for students to practice memorizing Luke 4:17-20.

## Tax Collectors

Social Box 1—Two or more students



**One of you will be Matthew, a tax collector.**  
**One of you will be Zacchaeus, a tax collector.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures:** *Luke 19:1-10; Matthew 9:9-13*

**Information:** Jews hated tax collectors, and they had good reason. Tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes for the Romans. A “head honcho” tax collector (*as Zacchaeus probably was*) would promise the Roman rulers to collect a certain amount of taxes. Whoever promised the highest amount would get the job. All of the tax collectors, from the lowest to the head guy, wanted to make money, so they charged extra to keep for themselves. It was legal, but it was a dirty trick, and they deserved to be thought of as thieves. Most people could hardly scrape together enough to eat, but they had to pay the greedy tax collector whatever he demanded.

Tax collectors had “filthy money.” Respectable people wanted nothing to do with them. They didn’t want to eat with them, because eating with someone was the same as giving that person a blessing.

## Sinners

Social Box 2—Two or more students

**One of you will be the woman with the ointment.**  
**One of you will be a sinner with whom Jesus ate.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures:** *Luke 7:36-50; Luke 15:1-2; Mark 2:15-17*

**Information:** Sinners are bad people, right? Robbery and adultery could put you in this box. But in Jesus’ day, you could also be put in this category by not keeping the laws about washing. Or you could get into this box because your job was being a tanner (*working with smelly animal skins*) or a shepherd.

We aren’t sure who all was included in the sinner category, but they were definitely not the type of people you’d invite to your dinner table. And the Jews believed that sinners were definitely not acceptable to God. Eating with someone like this showed you were one of them and that you wanted them to be blessed by God.



## Gentiles

Social Box 3—Two or more students

**One of you will be the Greek woman. One of you will be the Roman centurian.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures: Matthew 8:5-13; Mark 7:24-28**

**Information:** Jesus was a Jew. Jews usually had nothing to do with Gentiles. Anyone who was not a Samaritan or a Jew was a Gentile. Gentiles usually worshipped many gods. They were considered unclean and outside the blessing of God. The Jews called Gentiles “dogs.” Dogs were despised animals in that time and place. No one expected the Messiah to include the Gentiles.



Although the centurion in the Scriptures above had won the respect of the people, Romans were especially hated because they ruled the country by military force.

In the story about the Greek woman, it sounds as if Jesus as being nasty with his comment about dogs. Some people think he was just repeating what other Jews said, rather than what he felt himself. He may have said it with a twinkle in his eye, as if to say, “Woman, are you forgetting what people like me usually think of you?” The important thing is that Jesus rewarded her faith and healed her daughter.

## Lepers

Social Box 4—Two or more students

**One of you will be the Samaritan leper. (Read the information for the Samaritan box.)**  
**One of you will be the leper of Matthew 8.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures: Leviticus 13:1-3; Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 17:11-19**

**Information:** Lepers were supposed to live outside the city, because they had a skin disease. Going to the temple for worship was totally out of the question. A leper was no longer part of normal society. There were two reasons to not touch a leper. One: you could get the disease. Two: to touch a leper would make you unclean, and you would have to go through a special washing ceremony to be able to worship God again. Nobody wanted to touch anything that had been touched by a leper.



## Women

Social Box 5—Three or more students

**One of you will be Mary. One of you will be one of the group of women followers. One of you will be the woman in Mark 5.**

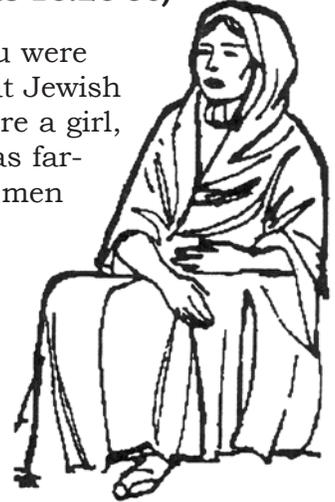
Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures: Luke 10:38-42; Luke 8:1-3; Mark 5:24-34 (and Leviticus 15:25-30)**

**Information:** As a woman, you could not testify in court, because you were thought to be a liar. You were not allowed to study the Torah, the great Jewish law. All the boys went to the synagogue to study, but because you were a girl, you were not allowed to do that. The court of women in the temple was farther away from the altar than the worship area of Jewish men. Some men regularly thanked God that they had not been born a woman.

A wife had about the same social position as a Gentile slave. Men who cared about their reputations did not speak to women in public. Rabbis and teachers would not want a group of women following them around. It was not acceptable.

The woman who had been bleeding for 12 years was seen as unclean the whole time. No one wanted to have contact with her. Anything she touched became unclean.



## Respectable Citizens

Social Box 6—Three or more students

**One of you will be Joseph of Arimathea. One of you will be Nicodemus. One of you will be Jairus, the synagogue ruler.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures: Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-39; John 3:1-3**



**Information:** Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and Jairus were the kind of people that got invited to meals. They were the social insiders. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. *(Sometimes we think of the Pharisees as the bad guys. They were actually sincere, religious people. They were probably a lot like many church people today.)* Jairus enjoyed the status of a synagogue priest.

# Samaritans

Social Box 7—Two or more students

**One of you will be the Samaritan woman.**

**One of you will be a Samaritan who just heard the surprising news that Jesus chose a Samaritan as the hero in one of his stories.**

Using the following information and Scripture passages, prepare what you will say to the interview questions. Question 1 may be answered by anyone in your box.

**Scriptures:** *Luke 9:51-56; John 4:1-26, 39-41; Luke 10:25-37*

**Information:** Jews and Samaritans hated each other. Each group thought they had the right place to worship. They kept the hatred alive by the way they treated each other.

The Jews said Samaritans were half-breeds, because they had intermarried with foreigners 400 years earlier. They said Samaritans were unclean. This didn't mean they were dirty, slovenly people. According to the Jews, Samaritan women were especially unclean. Anything they touched was unclean. If a Samaritan woman stayed in a village, the whole village had to do special things to remove the uncleanness. No Jew, especially no Jewish man, would speak to or accept food or water from a Samaritan woman.

Sometimes we tell the story of the Good Samaritan to show that people should help anyone in need. But that wasn't the point of Jesus' story. Everyone listening to the story already believed people should help those in need. They knew the priest and Levite had done the wrong thing to pass by without helping, and were anxiously waiting to see who the hero would be. Surprise! Jesus chose a hated Samaritan to be the hero—someone most people would have expected to be up to no good, someone they might have felt like spitting on.



# Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

African American Spiritual

Traditional Melody

1 Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian In my heart, in my heart;  
2 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing In my heart, in my heart;  
3 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly In my heart, in my heart;  
4 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus In my heart, in my heart;

Lord, I want to be a Chris - tian In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more lov - ing In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more ho - ly In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Je - sus In my heart.

In my heart, In my heart, In my heart,  
In my heart, In my heart, In my heart,

Lord, I want to be a Chris - tian In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more lov - ing In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more ho - ly In my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Je - sus In my heart.

(Copied from *Assembly Songs*, © 1983 by Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa., and Faith & Life Press, Newton, Ks. 67114. Used by permission.)

## Tony and the 2:00 Birthday Party



*Tony tore two sheets from his yellow legal pad, wadded them up, and pitched them into the wastebasket. He glanced wearily at the clock. It was almost 2:00 in the morning, and he just couldn't get his thoughts together for the youth retreat tomorrow night. He didn't have much time left, and he was the leader of the retreat.*

"I've got to take a break," he said to himself. So he went to the local diner to get a cup of coffee. While he sat at the counter, sipping his coffee, three scraggly-looking men came in. In a half-drunk voice, one said to the others, "Tomorrow's my birthday."

"So what," said another voice.

After they left, Tony asked the waiter, "Do you know those guys?"

"Naw," said the waiter, "but they come in here every night about this time. They've got some kind of crummy night watchman jobs over at the factory."

"I heard that one guy say he was having a birthday tomorrow," said Tony. "He'll be here around 2:00 tomorrow morning. What do you say we throw him a party?"

"Sure, why not?" replied the waiter.

So Tony bought balloons, decorations, and a big birthday cake. He got a bunch of the kids from the youth retreat to go with him, and the next night when the three men came into the diner, it was full of people singing "Happy Birthday" to the man named Rob.

At first, Rob was speechless. Then he pulled himself together and asked if he could take the cake home with him instead of eating it. He wanted to look at it a while, because no one had ever given a cake to him before in his life.

After the party, the waiter said to Tony, "I'll bet you belong to some church."

"Yeah," said Tony. "I belong to a church that gives parties for lonely people with nowhere to go at 2:00 in the morning."

"I just might join a church like that," said the waiter.

# The Ministry of Jesus

## LESSON 2: HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM

### Objective

Students will read and summarize various accounts of Jesus' healing ministry.

**Text:** Passages from the Gospels; James 5:14-16

### Key Concepts

- Jesus healed out of love and compassion.

### Essential Questions

- In what situations did Jesus heal people?

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Student Bibles
- “Jesus’ Healing Ministry” (p. 299)

### Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of “Jesus’ Healing Ministry,” one per student

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Explain that today** you will be looking at examples of times Jesus healed others. Ask, “Why do you think Jesus healed people?” List students’ responses on the board and talk about them. If “To prove he was God’s son” is listed, gently point out that this view, while commonly held, is not referenced anywhere in the Bible.

### LESSON STEPS

**1. “Jesus’ Healing Ministry.”** Distribute the student page and student Bibles. Pair up students and have them look up the references and summarize them.

**2. Read James 5:14-16 aloud** as a class, repeating verse 16 several times for memorization. Explain that this is a bonus memory verse that can give students extra credit for the assessment at the end of the unit.

**3. Invite students to share stories** about people they know who they believe were healed by God’s power. Then invite them to share about people they know who were not healed. Recognize that just as Jesus did not heal every sick person in his time, God doesn’t heal every sick person either.

Challenge students to think about this question: Why do we pray for healing? Sometimes prayer can open our minds to discover what God wants to do in our lives. Other times we might learn that God has a different plan for us than we expected. While we don’t understand why some people are healed and not others, we know that God always responds to our prayers by changing us and being near to those we pray for.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Invite one of the students' pastors** to visit your class and share about an anointing service. Your guest should describe what an anointing service is, and that it is often performed when someone is hurting in some way. It's helpful if those being anointed see it as a way of committing themselves and their afflictions to the Lord, rather than as a guarantee of physical recovery or a replacement for medical care. The focus of such services should be on God, and God's power to make people whole. It is God who heals. The service helps the persons to know that God is near and that they are surrounded by others who love them. You may want to consider including a time of worship and anointing in class.

- **Interviews about healing.** Give an assignment for students to interview family members or friends who can share experiences of God's healing. Maybe someone knows of a physical healing that can be shared with the class. Perhaps a long animosity between two people has been healed, and the two can now think of each other without anger. Maybe someone has been healed of a weakness, such as swearing, alcohol, overeating, etc. Talk about how healing may take a lot of work on the part of many different people. God is working in all of these situations in different ways. *Note: You may choose to have students retell these stories through creative writing, playwriting, storytelling, or art.*

- **Memory work.** Give time for students to work on the Luke 4:17-20 memory passage. Explain that the James 5:16 memorization will give them bonus points on the assessment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Jesus' Healing Ministry

Look up these accounts of Jesus' healing ministry and fill in the information. They represent only half of Jesus' healing stories in the Bible!



<i>Reference</i>	<i>Person Healed</i>	<i>Method</i>
<b>Matthew 8:2-4</b>		
<b>Matthew 8:16</b>		
<b>Matthew 9:2-7</b>		
<b>Matthew 14:35-36</b>		
<b>Mark 3:1-5</b>		
<b>Mark 5:25-34</b>		
<b>Mark 5:35-43</b>		
<b>Mark 7:32-35</b>		
<b>Mark 8:22-26</b>		
<b>Luke 4:33-37</b>		
<b>Luke 4:38-39</b>		
<b>Luke 8:27-39</b>		
<b>John 4:46-53</b>		
<b>John 5:2-9</b>		
<b>John 9:1-7</b>		
<b>John 11:1-44</b>		

**ANSWER KEY**

# Jesus' Healing Ministry

Look up these accounts of Jesus' healing ministry and fill in the information. They represent only half of Jesus' healing stories in the Bible!



<b>Reference</b>	<b>Person Healed</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>Matthew 8:2-4</b>	<i>Man with leprosy</i>	<i>Jesus touched him.</i>
<b>Matthew 8:16</b>	<i>Demon-possessed</i>	<i>Jesus spoke and the demons left.</i>
<b>Matthew 9:2-7</b>	<i>Paralytic</i>	<i>Jesus forgave his sins and told him to get up.</i>
<b>Matthew 14:35-36</b>	<i>Sick people</i>	<i>People touched Jesus' cloak.</i>
<b>Mark 3:1-5</b>	<i>Man with shriveled hand</i>	<i>Man stretched out his hand.</i>
<b>Mark 5:25-34</b>	<i>Bleeding woman</i>	<i>Woman had faith and touched Jesus' cloak.</i>
<b>Mark 5:35-43</b>	<i>Jairus' dead daughter</i>	<i>Jesus touched girl's hand and told her to get up.</i>
<b>Mark 7:32-35</b>	<i>Deaf and nearly mute man</i>	<i>Jesus touched man's ears and tongue.</i>
<b>Mark 8:22-26</b>	<i>Blind man</i>	<i>Jesus spit on and touched man's eyes.</i>
<b>Luke 4:33-37</b>	<i>Demon-possessed man</i>	<i>Jesus commanded demons to come out.</i>
<b>Luke 4:38-39</b>	<i>Simon's mother with fever</i>	<i>Jesus rebuked the fever.</i>
<b>Luke 8:27-39</b>	<i>Demon-possessed man</i>	<i>Jesus allowed demons to go into pigs.</i>
<b>John 4:46-53</b>	<i>Royal official's sick son</i>	<i>Jesus said the boy would live, and the father believed.</i>
<b>John 5:2-9</b>	<i>Invalid</i>	<i>Jesus told him to pick up his mat and walk.</i>
<b>John 9:1-7</b>	<i>Man blind from birth</i>	<i>Jesus spit, made mud, and put it on man's eyes; man washed in Pool of Siloam.</i>
<b>John 11:1-44</b>	<i>Lazarus, dead and in grave</i>	<i>Jesus prayed and told Lazarus to come out.</i>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Ministry of Jesus: Unit 9 Quiz

### Part 1: Memory Passages

*Write out, or say aloud to your teacher, the memory passage for this unit: Luke 4:17-20. You will receive extra points if you have memorized the bonus memory verse, James 5:16.*

### Part 2: Accounts of Jesus' Healing

*Describe in writing or draw detailed cartoon sketches of five different times when Jesus healed people, as found in the New Testament. You do not need to include the reference, but be sure to include who was healed and the method Jesus used to heal them.*

### Part 3: Personal Assignment

*In Lesson 1, you were assigned the task of reaching out to an outsider. On the back of this sheet, explain how you did this, and what the person's response was.*

*If you did not complete the assignment, explain why and describe your feelings about reaching out toward outsiders.*

## ANSWER KEY

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*Refer to the Answer Key for Lesson 2's student page (p. 300).*

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*Grade according to how thoughtfully the student answers the question.*