

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!

Bible Story: Jesus Heals the Blind Man • *John 9*

Bottom Line: God made you to trust Him.

Memory Verse: "Let your light shine so others can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven." *Matthew 5:16 NIV*

GET READY

Prepare ahead of time for 4th–5th grade Small Groups:

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (CHOOSE AS MANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES AS YOU LIKE.)

* If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #2.

1. MUD MASKS (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

- Several plastic tubs of wet sand
- Plastic spoons, cups, etc., to shape the sand
- Pipe cleaners in several colors and lengths
- Wet wipes

2. TRUST WALK (*application activity*)

- Blindfolds
- Obstacle course elements: chairs to walk around, tables to duck under, cones to hop over, etc.
- A few plates of raw eggs (in the shell), or a similarly "icky" obstacle

3. SHADOW HANDS (*memory verse activity*)

- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Pens
- Flashlights; 1 for every 2 kids
- Bibles

PRAYER

- Blueprints from yesterday (and extras for new kids)
- Pens or pencils

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Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (SMALL GROUPS, 25 MINUTES)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Mud Masks (application activity / review the Bible story)



What You Need: Plastic tubs of wet sand; plastic spoons, cups, etc; pipe cleaners in several colors and lengths; wet wipes



What You Do:

- Gather the kids around the tubs of wet sand and set the plastic spoons/cups in the tubs. Set the pipe cleaners nearby.
- Tell kids to make a self-portrait of their faces in the sand by molding a face shape and then decorating it with the pipe cleaners. Allow for plenty of time for do-overs.
- Look at each portrait and admire the differences in each one. Hand out the wet wipes so everyone can clean up and then gather around the tubs for discussion.



What You Say:

"Nice looking portraits! Now, you all trusted me when I told you to play in the mud and make pictures. What if I had told you to put the mud on your face? Now, I am definitely NOT TELLING you to do that, so don't get any ideas. But what if I had? What if it wasn't nice, clean sand but smelly mud? (*Allow for answers, but don't let it get too silly.*) In our Bible story today, the blind man showed that he trusted Jesus by accepting the mud on his eyes and then going to the pool to wash it off, just as Jesus had said. He didn't know what would happen next, but he trusted Jesus. **[Make It Personal] (Share about a time when you trusted God even when you didn't know what would happen, like when you were kind to an enemy, or you did the right thing even though the outcome might hurt you.)** I learned what the man in our story knew right from the start—that **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him.**"

*2. Trust Walk (application activity)



What You Need: Blindfolds, obstacle course elements, a few plates of raw eggs in the shell (or a similarly “icky” obstacle)



What You Do:

- Beforehand, set up an obstacle course in your small group area. Set the plates of eggs around the course. Let the kids see the course, and point out the places where they’ll need to duck, hop, or swerve to avoid the “traps.”
- Blindfold one kid and tell him that you’ll guide him through the course with your voice. Have an assistant small group leader remove the “traps” and perhaps an obstacle or two.
- Guide the kid through the obstacle course with your voice, telling him when/where/how to move. Be sure to lead him through an area where the traps were, and straight through the missing obstacles.
- The player may balk when he thinks he’s stepping into an icky “trap” or duck when he thinks he may bump his head on a nonexistent obstacle.
- Let other kids play too, varying the placement of the obstacles and traps each time.



What You Say:

“Nice work navigating our trust walk! You really had to trust your leader not to bring you into something icky or trap you under a chair or walk you straight out the door. Why did you trust me? *(Pause for answers.)* You’re all right. I’m in charge here, I care about you because I’m your small group leader, I wasn’t blindfolded and could see the course, and—there’s another important part—who do you think made this whole course in the first place? Me! You could trust me to guide you because I made this course. There’s nothing about it I don’t know, and no obstacle I couldn’t have moved to get you through it in one piece. That’s why there’s really two parts to our most important thing today: **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him.**

“We heard yesterday that God made you and knows all about you, and that’s a big reason why you can trust Him. And all of the reasons why you trusted me in the obstacle course are reasons why you can trust Him: God is in charge of the whole universe, AND He loves and cares for you, AND He knows everything about our lives and futures, AND He made you so He knows all about you. You might face a situation that’s confusing or even frightening like your parents arguing, or your friends acting mean all of a sudden, and you need to remember that **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him.** Even if you’re not sure of what happens next, remember that God knows, and He will take care of you.”

3. Shadow Hands (memory verse activity)



What You Need: Construction paper, crayons, pens, flashlights, Bibles



What You Do:

- Read Matthew 5:16 out loud from a Bible and encourage kids to keep their Bibles open to that page.
- Pair kids and hand out construction paper, crayons, pens, and flashlights.
- While one child holds the flashlight, the other uses the crayon to trace the shadow of their non-writing hand on construction paper. Then they switch.
- You may need to dim the lights in your area, or bring some towels or blankets kids can hide under so that the flashlight shows up.
- Using the pens, encourage them to write the verse along the outline of their hand and then decorate the page with crayon stars.



What You Say:

“Our verse reminds us that our good deeds—the right choices we make and the kindness we show others—shine a light so that everyone can see God’s goodness. What happened when you put your hand in between the light and the paper? Right, it made a dark shadow. Could you still see the light around it? When we trust God even through difficult circumstances, our light still shines. There may be things that try to block your shininess. Maybe you are having a hard time in school, or you feel left out by other kids on your team, or your family is going through a really rough time. Those things don’t have to make you stop trusting God. They can actually make your trust in God even shinier. Other people can see that you trust God and He is with you through bad times and good. In hard times, don’t forget that **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him.**”

Optional Additional Discussion Questions

- We just talked about times it was hard to trust God and the difficulties that life throws at us. Read John 9:3, and think about the part where Jesus says, “[The man] was born blind so that God’s power could be shown by what’s going to happen” (NIV). Jesus knew what would happen next, and the verse says that during this man’s whole, hard life, God had planned for the miracle Jesus would do to make the man see. What things are hard in your life that God might be planning to use for good? When is it hard to trust God’s plan in your life?
- In our Bible story, the blind man who could see told everyone—even the angry Pharisees—about what Jesus had done when he trusted Him. How can you show that you trust God? Who could you tell that **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him?**

Pray and Dismiss



What You Need: Blueprints, pens or pencils



What You Do:

- Hand out blueprints and writing utensils.
- Allow several minutes for kids to draw or write their thoughts for the day in the provided space. If anyone finishes early and/or gets rowdy, ask them to share what they wrote or to help put away the supplies from small group so that the group is ready to travel after prayer.
- Prompt the group to consider these questions for their journaling:
 - » This summer, when do I need to trust God the most?
 - » What's a specific situation in which I need to remember God made me to trust Him?
 - » Is there something hard I have to do, like the blind man needed to put mud on his face and go across town, or like being kind to someone who is mean to me or sharing better with my siblings, to show that I trust God?
- Collect the blueprints when everyone has finished and close in prayer.



What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for making us and for helping us to trust You. Please be with us today and show us how to shine even in hard times. In Jesus' name, amen. Today, this week, this month, even this year, don't forget that even in difficult times, **[Bottom Line] God made you to trust Him.**"

Travel Time (use these questions to continue conversation while walking to the next activity track)

- What kind of expression did your mud portrait have? Happy, sad, silly?
- Were you scared you'd step in the [eggs/icky trap]?
- Who do you think walked through the course with the most trust? Who looked the most surprised when they didn't step in a trap?
- Did you draw a big outline of your hand shadow or a small one?
- What do you think the blind man was thinking when Jesus made mud and pushed it in his eyes? Was he a little grossed out, or curious?
- I think it's really interesting that the Bible says Jesus spit! Maybe you could show your parents that verse; but I still don't think they'll let you spit at the dinner table!