Putting our hands to serve Him
– helping each other


The story of Jesus and the healing of a paralysed man who couldn’t walk is found in the three books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark and Luke. I think a lot of people in Galilee would have heard about this event. It was so amazing. That’s why it got written down in three places by three writers. It’s obviously important – so let’s see what we can learn from it 2,000 years later.

CUT LOTS OF SHAPES OF A HAND IN PAPER. (You could draw round hands). Now ask the children, “What do you think this story teaches us?” WRITE ONE ANSWER PER HAND AND STICK EACH HAND ON A BOARD, TRY AND FIND ONE WORD FROM WHAT EACH CHILD SAYS.

So this is a story of hands. Four men working together for one purpose. How many hands were there? The four men helped a fifth man, a man who couldn’t walk.

Jesus’ uses his hands. He bring the power of forgiveness and the miracle of healing.

The account makes us think about how we can help each other and how we can help other children at risk in our city.

United: how were the men of story able to work together?

GET 4 CHILDREN TO CARRY A FIFTH ON A SHEET OR STRETCHER. ASK THEM TO REPEAT BUT EACH TO TRY AND GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

The four men who carried their friend to Jesus had one aim: they saw their friend needed help. He was paralysed and unable to walk. They had heard about Jesus. They believed that bringing him to the hands of Jesus was the answer. 3 more questions; think how these show us how hands can serve together for children and young people suffering and in danger in our city.

i) The paralytic needed help – he couldn’t get to Jesus on his own. Do you think he was happy to be carried or did he wriggle off the stretcher? We can only help those who want to be helped.

ii) Did all five have faith, a trust they all shared? The paralysed man and his friends had faith that Jesus will be able to heal. Perhaps one or two had more doubts than the others but did they all have some trust that Jesus could help?

iii) Do you think they prayed before they left the paralysed man’s house? Is that what united them?

Obstacles: what happened when it turned out much more difficult than they imagined?

The men tried to take their friend into the house to lay him before Jesus. However, when they got there they found they could not find a way to do so because of the crowd. Jesus was teaching and healing, probably hundreds had followed him and turned up in hope. The house was completely surrounded by people. Below are three more questions to think about.
MAKE A BARRICADE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM WITH TABLES OR CHAIRS OR ANYTHING TO HAND. Get half your family to link hand either side of the barricade to reach up to the walls so the room is completely divided. They must close their eyes but be as far as part as possible. 5 of the rest of the team has to get through to the other side without being noticed, under the linked arms of the other team. Their side can make distracting noises.

i) Having worked together with the same plan they got to the house where Jesus was, their plan suddenly appeared impossible. How could they get in to Jesus? Do we face things that at first seem impossible? How should we react?

ii) One of them has an idea to go up on the roof- what do you think the others said? Did they think it was a waste of time? Are we prepared to change our plans and do something different or even unusual?

iii) When on the roof, who had the idea to loosen some tiles? What did the others say? What did the paralysed man think about being let down. What did some of the men who were less sure say about what the house owner might say when his roof was messed up? When we try and help others in our city do we meet people who think it won’t work or it’s a waste of time?

**Results:** how many were affected by the fact the men kept on working together as a team?

It was quite a surprise. Suddenly the ceiling is landing dust and bits of masonry on the crowd below seated around Jesus. Do you think the crowd kept quiet? Get children to imagine what was said.

WRITE ANSWERS ON COLOURED BITS OF PAPER AND FIX TO A LONG PIECE OF STRING HELD BY TWO CHILDREN AT EACH END.

But Jesus never seems worried by an unexpected interruption. What about us. Do we get easily put off? Are we ready to be interrupted in the middle of doing something else, to help somebody?

Jesus is surrounded by doubters. Are we? Rather straight away carrying out the expected miracle, Jesus does something even more amazing: he forgives the sins of the paralysed man. “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” Do you think he had done wrong stuff? Yes, we all have! Jesus’ forgiveness is worth more, much more than healing and being able to walk again. It mean’s he will get to heaven. I wonder what Jesus was teaching about just before the roof fell in? ……And three more questions

i) What did Jesus see? “When he saw their faith.” (Mk 2:5) Jesus saw the faith of a team working together! Can we be a team like that?

ii) What was the outcome of all the men working together? “He got up, took his mat and walked out!” A miracle. A life completely restored. Who were muttering against Jesus? Why?

iii) Who were amazed? Everyone! See when we put our hand together to pray, work as a team, we get amazing results, even the whole city wakes up and notices. “We have never seen anything like this!”

**Using hands,** how can we bring our hands to serve Him for other children of our city?

TIE THE STRING OR ROPE ON WHICH YOU FIXED BITS OF PAPER WITH CROWD REACTIONS TO THE SHEET OR BLANKET ON WHICH THEY ACTED CARRYING A FIFTH PERSON. Now get all children to link hands into a chain to pull the blanket / sheet round the room.

Sit children down again. Check what they have learnt about using their hands to help others in the city. You can use the paper hands again from the beginning and reuse or add new ones. END WITH HANDS– CLAPPING, PRAYING THEN LIFTED AND PraISING.