

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY IN THE CHURCH

LESSON 5

WHEN GOD SAID 'NO'



Bible Story	Message that will be taught *
2 Cor 12:7-9 – We don't know what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was, but God did not take it away and told Paul that it was enough for him to know that God loved him	Trust God to know best

* The goal of a Bible lesson is to teach the children a specific Biblical message. Children learn through repetition, and therefore this message should be repeated throughout the lesson.

TEACHING AIDS

Pictures of people with disabilities doing great things, for example

- Natalie du Toit, who won gold medals at the Paralympic games and even competed in the Olympic games, yet one of her legs has been amputated
- Franklin Roosevelt, who was president of the USA, yet in a wheelchair
- Stephen Hawking, who is a professor in mathematics, yet finds it difficult to walk or talk
- Helen Keller, who got a university degree and wrote many books, yet she was deaf and blind
- We need a black athlete etc – more South African examples
- Maybe a non-hero type person just getting on with life despite disability

Pictures from a children's Bible story book or the internet on Paul's journeys.

INTRODUCTION

(Show the children pictures of people with disabilities who were able to achieve great things, and tell them about these people)

The Bible also tells us about people who did great things. One of these people was a preacher and writer – he wrote many of the books in the New Testament. Do you know who this was? Yes, his name was Paul.

STORY

Paul travelled to many far-off countries, and everywhere he went, he told people about Jesus. He also started many new churches where previously people did not know about Jesus. These journeys were difficult and sometimes very dangerous. Paul had to walk long distances in the heat and the cold, he had to travel by boat on stormy seas, sometimes he was hungry, people didn't want him to proclaim the Gospel and he was often beaten or thrown in jail. But Paul always accepted and endured whatever happened to him, because he trusted God to know what is best. You can also trust God to know what is best for you.

However, something bothered Paul a lot. He didn't tell us what it was, but compared it to a thorn that is left in your finger, hurting and bothering you the whole time. He tells us in the Bible that he specifically pleaded with God to remove this thing from his life, but it didn't happen – God said "No".

Now, some people think that this was an illness. Some people said it was other people, working against Paul and trying to stop the work that he was doing. Others are convinced that it was a visual disability, and they think that Paul had trouble with his eyes and that he couldn't see clearly¹.

Whatever it was, Paul said that God did not take it away. Instead, God told Paul that He loved him and cared about him, and that he would always be with Paul to help him. And that knowledge should be enough for Paul. So Paul decided to trust God to know what is best for him.

You can also trust God to know what is best for you, even if God sometimes says "No" to something that you really want.

ACTIVITIES

- Word search on assistive devices attached
- Show the children a Braille alphabet so that they can experience how people with visual disabilities read
- Teach the children some sign language so that they can experience how people with hearing disabilities talk

¹ Motivation for this belief:

- Gal 6:11 where Paul wrote in large print
- Gal 4:15 where Paul mentions that the church in Galatia would have torn out their own eyes and given them to him if it were possible
- Acts 23:3-5 where Paul did not recognise the high priest in the Sanhedrin

WORD SEARCH

Q	D	W	E	R	H	T	J	Y	J	U	K	I	L	O	P	C
S	D	T	G	B	H	N	J	B	R	A	I	L	L	E	N	B
Z	A	C	S	U	V	D	V	G	B	H	N	J	M	K	L	A
B	H	E	A	R	I	N	G	A	I	D	G	T	C	D	E	N
M	K	L	I	O	P	D	I	J	Y	H	T	G	R	F	E	D
W	S	Q	S	W	H	E	E	L	C	H	A	I	R	V	F	R
T	G	B	Y	H	N	U	J	D	M	L	O	P	I	J	N	B
W	S	Z	C	D	E	R	T	X	O	B	T	Y	H	N	M	U
Q	A	C	W	S	C	D	E	R	F	G	L	A	S	S	E	S
E	P	R	O	S	T	H	E	S	I	S	Z	Y	I	B	T	J
T	G	U	B	Y	H	N	U	J	M	I	K	L	G	O	P	L
A	W	T	D	E	C	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	N	H	N	U
W	R	C	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	I	K	U	J	H	Y	G
Z	S	H	X	L	I	P	R	E	A	D	C	D	E	R	F	V
T	G	Q	W	S	C	R	F	V	N	H	T	Y	U	J	M	K

Words to look out for:

Guide dog
 Crutch
 Wheelchair
 Glasses
 Sign
 Prosthesis
 Hearing aid
 Braille
 Lip-read

Q	D	W	E	R	H	T	J	Y	J	U	K	I	L	O	P	C
S	D	T	G	B	H	N	J	B	R	A	I	L	L	E	N	B
Z	A	C	S	U	V	D	V	G	B	H	N	J	M	K	L	A
B	H	E	A	R	I	N	G	A	I	D	G	T	C	D	E	N
M	K	L	I	O	P	D	I	J	Y	H	T	G	R	F	E	D
W	S	Q	S	W	H	E	E	L	C	H	A	I	R	V	F	R
T	G	B	Y	H	N	U	J	D	M	L	O	P	I	J	N	B
W	S	Z	C	D	E	R	T	X	O	B	T	Y	H	N	M	U
Q	A	C	W	S	C	D	E	R	F	G	L	A	S	S	E	S
E	P	R	O	S	T	H	E	S	I	S	Z	Y	I	B	T	J
T	G	U	B	Y	H	N	U	J	M	I	K	L	G	O	P	L
A	W	T	D	E	C	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	N	H	N	U
W	R	C	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	I	K	U	J	H	Y	G
Z	S	H	X	L	I	P	R	E	A	D	C	D	E	R	F	V
T	G	Q	W	S	C	R	F	V	N	H	T	Y	U	J	M	K