



---

## OVERVIEW SECTION

### How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

- How to Read This Lesson Plan** (defines all components of the lesson plan)
- Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation** (a reminder of why we do this)
- Scripture(s) for the Session** (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)
- Key Verses & Theology** (background for teachers to ponder)
- Themes to Focus on from the Scripture** (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

- Preparation** (including supplies needed)
- Classroom Statement** (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)
- Step-by-step process of the lesson** (including the scripture to be read)
- Suggested variations for age groups** (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

### Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation:

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

### Scripture(s) for the Session: Mark 10:46-52

*Please READ this aloud in every class you teach.* The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

**Key Verses & Theology:** These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

48 *Many people sternly ordered Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'* It's very possible that Bartimaeus was an annoying, persistent man who talked too much and too loudly and that's why the people tell him to be quiet. But there are also some class distinctions at play in this story that we might not catch since we're not living in Jesus' time and culture. Jesus, as a teacher (or rabbi), had elevated standing in Israelite culture. His position was a revered one – a rabbi was a Very Important Person. So to have a blind man yell for Jesus' attention is like, in our time, a homeless person demanding an appointment with a Fortune 500 CEO. The people telling Bartimaeus to be quiet aren't just annoyed with him (if they are at all), but are enforcing normal social codes of conduct. Bartimaeus, though, keeps yelling because he knows that normal social codes of conduct won't help him see because if such codes did make him see, then he would've already been seeing.

49 *Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.'* And the disciples called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, Jesus is calling you.' So even though Jesus' job/role fits the people's understanding of a VIP, Jesus certainly does not function like the Israelites expected VIPs to function (or how we expect VIPs to function, for that matter). Jesus hears Bartimaeus crying out and he responds to that cry. Jesus stops what he is doing (stands still) and offers his time and attention to Bartimaeus. Notice, though, the positions of power in the story: Jesus stands still while Bartimaeus, though blind, is the one who must come to Jesus. As we'll see in the next key verse, this power move isn't just for show. There's an identity issue at stake here.

50 *So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.* Just like we have visual cues today that identify individuals who are blind (for example: A German-shepherd dog with a certain type of harness; a white cane or a cane with white markings at the end of it) so did the Israelites have identifiers for those who were blind in their time. Often, too, someone who was blind could not support himself and therefore wore the clothing of a beggar. Jesus, in standing still and granting an audience to Bartimaeus, gives Bartimaeus the opportunity to step outside the identity the Israelite culture has placed on him. Bartimaeus rises to the occasion. He throws off the signaling clothes of a beggar and blind man (his cloak) with energy (sprang up) and does not shy away from Jesus but approaches Jesus directly. Then when Jesus asks, 'What do you want me to do for you?' Bartimaeus does not mitigate his language. Instead he stays as bold as when he first started crying out to Jesus and says, 'My teacher, let me see again.'

**Themes to Focus on from the Scripture:** Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

**Identity** – We see the crowd tell Bartimaeus that he is not to talk. In response, we see Bartimaeus cry out all the louder. We see Jesus using his position of culturally-granted power to call Bartimaeus forward. We see Bartimaeus throw off his identifying beggar clothes to approach Jesus. Finally, we see Jesus using his position of God-granted power to give Bartimaeus a new identity of One-who-can-see. When

we choose to approach Jesus, when we cry out for God's help, we start to shed the identities that the world gives us. As we shed those false or half-true identities that the world places upon us, then we are better able to see. And with our better vision, we see what Bartimaeus sees: Better vision comes from God. Jesus shows us how to better pay attention to God, so it makes sense to follow Jesus. Which is why Bartimaeus follows Jesus after he can see.

**Crying Out** – Many of the identities that we accept from the world (represented by the crowd in this story) are identities that tell us to be quiet, that tell us to not ask for help, that tell us to not question how things are, that tell us to not look weak or vulnerable. These identities keep us from receiving the fullness of life God intends for us. Usually, in order to more fully experience the life God intends for us, we have to first act against what we've come to believe about ourselves as told to us by the world. Bartimaeus demonstrates how this might look by crying out even as the people around him tell him to stop it. This is not an easy thing to do. This acting against what we've come to believe about our own self usually takes a longer frame of time than the story of Bartimaeus illustrates. It's helpful to remember then, why we cry out in the first place: Because living life God's way is better...as demonstrated by Bartimaeus' healing.

**Surrender/Healing** – Often I hear individuals wanting to understand what will happen before they move forward, before they leave their known/safe zones. When explaining a possible forward step to a group of people, I try to clarify as many ambiguities as possible because when ambiguity remains, people will often use that ambiguity as a reason to stay put. As humans, we often want to know what we're getting ourselves into and why we should put effort and energy into getting there. So what's interesting to me about this story is that Bartimaeus doesn't get to see until *after* he cries out and releases his identity as a beggar. It's only once he's actually moved and placed himself in front of Jesus that he gets to see. He left behind his old identity and received a new identity, but for a scary few moments in-between, he has no identity. And that's what surrender is. After Bartimaeus surrenders, then he experiences sight. He gets to see after, not before, his actions.



---

## THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

### Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: 3 segments of Rope/string to mark start/finish lines (at least 5 feet long); 1 blindfold; 1 inflatable beach ball

### Classroom Statement

This Movement & Games lesson consists of reading the Bartimaeus scripture story, two games and one demonstration. The two games are called "Paper, Rock, Scissors Identity Game" and "Meow/Bark." Both of these games are used to teach the concept of identity to the students and prepare the students for the demonstration. The demonstration uses a beach ball and showcases how susceptible we are to becoming who others say we are if are not filled with God's love and life.

### Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

**SHEPHERD ASKS** "Question of the Day."

### **INTRODUCE yourself**

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

**PRAY** Short and simple is perfect. For example:

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

### **ASK/TELL (answers in parentheses)**

- First, think of a doctor or a police officer.
- Now pretend that you saw them at the store.
- How would you know you were seeing a doctor or a police officer at a store? (maybe because of what they were doing and but mostly because of what they were wearing)
- What if I wore a police officer uniform? Do think someone might at first believe I was a police officer even though I'm not? (but of course!)
- I ask you these questions because often our clothes make people treat us a certain way.

- As you listen to today's scripture story about Jesus and Bartimaeus, listen for what clothing Bartimaeus takes off and leaves behind.

## **READ** Mark 10:46-52

46 As Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth passing by him, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' 48 Many people sternly ordered Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' 49 Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And the disciples called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, Jesus is calling you.' 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to Bartimaeus, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' 52 Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately Bartimaeus regained his sight and followed Jesus on the way.

## **ASK (answers in parentheses)**

- Did you hear what kind of clothing Bartimaeus threw off when Jesus called for him? (his cloak)
- That's right! The cloak that Bartimaeus was wearing helped other people know that he was a beggar and blind. Can you think of some clothes or accessories that help us know that someone is blind? (long stick, that's usually white and sometimes a seeing-eye dog)
- So when Bartimaeus took off his cloak, that was his way of saying that he was ready for a new identity. Do you know what an *identity* is? (an identity is who you or who others think you are; it's a combination of personality and characteristics).
- So a big part of Bartimaeus identity was that he was blind. What identity did Jesus give to Bartimaeus? (an identity of seeing; an identity of someone who was blind but could now see)

## **TELL**

- So this idea of getting a different identity might seem a little strange to us.
- But we often change clothes and identities – just not as drastically as Jesus changed Bartimaeus' identity.
- We're going to play a game now where we're going to change identities each round.

## **EXPLAIN Paper, Rock, Scissors Identity Game**

- So the way this works is that we need to get into two teams with an equal (or as close as possible) amount of people in each team.
- Before each round, each team will choose what identity they are going to be. A team can choose one of three identities. Those three identities are: Paper, Rock and Scissors.
- Once your team decides what your identity is going to be, then your team comes to the middle of the room where this rope is and you make a line parallel to that rope.
- Once both teams are lined up, I'll say, "Ready?" And then everyone will make a fist and raise it above the palm of their other hand.
- Then I'll say "paper" and you say it with me, then we'll say "rock" and then we'll say "scissors" and then I'll say "Shoot!"
- Each time we say a word, our fist should be hitting our palm.
- When I say SHOOT, that's when each team shows their "identity" pose.

- If you chose Rock, you crouch down in ball. If you chose Paper, you put your arms out to the sides so that you look flat. If you chose scissors, you put your arms out in front of you and swing them up and down like you are cutting something.
- Rock beats scissors. Scissors beats Paper and Paper beats Rock.
- Let's say Team A shows the Scissors Identity and Team B shows the Rock identity. Who won? Team B, right?
- Once Team B sees that they won, they chase Team A. Once Team A sees that they lost, they run back to their base (marked by a rope or string).
- If a member from Team B tags a member of Team A before that person makes it back to base, then that member now joins Team B.
- First team to have everyone on their team, wins.
- After each round, each team determines what identity they're going to be for the next round.
- [if no team is winning, end the game somewhere between 3 to 5 minutes].

## **DO Paper, Rocks, Scissors**

### **ASK**

- Ok, everyone – have a seat.
- So after each round, how did your identity change? (changed between paper, rock and scissors. Also changed if you got tagged and you changed teams).

### **TELL**

- We sometimes change our identity when our circumstances change, like in the game we just played.
- But our identity is also shaped by what people tell us. And even if someone is wrong about who they say we are, but they keep saying it, then we sometimes start to believe them.
- We're going to do an activity now (if there's at least 20 minutes left – otherwise go to activity #3) where we'll demonstrate how, without God's help, people are not very good at knowing the identity of others.

### **EXPLAIN Activity**

- First, let's make a circle.
- Let's then go around the circle and say our names.
- Now I need a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle and be blindfolded.
- Now that our volunteer is blindfolded, I want everyone else, without making any noise, to change places with someone else in the circle. Don't talk. Just point and move.
- Ok, now that everyone is in a different position and our volunteer is still here in the middle and blindfolded, I'm now going to point at one of you in the circle. If I point at you, then you are to make a barking sound or a meowing sound. You get to decide which, but you need to do it before I point at you, because once I point at you I need you to make that sound. Make the sound once and immediately.
- After you make the sound, we'll let our volunteer guess who made the sound.
- We'll go through three or four rounds/people before we tell our volunteer which ones s/he got right and wrong.
- Then, if there's time, we'll do another round with another volunteer.

## DO “Meow/Bark” Activity

### ASK

- How well did our volunteers do at guessing the identity of our barkers and meowers?
- It was pretty tough, wasn't it?

### TELL

- In the story that we read today, the crowd kept telling Bartimaeus to be quiet because they thought they knew who he was. Well, they were wrong. But Jesus knew who Bartimaeus was and helped him (with God's help) to fully become that person.
- We're going to do one last activity. It's a demonstration that shows us what can happen to us if we listen to the people who tell us who we are but who are paying attention to God.

## DO Beach Ball Demonstration

- So Bartimaeus started out like this blown up beach ball [hold ball up]. Yep, he was blind, but he was filled with God's love and life.
- If things pushed in on him [push your hand into the side of the beach ball], he didn't let those things bother him [remove your hand from the side of the beach ball – it pops back to its original shape]. And he didn't let things get him down. He would just pop right up again [bounce the beach ball on the ground].
- But over the years, the people kept telling him things like, “You're a mistake. You're a burden. What did you do to become blind? – Something bad of course! Good thing you can't see how ugly you are.” After awhile, these things took God's love and life out of Bartimaeus. [Using the nozzle, let about half the air out of the beach ball].
- Then when things pushed in on him [push your hand into the side of the beach ball], Bartimaeus was pretty bothered by those things [remove you hand from the side of the ball – it should stay indented]
- And when Bartimaeus felt down [drop the ball – it won't bounce], he wasn't able to pop right up and keep going.
- So when he heard that Jesus was nearby, Bartimaeus knew he had a chance to be filled with God's love and life again. So Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus. And Jesus tells him, “Your faith has made you whole.” [blow up the beach ball again and bounce it around].

### TELL

- The Good News is that when we follow Jesus and learn to pay attention to God the way Jesus teaches us to, then we can receive healing like Bartimaeus did, where we can be filled again with God's love and life.
- Then by paying attention to God, instead of taking the air out others, we can be the ones who help others know who they are and we can help fill others with God's love and life.

## CLEAN UP