



## 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.



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## 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: DVD movie (online at [www.rfour.org/media.html](http://www.rfour.org/media.html). Or you can contact me at [support@rfour.org](mailto:support@rfour.org) about receiving a DVD with all the movies on it for Season 3); TV w/DVD player; 4 to 5 scripts for puppets (see *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S5*); some sort of upright material to for the puppeteers to hide behind and put their puppets above (a large, modified cardboard box works perfectly – if you really want to get into it, get a refrigerator box from an appliance store); camcorder; popsicle puppets (see “How to make popsicle puppets” directly below)
- **How to make popsicle puppets:** Print out the pictures as provided in the *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S5*. Cut them out and either paste or tape them to large craft/popsicle sticks. I often times tape the pictures to dark-colored construction paper to help with support and contrast.

### Classroom Statement

This Storytelling Class consists of reading the Bartimaeus scripture story; watching a “movie” about Bartimaeus; and acting out the story about Bartimaeus using a script and popsicle puppets that is then recorded to be turned into its own movie.

### 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.

#### **TELL**

- When you get hurt, do you sometimes yell or cry out with pain?

- What would you do if someone told you to be quiet even though you're hurt? (yell louder; go somewhere else)
- In the story we're reading today, Bartimaeus isn't "hurt." Instead, he's blind. And he believes that Jesus can heal him.
- Let's listen to what happens.

## **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 are in parenthesis)**

- So how does Bartimaeus try to get Jesus attention? (by crying/yelling out to him)
- Are there people who tell Bartimaeus to be quiet? (yes)
- Why do you think they might do that? (because they don't think Bartimaeus is important enough to ask for Jesus' attention)
- What does Bartimaeus do when he's told to be quiet? (He yells louder)

## **TELL**

- We're going to watch a video now of this story.
- It's going to be in first person (which means the person talking will be pretending to be one of the characters from the story – so he'll use the word "I" and "me.")
- The person speaking will be Bartimaeus' father, Timaeus.

## **WATCH DVD Video**

### **ASK**

- Were you surprised that Bartimaeus didn't stay home, but instead followed Jesus?

### **TELL**

- Now we're going to make our own movie.
- We have two characters that need readers. Jesus and the crowd. I need three or four people to read the crowd part together.
- Then I need one person to hold up the Wall.
- (If need be, you can assign an "audience" part to the less than enthusiastic students. Our shepherd here will record our play (or maybe have a student help out here, too).
- So we're going to go behind the screen, here.

- If we have time, we'll do a practice run through, where I'll be the director, helping yall know what to do and when to do it.
- Once we got through the practice run, then we'll film it.

## **DO & RECORD Popsicle Puppet Play**

**Characters:** Bartimaeus (read by teacher), Jesus, the Crowd (have 3 or 4 students read this part together)

**Non-character that needs to be held up:** The wall

### **Puppet Play Script**

**Bartimaeus:** Please help me out and share some of your food and money with me. I'm blind and I need help.

**The Crowd:** We're busy. Move out of our way!

**Bartimaeus:** I wish I could see. I wish I could see. I wish I could see!

**The Crowd:** We're busy. Move out of our way!

**Bartimaeus:** I've heard rumors about a man named Jesus who is healing people. He's going to be in town today. I'm going to ask him to help me.

**The Crowd:** We're busy. Move out of our way!

**Bartimaeus:** And if Jesus heals me, I don't want to be like these people who pass me everyday and treat me like I'm an obstacle.

**The Crowd:** Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming!

**Bartimaeus:** Jesus is coming by? Now?

**The Crowd:** Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming!

**Bartimaeus:** This is my chance! But how will Jesus notice me? These people are so loud! I will have to be louder than they are. JESUS! JESUS! OVER HERE! PLEASE JESUS OVER HERE! I NEED YOUR HELP!

**The Crowd:** Be quiet! Be quiet!

**Bartimaeus:** These people don't care about me. I'm not listening to them. JESUS! SON OF DAVID! HAVE MERCY ON ME!

**Jesus:** Bring him here.

[Jesus and Bartimaeus puppets move closer together]

**Bartimaeus:** Jesus, hello. Thank you for listening to me.

**Jesus:** What is it that you want?

**Bartimaeus:** If you choose, I know that you can make me see. Please choose heal me.

**Jesus:** I do choose.

**Bartimaeus:** I can see! I can see! I can see!

**Jesus:** Your faith has made you well.

**Bartimaeus:** Jesus healed me! He's not at all like these people who ignored me and told me to be quiet. I said if I could ever see, that I did not want to treat others like I have been treated. Jesus gave me sight and he treated me differently than everyone else. I'm going to follow him and learn to be like him, so that I can treat others like he treated me.

**The Crowd:** We're busy! Move out of our way!

## CLEAN UP

### Suggested Variations for age groups

For the youngest students, they may not yet be able to read the parts. As the teacher and shepherd, read the parts for the students as they move around their assigned puppets.