Scripture
Mark 10:46-52

Rewards of Faith

Jesus restores sight to blind Bartimaeus.
- In today’s scripture, the persistent cry for help from Bartimaeus receives a swift response in Jesus’ willingness to heal.
- We help young children “open their eyes” to the wonders of God’s beautiful creation around them.
- Today’s session invites children to re-enact the story of Bartimaeus and celebrate the gift of sight.

Question of the Week
Jesus asks you, as he once asked Bartimaeus, “What do you want?”

Core Session
- Getting Started (bag, fruit, key, crayon, comb, sock, other simple objects)
- Gospel Story: Jesus Helps Bartimaeus
- Creative Drama
- Praying Together

Enrichment
- Discover the Good News
- Singing Together
- Action Rhyme
- Art: Swanson’s Psalm 85 (strip of mural paper, pie pans)
- Info: Visual Disabilities
- Outdoor Walk (optional: prism, magnifying glass, Spy Tubes)
- Info: Young Children and the Gospel
- Info: Where You’ll Find Everything Else

Helps for Catechists
- More about Today’s Scriptures
- Reflection
- The Scriptures and the Catechism
- The World of the Bible: Jesus, Son of David
✓ Getting Started (5-10 minutes)
Gather the children at a table and spread out an assortment of simple objects: ball, fruit, key, crayon, comb, sock, etc. Lift each object in turn and ask the children to name it as you put it into the bag.

When all the objects are inside the bag, ask a volunteer to cover their eyes with a bandanna. Invite the volunteer to reach into the bag and pick an object.

Encourage the child to handle the object carefully and to guess what the object is. Repeat the game with other volunteers. (Children who do not want to use the bandanna can instead shut their eyes or hold the object under the table.)

After several turns of play, invite children to hear today’s story about a man who could not see at all, all day long.

✓ Gospel Story (5-10 minutes)
Jesus Helps Bartimaeus

The sun shone brightly, but Bartimaeus couldn’t see the sun.

Bartimaeus couldn’t see the blue sky. Bartimaeus couldn’t see his own fingers. Bartimaeus couldn’t see anything at all. He was blind.

Bartimaeus couldn’t see, but he could hear. He heard people all around him talking. And all the people kept saying the same word: Jesus.

“Jesus is coming,” the people said. “Jesus is coming now.”

Jesus! Bartimaeus wanted Jesus to come quickly. Maybe Jesus could help him to see!

Bartimaeus began to call out, “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus, help me!”

“Shhh!” said the people. “Stop that!”

Bartimaeus called louder. “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus, help me!”

“Hush!” said the people. “Stop that!”

Bartimaeus called even louder. “Jesus! Help me!”

“Come here,” Jesus called back. “I’ll help you!”

Bartimaeus jumped up and ran to where Jesus was. “Please make me see,” he said.

And Jesus said, “Yes. Now you can see.”

And Bartimaeus could see—the shining sun, the blue sky, his own fingers!

And best of all, he could see Jesus. “I’m coming with you, Jesus,” said Bartimaeus. And he walked away with Jesus.

✓ Creative Drama (5-15 minutes)
Children act out a simplified version of today’s story.

If you have carpet squares available, invite the children to use them to make a path. Ask one child to be Bartimaeus and sit with eyes closed by the side of the path.

Ask another child to be Jesus and walk slowly down the path. Ask the other children to be the crowd standing along the path.

As Jesus walks down the path, Bartimaeus calls out for help. The other children hush Bartimaeus until Jesus calls him to come.

When Jesus tells Bartimaeus that he can see, Bartimaeus names one thing he now can see. Repeat several times to allow other children the chance to play the parts of Jesus and Bartimaeus.

✓ Praying Together (5 minutes)
Gather the children in a circle. Ask, “What do we like to see?” Allow plenty of time for children to think of many answers.

Lead the children in thanking Jesus for the things we like to see. Close by praying:

♦ Jesus, thank you for everything we like to see. Thank you for helping Bartimaeus to see things, too. Amen.

Note: Distribute this week’s At Home with the Good News to children before they leave, or e-mail it to their parents after the session.
Discover the Good News  
(5-10 minutes)
In today’s Discover the Good News you’ll find a story related to today’s gospel. The story affirms that Jesus is always with us, no matter what he needs.

Explain to children that Jesus was with Bartimaeus. Ask for ways they want Jesus to be with them, too. You’ll also find a “See and Find” game. Invite children to find all the things listed, from the bird in the sky to Jesus.

Page 2 also includes a To Parents note for families to use at home.

Singing Together  
(5-10 minutes)
From Singing the Good News, sing together:
◆ “Season of Harvest” (songbook p. 4, also available as an MP3)
◆ “It’s a Miracle” (songbook p. 6, also available as an MP3)

Note: To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your Fall-B Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Singing the Good News.

Action Rhyme  
(5-10 minutes)
Teach children the words and movements to this action rhyme version of today’s Gospel Story.

When Jesus Walks By

He couldn't see his fingers,  
(Shake head “no.” Wiggle fingers.)
He couldn’t see the sky,  
(Point up.)

He couldn't see at all  
(Cover eyes loosely with fingers.)
Until Jesus came by.  
(Sweep arms out, right to left.)

And then he saw his fingers!  
(Shake head “yes.” Wiggle fingers.)
And then he saw the sky!  
(Point up.)
The man’s eyes were opened,  
(Frame eyes with hands.)
When Jesus came by.  
(Sweep arms out, from right to left.)

Art  
(10-15 minutes)
Swanson’s Psalm 85
Use the attached painting by the artist John August Swanson to inspire a children’s mural.

Gather children around the poster. Invite them to imagine that they are in the poster, together with Bartimaeus, the man in today’s story. Ask them to imagine that Bartimaeus can now see everything in the poster.

Ask:
◆ What would Bartimaeus see?
◆ What would Bartimaeus see in the sky?
◆ What would Bartimaeus see on the ground?
◆ What would Bartimaeus see all around him?

Invite children to paint the sun, sky and clouds that Bartimaeus saw. Tape a strip of mural paper to a work surface. Put paints into aluminum pie pans. Provide containers of water for rinsing brushes.

Ask each child to choose one color of paint. Encourage children to work together: a child who chose green and a child who chose brown might want to make a tree together. So might a child who chose orange and a child who chose purple!

Note: To learn more about John August Swanson, his faith and the painting of Psalm 85, visit http://www.johnaugustswanson.com.
Visual Disabilities

Because today’s session explores the joy of seeing, be sensitive to the feelings and needs of any visually-impaired children you may have in the group. Present visual impairment as a challenge, not a handicap. For such children, we recommend including activities that explore and celebrate senses other than sight. For example, the session for the 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time has many activities that focus on the sense of hearing.

Outdoor Walk (15-20 minutes)

Catechists with extended session times and enough adult assistance could enrich today’s session by inviting children on an outdoor “Look-and-Tell” walk around the parish.

Focus children’s attention by asking them to look for specific colors, such as red or blue. Take a close look at textures, from the rough bark of a tree to the smooth metal on a parish door knob. Take time to encourage children to point out sights of their own and describe them in their own language.

Visual toys and tools can enhance this walk. Try a plastic magnifying glass, a “bug’s eye” viewer or a prism. You’ll find directions for colored Spy Tubes attached to this document.

Young Children and the Gospel

In a companion story to the healing of the deaf man (see the session for the 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time), Jesus heals Bartimaeus, in response to his persistent prayer. Many of Jesus’ healing miracles emphasize the restoration of relationship and community that healing brings. For preschoolers and kindergartners, we focus on this restoration. Because the man is healed, he can see the world around him.

Where You’ll Find Everything Else

- Attached to this Session Plan you will find:
  - Backgrounds and reflections for today’s readings, titled More about Today’s Scriptures.
  - Directions for making simple Spy Tubes: cardboard tubes with colored acetate viewers.
  - An optional Bartimaeus Maze for children to complete.
  - A copy of today’s Gospel Story which can be distributed or e-mailed to children and their families.
  - A copy of today’s At Home with the Good News to print or to e-mail to children and their families.
  - Swanson’s Psalm 85, used in today’s Art activity.

Open your Fall-B Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Seasonal Articles to find:

- Information on Fall-B’s Models of the Faith.
- A printable article for catechists titled Learning through Music.
- An article for catechists exploring Discipleship in Mark’s Gospel.
- An article for catechists exploring Isaiah’s references to God’s Suffering Servant.
- The Introduction for Preschool/Kindergarten for Living the Good News.
More about Today’s Scriptures

The promise of restoration and healing flows through today’s readings. Jeremiah looks forward to the rescue and renewal of God’s people. Hebrews affirms the promise of full salvation through Jesus Christ and continued growth for believers. Jesus grants both physical and spiritual wholeness to blind Bartimaeus.

Jeremiah 31:7-9
Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry to Judah began in 627 BCE and ended about 580 BCE. He spans the period leading up to Judah’s final defeat by the Babylonians (587 BCE), the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple, and the start of the exile.

Today’s reading comes from a section (chaps. 30-33) consisting of promises of restoration (30:1-4). In it are gathered Jeremiah’s oracles of hope for an eventual renewal for Israel. Jeremiah envisions the restoration of Judah by imagining God’s fashioning a new exodus.

Hebrews 5:1-6
Today’s passage is part of a larger section (4:14–7:28) that demonstrates Jesus’ superiority to the high priesthood of Aaron and that of the tribe of Levi even though, by birth, Jesus was not of priestly descent.

The high priest was chosen by God (Exodus 28:1) to represent his fellow-humans before God. The quotation from Psalm 2:7 demonstrates that Jesus, too, was chosen by God, not self-appointed. His priesthood is not like Aaron’s (familial, inherited) but modeled upon that of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). Melchizedek is portrayed as superior to Abraham (7:1-10; Genesis 14: 18-20) and thus to Abraham’s descendant Levi and the Levitical priests.

Like the Levitical high priests, Jesus is patient and gentle with sinful people. But unlike these priests, Jesus is “without sin” (4:15). Therefore, his sacrifice is superior, for he did not have to offer sacrifice for himself as well as for his people (7:26-27).

Mark 10:46-52
The story of the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus is filled with vivid detail. Bartimaeus calls Jesus “Son of David” (vv. 47-48), a messianic title, recognizing Jesus’ true identity. Although blind, Bartimaeus can “see” Jesus more clearly than others because of his faith.

No healing word or action of Jesus is recorded, just a response to Bartimaeus’s faith. On one level, his faith, in the sense of confidence and persistence, is answered with healing. On another level, his recognition of Jesus is answered with salvation. The phrase “made you well” means both heal and save. Bartimaeus responds by becoming a disciple.

This incident is similar to the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (8:22-26). These two stories of new sight frame the whole section dealing with Jesus’ predictions of the passion and the disciples’ misunderstanding. Eyes must be opened to see the true meaning of Jesus’ messianic suffering and so correctly follow him on this new way to life with God.
Reflection
At a conference on Ignatian spirituality, a blind priest, Larry Gillick, SJ offered insights on the Bartimaeus story that sighted people may miss. He explains how he recognizes footsteps: his young students shuffle; his colleagues stride with intensity. Then he asks: do we recognize God’s footsteps? How do we know in our souls when it’s God’s love? Or when do our egos simply sound like God?

Just as the sculptor reverences the density of the marble, so God reverences human resistance. Like the sculptor, God uses a chisel, not dynamite. So Jesus respects Bartimaeus enough that he doesn’t make any assumptions about his condition. He asks courteously, “What do you want me to do for you?”

For his part, Bartimaeus must come to know his truth before he can articulate it to Jesus. He must spend a long time in the darkness contemplating, so that when his moment comes, he doesn’t say, “I want to hear.”

Where does Bartimaeus go after his cure? He enters more deeply into the mystery where he had already been immersed. Phrases like “on the way” or “up the road” can mean only one thing in this context: he walks in trust, entering further into God’s love.

The World of the Bible
Jesus, Son of David
In Semitic languages, Son of David is a somewhat ambiguous phrase because it can point to an actual historical individual or, when connected to a collective noun, the individual member of a group.

Thus calling Jesus “Son of David” might indicate that he is another King Solomon, David’s son and royal successor, who was particularly known for his wisdom.

“Son of David” could also indicate that Jesus is considered not only as an Israelite of the tribe of Judah (from which we get the word Jew) but also of the royal bloodline of King David, who unified the twelve tribal peoples into a single kingdom about 1000 BCE.

The title reveals the hope that Jesus is indeed David’s long-awaited successor, the one chosen and anointed (Hebrew, messiah or Greek, christos) by God to restore the Jewish nation into a kingdom dedicated to life with God. Jesus was a true Son of David who could properly be called the Lord’s Anointed, not only in view of his future role when God’s kingdom would reveal itself in power, but already in the present while God’s saving and liberating power manifested itself in Jesus’ words and actions.

The Scriptures and the Catechism
Today’s readings describe God as Father of the covenant people (CCC, #42, 239, 254–55, 370), who gathers the scattered children of the exile back together (CCC, #759–62). God enables us to draw together into community and provides the help we need to succeed. Priests, following the example of Jesus the Great Priest, are especially prominent in the work of helping the community to be holy (CCC, #1536–53, 1572–73). Creating a community demands breaking down the barriers of exclusion. In the gospel, Jesus extends the saving presence of God to one who prays for help (CCC, #2616, 2629–33, 2646).