2026-05-03 Jesus Spends Time with Sinners

Introduction

In this lesson, children will learn that Jesus came to save sinners, even the worst kinds of sinners. Through the story of Jesus calling Levi the tax collector (Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:27-32), children will discover that Jesus is like a doctor who spends time with sick people, and that every heart needs His healing. The Pharisees thought they were good enough and did not need Jesus, but Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Jesus welcomes sinners who know they are helpless and need a Savior.

Main Ideas:

- **Even the Worst:** Jesus came to save sinners, even the worst kinds of sinners.
- **No One is Good:** No one is righteous on their own. Every heart is sick with sin.
- **Not by Our Own Works:** People cannot be saved by trying to be good or by their own merits.
- **Jesus the Doctor:** Only Jesus can heal a sick and sinful heart.

Praise and Worship (15 mins)

> **Parents:** The parent and child scheduled for this week will lead us in singing on Sunday. Please take time to practice the songs together at home, helping your child feel confident and joyful as they prepare to lead.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/ClQ8pqL27aw?list=RDClQ8pqL27awstart_radio=1

https://www.youtube.com/embed/vAaQS0poL-Q

Prayer and Offering (5 mins)

> **Parents:** Please encourage your children to bring an offering to church. You may help your child prepare by setting aside a coin for them to bring on Sunday. This is a great opportunity to teach them about giving to God with a thankful heart and trusting Him to provide.

> “ What is Offering?

> Offering is when we **give something to God** to show our love and thankfulness. In church, we often give money as an offering, but we can also give our time, talents, and kindness to God and others.
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> ### Why Do We Make an Offering?
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> **To Thank God** – Everything we have comes from God! Giving back is a way to say, “Thank You, God!”
> **To Trust God** – When we give, we show that we trust God to take care of us.
> **To Help Others** – Offerings help the church teach about Jesus, help people in need, and share God’s love.
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> The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:7,
> *"God loves a cheerful giver!" That means God is happy when we give with a joyful heart!*

Prayer for Offering

> “ Dear God, thank You for giving us everything we need. We want to give back to You with joyful hearts. Please use our offering to help others and share Your love. Help us to always trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Review Verse from Last Week

John 10:10b

[Jesus said,] "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Bible Story (10 min)

Introduction (2 min)

Props Needed:

- A small bottle of cough medicine (or any medicine bottle) and a spoon
- A box of bandages and an ice pack (real or pretend)
- Darkened Heart visual (from previous lessons)
- Small White Heart cutout (to place over the Darkened Heart later)
- A paper sign labeled "Levi" and a paper sign labeled "Pharisee" (or printed cutouts)

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> *(Walk in holding the bottle of cough medicine and a spoon. Arrange a helper or parent ahead of time to sit in the group and start coughing loudly right as you begin.)*

> **Teacher:** "Good morning, friends! Look what I brought today. I brought a bottle of cough medicine and a spoon."
>
> *(The helper begins coughing.)*
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> **Teacher:** "Oh my! Did you hear that? Someone is coughing! When would someone need cough medicine? Who would WANT to take this medicine?"
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> **Interaction:** "If you think a sick person needs the medicine, pat your chest. If you think a healthy person needs the medicine, shake your head."
>
> *(Point to a child who is not coughing.)*
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> **Teacher:** "What about you? You're not coughing. You feel great! Do you need this cough medicine right now?"
>
> *(Wait for "no.")*
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> **Teacher:** "That's right. And what about our friend who keeps coughing? Would he be happy if I shared this medicine with him?"
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> **Interaction:** "Thumbs up if our coughing friend needs the medicine!"
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> **Teacher:** "People who know they are sick WANT the medicine. People who feel healthy don't want medicine, because they feel just fine. Jesus said something VERY important about this in the Bible. Listen carefully."
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> **Teacher:** *(Reads slowly.)* "Jesus said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'"
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> **Teacher:** "Jesus was not just talking about bodies that are sick. Jesus was talking about HEARTS that are sick. Today we are going to hear a true story about a man whose heart was very sick, and about some other people who thought their hearts were just fine. Let's see what Jesus did."

Story Telling: Jesus Spends Time with Sinners (8 min)

Props / Visuals Suggested:

- Cough medicine bottle (still in view)
- "Levi" sign or cutout
- "Pharisee" sign or cutout
- Darkened Heart visual
- Small White Heart cutout (lightly taped over the Pharisee's dark heart)

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> ### Part 1: A Man Nobody Liked (2 mins)

Teacher: "Last time, we learned that Jesus healed a man who could not walk, and Jesus also forgave his sins. Jesus has the power of God. Today, Jesus is going to do something that will surprise a LOT of people."

(Hold up the "Levi" sign.)

Teacher: "This is a man named Levi. Levi had a job. He was a TAX COLLECTOR. That means he was in charge of taking money from people and giving it to the king."

Interaction: "Hold out your hands like you are asking for money. Now pull them toward yourself. That's what tax collectors did, all day long!"

Teacher: "But Levi did NOT do this job kindly. Tax collectors in those days took EXTRA money from their own people and kept it for themselves. They cheated. They were like thieves who the king said were allowed to steal. People HATED tax collectors. They were not even allowed to go into the church to worship God!"

Interaction: "Make a sad face for Levi. Nobody liked him. Nobody wanted to sit with him. Nobody wanted to eat with him."

(Hold up the Darkened Heart.)

Teacher: "Levi had something even sadder than no friends. Levi had a sick heart. Not a sick body, but a dark, sinful, sick HEART. And deep down, Levi knew it. Levi knew that stealing money and cheating people was wrong, and he knew he could not fix his own heart."

Part 2: Jesus Calls Levi (2 mins)

Teacher: "One day, Levi was sitting at his money table, collecting taxes, and Jesus walked by. Jesus stopped. He looked right at Levi, the worst person in town, and said just two words."

Teacher: *(Speak it loud and clear.)* "'Follow Me.'"

Interaction: "Everyone stand up, look at the teacher, and let's all say it together. Ready? 'Follow Me!'"

Teacher: "Now, this is amazing. Jesus did NOT say, 'Levi, first go clean up your heart, then come follow Me.' Jesus did NOT say, 'Levi, go give back all the money, then come follow Me.' Jesus did NOT say, 'Levi, go be a better person, THEN come follow Me.' Jesus said, 'Follow Me,' right now, just as you are."

Teacher: "And what do you think Levi did? Levi GOT UP! He left his money, he left his table, he left his job, and he followed Jesus!"

Interaction: "Everyone march in place! Levi is following Jesus! Left, right, left, right!"

Teacher: "Why would Levi leave everything? Because Levi knew his heart was sick, and he knew Jesus was the only one who could heal it. Levi wanted Jesus more than he wanted

money. He wanted Jesus more than he wanted his job. He wanted Jesus more than ANYTHING."

Part 3: Dinner with Sinners (2 mins)

Teacher: "Then Levi did something wonderful. He invited Jesus to his HOUSE for a big dinner! And you know who else came to the dinner? ALL of Levi's friends, who were ALSO tax collectors and people everybody called 'bad sinners.'"

Interaction: "Everyone pretend to sit at a big table. Pretend to eat. Mmm, yummy! Now imagine the table is full of people that nobody liked."

Teacher: "And right in the middle of all these 'bad people'... sat JESUS. Eating with them. Talking with them. Laughing with them. SPENDING TIME with them."

(Hold up the "Pharisee" sign or cutout, with the Small White Heart taped over the darkened heart.)

Teacher: "But some other people saw this dinner. These people were called PHARISEES. The Pharisees were teachers who knew the Bible very well. They went to church every week. They said lots of prayers. They did lots of good things. And they thought their hearts looked like THIS."

(Point to the Small White Heart.)

Interaction: "If you think a clean white heart is good, put your thumbs up! The Pharisees THOUGHT their hearts were clean."

Teacher: "The Pharisees were VERY upset. They said, 'Look at Jesus! Why is He eating with those bad people? Why is He spending time with tax collectors and sinners?'"

Part 4: Jesus the Doctor (2 mins)

Teacher: "Jesus heard what the Pharisees were saying. And Jesus gave them an answer that surprised EVERYONE. Listen closely."

Teacher: *(Hold up the cough medicine again.)* "Jesus said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician (that means a doctor), but those who are SICK. I have not come to call the righteous, but SINNERS to repentance.'"

Interaction: "Cough like you're sick! Now pretend to drink some medicine. Now say 'ahhh, better!'"

Teacher: "Jesus was saying: 'I am like a doctor! A doctor does not spend time with people who feel healthy. A doctor spends time with people who know they are SICK and who WANT to get better! That's why I am with Levi and his friends. They know their hearts are sick. They want Me to help them. But you Pharisees? You THINK your hearts are healthy. You don't think you need

a doctor. So you don't want my help.'"

(Slowly remove the Small White Heart from the Pharisee to reveal the Darkened Heart underneath.)

Teacher: "But here is the saddest part. Look what was hiding UNDER the clean white heart."

Interaction: "Gasp! Everyone gasp! The Pharisee's heart was DARK too!"

Teacher: "The Pharisees had sinful, dark hearts, JUST like Levi. The difference was, Levi KNEW it and wanted Jesus' help. The Pharisees did NOT know it. They thought being nice, going to church, and following rules made their hearts clean. But only Jesus can make a heart clean. You cannot do it by trying hard. You cannot do it by being nice. You cannot do it by going to church. Only Jesus."

Teacher: "So Jesus said, 'I did not come to call the righteous (people who THINK they are good). I came to call SINNERS who know they need to be saved.' That is really, really good news for anyone who knows they need Jesus."

Review with Actions

Teacher: "Let's remember the story with actions!"

- **Teacher:** "Levi was a tax collector with a sick heart." *(Kids pretend to scoop money and make a sad face.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus said, 'Follow Me!'" *(Kids point out and say, "Follow Me!")*
- **Teacher:** "Levi got up and followed Jesus." *(Kids march in place.)*
- **Teacher:** "The Pharisees thought their hearts were clean." *(Kids cross arms and look proud.)*
- **Teacher:** "But their hearts were dark too!" *(Kids gasp and cover their mouths.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus is the doctor for sick hearts!" *(Kids pretend to take a spoonful of medicine.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus came to save sinners, even the worst of sinners!" *(Kids point to their own hearts, then up to heaven.)*

Teacher: "One more time, louder!"

- "Levi had a sick heart." *(Scoop money, sad face.)*
- "Jesus said, 'Follow Me!'" *(Point out.)*
- "Levi followed Jesus." *(March.)*
- "The Pharisees thought they were good." *(Proud pose.)*
- "But their hearts were dark too!" *(Gasp.)*
- "Jesus is the doctor for sick hearts!" *(Take medicine.)*
- "Jesus came to save sinners!" *(Point to heart, then up.)*

Wrap-up & Discussion (4 min)

(Gather children close for reflection.)

Discussion Questions:

Teacher: "Let's think about what we learned today."

Question: "Why did people hate Levi?"

Teacher Key: He was a tax collector who cheated people and took extra money for himself. He was a known sinner.

Question: "What surprising thing did Jesus say to Levi?"

Teacher Key: "Follow Me." Jesus did not wait for Levi to clean himself up first. Jesus called him just as he was.

Question: "Why were the Pharisees upset that Jesus was eating with sinners?"

Teacher Key: They thought their own hearts were already clean, and they thought Jesus should only spend time with 'good' people. They did not see that their hearts were sinful too.

Question: "Jesus said He came for sick people, not healthy people. What kind of sick was He talking about?"

Teacher Key: Sick HEARTS, not sick bodies. Every person has a sinful heart and needs Jesus to heal it.

Question: "Can we make our own hearts clean by being really good, going to church, or saying nice prayers?"

Teacher Key: No! Only Jesus can clean a sinful heart. That's why He came. We trust in Jesus, not in our own goodness.

Teacher: "Sometimes we might think, 'I'm pretty good. I don't do bad things like THAT kid. I don't need Jesus as much as HE does.' But the Bible says ALL of us have sinful hearts. The good news is, Jesus came to save sinners. ANY sinner who knows they need Him and trusts in Him. Even the worst of sinners. Even you. Even me."

Closing Thought & Prayer

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> **Teacher:** "Jesus is the doctor for sick hearts. When we see someone who seems very 'bad,' we can remember: Jesus came for that person too. When we see ourselves and think we are

'pretty good,' we can remember: our hearts are sick too, and we need Jesus. Those who trust in Jesus, and only Jesus, will be saved. What a wonderful Savior!"

(Fold hands and bow heads.)

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, thank You for being the doctor who heals sick hearts. Help us to know that our own hearts need You. We cannot clean them on our own. Thank You for calling sinners to follow You, just like You called Levi. Help us to follow You with our whole hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Memorizing Verse: Luke 5:31-32

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> **Luke 5:31-32**
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> And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."
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> **Hand Gestures:**
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> - **"Those who are well..."**: Flex your arm muscles and smile big (a strong, healthy person).
> - **"...have no need of a physician..."**: Shake your head "no" and wave your hand away (don't need the doctor).
> - **"...but those who are sick."**: Cough into your elbow and hold your stomach (feeling sick).
> - **"I have not come to call the righteous..."**: Point outward and shake your head (not the people who think they're good).
> - **"...but sinners to repentance."**: Point to your own heart, then raise both hands up (turning to Jesus).
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> **Teacher Tip:** The verse is a little long for ages 4-6. Focus first on the key phrase: "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners." The other lines can be taught as call-and-response (teacher says first phrase, kids do the gesture and repeat).

Craft & Game (10 mins)

Game: "Who Needs the Doctor?" Sorting Game

Children sort picture cards of people and situations into "Thinks they are healthy" and "Knows they need the Doctor" piles. The twist: at the end, EVERY card ends up in the "Needs the Doctor" pile, because every heart is sick.

? **Time:** 5 minutes

? **Age Group:** 4-6 years

? **Lesson Connection:** Reinforces that every person has a sinful heart and needs Jesus. No one is saved by being "good enough."

? Setup & Materials Needed:

- A set of picture cards showing different people: a grumpy child, a kind child, a church-goer, a person in fancy clothes, a person stealing, a person helping, a tired parent, a happy grandma, etc. (Aim for 8-10 cards, with a mix that could make kids "sort" them into good and bad)
- Two signs: "Thinks They Are Healthy" and "Knows They Need the Doctor"
- A small toy doctor kit or a picture of Jesus (to be the "doctor")

? How to Play:

Step 1: Lay the two signs on the floor. Shuffle the picture cards.

Step 2: Let each child pick a card and decide: "Does this person think they are healthy, or do they know they need the Doctor?" Place the card under one of the signs.

Step 3: After every card is sorted, the teacher walks over to the "Thinks They Are Healthy" pile and says: "Remember what Jesus said? Everyone has a sinful heart, even people who LOOK good on the outside. The Pharisees thought they were healthy too!"

Step 4: Have the children help move every card into the "Knows They Need the Doctor" pile. Cheer together: "EVERYONE needs Jesus!"

Step 5: Ask: "Who is the only Doctor who can heal a sick heart?" (Jesus!) "Did Jesus come for 'pretty good' people, or for sinners who know they need Him?" (Sinners!)

Craft: "Follow Me" Heart Flap Card

Children make a card with a dark heart on the front that flips up to reveal a clean, red heart behind it, with the words "Jesus calls sinners." This is a simple take-home visual of what Jesus does for hearts that come to Him.

Materials: Half sheet of white cardstock (folded in half to make a card), a pre-cut dark grey or black heart shape (about 3 inches), a pre-cut red heart shape (slightly smaller), glue sticks, crayons or markers, the memory verse printed on small strips.

The Activity:

- **Step 1:** On the front of the folded card, glue the RED heart in the center. Write or stamp "Jesus" above it.
- **Step 2:** Glue the DARK heart on TOP of the red heart, but only glue along the top edge so the dark heart lifts up like a flap to reveal the red heart underneath.
- **Step 3:** On top of the dark heart, draw or write a simple sad face, or the word "Me."
- **Step 4:** Inside the card, glue the memory verse strip: "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32)
- **Step 5:** Decorate the outside with stickers or crayons.

- **Take Home:** Children show their family and lift the flap to tell the story: "My heart is dark because of sin, but Jesus calls sinners and makes their hearts red and clean!"

Response Song

https://www.youtube.com/embed/lmgUKoFKM60

Closing Prayer & Snack Time (10 mins)

> "Dear Jesus, thank You that You came to save sinners. Thank You that You are not afraid of dark hearts, because You came to heal them. Help us to know that we need You every day. Help us to tell our friends and family that You are the doctor for sick hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen."
>
> Now, let us thank You for the snack we're about to enjoy.
> We fold our hands.
> We bow our heads.
> We thank You, God,
> for this daily bread.
> Amen.

Free Time & Children Pickup (15 mins)

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