

Luke 8:40-56

## Aim of Lesson

To show that those who come to Jesus with faith will be rewarded, and that Jesus has power over disease and death.

## Background study

John 11:25; Acts 9:36-43; Romans 10:9; Hebrews 11:6. Study the role of the synagogue, and mourning customs.

## Suggested outline of lesson

Because this is a very familiar story, it is suggested that the description it be given a particular slant. Describe the events of the whole day as witnessed by Jairus himself. At the outset he is found waiting by the lake for Jesus to return. It is not clear how long his daughter had been seriously ill, but the situation was now so acute that he was desperate to see Jesus. Point out to the class that Jairus' daughter was not much older than they are. If possible, compare her with a twelve-year-old girl whom they know.

The boat seemed a long time coming, and many other people were waiting to see Jesus. Explain to the children that since Jairus played a large part in the organization of the synagogue, which was the centre of village life, he would be well-known and a well-respected member of the community; perhaps for this reason he was allowed to get to the front of the crowd. The urgency of his plea caused him to humble himself at Jesus' feet and beg him to come quickly to save his much-loved daughter. Jairus was so confident in the ability of Jesus to cure her that he would have felt immediately relieved when Jesus agreed to go with him. However, the ever-increasing crowd surged around them and their progress through the streets was distressingly slow.

Jairus' impatience must have reached a peak when Jesus suddenly stopped and asked: "Who touched me?" Jairus was, no doubt, as surprised as the disciples by this question, for they were being jostled on all sides. When Jesus gave his reason for stopping, Jairus realized that someone else was seeking the healing power of Jesus. He scanned the faces of the crowd and saw the timid face of the trembling woman behind Jesus. How different was this woman from himself; she a shy, impoverished creature and he a prominent and wealthy dignitary. It was obvious that she had been too reticent to approach Jesus and ask for help as he himself had done, and she had hoped to avoid attracting attention to herself. She knew for certain that she need only touch Jesus' robe and she would be healed. Jesus, however, felt it necessary to draw from her a confession of faith and to commend her for it. She would thus be strengthened both in character and body. She testified to the crowd how she had been ill for twelve years and had now been instantly cured.

While Jairus must have felt great sympathy for the woman and shared her joy at being healed, he would nevertheless be constantly aware of the passage of time. The delay that this incident caused must have been agonizing to him. Help the children to imagine his deep distress upon receiving the news that it was already too late. Immediately, Jesus offered Jairus words of comfort, and reinforced these words by wasting no time in going directly to Jairus' house.

When they arrived at the house there was no doubt that the girl was dead. As was the custom, friends and neighbours had already gathered to mourn, and there was much sobbing and wailing. Jairus' heart sank, and he looked questioningly at Jesus. More reassurance was forthcoming. Jesus spoke with authority and conviction. The child would awake. Some felt he must be unaware of the reality of the situation. Those who are dead do not wake up.

Jairus stood there, helpless, allowing Jesus to take command of the situation. Firmly Jesus quietened the mourners and turned them all out of the house. Jairus and his distraught wife, together with Peter, James and John, accompanied Jesus to the girl's bedside. Jairus watched in wonder as Jesus took the child's hand and spoke one simple command, upon which she was instantly restored to life and perfect health.

The parents must have been so overwhelmed by this sudden and wonderful reversal of the tragedy that they stood staring in amazement. Gently and warmly, Jesus spoke to them, restoring things to normality. Their daughter had been too ill to eat for some time and would now be hungry. The parents could now meet her needs again. Jesus told them not to spread the news, but it was inevitable that word of this momentous miracle would soon be heard throughout the region.

## Relevance to the children's lives

In this story, two people asked Jesus for help. Both received what they wanted because they approached Jesus with humility and faith. They knew he could help them. They were, however, very different from each other. One was an important and highly-respected religious leader; the other was a frail, nervous, insignificant woman. Does it matter to Jesus whether people are poor, rich, confident, shy, handicapped, clever, old or young? What is it about people that is really important to Jesus?

## Worksheets

The path to Jairus' house reads 'Don't be afraid, just believe!'

The solution to the puzzle is:

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## Prayer

Dear Lord God, we thank you that we can come to you just as we are, and that you will hear our prayer, if we trust and believe. Amen.

## Memory verse

"Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).