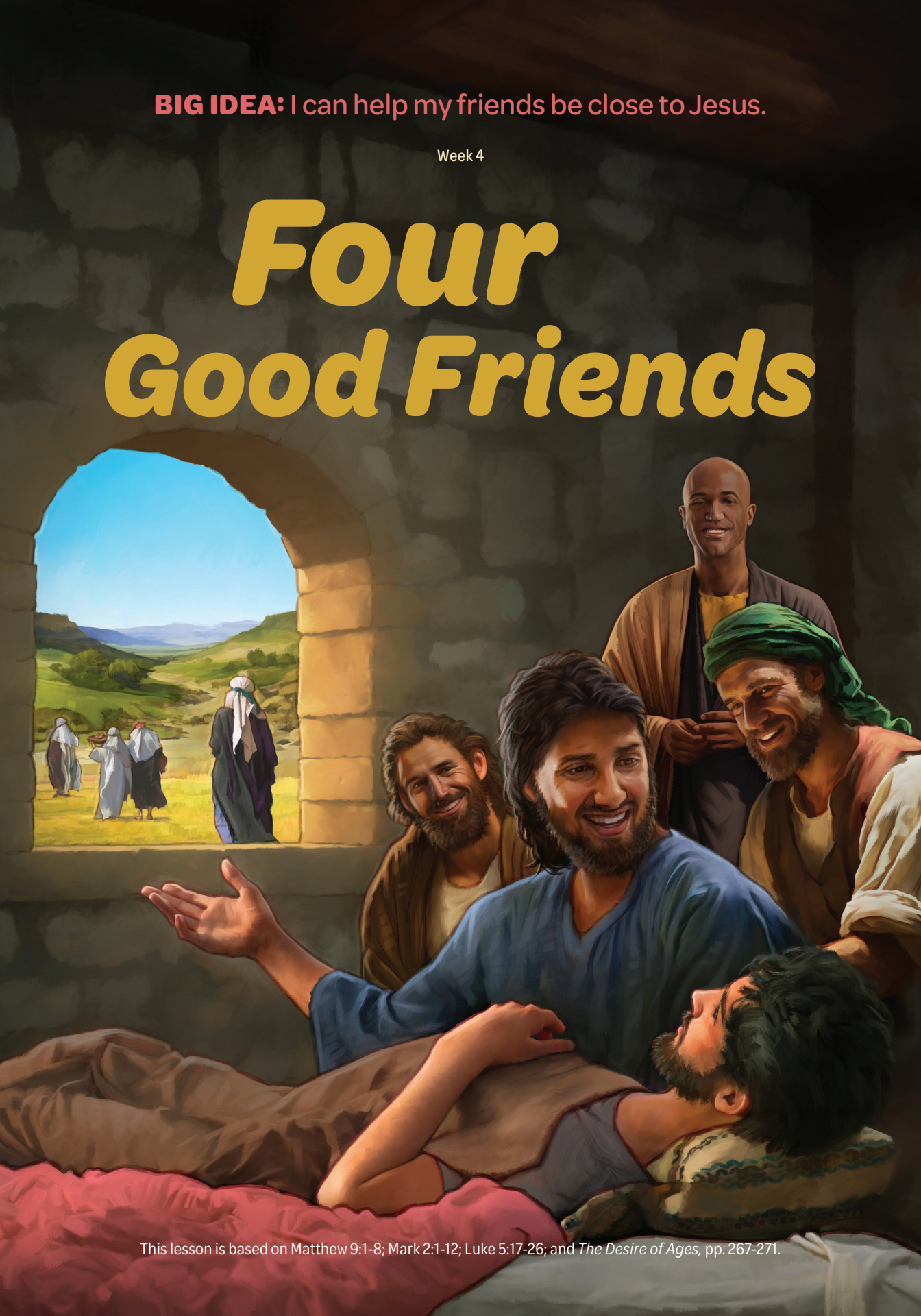
BIG IDEA: I can help my friends be close to Jesus.

Week 4

Four Good Friends



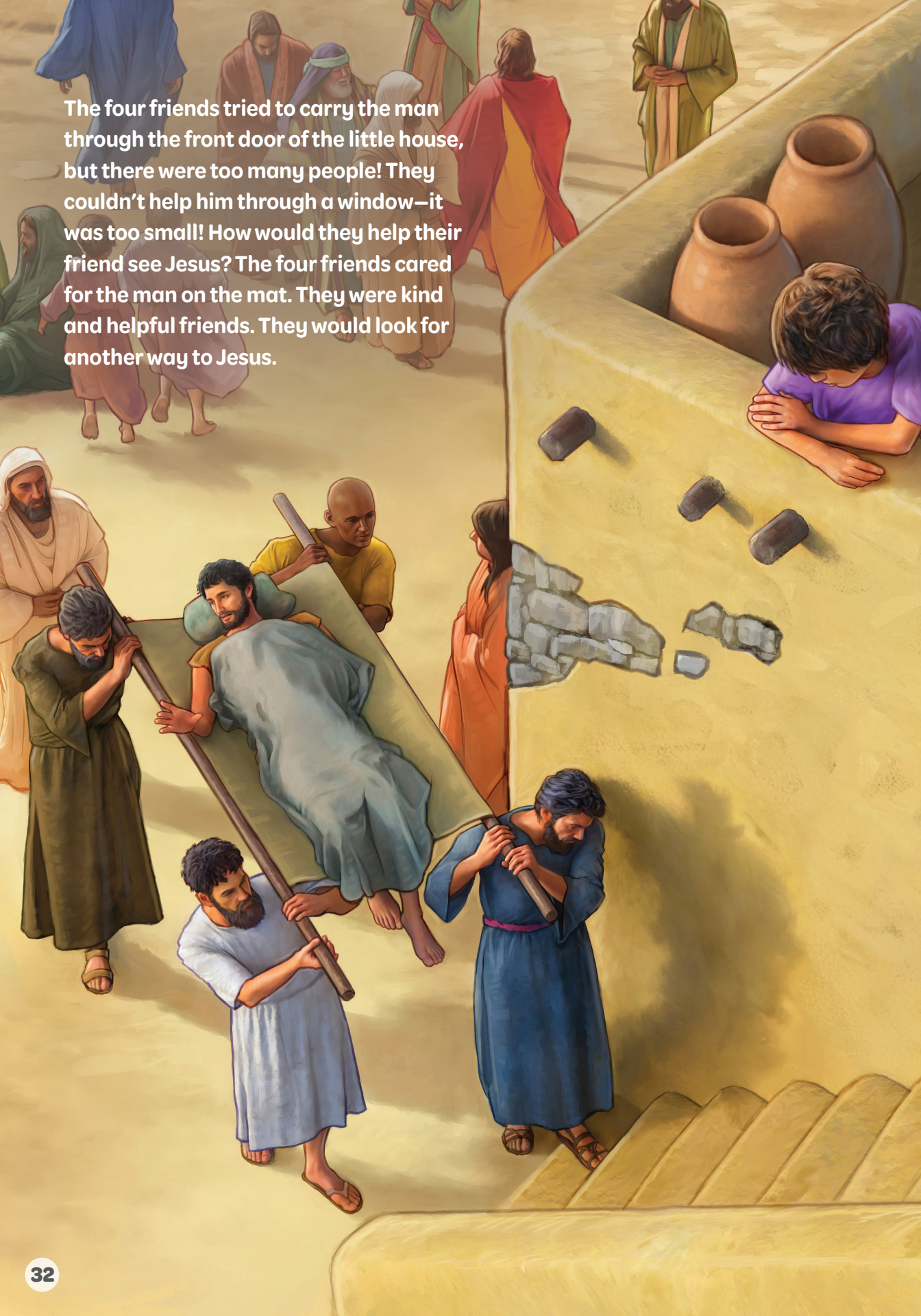
This lesson is based on Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26; and *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 267-271.



The little house was too full! There wasn't enough room. There wasn't even room for a little mouse! Mothers and fathers squished together *(squish close)*. Grandfathers and grandmothers squeezed in close *(pull child close)*. Young, old, short, tall—everyone pressed together to be near Jesus. Children peeked through windows to see and hear Jesus. People waited outside the little house to see Jesus too.



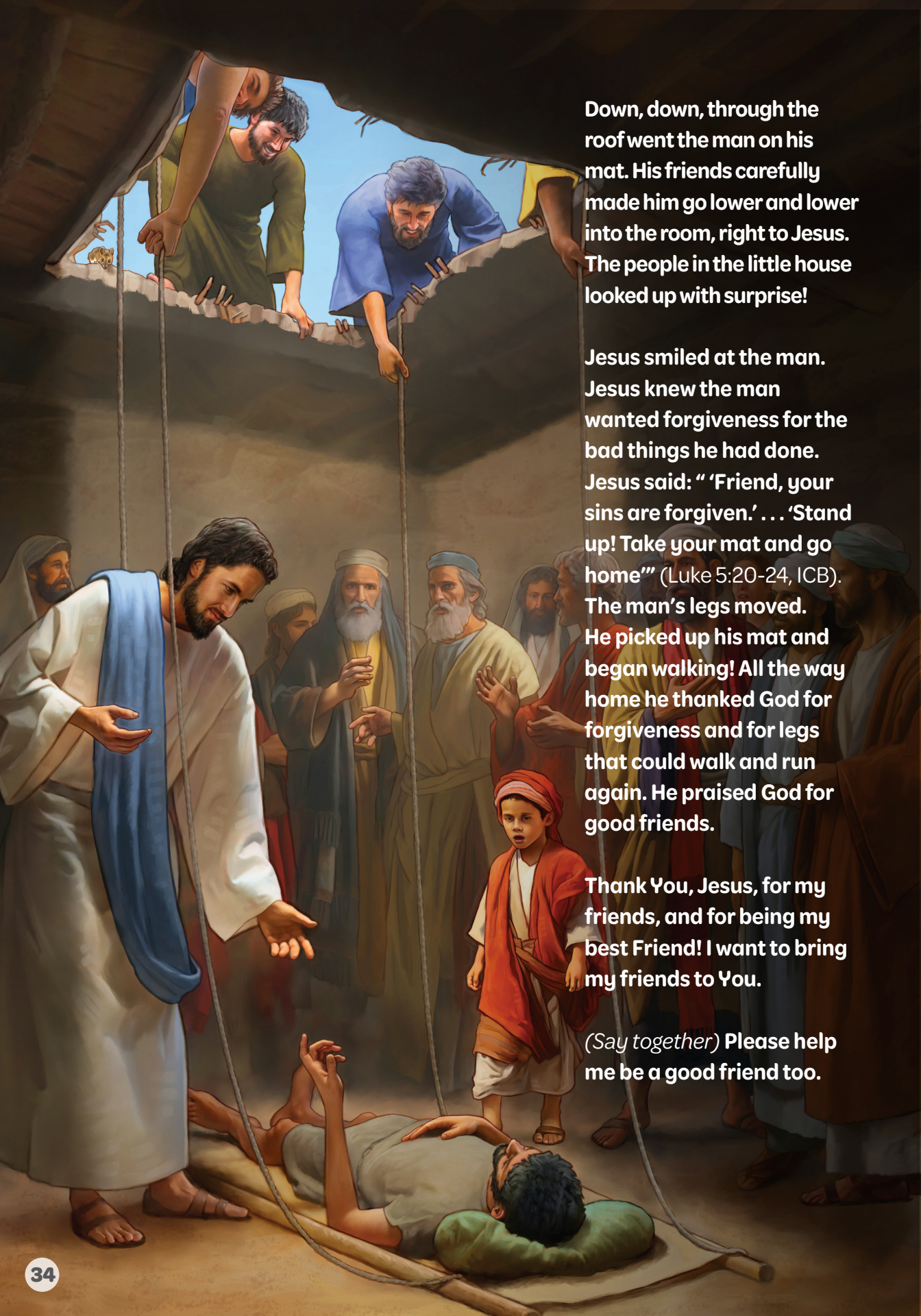
Four friends carried a man who lay on a mat to the little house. The man's legs didn't work anymore. He couldn't move them to walk and run. His four good friends wanted to take him to Jesus. They knew Jesus could make his legs work again. If only they could get to Jesus! But there were so many people in the little house. What could they do?



The four friends tried to carry the man through the front door of the little house, but there were too many people! They couldn't help him through a window—it was too small! How would they help their friend see Jesus? The four friends cared for the man on the mat. They were kind and helpful friends. They would look for another way to Jesus.



The four friends looked and looked *(hand at forehead searching)***. Ah, there was a way! The roof—through the top of the house! Very carefully they climbed one step . . . two steps . . . They carried their friend all the way up to the flat top of the little house. They scratched away the straw and mud to make a hole in the roof. The man lying on his mat smiled at his four good friends. He was going to see Jesus!**



Down, down, through the roof went the man on his mat. His friends carefully made him go lower and lower into the room, right to Jesus. The people in the little house looked up with surprise!

Jesus smiled at the man. Jesus knew the man wanted forgiveness for the bad things he had done. Jesus said: " 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.' . . . 'Stand up! Take your mat and go home'" (Luke 5:20-24, ICB). The man's legs moved. He picked up his mat and began walking! All the way home he thanked God for forgiveness and for legs that could walk and run again. He praised God for good friends.

Thank You, Jesus, for my friends, and for being my best Friend! I want to bring my friends to You.

(Say together) Please help me be a good friend too.

play throughout the Day

Explore

Re-create the story using sticks, leaves, and bark to create a house. Take a piece of cloth, tie a thread to its four corners, draw and cut out a paper man, and lay him on the cloth bed. Make a hole in the "roof" and send down the "sick man." Thank Jesus together for healing the sick man in such an amazing way, and for his four kind friends who brought him to Jesus.

Create

Invite one of your friends to Sabbath School. Create a special invitation, then mail it or deliver it to their home.

Worship

In worship, re-create the story using a blanket and some teddy bears. Read the story from your Bible or the lesson again. Take turns giving your child a turn to be carried around the room in the blanket by holding each of the corners.

Connect

Think about a friend (who may also be a family member) who may need your help or encouragement. Spend time making a card, gift, or practicing a song to sing, to encourage this person.

Pray

Choose a different friend to pray for each day this week. Model praying for that person and then ask your child if they would like to pray too.



Extension weekly memory verse: "... he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:21).

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

For You, Parents

How blessed the man with paralysis was, to have four good friends. These friends were so invested in his life, health, and happiness that they personally *carried him to Jesus.* They didn't just stop at the first roadblock. No! They thought outside the box and created a solution that would allow their friend to come close to the Savior. Then they watched with joy as Jesus healed him—wholly and fully. His life was changed forever. They too would never be the same.

You have an opportunity to be one of these friends. Whom will you carry to Jesus? How will you go out of your way to help someone discover His love, forgiveness, and healing? What obstacles are you willing to overcome in order to get them there?

The four friends didn't judge their friend with paralysis. They didn't allow polite society to keep him at the edge of the crowd. They found a way to bring him right to Jesus. "Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Savior said, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 268).

Imagine the joy, amazement, and wonder!

As you go throughout this week, intentionally invest in friendship. Ask God to help you to find time and create opportunities for meaningful connections. That's not always easy in this phase of life. We need His help! Saturate your friendship in prayer. You may even consider boldly having a short prayer to begin a conversation. Your children will watch how you do friendship and model your ways. Make Jesus your best Friend and ask Him to help you as you grow friendships for Him.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).