BLESSINGS IN CAPERNAUM

WHEN JESUS BLESSES MY LIFE IN WONDERFUL WAYS, I CAN PASS A BLESSING ON TO OTHERS.



MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you" (Numbers 6:24, 25).

WORD OF THE WEEK: BLESSING:

A blessing is a special favor or gift that improves a person's life, making them happy and content. You can also say a blessing: request God to care for someone.

This week's lesson is based on the story of Jesus in Capernaum as found in Mark 1:29-34 and Luke 4:38-41. Some insights have also been drawn from *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 252-261, and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, pp. 570, 571.

SUNDAY

Sharing Blessings in the Synagogue

Do: Find Capernaum on a Bible map. Plot Jesus' course from Jerusalem to Damascus. Where else might He have stopped along the way?



A gentle breeze blew through the pretty village of Capernaum. Perched on a lake, it was surrounded by water, rolling green hills, vineyards, and olive trees. The soft wind set the palm trees swaying and cooled the many people who had gathered in the streets. Families, fishermen, farmers, traders, and travelers were all pressed together. Everyone was excited. Jesus was in town!

They hurried to find the new Teacher, eager to learn more of His ways and His mission. Crowds eagerly gathered around Him.

Sabbath came, and masses of people tried to squish into the synagogue to hear Jesus. Some had to be turned away because there was simply no more room. All those who managed to find a spot inside listened carefully—they didn't want to miss even one word. What did they think of the way Jesus taught? **Read Mark 1:22.**

Jesus blessed the people of Capernaum as He taught them God's beautiful truth. Their faith grew, and their hearts were full and happy.

There is an extra-special blessing waiting for us when we go to church with an open heart to worship Jesus. He remains our teacher, and His words in the Bible will amaze and change us, as they did the people of Capernaum. We can read and share them anytime—what a blessing!

The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to draw us to Jesus. Then He blesses us and teaches us spiritual truths that help us love God more. We can then share our faith with others to bless them.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *How much like the people of Capernaum are those in your home town or city?*
- *What could you or your church do to encourage the people in your town to choose Jesus?*

Pray: Pray for your neighbors and the people in your town. This is called *intercessory* prayer.

Pray that the people around you will be drawn to Jesus as the people of Capernaum were.



☐ MONDAY

Sabbath With Friends

The crowds in the synagogue sat in hushed awe as they thought about the powerful words Jesus had just spoken. Meanwhile Jesus slipped quietly out the door, leaving the people alone with their thoughts. Where did He go? *Read Mark 1:29*.

Jesus often stayed in Simon Peter's home in Capernaum. Jesus and His disciples had become like family to Peter. His whole family treated Jesus as one of their own too. Jesus was blessed to be accepted and loved by them all. He knew He could go there for Sabbath lunch that day. He also knew He could rest quietly after preaching all morning to the crowds in the synagogue.

As Jesus traveled and taught all over Galilee, He needed people like Simon Peter who would welcome Him into their homes and treat Him like family. Many church members today are blessed when we welcome them into our homes too. Those who live alone, people who have lost their husband or wife, children who don't have a mom or dad living with them, refugees and people new to the area or country, elderly people, and shy people are all blessed when we make them feel welcome and part of our family.

It is God's plan that we all feel part of His big family. Ephesians 2:19 says, "Now you are citizens together with God's holy people. You belong to God's family" (ICB). We can travel all over the world and find members of God's big church. Worshipping and spending time together is a wonderful, world-wide family blessing.

Do: If you know (or anyone in your family knows) the song "I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God," sing it together.

Fast Fact: In 2020 there were 21.76 million members in God's Seventh-day Adventist Church family. This number grows by about a half million each year.

Pray: Thank God for the wonderful blessing it is to belong to His big family.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Where would you like to visit with other members of God's family?*
- *How could you make others feel part of your church family? Challenge yourself to do something this week. For example: invite someone to sit with you in Sabbath School, invite someone to your house for Sabbath lunch, or greet them with a smile. Small actions can have a big impact.*

☐ TUESDAY

A Healing Blessing

Jesus strolled into Peter's house and sat down wearily. But His rest didn't last for long. With a worried look on his face, Peter came and told Jesus that his wife's mother was sick with a very high fever. Her body felt hot, as if it were burning up. She was too sick to do anything except lie still in her bed.

Jesus knew exactly what to do. He went straight to the sick woman's bedside and gently held her hand. "He stood very close to her and commanded the fever to leave. It left her immediately, and she got up and began serving them" (Luke 4:39, ICB).

At Jesus' command the fever left: no headache; no aching muscles; no hot, burning body. What a wonderful blessing!

Imagine the happiness and praise that filled Peter's house. Jesus had healed many people in the streets and on the hillsides, but now He had healed someone they loved very much, in Peter's very own family home.

Jesus blesses us with healing too. Sometimes He performs a miracle to heal us. At other times He heals us over time. When we are sick with a fever, our mom may put a cold cloth on our forehead to help cool us down, or the doctor may give us medicine to take. These are Jesus' ways of helping our body to heal as we rest. This kind of healing may not seem like a miracle, but God is just as much at work in it. Peter's mother-in-law was healed quickly, while we may be healed slowly. But both kinds of healing are wonderful blessings.

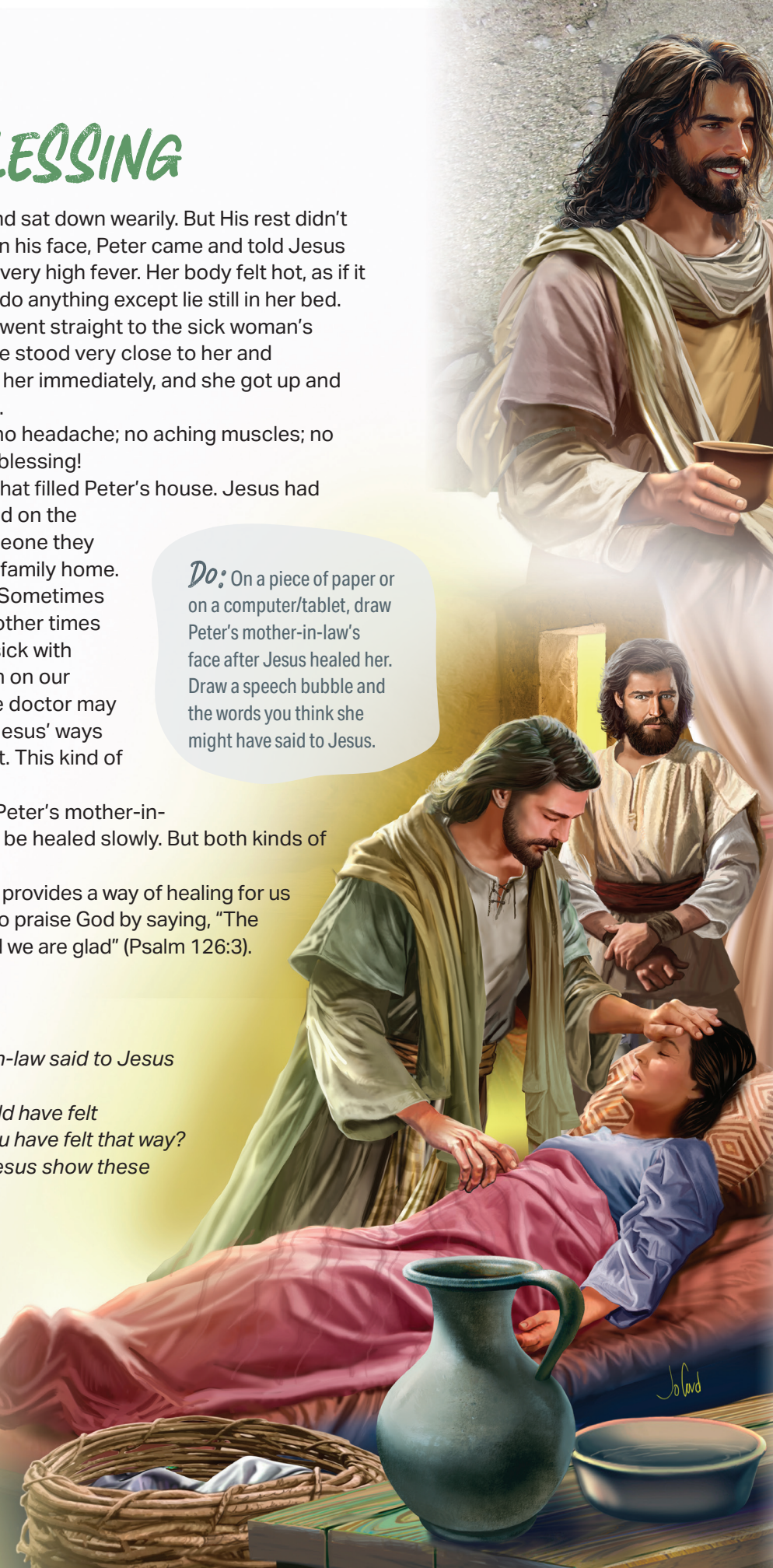
What might we say to God when He provides a way of healing for us and others? **Read Psalm 95:1.** You can also praise God by saying, "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad" (Psalm 126:3).

Do: On a piece of paper or on a computer/tablet, draw Peter's mother-in-law's face after Jesus healed her. Draw a speech bubble and the words you think she might have said to Jesus.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What do you think Peter's mother-in-law said to Jesus after He had healed her?*
- *Use your face to show how you would have felt if you had been there. Why would you have felt that way?*
- *Read* **Numbers 6:24-26**. *How did Jesus show these things to Peter's mother-in-law?*

Pray: Thank God for the times He has healed you. Pray for people you know who are sick.





WEDNESDAY

Blessed to Serve

Peter's mother-in-law felt amazing! With a spring in her step and light in her eyes, she headed straight to the kitchen to serve her guests. Jesus had healed her, so she immediately passed the blessing on by doing what she could for others. She happily served Sabbath lunch to her family, Jesus, and the disciples.

Imagine the cheery chatter around the table as they ate that meal together in Peter's house. You can be sure they weren't fighting or arguing. Neither would they have been bossing Peter's mother-in-law around—no, they would have been very grateful and eager to help her. Every time they looked at her they would have been reminded of the wonderful healing miracle Jesus had performed. This joy is one they would need to share with others too. **Read Matthew 5:16.**

Just as Peter's mother-in-law served others after she was healed, we can be a blessing to others after God has blessed our lives in wonderful ways. If you have been blessed with the ability to read well, for example, you could help someone else learn to read. Blessed with strong legs, you could do a chore for an elderly neighbor. Blessed with a car, your family might give someone a ride to church.

Proverbs 11:25 says, "The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself." When we are a blessing to others, our lives will be blessed as well! It's like a big circle of blessings, going round and round. Part of the blessings is the way we feel inside after we have done something good for someone else.

Parent Faith Talk: Share a blessing you received from God, and how you were then able to pass a blessing on to someone else.

Mission Challenge: This week's challenge is to serve your own family. Talk with your mom about a simple meal you could make and serve them. As you eat together, tell them about Peter's mother-in-law: how she was healed and how she served.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *"Pay it forward" is a well-known saying that means you should pass on the good things that come to you. What blessings could you pay forward, and to whom?*
- *How does this saying apply to Peter's mother-in-law?*

Pray: Place your hand on a family member's arm and pray Numbers 6:24, 25 (your memory verse) as a prayer over them.



☐ THURSDAY

Joy in Shared Blessings

News of the miracle spread like wildfire around Capernaum that Sabbath afternoon. The people had been amazed by the Great Teacher in the synagogue, but then Jesus had healed Peter's mother-in-law as well! The story was told from house to house and around every street corner.

The people's hearts filled with hope—maybe they could be healed too! But they didn't dare come to Jesus on Sabbath, as they were afraid of making the rabbis, who thought it a sin to heal on Sabbath, angry. As soon as the sun set, their doors flew open, and the people of Capernaum surged out into the streets.

From all over town everyone headed toward the humble home where Jesus was staying. Limping, leaning on walking sticks, and supported by friends, the people came. "And He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them" (Luke 4:40). What else did Jesus do for some of these faith-filled people? *Read Luke 4:41.*

Jesus shared His love and God's healing power as He blessed every single person. And as each one was healed, the joy was shared right down the line of people waiting to meet Jesus.

The night was dark, and the hour was late when the last person left. Silence finally settled down upon Capernaum. Grateful silence, contented silence, joyful silence. It had been a day like no other. God's promise "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace" (Isaiah 55:12) had come true in a special way that night.

When Jesus blesses people's lives in wonderful ways, the news—and the joy—can quickly spread. Become a messenger of this good news! Jesus also loves to be able to bless many people at once, just as He does at church, so they can experience His love together.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *If you had been there that night, how would you have helped Jesus?*
- *What do you think the people would have talked about when they woke up the next morning?*
- *Read **Psalm 47:1**. How well do you think the people did what this verse describes?*

Do: Collect items that help to heal people (bandages, tissues, ointment, etc.). Show a family member and discuss how each one helps. Thank God for the many ways He heals.

Pray: Praise God for the joy He brings to your heart, especially when the joy is shared.

FRIDAY

The Joy of Being a Blessing

Many years before, when Jesus was 12, He had said to His mother, "I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Now that He was busy doing God's work publicly, those words had really come true—especially on that long and exciting day in Capernaum when He blessed so many people.

- People were blessed by Jesus' teachings in the synagogue.
- Jesus and His disciples had been blessed to feel part of Peter's family.
- The family felt blessed to have Jesus stay with them.
- Peter's mother-in-law had been blessed with healing.
- The whole town was blessed either to have been healed or to have seen the healings firsthand.

So many blessings flowed from Jesus as He went about His Father's business that day. And when it came to an end, Jesus felt blessed by all He had been able to do for others. His heart had filled with sympathy when He saw the sufferings of those who had come to be healed. Then His heart sang with joy as He blessed the people with healing and comfort. Jesus was so glad He had the power to make them well and happy. It had been a wonderful day.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *As you receive God's blessings, what does He want you to do? Read* ***Hebrews 13:16.***
- *Do you sometimes feel blessed by what you have been able to do for others?*



Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Sing or listen to the song "We Are His Hands," by Jeff Wood. Alternatively, think about the words:

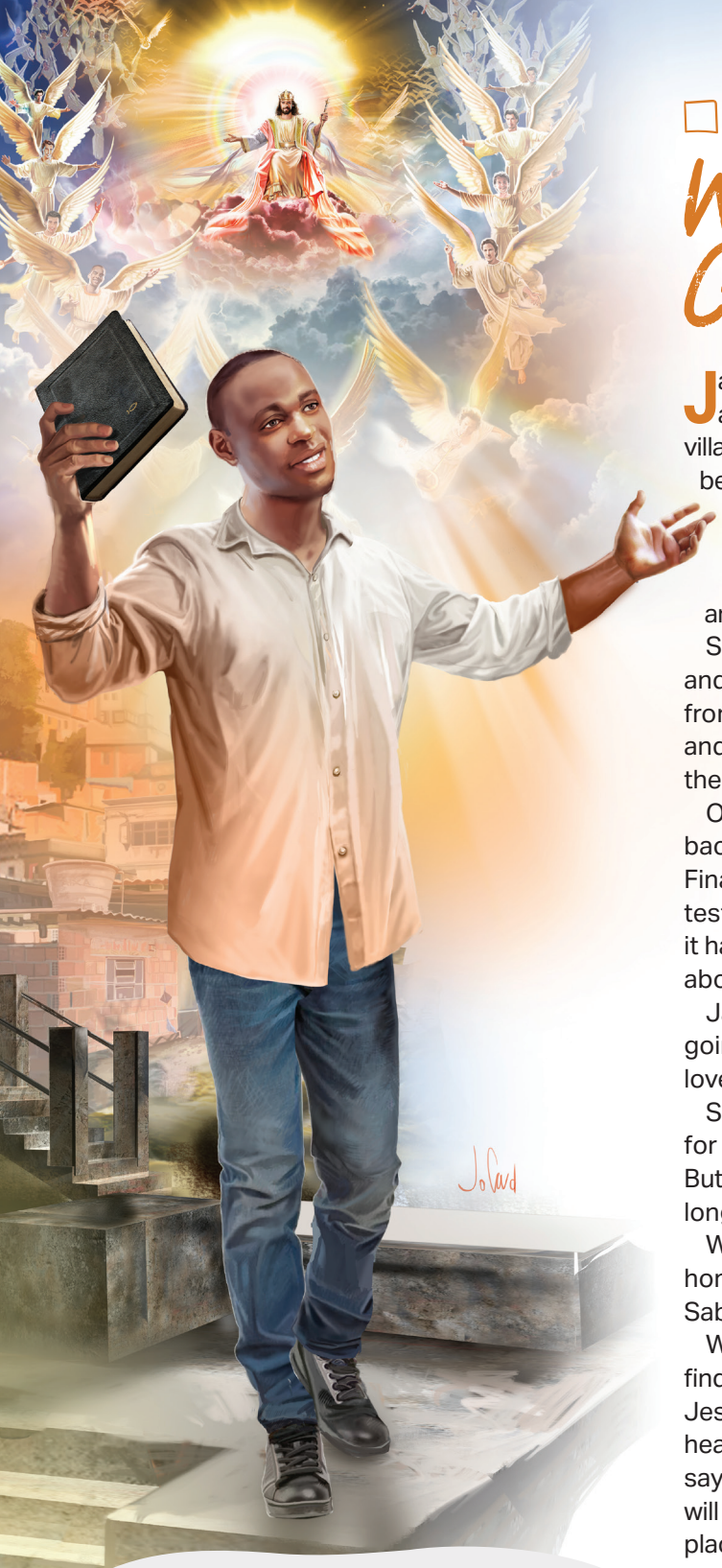
  We are His hands, to touch the world around us.
  We are His feet, to go where He may lead.
  And we are His love, burning in the darkness.
  We are His love, shining in the night.
- Create actions to go with the Bible verse "Share with God's people who need help. Bring strangers in need into your homes" (Romans 12:13, ICB).
- Listen to or sing the hymn "As Water to the Thirsty" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 460).

Family Journal

- What new things have you learned about blessings from this story?
- What is God inviting you to do in this story?

Pray

Take turns thanking God for a specific blessing He has given you this week, and for the forever blessing of being His child.



SABBATH

Where Did the Cancer Go?

Janeesh is a natural storyteller whom God has blessed with a very special story indeed. The young man from a small village in southern India grew up loving God and decided to become a pastor. He left his village and went to study at a seminary. While there, he met some Adventist friends who invited him to a Friday night worship service. He had never heard about the Bible Sabbath, and after many questions and much study he accepted the Bible truth with joy.

Soon Janeesh was telling everyone about the Sabbath and about Jesus coming back soon. He just loved to share from the Bible. He preached to a Sundaykeeping church, and in time the whole church switched to worshipping on the Sabbath.

One day Janeesh began to feel ill. He had pain in his lower back, and his belly ached with a pain that didn't go away. Finally he went to a doctor. After an examination and many tests, the doctor told Janeesh that he had cancer and that it had spread to several parts of his body. "You have only about six months to live," the doctor said.

Janeesh went home feeling sad—not because he was going to die, but because he wouldn't be able to share God's love with more people.

Some people told Janeesh that God was punishing him for becoming an Adventist, or for arguing with the preacher. But Janeesh didn't listen; he just prayed. Then he began a long treatment for the cancer.

When the treatments were finished, Janeesh returned home and held more meetings to talk about God and the Sabbath. From these meetings eight people were baptized!

When Janeesh returned for a checkup, his doctors couldn't find any signs of the cancer. Janeesh is healthy and strong. Jesus has blessed him with a miracle of healing. "Jesus healed me so I can share God's love with more people," he says. Janeesh loves to tell people that Jesus loves them and will come again soon to take all those who believe in Him to a place where no one will ever be sick again.

(Note to Parents: Please take some time to explain to your child that God does not always heal people like this. Sometimes people die of their sicknesses. This does not mean that God does not love them, but we need to understand that there is a larger controversy going on in which we are a part. We need to trust God whether He decides to heal us or not.)

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For You, Parents: God will bless you and your children abundantly as you work together to be a blessing in the lives of others. "Whatever blessings the Lord may give, He has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which you may draw" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 28).