

Prepare

What's behind all this?

The miracles are a big part of the Jesus story in the Gospels—although it's notable that Paul doesn't mention them much in his letters. Starting with his changing of water into wine at a wedding, Jesus performs miracles showing his power over nature (like calming a storm) and over human ailments (like leprosy and paralysis).

Jesus also makes it clear, when he heals a man who was paralyzed and whose friends had lowered him through the roof of the home where Jesus was teaching, that his ability to forgive sins and his ability to heal are both connected. And they are both a work of the Holy Spirit, which descended on Jesus at his baptism.

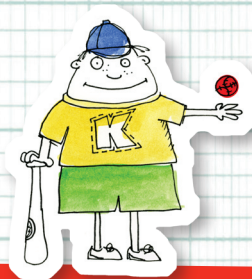
Jesus' miracles inspired awe in those who observed them. Even more important, they were signposts pointing to what the kingdom of God is like—where there is no more leprosy, paralysis, or demon possession. In his miracles, Jesus was giving people a vision of the world the way that God intends it to be.

Where are kids at?

- Kids this age are beginning to question things that might not be true in today's "real world." Miracles definitely fall into this category. Focus on how miracles make us feel. Encourage discussion about the excitement, wonder, and amazement we feel when hear stories of Jesus performing miracles. Use those emotions to help kids break into thinking of miracles as something that can strengthen our faith whether we truly believe they happened or not.



John 14:11
Revelation 21:3-4



Where's this going?

Kids plumb the meanings of miracle stories in the Bible and what they ultimately say about God.

Consider this . . .

"The truth is, nothing about the early ministry of Jesus is plainer than that it was chiefly as a wonder-worker, a benefactor and doer of good to people in physical or mental distress that he was first known."

Edgar J. Goodspeed, *A Life of Jesus*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, publishers), 1950, 53

encounter

15 minutes

Video

1. Set up

Using a long strip of mural paper, give kids 2 minutes to work together to make the longest list they can of current events that they would consider modern-day miracles. On the back of the same paper roll, give kids 2 minutes to work together to make the longest list they can of miracles that they remember happening in the Bible.

2. Watch

“Do I have to believe Jesus performed miracles in order to be a Christian?”
DVD 2, Chapter 4

3. Unpack

- How do you feel about the video we just watched?
- What words can you think of that describe the word *miracle*?
- What events in the video remind you of something that has happened in your life?
- According to the video, what were some reasons Jesus performed miracles?

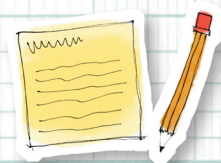
What about the Bible?

Split kids into two teams. Give teams 10 minutes to do a Gospel scavenger hunt for stories about miracles. Which team can create a longer list?

Questions for conversation while you work:

- To you, what is a miracle? How does this compare to what miracles were like in the Bible?
- When was a time you experienced a miracle, or what is a miracle you have heard about?
- Why do you think some people have their prayers answered by miracles?
- Why do you think some people don't have their prayers answered by miracles?

Make sure you've got the obvious stuff for this session—re:form video (DVD or download), Anti-Workbooks, Bibles, pens or pencils, paper, tape, etc.



Get this stuff . . .

Long strip of mural paper. Markers.



Back it up . . .

“If we look at the story about a paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof of a home Jesus was teaching in, it says that Jesus then told the man that his sins were forgiven. Which some people thought was very un-cool. But Jesus, knowing their hearts, then proved to them that he had the authority to forgive sins by healing the man as well.”

re:form DVD

engage

25-30 minutes

Choose 1+ Anti-Workbook (AW) activities to explore the session question. The first 2 are for individual use, while the last 2 involve the whole group.



1. Miracle, Any Miracle! AW p. 110

Before this activity, consider some of your favorite miracle stories from the Bible and how you have seen them come into play in your life. Tell kids about your favorite miracle story. Why is it your favorite? What does it tell you about God? How have you seen these kinds of miracles, in a similar or smaller way, come to life in your own experiences?

Questions for conversation while you work:

- What kinds of miracles do you see proclaimed in our sample tabloids?
- Why do you think some people believe in miracles today?
- How do you feel about miracles today?
- How are the miracles in our sample tabloids different from the Biblical miracles you're reading about? What is God telling us by creating these miracles?
- If Jesus had never performed any miracles, would you still be able to say he was God's Son? Why or why not?

Get this stuff . . .

Sample tabloids for kids to browse.

Where's this going?

Kids look at a variety of miracles in the Bible and rewrite them, tabloid-style.

Back it up . . .

"Walk? I can dance!"

re:form DVD



2. Humpty Dumpty AW p. 111

Select a few volunteers to act out the parts in the "Humpty Dumpty" nursery rhyme. Be sure to include a Humpty Dumpty, the king's horses, and the king's men. Read "Humpty Dumpty" aloud for your group once or twice while your volunteers act out the rhyme.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- What does Humpty Dumpty look like in your drawing?
- When you recall the nursery rhyme, is there any point where Humpty Dumpty is said to be an egg?
- Why do you think most people picture Humpty Dumpty as an egg even though he's never described as one?
- How could this assumption relate to our assumptions about miracles?
- When you read about miracles in the Bible, how do you feel?
- Do you think stories of miracles are important for your faith? Why?
- Do you think it's possible to believe in the power of miracles even if you don't know whether they really happened? Why or why not?

Get this stuff . . .

Wide variety of drawing materials, such as thin-line colored markers, colored pencils, and high-quality drawing pencils. Copy of the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme.

Where's this going?

Kids draw Humpty Dumpty based on the nursery rhyme—which never actually mentions an egg—and consider what this means for our assumptions about miracles.



3. Perform a Miracle! AW p. 112

Learn a simple card trick in advance of this activity. Perform the trick several times for your group. Then reveal how the trick works. Invite any kids in the group to share card tricks they know with the group.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- Why do people love watching magic tricks and shows? How do magic tricks make them feel?
- Why do people love the miracle stories in the Bible so much? How do those stories make them feel?
- What is the difference between a miracle and a magic trick?
- How do you think Jesus felt when he caused a miracle to happen?
- What do you think Jesus felt about the people to whom he could not bring miracles?
- Why do you think Jesus used miracles?

Get this stuff . . .

Spoons. Nickels. Deck of playing cards. Book of card tricks, or online card trick sources.

Where's this going?

Kids learn how to do a magic trick and explore how miracles were different from simple magic tricks.



4. My Medical Chart AW p. 113

Think of an experience you've had with illness or injury. It could be a personal experience or an experience of one of your friends or family members. What made you feel better during the experience? What things have you done for others to help them when they were ill? Share your experience with the group.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- Think of a time when you had a cold. What did it feel like when you finally realized you'd "beaten" the virus?
- Even though we know diseases are bad, why do you think some germs are good?
- Do you think there can be healing for all sick people, even those with lifelong diseases like diabetes or MS? What does healing look like for someone with a lifelong disease?
- Why do you think some people consider their medical illnesses to be gifts?
- What message does God send with a miracle?

Where's this going?

Kids reflect on their medical histories and the power of healing in order to see God's abundance and gifts to the world.

Back it up . . .

"Christians believe that in the Kingdom of God there is no more leprosy, paralysis, demon possession, parking tickets, algebra tests, or line dancing."

re:form DVD

respond

15-20 minutes

Gather to share the different points of view kids have discovered and developed during the session.

Regroup

Have kids get back into their teams from the beginning of the lesson. Pass their lists of miracles back to them and have them add any new Biblical miracles they learned about in the lesson, as well as any miracles on the back that they have heard about from the news or friends.

Share

Invite kids to share their work and describe how and why they did it. Affirm those things you appreciate or find interesting and ask others to offer helpful observations.

Questions for conversation:

- Why do you think there are so many miracles in the Bible?
- Are modern-day miracles really miracles? Why or why not?
- What's one of your favorite "everyday" miracles, like birth or sunrises?
- If Jesus had lived longer, what other miracles might he have performed?
- If Jesus were alive on Earth today, what miracles might he perform?

Send

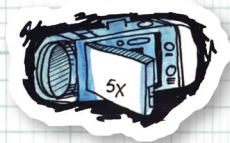
If you haven't already, place a clear vase in the center of a table, and make sure you have enough small clear containers for each kid to have one. For each lesson in the Jesus unit, you will continue to add new sand to the vase.

Place bowls of sand out, and allow kids to fill their small clear containers with a color of sand that represents miracles to them. Go around the table and give kids a chance to name miracles they celebrate personally, either from their lives or from the Bible. As everyone pours their sand into the large vase together, pray this prayer: "Dear God, we celebrate your work in the world during Jesus' life and each and every day of our lives. Amen."



Get this stuff . . .

List of miracles from Encounter. Clear vase with straight sides. Small clear containers. Small bowls of red, blue, purple, green, and orange sand.



Capture it . . .

Use a digital camera, camcorder, scanner, web cam, or audio recorder to capture group conversations and individual pieces of work. Upload them to your online galleries, or ask kids to do so.