



## Discussion Guide Stories Worth Sharing – Part 3 LEADER GUIDE

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*Hey leaders! Throughout our summer series, "Stories Worth Sharing", we're excited to help our church see the character of Jesus and that we all have impactful stories to share. Just like we'll hear the Gospel in these stories, people can hear the Gospel through OUR stories!*

*Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!*

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**"He is your friend who pushes you nearer to God."**

[Abraham Kuyper]

**LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
  - Four men bring their paralyzed friend to see Jesus, but they can't reach him due to the crowd. Undeterred, they make an opening in the roof above Jesus and lower the man down. Seeing their faith, Jesus tells the paralyzed man that his sins are forgiven. Some scribes question who Jesus thinks he is to forgive sins, as they believe only God can do so. To demonstrate his authority, Jesus then tells the paralyzed man to get up, take his mat, and go home. The man does so, astonishing the crowd, who praise God and exclaim that they have never seen anything like this before.
- **Mark Ch. 2 Commentary & Jesus Takes Our Place**
  - Use this commentary and short video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Friends Who Tear Up the Roof For Us**
  - This would be an encouraging resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.

Describe someone in your life who has been a friend through it all. What is one characteristic that defines the kind of friend they have been to you?

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note** Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*"Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family."*

[Proverbs 18:24]

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today's discussion is.

However you and I define friendship, is how you and I will pursue and live out friendship.

**PASSAGE || Leader Note** Have someone read the passage aloud slowly. Consider having another person read it aloud again (possibly in a different translation) or use **Dwell** to listen to it read aloud.

- Mark 2:1-12

**DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

1. How does the faith of the paralytic's friends inspire you? *Their faith demonstrates an unwavering belief in Jesus' ability to heal and their determination to lower their friend through the roof shows their creativity and commitment. This level of faith inspires us to think about how we can support our friends and loved ones, bringing them to Jesus in prayer and action, even when it requires effort and innovation.*
2. In the sermon we heard, *"This moment happened because of the faith and efforts of these friends."* Describe a time in your life when the faith and effort of your friend(s) accomplished something that brought you great joy or purpose. *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
3. What does Jesus' response tell us about His priorities? *Jesus' initial response, "Son, your sins are forgiven," indicates that His primary concern is spiritual healing over physical. This highlights that Jesus values our spiritual well-being and relationship with God above all else, showing that forgiveness and reconciliation with God are paramount.*
4. What does the healing of the paralytic tell us about the relationship between physical and spiritual healing in Jesus' ministry? *The healing of the paralytic demonstrates that while Jesus prioritizes spiritual healing, He also cares deeply about our physical well-being. This dual aspect of healing shows that Jesus' ministry addresses the whole person, emphasizing the interconnectedness of body and spirit.*
5. How can we practice the kind of faith and determination shown by the paralytic's friends in our own lives? *We can practice this kind of faith by persistently praying for others, seeking innovative ways to help and support those in need, and not giving up when faced with obstacles. This involves being proactive in bringing others to Jesus through our actions, words, and prayers.*
6. In the sermon we heard, *"There will be chapters in your life that you simply won't get through without friendship."* What has one of those chapters been like for you? (i.e. needed a friend to get through)
7. How do you think the paralytic felt when Jesus first forgave his sins instead of immediately healing him? *The paralytic might have been initially confused or disappointed because he came seeking physical healing. However, he likely felt an overwhelming sense of peace and liberation upon receiving forgiveness, understanding that his spiritual condition was being addressed first.*
8. What does this passage teach us about the importance of community and intercessory prayer? *This passage highlights the power of community and intercessory prayer. The paralytic's healing was a result of his friends' faith and actions, emphasizing that our faith and prayers for others can have a significant impact. It teaches the importance of supporting and carrying each other to Jesus.*

9. In what ways can we be more aware of the spiritual needs of those around us? *We can be more aware of others' spiritual needs by developing a deeper relationship with God, practicing empathy, and actively listening to others. Regular prayer and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance can also help us discern and respond to the spiritual needs of our community.*
10. How does the reaction of the crowd to the healing encourage our own faith journey? *Their reaction of amazement and praise to God encourages us by reminding us of God's power and the impact of His works. Witnessing or hearing about miraculous transformations can strengthen our faith and motivate us to trust in God's ability to work in our lives and the lives of others.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Jesus has placed you in the circle of people you are in for a purpose. His will for every one of us is that we have a circle of “open roof” friends! Based on the Holy Spirit’s prompting today, **what is a step of obedience that you can take?** Here are a few questions to consider ...

- Who is God inviting you to be an “open roof” friend to?
- Who do you need to forgive so that friendship can be restored?
- Are the friendships in your life defined as open, sacrificial, creative, and bold?
- How can your home become a place where people are welcomed to and invested in?

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.*

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!*

### “Open Roof” Friends

- Pray that we come before God with a humble heart, seeking His guidance and wisdom to be godly friends who reflect the love and grace of Jesus in every interaction.
- Ask God to empower us to be sources of encouragement, support, and joy to those He has placed in our lives. May He fill us with more of His Spirit, so that our friendships are a testament to God’s unfailing love!

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE \*Optional\*** *We include a monthly spiritual practice that can be shared with your group after you gather. Our hope is for this to enhance what we’re learning and discussing together, so share about your experience with the practice at the beginning of your gatherings or throughout the week!*

Welcoming Prayer is an invitation to welcome everything, knowing that everything that happens to us is something we can learn and grow from. It also helps us consent to God’s presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to anything that happens to us and around us. Give it a try!

- [Welcoming Prayer](https://rockbridge.cc/welcoming-prayer) or [rockbridge.cc/welcoming-prayer](https://rockbridge.cc/welcoming-prayer)