

Get Ready!**Seeing the Light**

By: Daniel Smead

**Text**

John 9:1-12

Key Quest Verse

“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

Bible Background

At the time of our text some people, including disciples of Jesus, thought that all problems resulted from sin. (They may have been guided by texts like Exodus 15:26, where God promised that if the people were obedient none of the plagues which came on Egypt would be put on them.) At this time in Palestine many people were blinded by illnesses during their lives. The disciples had seen Jesus heal people, and also had heard Him tell people that their sins were forgiven. This did not upset their beliefs about sin and illness. But in Jerusalem they encountered a man who had been *born* blind, and this puzzled them. Had he been made blind in anticipation of his own sinfulness (and what was bad enough to get punished in advance for it?), or was he punished for someone else’s sin (Jeremiah 31:29, 30 promised a time when this wouldn’t happen, but when was that time to be?)

Jesus did not directly argue with this understanding of sin and punishment, instead He healed the man. In effect Jesus said that it is not God’s will to give in to sin and loss and simply assign blame, but rather to overcome these things.

*Get Ready!***Lesson Quest**

What I want my students to:

Know: That Jesus treats blindness (literal or figurative) as an opportunity to show God’s power, not place blame.

Feel: Confidence that Jesus is for them, and will cut through questions and problems to help them.

Do: Trust Jesus, accept His help, and work with Jesus to serve people without blaming them.

[Note: if you actually have a blind student in your class, you will need to change how you frame much of the discussion for several of the activities of this lesson. In fact, if you have a blind person in your congregation who is comfortable doing so, it might well be worth having them talk with your class about how they get around, etc., rather than using one or more of the activities.]

Leader’s Devotion

We don’t read in the Old Testament of anyone healing natural blindness (Elisha did pray for some foreign soldiers to temporarily be unable to see, and then prayed for them to see again; 2 Kings 6:18-20), but Isaiah prophesied that the day would come when the blind would see (for example in Isaiah 35:5; 42:7). By giving sight to the blind Jesus gave evidence that He was the Messiah (Luke 7:20-22). But in John 9 Jesus did not simply prove again that He was the promised Messiah; Jesus made a point about who that Messiah really is — a minister of God’s light in *all* situations, regardless of flaws or fault.

The disciples asked a question about blame which is not out of date. Many people still pin the blame for problems on sin, or claim that their health or their success shows that God likes them. It can be particularly hard for Christians who believe this to deal with being sick or injured — “does God not care anymore?” they may ask. When we sin we can cause ourselves problems, but sometimes problems occur without any sin being behind them. The main thing to remember is that Jesus is not concerned about assigning blame, Jesus wants to bring light and life to everyone.

God’s work was done through healing the blind man, but that work had a larger impact than just in his life. Jesus’ healing action had effects through others’ awareness of what was done, with the disciples, and with several groups of people later in the chapter, and over centuries through John’s gospel. We can still have a difficult time accepting the idea that God permitted blindness just so it could be removed. But God is not blind, and sees a much bigger picture than we do. God’s servant Paul said that all we suffer now is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in the future (Romans 8:18). This can be hard to take if we are in the middle of problems, or particularly if someone we love is the one doing the suffering. But we have to trust that the same divine power that can heal is able to make everything worthwhile as well.

Get Set!**Option A****Alternative Reality****Materials:** None

Procedure: The following provides questions for your students to consider and offer some responses to. The point is to get them to really consider the situations, so don't rush through this. With the first question a few suggested possibilities are offered for them to consider, and they can give their own. With the second question you should let students come up with thoughts of their own before relating the author's ideas.

If suddenly you were blind, what things would you most miss seeing? sunsets? art? your reflection? someone else's face?

If you were no longer able to see, some things would be harder for you to do; which do you think would bother you the most?

[Here are some possible comments to use on changes your students would experience if blind, to relay to them after they have offered their own suggestions. If they came up with many suggestions on their own it may not be necessary to use this paragraph before going on.

You might use a seeing eye dog to get around, but you would never drive on the street. You might use Braille to read, but there would be many books and signs that you wouldn't be able to read. Going to the movies or listening to a television show would be a much different experience. Using the Internet would be a lot more difficult, and few video games would be playable. You could still recognize your friends, but you wouldn't know as easily if they were coming in the distance. In classes you could never read the chalkboard, and you wouldn't take notes the same way. Many jobs would not be open to you. You wouldn't perceive body language, like knowing if someone was smiling or frowning when they spoke to you, but their tone of voice might be something you really noticed. It might be harder to trust people. You might find you needed to trust and rely on some people even more.]

If you had *never* been able to see, how would your life be different than it is?

After your students have offered suggestions on the third question, you might relay these ideas. Feel free to use your own words: **If you had never seen at all, there would be huge areas of everyday life which you might not understand at all. So much is wrapped up with sight that people have a hard time grasping the effects of blindness unless they are or have been blind. You wouldn't have any experience with stars. You wouldn't know what colors are. You might not even be able to understand the idea of light as opposed to darkness. In our lesson we will be considering one blind man's encounter with Jesus. It is a short story in the Bible, and it could be easy to miss how big a change Jesus made in this man's life. But it was a *huge* change.**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

*Get Set!***Option B****Taking Attendance**

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk, or other method of listing items for all to read

Procedure: Ask your students to tell you what they did last week. It may be necessary to draw them out on specifics for this exercise. Write down various activities on the board or a flipchart (for example if they watched television, went to the movies, went driving, went out to eat pizza, went swimming). Once you have a fairly large list, ask them to consider how these activities depended on their senses (sight - visual, touch - tactile, smell - olfactory, hearing - auditory, taste - gustatory). You might note with letters next to activities which senses were most tied up with each one. The list will probably be lopsided in favor of activities which emphasize the visual and auditory. Have the students try to remember from certain of these activities what their less “involved” senses were perceiving during each one. For example, what did they smell while busy using their hearing at a concert?; what did they touch while taking a spelling exam?; what did they taste while reading a book? Your students may have difficulty recalling these sensations days later — one reason they would recall them is if they stood out at the time as an annoyance.

In some situations we are attentive to certain sensations more than we are to others. It may not stand out to us at all that our mouths taste flavors or our noses pick up scents while we are concentrating on our vision or hearing. We may not even notice what we are looking at while we savor a hamburger. It may also be, however, that we can be greatly distracted by an “irrelevant” sense when we are trying to focus on a different one, like smelling bleach in a grocery aisle while we are considering what foods we want to buy, or having an itch during a lecture at school. In our Bible story today a man receives the sense of sight from Jesus, but in such a way that he does not see Jesus. He would have been used to identifying people by the sound of their voices, but a little later in the chapter he meets Jesus again and does not initially know Him — perhaps he was too distracted by what he could now see to be able to focus on what he could hear. The ability he now had to see was going to take some time and effort to coordinate with his other abilities.

When a person becomes a Christian they begin to recognize and focus on many things that were not significant to them before, and they can continue to be distracted by many things that they might wish not to be interested in at all any more. But people who are serious about loving Jesus and being loved by Jesus can’t beat themselves up over the past, and they can’t just pass on investing time and energy in being prepared for the future.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!**Bible Story**

Teacher Tip: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles. See instruction at the end of the Bible Story.

John 9:1-12 (NIV)

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,”

said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.

“Go,” he told him,

“wash in the Pool of Siloam”

(this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked,

“Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?”

Some claimed that he was. Others said,

“No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted,

“I am the man.”

“How then were your eyes opened?”

they demanded. He replied,

“The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

“Where is this man?”

they asked him.

Get Set!

Bible Story Cont.

“I don’t know,”

he said.

....

You might try acting out the story as a class, with different students reading the narration and each part of dialogue. You will need: narrator, disciples, Jesus, blind man, neighbors. You can combine roles as needed for the size of your class, or if your class is larger than the number of parts require you could give the narration out in sections to different students (just label the text in the margin).

You could use some chocolate pudding for mud (perhaps from a pudding cup) and let whoever plays Jesus smear it on the face of a willing “blind man” (who should keep eyes tightly closed; you might play one of these roles yourself to exercise more control in the situation). If you go the pudding route that will also require that you have a bowl of water and a towel to simulate the pool. You might consider not letting on to the other players that this will be part of the reenactment (perhaps conceal the pudding cup in the pocket of a bathrobe provided as “costume” for Jesus). Seeing this performed can really bring home the oddity of Jesus’ action.

When the story is finished point out to your students that while we don’t initially hear the blind man give his opinion of Jesus we can suppose that he had faith from the start, given the fact that he went along with all this.

Go!**Words to the Wise****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Pencils or pens; “Words to the Wise” worksheet — it has English expressions listed on it in the top half, along with space for more expressions; on the bottom half of the worksheet there are two columns, one labeled “What I haven’t always seen clearly” and one labeled “What I am looking forward to”

Quest Connection

Procedure: In English we speak about vision a lot. We connect blindness to many actions which people take without enough thought or enough information to justify them, as with some of the phrases on your worksheet (blind rage; blinded to reality). We advise people “keep your eyes open” in possibly dangerous situations. Villains in stories even say that the hero “won’t live to see tomorrow.” In the Old Testament God refers to bribery as an attempt to get people to shut their eyes to wrongdoing. We find that vision is very important, we rely on it. We even use vision as a metaphor for thought — we talk about “imagining” (image-ing), or “visualizing” reality or the future or our hopes.

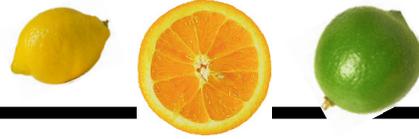
What are some other metaphors related to blindness or sight? [Give your students time to suggest some, and to write suggestions on their worksheets; you could have a timed race to write suggestions, and only then ask to hear them.]

In what ways have you been metaphorically blind to reality? Write some of these in the left hand column at the bottom of your worksheet. [Broadly stated, the possibilities include not recognizing God working in your life, or the blindness of choosing sin over doing right; but students may write things which are more specific.] **In the right hand column write some of the things you are looking forward to seeing in the future.** [Perhaps seeing Jesus and God; seeing resurrected relatives; seeing the New Jerusalem; or in the shorter term a person seeing Disney World, or their High School graduation, their wedding, or their own child.]

Close

Paul said that even as Christians we don’t see everything clearly (1 Cor. 13:12), but we can rely on Jesus’ love and trust that someday perfection will come and we will see fully. Jesus and God do not desire for people to remain blinded to truth, rather they are willing and ready for us to see (James 1:5). Our Key Quest Verse this week says: “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6. As with the man in the Bible story, Jesus has taken the initiative in offering us sight, and we need to pick up the ball and follow through on what Jesus has told us to do and the opportunities that knowing Him open up for us.

Go!



Identity Unknown

FOOD

Materials: One or more pieces of cloth to be used as blindfolds (decide if you need enough for your entire class to use separate ones); a number of small items for students to attempt to identify while blindfolded — it is not strictly necessary to have items from all five of these categories for this activity, but a variety of them is preferable to using only one example — 1. a small quantity of coins, including several denominations and several of the new U.S. quarters in the “U.S. States” series (or equivalent coinage for Canada, etc.); possibly add foreign coins to the mix as well, as well as metal washers, buttons, bottle caps, and other small round objects; 2. several six-sided dice with imprinted dots and at least one with numerals (hopefully also imprinted); 3. a set of measuring spoons (and/or a measuring cup with a raised “full” line), a table knife, a pitcher or bowl, some quantity of a granular substance (salt, sugar, sand; whatever you judge to be simplest and best for cleaning up, based on where your class meets — you could substitute water for this test, it depends on whether you have carpet, etc.), paper towels; 4. a key ring holding several keys of varying sizes — perhaps with two being very close in appearance — at least one of the keys should open a lock available in the classroom area, perhaps a padlock; 5. one each of several kinds of fruit, particularly at least two citrus fruit of fairly equivalent size (orange, nectarine, lime, lemon, grapefruit) but additionally three or so others: apple, pear, banana, grape, plum.

The purpose of this activity is multi-fold: for students to test their ability to identify or use common items without seeing them; for students to confront unexpected obstacles to such identification or use; for students to suggest ways they could get around these obstacles. To add extra interest to the process you could offer to time each student’s efforts at a particular task, having all be blindfolded at the same time (thus distracting them from the idea that some of the tests may involve a trick to get around), or you could blindfold one student at a time but switch items with each new student so that none will have seen another student attempting the exact challenge they receive.

Quest Connection

Procedure: Either blindfold one student at a time, or all at once, depending on whether you will be having all of the students attempt the same identification exercises or not. You will not necessarily have time to do all of these exercises, the variety is provided so you can choose what works best for your class situation.

1. With the coins, ask the student(s) to calculate how much change there is in the pile. Do not warn them that the pile is not uniformly coinage, and not necessarily coinage of only one nation (U.S., Canada, etc.). If they have successfully completed their count, ask them to identify something about the coins which will be impossible for them, for example request that they find a particular quarter in the “states” series for a coin collection.

2. With the dice, ask the student to roll the dice, and then calculate their roll. (Even finding the dice after they roll them could be awkward, don't make this too easy on them, let them think it through.) They should be able to add up the dots fairly well, but when they discover the die that has numerals imprinted on it they may get confused.

3. With the measuring spoons and/or measuring cup, perform a brief test in how well a student can measure out a certain quantity of salt and/or water into a container (perhaps $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup, or 3 teaspoons). Offer the possibility of leveling the measuring spoon with a dull knife available on the table, but don't advise the student on which spoon to use or what level is what in the measuring cup (you could describe what sizes are there, and let them figure what to do).

4. With the keys, ask the student to figure out which goes with the lock. If it is a padlock, hand it to them, otherwise start them out by the door or cabinet the key opens and let them locate the keyhole. (The key ring should not have any attachments that allow them to easily tell an order to the keys, rather it should just be a round ring. That way if they drop the ring they won't automatically know which keys they have already tried.)

5. Provide the student with pieces of fruit one at a time, and ask them to identify them. With the citrus in particular, let them smell it if they need to. If you wish, you could expand this example by letting them peel a citrus fruit blindfolded to eat.

Either when the students have completed all the exercises they will be doing, or individually while they remain blindfolded after attempting an exercise, have them suggest ways that they could improve in the desired task if they were blind (for example by putting rubber pieces of different shapes on the ends of keys, one square and one round, etc., so they can easily distinguish them). The students will realize that in some cases it would not be possible for them to achieve the goal (like knowing the minting date of a coin they are given in change at a store) and that they would need to seek assistance.

Close

The blind man in the story made it to the Pool of Siloam without Jesus' help. He had grown up without sight and was used to it. Probably he could do many things without assistance that we would be hesitant to try. But some things certainly were outside his abilities. Likewise, when people lack Christ's power there are things they simply cannot do. We need to remember to thank Jesus for all the help He gives us, and remember to rely on that help.

Go!



Where Are You?

GAME

Materials: A piece of cloth to be used as a blindfold; possibly padding in case of falls, or some advance time spent in moving furniture around; if you want, you could provide students with canes (possibly yard sticks) to feel their way with.

Quest Connection

Procedure: Blindfold one student, and direct that one to listen for a particular student to direct them in walking across the classroom (or in some other room, or even outside — determine this based on convenience and safety of the location). Advise the student to walk slowly and carefully. Direct the student guide to stand next to the blindfolded student where they begin their journey, and to be careful in their instructions. Set a goal, like finding a certain piece of chalk or a book, and bringing it back to the guide.

When the exercise is over, remove the blindfold and ask the previously blindfolded student: **How hard was it to find your way with the directions? Was it hard to trust your guide? Is “blind faith” different from this situation?** (Is faith in a guide ever “blind” if you know them, and have some idea that you are in safety?) **How much easier was it to find your guide on the way back than to walk away from them?** Point out that the two parts of this illustration present two very different situations we can have in our faith lives. It can be very hard to understand the directions we receive in the Bible about walking out in faith, because we are being called upon to go into areas we are unfamiliar with, or cannot perceive clearly. Contrarily, when we have wandered off course as believers we are instructed to go to Jesus — if we can “hear” His voice we can go straight to Him.

Close

This week, be conscious of whether you are listening to Jesus as your guide. Are you acting in faith, or are you trying to figure everything out for yourself? If you have strayed from Him, head straight back.

Go!



A Path To The Pool

OBJECT LESSON/WORKSHEET

Materials: Two copies of the worksheet “The Path to the Pool” for each student, plus one prepared specially for your use (see below, fifth paragraph of Procedure); one or more sharp pencils; at least four colors of ink pens — possibly washable markers; a magazine or other writing surface with some give to it; a hard writing surface like a Formica table; pieces of cloth to be used as blindfolds (optional).

Quest Connection

Procedure: Distribute the pencils, and pens, and one copy of the worksheet for each participant, and tell students that they are going to recreate the circumstances of the blind man making his way to the Pool of Siloam, but that the students will get more than one try at making it there. Either have the students work in pairs, with one student “blind” at a time, or you could work with each student in turn. Let the “blind” students be blindfolded, or have them simply shut their eyes for this activity. Students should be seated at a table with a hard surface

Have the “blind” students look at the worksheet, and tell them to try to memorize the winding path which leads to the pool. After a moment, have them attempt to follow that path without looking at it (whether blindfolded or with their eyes shut). Their partner (if they are in pairs) will hand them a pen and set them at the starting point, then release them and watch them go. If they go off the page entirely they should be told of this, but otherwise given no direction until they either make it to the pool (by whatever path) or give up, or enough time has passed that you feel the need to move to the next step. [Note: if the “blind” students are paired with other students, and are simply closing their eyes, let them look at their attempt and then switch with their partner. If blindfolds are being used, it may be simpler to go through the first three steps with one student and switch only then. If the students are all “blind” simultaneously, you can use your judgment on whether to have all of them attempt the exercise at once, but switching off will not be necessary.]

Now tell the “blind” students that on their next attempt they will use a different color of ink so their path can be distinguished from the first attempt. Remember to keep track of the order in which the pens are used, whether all students are using the same color at the same time, or by a “seeing” participant making marks at the edge of the page with each pen in turn. Switch the pens, and this time each student will again be started at the right point, but they will be guided by the voice of their partner (or, if all students are playing “blind” at once, by your voice one at a time) as they attempt to follow the path. Probably they still will have problems making it to the pool end-point, but they will do better.

On the third effort, again switch the color of ink, but now the “blind” student will attempt the path while the “guide” has their own hand on/around the hand of the “blind” student holding the pen. The “guide” may not simply move the pen along, but they can both speak and nudge when the pen is going off-track. This attempt should work much more smoothly.

After all of the students have completed their third attempt, remove any blindfolds on the students. Now you, the teacher, attempt the process (though not, unless you particularly want to, duplicating the three first efforts). Either at this time, or before the class session, prepare a copy of the worksheet for your use: place the worksheet on a magazine or other soft writing surface, on top of a solid hard writing surface. Pressing down hard with a pen, trace the outlines of the path on the paper, so that there is a trough on the printed side of the worksheet where the lines of the path are. Then place the worksheet on a hard writing surface like what your students have been using, and attempt the path without looking. Use a sharp pencil. You should be able to feel the ridge with the tip of the pencil whenever you are at risk of crossing off the path. Or, you could use your fingers to feel out the path as you go. You might want to practice this a little before class so you can really impress your students with how this can work. If you wish, you can permit your students to attempt this in class as well, or you can send them home with both their first and second copies of the worksheet to try it later.

Last of all, allow each student to use another pen to follow the path on their first worksheet while looking at the worksheet.

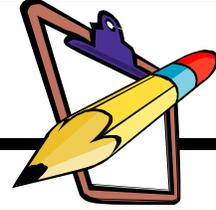
Next after that? What difficulties did you have in following the path? [Perhaps the pen slipped, or they lost their sense of direction, or when the guides were offering help they couldn't understand what was meant.]

In general, the easiest way to take the path is if you can see it, right? But it is possible, with a little preparation, or a little help, to make your way to the pool without the use of your eyes. How does this compare with the way that we, as Christians, are called on to serve Christ? [Various responses make sense, like that as Christians we have to trust guidance in areas we cannot see into; preparation or assistance are good to have; we improve by experience; we may not know how to do things when we first try them, but be able to learn new things from others later; even with a “narrow” path there is some room for taking different routes — the problems come when you *leave* the path.] **What would happen if you were trying to feel the trough to follow the path, but all of your earlier attempts had been traced out as well?** [Probably it would be too confusing to get very far.] **Have you ever been thrown off in your efforts to follow Jesus by someone else's experiences or advice that conflicted with what you thought you were supposed to be doing? Is anyone willing to tell how that happened with them?**

Ask your students: **Which was the easiest way of following the path? Looking at the lines you drew, which was the next easiest?**

Close

After your students have the chance to discuss the questions, close with prayer. **Lord, we thank You that You are for us, and that You are willing to guide us when we cannot see, and to help us to see better. Please allow us to look to You when we are confused or in need, and not to be distracted by the other paths that people suggest and follow in this world. Help us to love people, in Your power. Amen.**

Go!**Guilty Or Innocent?****WORKSHEET**

Materials: Pencils or pens; copies of the worksheet “Guilty or Innocent?”.

Quest Connection**Procedure:**

Distribute the worksheets to all of your students. Ask them to consider the following from the top of the worksheet: **Jesus was asked about the blind man in today’s story because it was commonly assumed that his blindness was the punishment for a sin, either his or his parents. The disciples aren’t even pictured as having spoken to the blind man about his own life, they turn to Jesus for a statement of guilt for one party or the other. Instead, He healed the man. We can hope that once this happened the disciples were willing to acknowledge that this was not a man who had been condemned to blindness.**

How often do we behave in the same way? Are there things we see in people, or hear about them, which cause us to find them guilty without ever listening to them? In the area under “Circumstantial Evidence” write things that sometimes have caused you to form conclusions about someone’s character without having checked further with the accused person. Under “Cleared of All Charges” write down whatever might cause you to change your mind about such a person (or what has caused you to change your mind, if you have already).

After your students have filled out the worksheet, ask if anyone wants to discuss some of their answers on it. This could lead to a significant conversation about the way that your students treat others, and how they themselves have been treated. If the subject does not come up on its own, ask your students how they feel about being judged on their appearance, or on rumors or other information about them, when they are not personally addressed by the one judging them.

Close

Tell your students: **The blind man in our story was not blind because of his own sin, or the sin of his parents. But in one sense it was due to the sin of his ancestors that he was blind. If sin had never entered the world we would not have the diseases and other problems which lead to blindness. The very fact that God’s power needed demonstrating in that man’s life resulted from the fact that ever since the Garden of Eden God no longer freely walks with people. We may not be physically blind, but we lack abilities we were always meant to have had, including the ability to look at God and appreciate God’s glory and character. Some day, that part of human ability will be restored.**

In the meantime, it is up to us to try to see the world with Jesus’ eyes, part of which means judging people as Jesus judged them, with love and a willingness to know them personally. Let us try to consider those facts this week.

Go!**What Next?****WORKSHEET**

Materials: Pencils or pens; copies of the worksheet “What Next?”

Quest Connection

Procedure: Distribute the worksheets and have your students read the introduction (it invites them to read the rest of chapter nine, and then provide their story with an ending for the ex-blind man’s life). Give them time to read and a few minutes to write. You might have the rest of chapter nine read aloud before the students begin writing, as that will help get everyone started at the same pace.

[Note: if students have difficulty getting into the writing you might suggest some of the following issues to address: how the man related to Jesus, his family, and the religious leadership of Israel. What work did he go on to do? Did his encounters in John 9 shape the rest of his life, his reputation, etc.?)

When your students are finished writing, ask them what guided their choices in how things would turn out. Perhaps the man’s gratitude for receiving sight, or the great faith he showed in Jesus, determined what they think he did with his life. Perhaps they emphasized his lack of training for dealing with the world as a sighted man — quite likely he had needed to beg for his livelihood until this moment, but he is untrained in most work. Did the man have a good relationship with his family? Did he follow Jesus, or remain in the little area of the world he had always known? How would this man have responded to Jesus’ death, or hearing of His resurrection?

At this point you might tell your students the following: **In the modern day surgery sometimes has given sight to people who have never had it. This does not always go smoothly. A Braille reader suddenly can be faced with learning to read visually. Long-time friends who are blind are related to differently. On a very basic level, the input of images can take a while to learn to interpret, leaving people disoriented. We can hope for the man in our Bible story that the miracle he underwent affected not only his eyes but the working of his mind, allowing him a smoother transition into interpreting what his eyes revealed. But even if this was so we can guess that his pattern of life was greatly disrupted by his encounter with Jesus.**

Go!

If students are willing, have some or all read aloud their endings to the man's story. Note aloud what the students emphasized in their stories, whether gratitude, worship, weakness, etc., then ask them:

What things about *your* life story with Jesus so far do you expect to affect how your life proceeds?

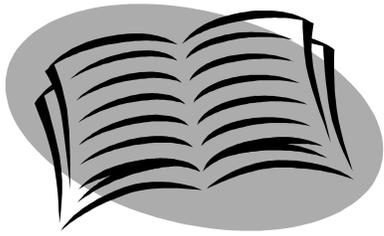
If you have already entered a discipleship relationship with Jesus, is that fact something which you automatically think of as key to your life so far? [You can treat this as a rhetorical question, rather than calling for people to verbally respond. If there is time, you might ask students to write out their answers on the back of the worksheet so that they can take them home and think about their answers later.]

Close

We easily recognize that the blind man Jesus healed was given an incredible gift. We need to recognize how great the gifts we have been given are, particularly the gift of learning about Jesus and being able to love Him and follow Him.

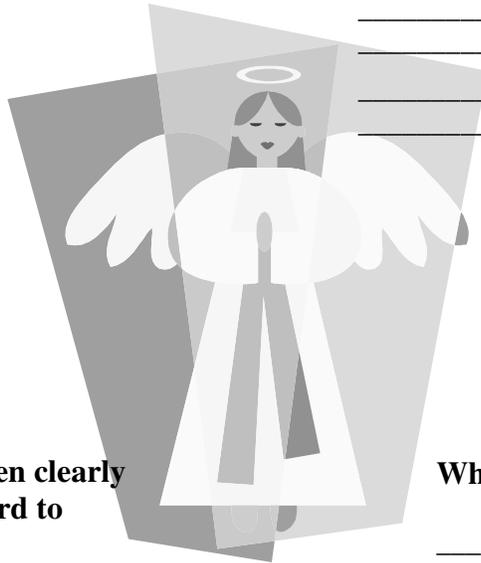
Let's pray:

Lord, thank You for the wonderful gift of Your son, and all of the things that He has done for us and that He desires to do for us. Please help us to love Him more and more as we grow to know Him better and better, and allow us to serve as guides for those who do not yet see His glory. In Jesus' mighty name we pray this, Amen.



Words to the Wise

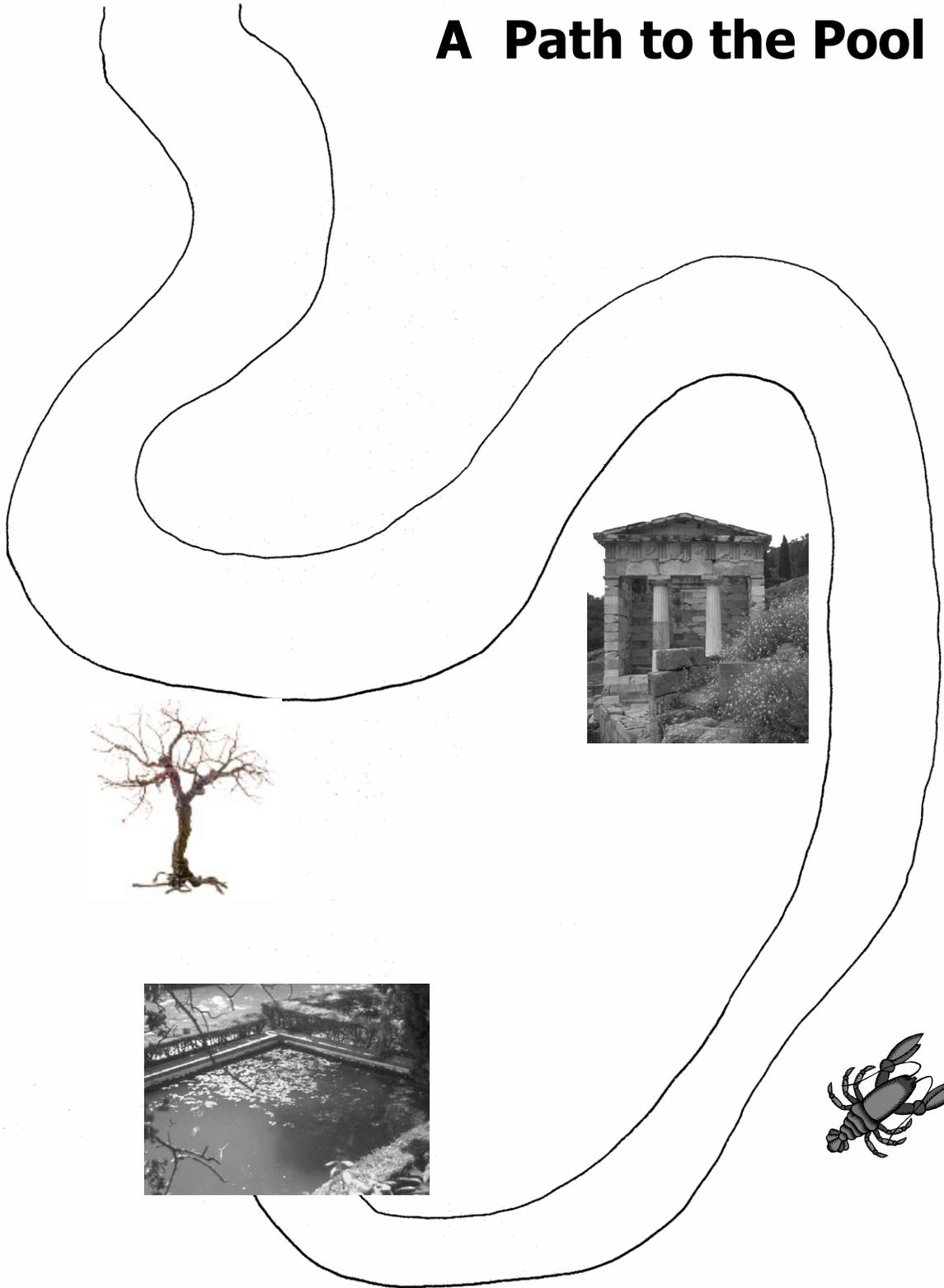
seeing is believing
blind rage
love at first sight
keep your eyes peeled
blinded to reality
look before you leap
beauty is in the eye of the beholder



What I haven't always seen clearly
What I am looking forward to

What I am looking forward to

A Path to the Pool



What Next?

Today you have been considering the encounter Jesus had with a man who was born blind in John 9:1-12. Now read the rest of the Bible story, which continues to the end of chapter 9. Particularly note that near the end of the chapter Jesus meets up with the man again. When you have finished reading the chapter, you are going to make some guesses about what the formerly blind man's life may have been like after the events John described. Write a story below presenting your ideas about this. You may choose to share your story with the group later on today.



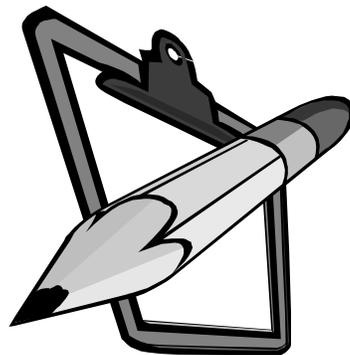
Guilty or Innocent?

Jesus was asked about the blind man in today's story because it was commonly assumed that his blindness was the punishment for a sin, either his or his parents'. The disciples aren't even pictured as having spoken to the blind man about his own life, they turn to Jesus for a statement of guilt for one party or the other. Instead, he healed the man. We can hope that once this happened the disciples were willing to acknowledge that this was not a man who had been condemned to blindness.

How often do we behave in the same way? Are there things we see in people, or hear about them, which cause us to find them guilty without ever listening to them? In the area under "Circumstantial Evidence" write things that sometimes have caused you to form conclusions about someone's character without having checked further with the accused person. Under "Cleared of All Charges" write down whatever might cause you to change your mind about such a person (or what has caused you to change your mind, if you have already).

Circumstantial Evidence

Cleared of All Charges



This week's Key Quest Verse says:

"For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6

It is through the light of God shown in Christ that we can see clearly. That includes our ability to look at others in a fresh way. We also can rejoice that God gives us the opportunity to be looked at in a new way. Take some time now to thank God in prayer for the mercy that has been extended to you, and to ask God for help in viewing others mercifully as well.

My Journal

Dear Journal,

This week I have been thinking about the man who was born blind. I'm living a life that is different from his life in tons of ways, and I am blessed in many ways.

My life is different because: