

Open the Word

Present the reading Open the Bible at Matthew 15.(10-20),21-28

Jesus meets a woman with amazing faith, and heals her daughter despite what others might expect.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Distract Ask a child who is a strong reader to read out the story while the rest of the group make as much noise as they can (perhaps have musical instruments to help). Ask the children how clearly they were able to hear the reader with so much distraction. Ask the same child to read the passage again, this time without distraction, and discuss how that felt.

Picture perfect Display flash cards (template on **WEB**) that correspond to words in the passage. Ask the children to choose the right picture when they hear the words. For example, in the first part of the story: mouth, plant, stomach, heart; for the second part: Jesus, disciples, sheep, dogs.

Jesus was teaching the crowds when he explained about what makes a person pure. 'It's not about what goes into your mouth,' he said, talking about what you eat. What stops you from being pure is if bad things come out of your mouth.' Some people listening disagreed and the disciples told Jesus. He answered, 'Any plant that has not been planted by God will be uprooted. These people are like the blind leading the blind. If they do not understand, how can they help others to do so?'

Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Explain this to us.' Jesus said, 'Do you still not understand? Whatever goes into your mouth goes into your stomach and eventually into the sewer. But things that come out from your mouth come from the heart, so if they are bad, this means the very heart of you is also bad.'

Jesus went on to another place, a foreign place called Tyre and Sidon. A woman from that place, a foreigner, came out into the street and started shouting. 'I need your help, Lord!' she called. 'Son of David, help me. My daughter is very ill.' She shouted as loud as she could to get their attention, but Jesus didn't answer her at all.

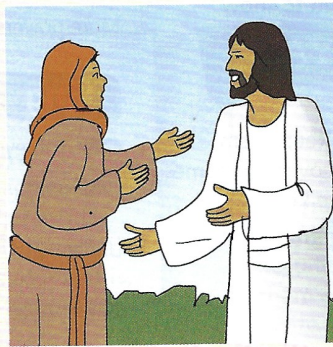
His disciples tried to persuade him: 'Send her away. She keeps on shouting at us.' Jesus seemed to agree with them.

He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'

But the woman didn't give up. She came right up to them and knelt before Jesus, saying, 'Lord, help me.' Then Jesus said to her, 'It's not fair to take what was meant for the children, their food, and throw it to the dogs.'

But she replied, 'Well, yes, Lord, but even the dogs get something. They eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.'

Jesus looked straight at the woman and answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! What you want most will happen.' And her daughter was healed instantly.



For very young children

Play and explore listening to others.

Play materials: a play doctor's set.

Storytelling

Make two wooden spoon puppets, one to represent Jesus and one the Canaanite woman. Use these to tell the story.

Jesus was walking along the road when a woman from another country shouted to him, 'Please help me! Please help my daughter!'

Jesus carried on walking. So, she shouted again, 'Please help me! Please help my daughter!'

Jesus' friends wanted to send her away, but Jesus said, 'No.'

He turned to the woman and said, 'I have come only to save God's people.'

So, she knelt down and said again, 'Please help me! Please help my daughter!'

Jesus listened to her. He knew that she believed that he could make her daughter better.

Jesus said, 'Because you believe, your daughter is well.'

Play

Use a number of noisy objects behind a cloth, e.g. a bell, a shaker, a horn, a triangle and a whistle. Can the children guess what each of the sounds is?

Create

Make 'listening tubes' from cardboard tubes and coloured tape. Encourage the children to decorate their tubes and then use them to listen to others.

Praise

Encourage the children to choose a percussion instrument. Listen to each child play their instrument. Then all join together as you play your instruments to praise God.

Pray

Lay out play dough and people-shaped cutters and ask the children to make lots of play dough people. Look at them as you pray:

Jesus, we are sorry that sometimes we ignore other people. Help us to listen to others. **Amen.**

Find more prayers opposite and additional activities on the next page.

WEB Very young children page with more activities, prayers and songs.

Talk together

- What's the kindest thing someone has said to you recently?
- How important are the words we use, and why?
- Who are 'outsiders' today, and how can we include them more?