

# Story 5: The Woman in the Crowd



*(Remember to set up your space: Altar cloth in the center of your circle, unlit candle in the middle, letter tiles scattered, filled water bottle, flip flop, question mark, and scripture book around the candle.)*

*Additional Supplies Needed for this Session:*

*Flashlight*

*Copies of Mark 5: 21-42*

*Highlighters*

OPENING RITUAL:

Leader: **We gather together as God's people, intentionally seeking a word from God, believing that God's word has the power to change us.**

Leaving the tiles scrambled, remind the group of the purpose of the tiles: **We long to hear God's word. In a world of abundant words, spoken and written, we struggle to discern God's word to us. It takes intentional time and effort to wrestle with the words before us and listen for what God longs for us to hear. On any given day, we may hear a different word from God. Each person may hear the word differently. We gather to intentionally seek God's word, to listen, to wrestle, to discern, to be open to God's word changing us.**

LETTER TILES FOR THIS SESSION: Leaving the other letters scattered, pull out the letters J-E-S-U-S spelling the word JESUS on your altar area.

STORY FOCUS: JESUS changes everything.

GATHERING ACTIVITY: Sardines

**Play "Sardines."** Sardines is an adapted version of hide and seek. Begin by defining the boundaries for your game (are all floors open, can they open closed doors and hide in all rooms, are bathrooms out of play, etc.). Then turn off all the lights. Play it this way even if it remains as bright as day in your building with the lights out. This will be part of the discussion later.

Select one person to be the “hider.” Give the “hider” a flashlight to hold while hiding. The “hider” must keep the flashlight on and visible at all times. While the rest of the group waits in a room together, the “hider” goes and hides somewhere in your designated space.

Once you think the “hider” has had enough time to hide, send everyone out looking for the “hider.” Explain that when they find the “hider” they should hide with them, tucked into their hiding space as snugly as possible. A small part of them must be touching the “hider” at all times. As people find the “hider” the huddle of people hiding with them will grow. The last person to find the “hider” becomes the “hider” for round 2.

After a few rounds, gather the group back into a circle around your Story Kit altar. Start by debriefing the game:

**Did you go hunting alone or as a group? Why?**

Depending on the lighting in your building ask:

- **Did you like hunting in the dark?**
- **Did the darkness make it harder or easier to find the “hider” with the flashlight?**

**OR**

- **How would the game be different if it had been really dark in the building?**
- **Do you think it would have been harder or easier to spot the “hider” with the flashlight?**

*(Consider: Sometimes we feel like darkness surrounds us and we long for Christ’s light. Youth may have found it harder to see the flashlight because of the light around them. Sometimes when everything is good in our lives we are less likely to seek Jesus. It may have been easier to find the hidden person in the dark because the flashlight was shining in the darkness. Sometimes it is easier for us to “see” Christ in dark times.)*

- **Did you find the “hider” on your own or were you tipped off by the action of those around you? (Example: You noticed someone else go into a space and not come out. You followed the group, etc.)**
- **Did you spot the “hider” and the flashlight or the crowd around them first?**
- **Was it easy or hard to keep touching the “hider” as the cluster around them grew?**

THE STORY:

Mark 5: 21-42 "Jesus changes everything. This is everything."

Leader: **In our Bible story today, Jesus is surrounded by a great crowd. They have heard about Jesus and long to see if what they have heard is true, to see Christ in action.**

*(Ask a volunteer to read Mark 5:21 from your "The Word" scripture book. Also give each of the youth a copy of the scripture story to follow along.)*

*<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea.*

RITUAL ACTION: Light the Candle

Leader: **God sent his only son to dwell among us. Jesus was the true light that came to enlighten the world. We read in the gospels "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" and the darkness cannot overcome it. The crowds were drawn to the light of Christ. Jesus is still the true light that comes amidst our darkness. We light the candle to remind us of Christ's presence with us. Christ is light in our darkness. Holy God, draw us to the light of Christ.**

RETURN TO THE TEXT:

Leader: **As we continue to read our text for today, keep noticing the crowd. How often is the crowd mentioned? What is the crowd doing? Use the highlighters to mark mentions of the crowd. In this session we will briefly touch on many aspects of this text.**

*<sup>22</sup>Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet <sup>23</sup>and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."*

*<sup>24</sup>So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.*

*<sup>25</sup>Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. <sup>26</sup>She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup>She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup>for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."*

*<sup>29</sup>Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. <sup>30</sup>Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" <sup>31</sup>And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"*

## RITUAL ACTION:

Leader: **In each of our story sessions we have stopped to take a moment and recognize our “holy ground moments,” the moments when we have become aware of God’s presence with us. Today’s “holy ground moment” is different. In all of our stories we have recognized the moment that we recognize God is with us, but in today’s story we have the opportunity to see the moment that Christ recognizes us. Verse 30 reads, *Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?”* Despite the crowd, Jesus notices this one woman that has touched him. Despite his need to keep traveling to Jairus’ house to heal his dying daughter, Jesus stops and engages with this one woman.**

**Despite the crowd, the millions of billions of people who have lived, Christ notices you and recognizes the holiness of the moment in which we reach out for him. Despite the need to care for all of creation, Jesus stops and turns his face in response to you.**

One member of your group should pick up the flip flop and share a response: **“When have you experienced Christ noticing you amidst the crowd? When have you been reassured that despite God’s need to care for all of creation, God has the desire to care specifically for you? When have you reached for Christ and known that Jesus has turned his face to you and recognized the holiness of the moment?”** Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to share.

## RETURN TO THE TEXT:

*<sup>32</sup>He looked all around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup>But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”*

## THE CLOTH

Leader: **The woman reaches out and touches Jesus’ cloak. Immediately power leaves Jesus and she is healed. Today we introduce the last item in our story kit, the cloth. This cloth represents the material of Jesus’ cloak. We remember how the woman reached out and touched the cloth, believing that Jesus had the power to heal. While we cannot reach out and touch Jesus as the woman did, we continue to believe that Jesus has the power to heal. Who needs healing today? Where in the world is there a need for the power of Jesus?**

**We are going to pass around the cloth. As you hold the cloth, imagine reaching out to Christ as the woman did. We will go around the circle sharing our hopes and prayers for healing.**

*(Pass the cloth around giving everyone a chance to add their prayers)*

RETURN TO THE TEXT:

*<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" <sup>36</sup>But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." <sup>37</sup>He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. <sup>38</sup>When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." <sup>40</sup>And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup>He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" <sup>42</sup>And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age).*

RITUAL ACTION: QUESTIONS

**Leader: The word of God does not only come to us with answers but rather to stir up within us deep questions. What is one question you have after encountering this scripture text? This can be a question about the text itself or a question about God or a question about your faith.**

Pass around the question mark giving everyone a chance to share a question.

**Leader: A frequent question related to this text comes from Jesus' comment to the woman "Your faith has made you well." The woman believes that she will be healed and she is. Many people come to Jesus praying for healing but they may not receive the healing they ask. They then struggle, did they not have enough faith? Why does Jesus' heal some and not others?**

(Take time to reflect: Have youth share how they have encountered these questions or situations. How would they respond to these questions?)

**Leader: Jesus really heals the woman twice in this text. Because of her disease she has not been allowed to be in public or enter the temple because of her bleeding. First her physical disease is healed as she asks. But then Jesus takes the time to engage with her. He publically acknowledges her and her faith, therefore drawing her back into community, a second healing. Sometimes God provides healing in unexpected ways.**

(Take time to reflect: Have youth share examples of unexpected healings or God answering prayers in unexpected ways.)

Leader: **Finally consider, in the first part of our text, the woman reaches out and touches Jesus. By the time Jesus reaches Jairus's child, she is believed to be dead. In this part of the text, Jesus does the reaching. We read: <sup>41</sup>He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!"** When we are too weak in body or spirit to reach out to Jesus, Jesus continues to reach out to us. Do we have faith that we are never beyond the healing powers of Christ?

*Then place the question mark on the altar saying:*

Leader: **We bring all our questions to you God. Amen.**

RETURN TO THE TEXT:

Leader: **As we wrap up, let's go back to where we started, where have you seen the crowds throughout the text? What has the crowd been doing?**

*(Have each of the youth look back at their paper with the scripture text, highlighted with mentions of the crowd. Give time for youth to share their responses)*

Leader: ***The last sentence in our text today reads, "At this they were overcome with amazement."***

SENDING RITUAL ACTION:

Take the water bottle and go around to each of the youth, marking them with the sign of the cross and this blessing **"May you be drawn to the light of Christ and overcome with amazement as Jesus changes everything."**

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