

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

It's a God Thing — Miracles: Jesus Feeds 5,000

It's Sunday afternoon in North Memphis at Luis and Isabella's house. The neighborhood kids were playing kickball in the cul-de-sac until supper time. Luis was an athletic 4th grader at Treadwell Elementary, while his sister, Isabella, was a sweet, a little shy 3rd grader at the same school. Next door neighbors Luca and Maya were also involved in this fun afternoon. In March, the kids enjoyed attending Street Reach after school. This was not their first year, so they all knew how things worked, and they always had a great time. Tomorrow would be week 4, and they were all excited to meet the church people who would be with them.

After a while, Bela (Luis and Isabella's grandmother) came to the door to let them know it was supper time. The kids all said bye until tomorrow and disappeared into their houses. Bela was finishing up supper while Mama was neatly stationing the backpacks by the front door. Baby sister Sophia (just 1 year old) was just waking up from her afternoon nap and was clearly hungry (who here has a baby sister or brother? Do they cry a lot?)

After supper, Mama took baby Sophia for her bath while Papa sat with the kids, just talking about the coming week. "Well, kids," he said, "I was thinking about a trip to the Pink Palace next Saturday. What do you think?" "Yeah!" Luis and Isabella said at the same time. "Of course, I'll need to hear about good reports from school and Street Reach, right?" Papa said, with a smile.

The kids finished supper and helped Bela with the dishes; then they got their baths and were ready for bed. Luis and Isabella pinky-promised to be extra good for the whole week!

Monday morning started out a little cloudy, but no rain. The kids got dressed and headed to the kitchen for breakfast. Bela was already there

with freshly made tostadas and orange juice. They ate and headed towards the door to leave for school. Papa would drop them off on his way to work. Mama went to work a bit later, and baby Sophia would stay home with Bela.

Luis and Isabella had a good day at school. They came home with the dreaded spelling word list for the week. Isabella was pretty good with her spelling words; Luis struggled a little more. (Do you all get spelling words every week?)

The kids lived close to school, so they usually walked home. Bela was there waiting with a snack and a kind smile. Luis and Isabella knew it wouldn't be long before the church people came marching up the street. And soon, here they came. After a few minutes talking to Bela, they were headed to their Street Reach site. At the site, everyone got settled into the circle for the Bible Story. The church story leader stood before them and asked a question.

"What's the difference between magic and a miracle?" she said.

Isabella just stared. That's an interesting question, she thought. "Just keep that in mind as we start this week about miracles.

This story is about a miracle. If you don't know what a miracle is, you should by the end of this story. Just remember, only God can do miracles, and He still does them today!

And the story today goes something like this....

Jesus sent the twelve disciples out into the country and gave them the power to heal the sick and to tell others about God's love. When the disciples returned, they met with Jesus to tell Him about all the people they had talked with and had healed. They were all very excited to tell Jesus about their adventures.

The problem was that people followed the disciples to find Jesus. They had seen the miracles He had done and wanted to see more. But Jesus knew the disciples wanted to talk to Him. They hadn't even had a chance to eat yet, so He said to them, "Come with me and we will find a quiet place to talk and get some rest."

So, they went away by themselves in a boat to a quiet place. But many people saw them leaving and recognized them, and ran after them on land. The boat Jesus and the disciples were in was slowed by the wind, so the people actually reached the other shore before them.

When Jesus and the disciples arrived, they noticed the large crowd. Jesus felt love for these people because He knew they needed a teacher and someone to believe in. He knew that the disciples would understand, so He began teaching the large crowd many things.

It was getting late in the day, and no one had had supper yet. The disciples came to Jesus and said, "There is no food around here, and it's already getting late. Maybe we should send the people away so they can go to the surrounding towns and get themselves something to eat." But Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat."

The disciples didn't think that they understood Jesus correctly and said, "We can't feed all these people, we would have to work almost a year to pay for all the food!"

While the disciples were talking to Jesus, one of them, Andrew, noticed a small boy walking by with a small lunch. He stopped the boy and asked him what he had. He quickly ran over to where the disciples were talking to Jesus and said, "Here is a boy with five small loaves of bread and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many people?" Jesus smiled and said, "Ask everyone to sit down."

There was lots of grass to sit on, so everyone was seated -- all five thousand of them. After everyone was seated, Jesus took the loaves of bread and thanked God for them. Then the disciples passed around the bread, and everyone could take as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

Remember, these were five small loaves of bread and two small fish, only enough for a boy to eat. There were five thousand people all eating from this boy's small lunch, and they could eat as much as they wanted. There are probably more than 5,000 people at your church or school; that's a lot of people!

After everyone was full, Jesus asked the disciples to gather all the leftover food so nothing would be wasted. After they gathered all the baskets of food, they counted them up. There were twelve baskets still full of some bread and fish from the little boy's small lunch.

His small lunch probably barely filled one of the baskets before Jesus touched it, and that is a miracle! After the people realized what had happened, they said to each other, "This must be an important person sent from God." He was much more than that!

Isabella thought back to the first question. She was sure about the difference! **(Are you?)**

The kids moved through the rest of their rotations before heading home for the day. Isabella really liked this new church team. She felt like this week would be fun. At home, the church leader told Bela the kids were great today before they moved on. Luis and Isabella went inside to review their spelling words and help with supper.

Group Discussion Questions:

At first, why couldn't the people get any food?

How many loaves and fishes were there?

How much food was left over?

Even though Jesus isn't standing here today, do you believe miracles happen?

Bible Verse:

"Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish." John 6:11

Word of the Day: *Miracle*

A special event done by God that can't be explained by science or normal things

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

It's a God Thing — Miracles: Jesus Walks on Water

Monday night settled in a little stormy. Luis and Isabella got home shortly before the clouds rolled in. They helped get supper on the table. After supper, the kids got ready for bed, then settled in the living room with Papa to go over the dreaded spelling lists. Bela quietly came into the living room with glasses of cold milk and some little cookies. At least that made the homework a little more bearable. (Would that help you do homework better?)

Later on, the kids headed off to bed. Isabella was still thinking about the Bible Story from the day. She wondered what the Tuesday miracle would be. But she was sure she now knew the difference between magic and miracles. (What do you think? Have you figured it out?)

Tuesday morning starts out a little stormy. The kids get ready for school and ramble to the kitchen for breakfast. It was just a simple day: cereal, toast, and juice. But that was ok. They finished up and headed to the car, where Papa was waiting to drop them off at school.

By the time school was over, the sun was out, and the kids walked home with their neighbors, Luca and Maya. Bela waited on the front porch with some fruit for a snack until the church people came along.

Soon enough, the church group arrived, ready for day 2. The kids joined in the crowd and headed to their site. Once in the circle, they were anxious to hear about the next miracle.

The church leader smiled. "Well, kids," she said, "we're going to talk about another miracle. Who here likes swimming in a lake or a pool? We're going to talk about faith and trust. And that has to do with walking on water."

And our story goes something like this....

It had been a very long day. Jesus and the disciples had been out teaching about God and performing miracles. Many people followed them, and Jesus spent the rest of the day teaching and feeding five thousand people.

When the day was over and the crowds were leaving, Jesus told the disciples to go find their boat and go back to the other side of the lake. When everyone had left, Jesus went up to the mountainside by himself to pray.

You see, Jesus needs to pray, too. He had a long, tiring day, and performing miracles was very tiring. He knew He had to be close to His heavenly Father so He could have the strength to go on each day and resist all temptation that came His way.

When Jesus had finished praying, it was very early in the morning (probably around 3:00 or 4:00 am). He came to the shore where the disciples had left sometime earlier. He could see the boat, but it was quite far away; the wind had taken them faster across the lake than usual.

Jesus knew He had to cross the lake and join the disciples. I'm sure He could've swum, flown, or jumped across the lake - this is Jesus we're talking about, He could've done anything He wanted. But He decided He could teach the disciples something, so He started walking on the water towards their boat.

I'm not sure if you've ever tried walking on water, but it's impossible. Keep in mind the water was very deep, and I bet some of the fish even noticed Jesus and stopped to watch the miracle.

So Jesus walked and walked and finally was close enough to the disciples that He could see each of them on the boat. All of a sudden, one of the disciples said, "What is that!" He pointed out into the water, and all the disciples turned around to see what was out there.

"I think it's a ghost, what else could it be!" A few of the disciples said, terrified.

They had all gathered on one side of the boat to see the strange thing on the lake, and the boat suddenly got tipsy, and some of the disciples fell back into the boat to steady it and keep it from tipping over. Jesus could see and hear the confusion.

He called out, "It's alright. I am here, do not be afraid." The disciples looked at each other and felt silly for thinking their teacher was a ghost. Then Peter replied, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," Jesus said with His hand reaching out to him.

The disciples watched as Peter carefully got out of the boat and began to walk on water towards Jesus. Peter watched Jesus at first, then noticed the wind and the small waves on the water, and looked around with worry.

As soon as Peter became scared, he began to sink, and he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him before he was completely submerged.

"You have so little trust in me, Peter," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

Peter walked to the boat with Jesus by his side, wondering to himself why he had gotten so afraid. He knew that Jesus could do anything; as soon as he took his eyes off Jesus, he started thinking about other things, and that was when he began to sink.

As soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind stopped, and the water was calm. Then everyone in the boat worshipped Jesus, saying, "Truly you are God's Son!"

When they had crossed the lake to the other side, people began to recognize Jesus again. The people from that area told their friends, and

they told their friends, and soon people were coming from all over to see Jesus. They brought all the sick people to him and begged to touch the corner of his long coat because all who touched him were healed.

Luis just stared at the church leader. Walking on water? Really? He just wasn't so sure about this one. But one thing is for sure: this story came right from the Bible, so he couldn't just toss it away. This was something to discuss further with Papa.

After finishing their rotations, the kids started home. When they arrived, Luis was glad to see Papa was already home from work. While Isabella went to the kitchen to help Bela with supper, Luis sat on the front porch with Papa to discuss today's Bible story. The day was winding down with one last conversation.

Group Discussion Questions:

What did Jesus do when the disciples left?

Which disciple wanted to walk on the water with Jesus?

When did the disciple start to sink?

What is the message being explained here?

Bible Verse:

"And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" Matthew 14:31

Word of the Day: *Trust*

Believe God is good, loving, and has a plan for you, even when things are scary or confusing

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

It's a God Thing — Miracles: Jesus Heals a Man

Isabella was in the kitchen helping Bela finish supper. Mama was changing baby Sophia, and Luis was out on the front porch with Papa. Soon, everyone was sitting down to eat. Papa asked if they had a good report today. Isabella knew right away he was thinking about the Saturday trip to the Pink Palace. "Yes, sir!" she said. "We learned more about miracles!" After supper, the kids went into the sitting room with Papa to study their spelling words. Isabella had almost learned all her words learning; Luis wasn't far behind. He was not a great speller, so he was pleased that he almost had them. (Do you all have spelling words to learn each week? Like Isabella and Luis?)

Wednesday started out with sunshine. School was just another Wednesday, and soon it was over. The kids were walking home. Bela waits on the front porch with a snack. Luca and Maya ran over to wait with Isabella and Luis for the church people.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Maya. Before long, the kids were joining the church people for the short walk to their site. Isabella asked the Bible Story leader whether there would be another miracle story today. "Yep, and a good one!" she replied. They got into their circle and waited.

"Today's story is about a man who was paralyzed. Being paralyzed means that he couldn't walk and probably couldn't use his legs," the church leader said. "He would've had to sit or lie down all the time."

Just think for a minute how hard it would be to do things if you couldn't walk around. How would you go to the bathroom? What kind of games would you play? How easy would it be to make friends?

"Well, let's get right into the story."

And today's story goes something like this...

This story actually took place a few days after Jesus had touched a man who had leprosy and made him better. Jesus was going from town to town performing miracles, and everyone wanted to see Him.

People were excited whenever they heard that Jesus was in their area because they either wanted to see a miracle or be the one who was healed.

So, as Jesus entered one of the homes in Capernaum, people quickly gathered around Him. So many people came that there was no room left, not even outside the door.

I can imagine people pushing each other a little to squeeze everyone in; plus, people gathered outside to see or hear Jesus when He came out. That's where things got interesting.

Four men who heard that Jesus was in town decided to carry their paralyzed friend on a mat to Him to see if he could be healed. As soon as they arrived at the house where Jesus was, they realized they couldn't get in to see Him.

I'm thinking that the man they were carrying was getting pretty heavy and was desperate to see Jesus. They didn't know how long Jesus would be in town, so they had to see Him today!

Someone decided to take him to the roof of the building where Jesus was! That might sound impossible, but houses were built differently then. Most houses had staircases outside to get to the flat roof.

With a flat roof, people could use this area as an extra living space. It might have been like having a deck on the roof of your house. Plus, the

roof wasn't made of large pieces of wood and didn't have shingles; it had tiles or plaster that could be easily lifted or broken through to make a hole.

The Bible says that, after digging through the roof, the men lowered the mat that the paralyzed man was lying on down to where Jesus was.

Imagine listening carefully to Jesus when all of a sudden you hear something coming from above you. The ceiling is crumbling a bit, and everyone stops to look up and see what's going on.

I'm sure Jesus was smiling as the man was being lowered down. These men were so sure that Jesus would heal him; otherwise, they wouldn't have gone to so much trouble.

The first thing Jesus said when He saw that they believed was, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Probably not what the man expected, since he came to Jesus seeking to walk.

However, Jesus knew what this man needed most because he knew what was in his heart. Jesus knew that being paralyzed would be difficult, but it was even worse not to be forgiven.

Well, some of the teachers of the law heard Jesus forgive the man, and they began thinking, "How dare this man forgive sins? Only God can do that."

Immediately, Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things?" This probably startled the men because Jesus knew what they were thinking!

Jesus also asked them, "Which was easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

This might be a bit hard to understand, but I think Jesus was trying to get through to the teachers of the law, telling them that He was the Son of Man and that God had given Him the power to forgive sins and heal people. These things could not be done by just a regular person, but only by God.

Then, before He was finished, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

The Bible says that the man got up, took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all. I just have to wonder how the man reacted when he was suddenly told that he could get up and go home...

I'm thinking he thanked Jesus and maybe even gave him a big hug! He could've laughed and maybe did a little dance on his way out. He probably didn't go straight home either...what a day that would've been for him and his friends!

The crowd was very amazed and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Isabella knew this was definitely a miracle and not magic! Looking forward to discussing this more at supper tonight. Then they all moved along in their rotations before starting home with the church people. On the walk home, they sang some songs the church people taught them. It was fun.

Group Discussion Questions:

What did the four men do to get their friend to Jesus?

What did the healed man do with his mat after he was healed?

How many miracles did Jesus perform himself?

What are way you can help a disabled friend to show your compassion?



Bible Verse:

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" Mark 2:10

Word of the Day: *Compassion*

Being moved by someone else's hurt and then taking action to help them

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

It's a God Thing — Miracles: Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy

Isabella was thinking about how much she learned this week. And the church people were great to be around – they were mostly high school kids and lots of fun. Now at home, Isabella helped with supper plans by setting the table. Then she went into the sitting room and played with baby Sophia while Bela finished up supper. Soon, Mama and Papa came home from work, and they all sat down for supper. Tonight, the kids would finish learning their spelling words for tomorrow's spelling test.

Before bedtime, both Isabella and Luis got through their spelling lists perfectly. Isabella went to bed feeling good about the upcoming test.

It's Thursday. A day promising a good time at school and, of course, more miracles at Street Reach. The kids got dressed for school and went in for breakfast. The kids ate and moved to their backpacks and the car, where Papa waited for them. Papa told them both good luck on their spelling tests. The day went by well. Spelling tests were successful, with both kids getting all their words correct. After school, they walked home for a snack and settled in to wait for the church people.

Soon they were coming down the street. Isabella was a little sad as this was the last day with this group. They were lots of fun, but Isabella knew they would have to go home, and next week there would be a new group.

Once at their site, everyone sat in the Bible Story circle waiting for the church leader to begin.

"Hello, kids," she began.

"Today's story can be found in the first three books of the New Testament in the Bible." Matthew, Mark, and Luke are also the names of three men who either heard about the story or were there to see the miracle for themselves and then wrote about it.

This story is about a man with leprosy. So what is leprosy?

Well, let's get right into our story.

And today's story goes something like this....

Leprosy is a disease that is caused by a bacterial germ. People who get leprosy usually live in poor areas, have dirty water, eat food with little nutrition, and aren't healthy to begin with. It looks very bad. It can make a face look bumpy and completely change how a person looks. Some people get it on their hands or feet and lose fingers and toes.

This isn't everything leprosy is, but you get the picture. On top of it all, during the time when Jesus was around, people thought leprosy was caused by people's sins. So, if someone had leprosy, it was because they had done something wrong.

For all these reasons, the "lepers", as they were called, were kicked out of the city and had to live on the outside of it. They weren't allowed in stores, churches, or any public place, so they often went to live in the dumps where the garbage was, to find food and other things they needed. No one wanted to see them for fear of touching them and catching the disease or becoming 'unclean' because of their sins.

Now to the story: Jesus was going around at this time, healing people and telling stories. Word got around about Jesus, so people would follow Him because they wanted to hear what He had to say or to see a miracle.

While Jesus was walking and talking with people, a man with leprosy approached Him, fell to his knees, and put his face to the ground begging, "Lord, if you want to, you can heal me and make me clean."

Something amazing happened next. Like it was no big deal, Jesus just reached out and touched the man.

Wait a minute, Jesus reached out and touched a man with leprosy? This was not allowed then, and now Jesus would be unclean! Besides, this man looked really bad and was probably very sick!

None of this mattered to Jesus, however. He reached out his hand and said to the man, "I will heal you. Be clean." And right in that moment, the leprosy left him.

This showed that Jesus was more than just a man. Jesus healed the man of his disease but also cleansed him from his sin without becoming infected Himself.

Jesus then asked the man to do one thing. He asked him not to tell anyone what had just happened and to go to the priest for a checkup. This would show that he was cleansed, and he would leave an offering. Then the priest would grant him permission to return and live with the people again.

By going to a priest, the healed man would send a message that Jesus had a special power from God. The people were waiting for a Messiah (someone who would come and save them), and the priests and Jews believed that only God could cure leprosy. This was supposed to be a sign that the Messiah had come.

Instead, the man was so excited that he told everyone he had seen what had happened. This made it hard for Jesus to walk around in the cities because large crowds would flock to Him, and the Jewish leaders started to go against Jesus because they didn't believe that He was sent by God. Jesus would often go off by Himself to pray, but people kept coming from everywhere to see Him.

The message that I want you to take from this story is that it doesn't matter to Jesus what you've done, how you look, or what other people think about you. He made you, and He loves you no matter what! Every day, Jesus is trying to reach out and show His love to you, but sometimes we're too busy to notice.

Start taking notice of the beautiful things outside (a butterfly, flowers, or a sunset), the love from a parent or a friend, and even kindness from a stranger. All these things are ways God is trying to show His love for you.

Luis was thinking this leprosy thing was terrible. He's never heard of it before. He wondered if people still had that disease these days.

They finished their rotations before starting home. Isabella was talking to the church leader about where she lived and what it was like. She was sorry to say goodbye.

Soon they were home and waved bye to the church people. Then they went inside to plan for their Saturday at the Pine Palace. Luis was really excited about this! The

The whole family was going to go. Mama was even going to put baby Sophie in her stroller and bring her along!

The end of another great week at Street Reach. See everyone next week!!

Group Discussion Questions:

Which 3 books in the Bible has this story?

What did the man with leprosy do to be healed?

What did Jesus do to heal the man? Did Jesus get sick?

Bible Verse:

"Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willed; be cleansed'"
Mark 1:41

Word of the Day: *Kindness*

Doing something for others even if you don't get something back in return
