



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience **How Might I Be Of Help?**

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: How Might I Be Of Help? (Luke 4:31-37)

Intended Audience

Small discussion group of youth or adults, men's group, women's group, or intergenerational small group. Note to the facilitator: If the groups are large, divide them into smaller groups of four (for better discussion and limited time).

Outcome of Experience

Participants will learn of people who are often neglected or not well cared for in a community because of mental illness. Participants will learn in their discussion that by Jesus' example we are called to care for all people with the love and grace of God.

Introduce Experience

In Biblical times people with diseases and mental illness were excluded from the community. Other than perhaps close family, no one cared for them. Often their disease was described as being possessed by demons. So it took a miracle by someone who could cast out the demon(s) for the person to be healed. This story is about God's love in Jesus for all people and the connection of faith, Jesus, and healing. So we will focus on how God still brings healing to people with mental illness in our 21st century. Why do people with mental illness still fall through the cracks of care in a community today?

Scripture - Luke 4:31-37

31 He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. 32 They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. 33 In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. 36 They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, "What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!" 37 And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.

Image Selection

Choose one or two images that connect to some action or feelings that are present in this Biblical story.

Image Packs

We recommend the People Pack (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find the People Pack at: <https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>



the visual **faith** project

How Might I Be Of Help? continued...

Facilitators Questions To Guide Group Discussion

1. Describe the action or feeling(s) depicted in your choice of image.
2. What questions arise in you about the action or feelings in the image?
3. What is a question you would like to ask the man who was healed?
4. What question would you like to ask Jesus concerning this healing?
5. How might this event connect to what Jesus was teaching the people in the synagogue?
6. After the healing of the man, do you think the report about this event to others was positive or negative and why?
7. What might the emotion of “being amazed” look like or be expressed?

Now choose one or two images that depict emotions that you have felt when you have worked with, encountered, or tried to help an emotionally challenged disturbed person or someone who is mentally ill. Use your choice of image(s) to describe your experience.

Facilitators Questions To Guide the Discussion

1. What made your experience either positive or negative?
2. What do you remember of how you felt at such an experience?
3. What questions do the others in the group have for the person who shared her/his story and image(s)?
4. Where was God for you?
5. Were you alone?
6. What was something you learned from the person you encountered?
7. What was something you learned about yourself from this encounter?
8. How could this person be cared for? How could God bring healing?

Application

- Mentally ill or emotionally troubled persons did not stop Jesus from sharing God’s love and even healing such a person.
- Why does it seem to be such a stigma in our communities?
- What ministries are you aware of that care for mentally ill people and emotionally troubled people?
- What are your feelings about being involved in a ministry to such people? What caring action could you do for such a troubled person?

Prayer

As the facilitator, create a holy space for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Invite the participants to choose an image of a person who appear distraught, confused, or disturbed. Or, if you have the digital images, put them in PowerPoint and show them. Together sing “Amazing Grace” or “Jesus Loves Me,” as you look at the images one at a time. When finished share a blessing like, “*Peace I give to you. Live and rest in the Peace of God!*”