

Beyond hope

Matthew 9:9-13,18-26

After calling Matthew, a tax collector, to follow him, Jesus is criticised for his association with 'tax collectors and sinners'. He responds that he was sent to those who are sick. The gathering is interrupted by a synagogue leader whose daughter is sick. On his way to the girl, a woman who has been ill for 12 years touches Jesus' cloak. Jesus restores the girl to life and heals the woman. News of this spread quickly!

Read this week's passage:



Living Scripture

'As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.' Matthew 9:9

No one could be more surprised than Matthew that Jesus even noticed him, let alone stopped and talked to him, inviting him to go with him. Why would Jesus even bother with him? Those around Matthew would have been amazed at what Jesus did, but they would probably have been equally amazed at what Matthew did. Matthew got up and followed him.

What surprises you about Matthew's response? Are there questions you would like to ask Matthew if you met him? Can you imagine or act out this encounter with Matthew? Tell the story from Matthew's point of view. Imagine others asking questions: How much money did you make as a tax collector? What kind of house do you live in? How many friends do you have? Do you think Jesus really wants to be your friend?

Reflect on how you came to know Jesus. How has Jesus helped you, even when things seemed beyond hope? Plan one way you can help someone who doesn't know Jesus get to know him. (Even just a little bit – everyone's faith journey starts somewhere.)

First impressions

- What do you think the photographer is trying to convey in this image?
- How does this image connect with the Gospel story?
- What hope do you need to hold onto this week?



DRAW



Draw these two stories as a comic strip. Alternatively, write a diary entry from the perspective of one person.

Pray



Cut out cards in the shape of plasters and write messages on them: 'Follow Jesus', 'Be merciful to others', 'Jesus makes us well'. Think about the times Jesus has helped you or given you hope. On the reverse, write or draw a thank you prayer.

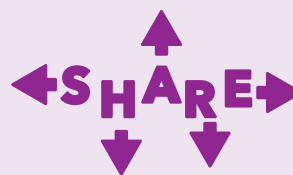
Read

Try and find other passages in Matthew's Gospel that give different examples of hope. How does Jesus act towards and speak with others?

Pray



Thank you, Lord,
that you never turned your back on anyone.
You actively sought out those who were hopeless and helpless.
You gave them help, you gave them hope.
Thank you that even when we are at our lowest, we know there is always hope.
We praise you, Lord.
Amen.



Jesus shared a meal with someone who usually gets left out. Can you share a snack with someone alone on the playground, help provide some food for a food bank, or invite someone elderly and alone to join your family for a meal?

