Preschool–Grade 6

# The Syrophoenician Woman

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

**Main point:** Come to Jesus with humble faith and keep asking. Jesus helps everyone who comes to Him.
**Bible passage:** Mark 7:24–30 (and Matthew 15:21–28). Read them before class.
**Memory verse:** "And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." *Mark 7:29 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and pencils, and one take-home sheet for each child.
**Before class:** write the memory verse on the board. Draw a map line on the board: Galilee at the bottom, Tyre and Sidon at the top by the sea.

## 1. Opening game: Don't Give Up (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Kids give a thumbs up if the person should keep asking, or a thumbs down if they should stop. 1) You asked your mom once for a snack and she said "not yet." 2) You prayed for your sick grandma and she isn't well yet. 3) You asked a friend to share and he said no, so you grabbed it. Talk about the difference between asking humbly and demanding. Say: "Today we meet a mother who kept asking Jesus, humbly, even when the answer at first sounded like no."

## 2. Bible story: Even the Crumbs (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Mark 7. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

**Jesus could not be hid. Look up Mark 7:24.** Jesus went to the **borders** (the land near) of Tyre and Sidon, two cities by the sea north of Israel. He entered a house and wanted no one to know, "but he could not be hid." Point to the top of the map line.

**A mother comes.** A woman whose young daughter had an **unclean spirit** heard of Jesus, came and fell at His feet (7:25). Mark says she was "a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation" (7:26): not from Israel. Matthew calls her "a woman of Canaan" and says she cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David" (Matthew 15:22). She **besought** Him, which means begged Him, to cast the devil out of her daughter (Mark 7:26).

**Not a word.** Matthew adds that at first Jesus "answered her not a word," and the disciples said, "Send her away; for she crieth after us" (Matthew 15:23). Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). She came and worshipped Him, saying, "Lord, help me" (15:25).


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**The children's bread. Look up Mark 7:27.** Jesus said, "Let the children first be filled." It is not **meet**, not right, to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. Jesus' picture was a family meal: Israel, the children, were to be fed first.

**Yes, Lord. Look up Mark 7:28.** She didn't argue or get angry. She agreed, "Yes, Lord," and still asked: even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. A crumb from Jesus was enough for her. Matthew says Jesus answered, "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matthew 15:28).

**Go thy way. Look up Mark 7:29–30.** Jesus said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." She went home and found the devil gone out and her daughter laid upon the bed. Jesus never went to her house. His word was enough.

## 3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

**Thinking questions** (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. At first Jesus "answered her not a word" (Matthew 15:23). Why do you think she kept asking?
2. She said, "Yes, Lord" (Mark 7:28). What does it look like to ask humbly instead of demanding?
3. Jesus healed her daughter without going to her house (7:29–30). What does that show about His word?
4. She was not from Israel, yet Jesus helped her. What does that tell us about who Jesus helps?
5. Who is someone you can keep praying for, even if the answer doesn't come right away?

**Recall questions**

1. Where did Jesus go? *(The borders of Tyre and Sidon, Mark 7:24)*
2. What did the woman say about the crumbs? *(The dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs, 7:28)*
3. What did she find at home? *(The devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed, 7:30)*

## 4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **saying** means what she said, **go thy way** means go home, **thy** means your, and the **devil** is the unclean spirit that troubled her daughter. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.


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## 5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus helped a woman who wasn't from Israel. The good news of Jesus is for everyone. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
*Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*
**This week:** write down one person or need, and pray for it every day this week. Don't give up.

## 6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Mark 7:24: Could Jesus be hid? *(No, "he could not be hid")*
2. Mark 7:25: Where did the woman fall? *(At his feet)*
3. Mark 7:26: What was she "by nation"? *(A Syrophenician)*
4. Mark 7:27: Who should be filled first? *(The children)*
5. Mark 7:28: What did she call Jesus? *(Lord)*
6. Mark 7:30: Where was her daughter? *(Laid upon the bed)*
7. Matthew 15:22: What did Matthew call her? *(A woman of Canaan)*
8. Matthew 15:28: What did Jesus say about her faith? *(Great is thy faith)*

For more, use the **word search, crossword, maze or worksheet** (vbshq.com/bible-stories/the-syrophoenician-woman).

## 7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You that You help everyone who comes to You. Help us come to You humbly, and keep asking You in prayer. Thank You that Your word is enough. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child asks whether Jesus was being unkind:** read Mark 7:27–29 together. Point out that she wasn't hurt or angry; she said, "Yes, Lord," and Jesus praised her faith and helped her (Matthew 15:28). Keep to the words the Bible gives.


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