Preschool–Grade 6

The Syrophoenician Woman

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Humble faith keeps asking. It doesn't argue with Jesus or give up on Him, and Jesus answers it. The gospel is for everyone.
Bible passage: Mark 7:24–30 and Matthew 15:21–28. Students read both out loud themselves.
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)* and "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." *Matthew 15:28 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read both passages. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Demand or Ask? (5–10 minutes)

Read each line. Students call out "Demand" or "Ask humbly." 1) "You have to let me go; everyone else is going." 2) "Could I please have another chance? I know I messed up." 3) "God, if You don't answer by tonight, I'm done praying." 4) "Lord, I don't deserve it, but would You help my friend?" Ask: *What makes the difference between the two?* Say: "Today a mother who was not from Israel asks Jesus for help, and the way she answers Him is the key."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Mark 7:24–30. Old words in this passage:

- **borders of Tyre and Sidon** (7:24): the land near two cities by the sea, north of Israel
- **could not be hid** (7:24): people found out He was there
- **unclean spirit** (7:25): a devil (7:26), an evil spirit that troubled her daughter
- **a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation** (7:26): not from Israel; from the part of Syria called Phenicia
- **besought** (7:26): begged; **cast forth**: drive out
- **meet** (7:27): right, fitting
- **For this saying** (7:29): because of what you said; **go thy way**: go home

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Read out loud: Matthew 15:21–28. Old words in this passage:

- **coasts** (15:21): the borders of a land
- **a woman of Canaan** (15:22): from the old people of that land, not from Israel
- **grievously vexed** (15:22): badly troubled
- **the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (15:24): the people of Israel, to whom Jesus was sent first
- **Truth, Lord** (15:27): "Yes, Lord," it is true
- **be it unto thee even as thou wilt** (15:28): let it happen as you want

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jesus "answered her not a word" (Matthew 15:23), then said He was sent to Israel (15:24), then spoke of the children's bread (Mark 7:27). What did she do after each one?
2. She said, "Yes, Lord" (Mark 7:28). Why is agreeing with Jesus, and still asking, different from arguing with Him?
3. Jesus said, "For this saying go thy way" (7:29). What was it about her saying that showed faith?
4. Jesus never went to her house, yet she found her daughter free (7:30). What does that teach about the power of His word?
5. She was not from Israel. Read Acts 2:39. How does this story point ahead to the gospel going to everyone?
6. Is there something you stopped praying about? What would humble, persistent faith look like there?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **saying** means what she said; **go thy way** means go home; **thy** means your; **great is thy faith** means your faith is great; **made whole** means healed, made well. Mark 7:29 is Jesus' word to her; Matthew 15:28 is what He said about her faith.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Mark 7:29 this week; keep working on Matthew 15:28 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "She was not from Israel, but she came anyway, and Jesus answered her. On the Day of Pentecost Peter said, 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call' (Acts 2:39, KJV). That promise is for you. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who or what do I need to keep asking Jesus about?
2. When God's answer is "not yet," do I tend to argue, give up, or keep asking humbly?
3. Write a short prayer that starts, "Yes, Lord," and then asks Him for that need.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10, KJV) Pray for your need every day, starting with "Yes, Lord."

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You that Your promise is for everyone who comes to You. Give us humble faith that keeps asking and trusts Your word. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks why Jesus spoke of dogs: read Mark 7:27–29 and Matthew 15:24–28 together and let the verses speak: Jesus was sent first to Israel; she agreed, kept asking, and Jesus praised her great faith. Don't add explanations the text doesn't give.

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