



## On your marks

Jesus had promised his followers that when the Holy Spirit came, they would do the things that he had been doing – and even greater things. Peter and John discovered this to be true soon after Pentecost, on their way to the temple one day.

The following idea offers a fun way to tell the story of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, using a well-known nursery counting song. It is suitable for a Messy Church celebration, an all-age service, collective worship or a group session with adults and children.

## Get set

The Bible story can be found in Acts 3–4.

## Go!

### Introducing the story

Today's story is about the first big miracle performed by the first Christians. It came just after the church had got going at Pentecost.

I wonder how much money you've got in your pocket. How much loose change? Have you got some 'gold' pounds or 'silver' coins? Or is it all copper pennies? Rattle your money!

I can hear the sound of loose change in your pockets – some spare change, the sound of small change. The charity collector, the money-changing machine at the supermarket or the beggar on the street would all love your small change.

There was someone in our story today who was also hoping for some small change... but God gave him a big change instead. He was lame. He couldn't walk on his own. As the old song goes, he asked for 'alms' (charity) and God gave him legs instead.

### Preparing for the story

Introduce the following actions as a warm-up to the story:

- It was three o'clock (*one hand up straight and the other to the left for three o'clock*).
- It was prayer time (*hands together*), just before tea time (*mime sipping a cuppa*), and it was God's time (*point upward*). Repeat the three actions quickly several times in succession.
- It was 'walk to the temple' time (*mime walking*).
- It was 'be carried to the temple' time (*hold out hands to be lifted*), to sit time (*sit down*), to beg time (*hold out cupped hands*). Repeat the three actions quickly several times in succession.
- And soon it became 'walking and leaping and praising' time. Repeat these three actions



quickly several times in succession.

The miracle took place at three in the afternoon. There were crowds around, so everybody saw it happen; but not everyone was happy. Listen to the story!

### Telling the story

Tell the story, counting out the numbers on fingers and thumbs and to the tune of '[One man went to mow](http://brf.org.uk/resources)'.

1 man went to beg, went to beg for money.

1 man on his mat, sat, went to beg for money.

2 men went to pray, went to pray as usual.

2 men, 1 man on his mat, sat, right outside the temple.

3 men at the gate, one hoping for a handout.

3 men, 2 men, 1 man on his mat, sat, hoping for a handout.

A 4th man's name was said, a name worth more than money.

Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man on his mat, sat, whose legs were feeling funny.

5 men gathered round, hearing the commotion.

5 men, Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man, **not** on his mat, sat, but doing the locomotion.

6 men from the temple came to stop this real din.

6 men, 5 men, Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man, walking, leaping, saying Jesus healed him!

7 men in a prison heard about this story.

7 men, 6 men, 5 men, Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man praising God, made sure they heard the story.

8 men told them off: 'Stop this talk of Jesus.'

8 men, 7 men, 6 men, 5 men, Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man obeyed God instead and spoke about this Jesus.

9 men prayed to God, thanked him for his power.

9 men, 8 men, 7 men, 6 men, 5 men, Jesus, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man prayed - and were filled, that hour.

10 men on that day saw good news brought by Jesus.

10 men, 9 men, 8 men, 7 men, 6 men, 5 men, 4 men, 3 men, 2 men, 1 man... *(slow down)* A-men... for good news brought by Jesus.