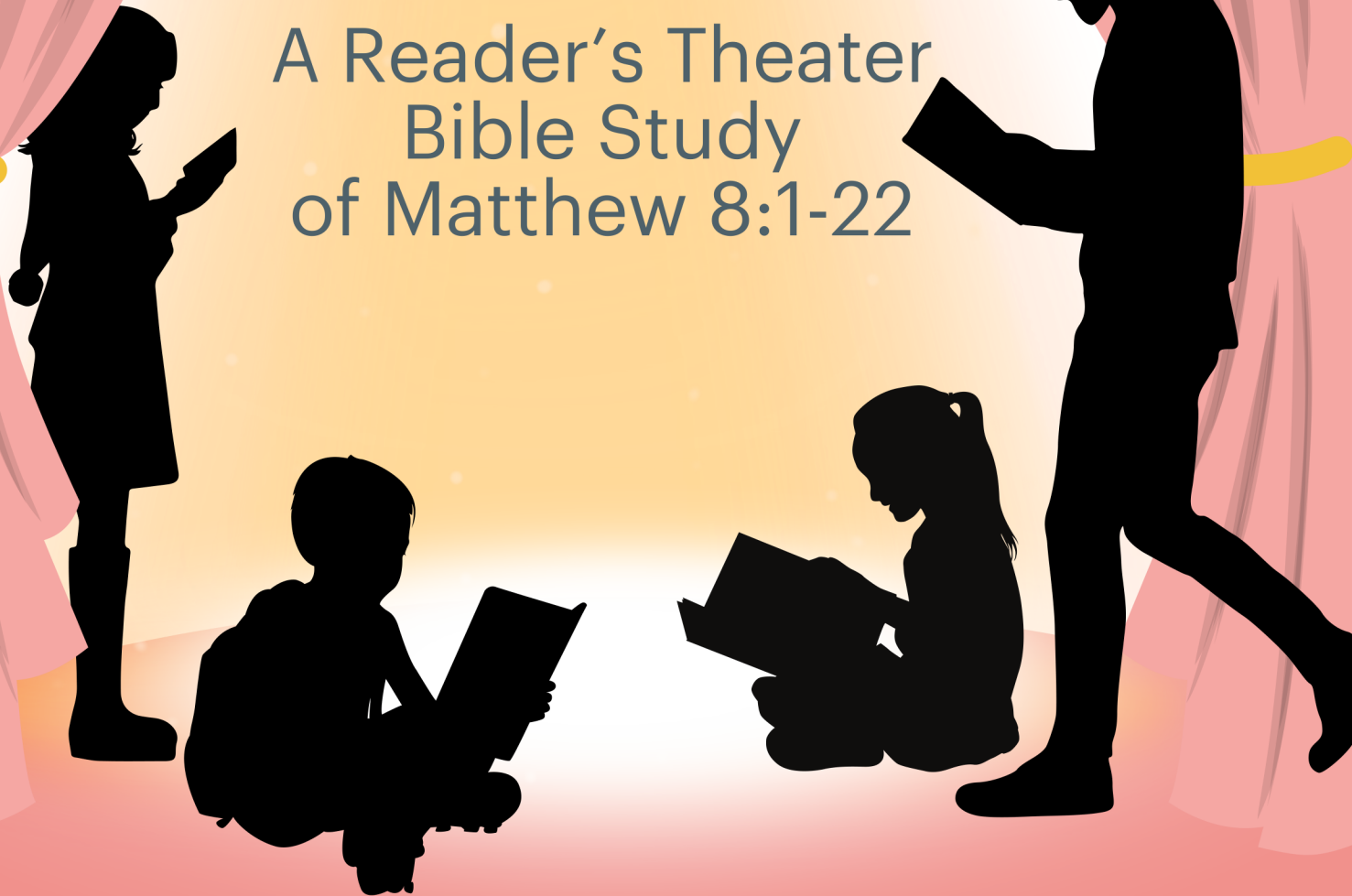




DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

A Reader's Theater
Bible Study
of Matthew 8:1-22



1 LESSON | LEADER GUIDE + STUDENT WORKSHEETS

Leader's Guide

Ready...set...action! Reader's theater is a creative way of inviting students to immerse themselves in the story of Scripture. Not only is it a fun way to read, it also helps readers (and listeners) hear and see the story with greater clarity. You can sit around a table or a living room and simply read it, or you can choose to stand and act it out. Either way works!

After reading the script aloud, follow the discussion guide to explore the story to your desired level of depth. Note that this guide won't be providing "answers" to the questions. Rather, the questions invite you to enter into the story and see what you discover. Your group will have more unique insights than this guide could possibly include. The goal isn't application but rather response. Each story invites us to respond to God.

Before you begin, print out scripts for every member of your group. Decide if you want to print the optional worksheets.

Part 1: Reader's Theater

1. Assign a **role** (or roles) to each person in the group. Note that the roles are different for each story.
 - The number that appears in parentheses after each role lets you know how many lines of script the person filling that role will be reading. This doesn't indicate how many *times* they will speak, but rather how is a measure of how much they'll be reading. If someone in your group struggles with reading, you can give them a role with a smaller number of lines.
 - If you have fewer people than roles, the scripts also note which roles can be easily combined. If you need to further combine roles, consider using simple props and more exaggerated voices to help differentiate them.
2. After you have assigned roles, give everyone a copy of the script and ask them to circle or highlight their parts. You may also want to ask them to read through their parts first and see if there are any words they need help pronouncing or defining.
3. Decide if you want to sit and read or stand and act it out.
4. Before you begin reading, remind everyone to have fun with it!
5. Say "Action!" and enjoy the show!

Part 2: Discuss

Discussion can take place with or without the worksheet. If your students are visual or need something to keep their hands busy or their minds focused, the worksheet can play that role. However, it may be that they engage better through simple conversation. Experiment with it!

1. Help orient students with the setting of the story by asking two questions:
 - **What time is it?**
 - Explore where this story takes place within the larger story of the Bible. If you are using the worksheet, look at the ups and downs of that larger story and what they've all been building to. The stories in this series travel up that steep hill that Jesus is standing on. Anticipation for God's Kingdom is ramping up and there is a sense of desperation.
 - Are there any other markers of time in the story? For example, Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. Are there any other stories in the Bible where someone was somewhere for 40 marks of time? You might discuss the similarities.
 - **Where are we?** Explore the physical location of where this story took place. Did any other notable stories take place in this location? For example, did any other stories in the Bible involve 40 marks of time in a Wilderness? Are there any connections between those stories?
2. Help students explore who is in the story and what they are doing.
 - **Who is here?** Identify all of the characters in the story, including those who didn't have speaking parts. Have we seen them in other stories? Do you notice any behavior patterns? Remember to point out that God is the main character in every single story, whether He speaks or not.
 - **What do we see each character doing?** What are they like? Most of the time, the people in Bible stories are not playing the role of "hero." Rather, their story acts like a mirror to show us how normal people act. So how are they acting? Are they complaining? Are they suspicious? Are they desperate for something? Ask what you have in common with the characters in this story.
3. (optional) Consider running through the script again at this point.
4. Connect with God.
 - **What is God doing in this story?** What do you see Jesus doing? How is he connecting with the people in the story? If you were in this story, how might he want to respond to you.

If your students have OneStory's Bible Binder, they can file the scripts and workbook pages in the Gospels section.



Reader's Theater: Down From the Mountain

Roles: Narrator 1 (11), **Narrator 2** (11), **Leper** (1), **Jesus** (13), **Centurion** (5), **Isaiah** (1), **Scribe** (1), **Disciple** (1)

(The following parts can be combined: Narrator 1 + Narrator 2; any combination of: Leper + Centurion + Scribe + Isaiah + Disciple)

Narrator 1: When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. Behold, a leper came to him and worshiped him, saying,

Leper: Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean.

Narrator 2: Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying,

Jesus: I want to. Be made clean.

Narrator 1: Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Jesus said to him,

Jesus: See that you tell nobody; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.

Narrator 2: When he came into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking him for help, saying,

Centurion: Lord, my servant lies in the house paralyzed, grievously tormented.

Narrator 1: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: I will come and heal him.

Narrator 2: The centurion answered,

Centurion: Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am also a man under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and tell another, 'Come,' and he comes; and tell my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.

Narrator 1: When Jesus heard it, he marveled and said to those who followed,

Jesus: Most certainly I tell you, I haven't found so great a faith, not even in Israel. I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the children of the Kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Narrator 2: Jesus said to the centurion,

Jesus: Go your way. Let it be done for you as you have believed.

Narrator 1: His servant was healed in that hour.

Narrator 2: When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her. So she got up and served him.

Narrator 1: When evening came, they brought to him many possessed with demons. He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Isaiah: He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.

Narrator 2: Now when Jesus saw great multitudes around him, he gave the order to depart to the other side. A scribe came and said to him,

Scribe: Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.

Narrator 1: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Narrator 2: Another of his disciples said to him,

Disciple: Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.

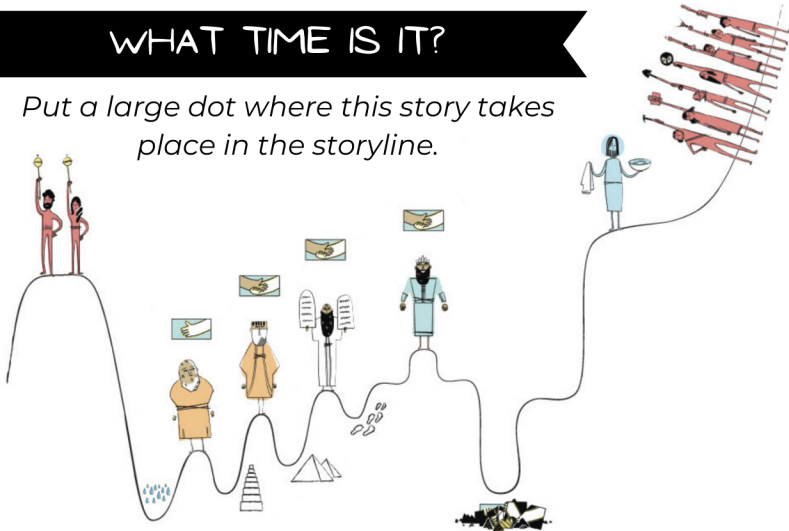
Narrator 1: But Jesus said to him,

Jesus: Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.


Down from the Mountain

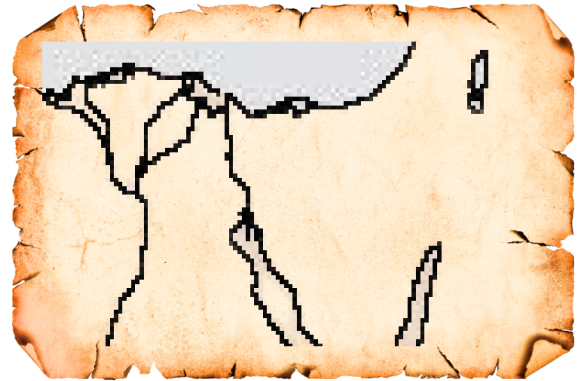
WHAT TIME IS IT?

Put a large dot where this story takes place in the storyline.



WHERE ARE WE?

Draw a  to show where this story takes place on a map.



WHO IS HERE?

Draw or name the characters in this story.



LOOK IN THE MIRROR

Write or draw what you see people doing. Then circle what reminds you of yourself.



WHAT IS GOD DOING?

Write or draw what you discover about how God is meeting with people.