



Bethesda
series

Compassion

ADAPTED FROM

The Person of Jesus Study

Starter Kit



Unit 1: Compassion

Jill A. Miller



Introduction to Bethesda Series

I love Kim. I love people like Kim. When I am around people that others see as “dis-abled,” I see “abled.” One of those abilities is relentless faith.

Kim is the fourth of our six kids. Paul and I are both teachers, and we tried to teach all six kids the Bible. We sent them to Christian schools. Paul was the principal of a Christian school, but Kim was frequently left out. She wasn't able to go to a Christian school because of her multiple challenges. She was able to keep up in Sunday School up to first grade, and then got frustrated with all the scissors, play groups, and interaction with the other kids and teachers. I stayed with Kim for about twenty years during the Sunday School hour. I got frustrated because “this little light” was being hidden under a bushel.

I believe all of us can learn. We are made in the image of God, and God is limitless. I don't believe in ceilings where people stop learning. With this in mind, I looked at curriculum for Kim and her friends. The material I reviewed looked too simple. Good teachers expose students to concepts that they may never understand. Exposure is important to lifelong learning! I remember being taught trigonometry and thinking, “What in the world is this man trying to teach me!” But that didn't stop him from exposing me to the information and giving me an opportunity to “grab” what I could. This is what I have tried to do with the *Bethesda Series*. I want to give Kim and her friends the opportunity to learn God's Word, the Bible. I want them to have the opportunity to discover. I want them to experience Jesus, to know at a new level, his amazing love for them!

I looked at the *Person of Jesus* study and thought to myself, “Just start with this.” As the weeks went by, Jesus took over the lessons. He truly gave me the ideas. When I reread the lessons I'd think, “This was not my idea.” Jesus' heart is where the weak are, and I saw His heart revealed as I sat down to adapt these lessons.

Courtney, our oldest daughter, gave me a copy of the Bible with all the stories in the Gospels that had anything to do with disabilities cut out with an exact-o knife. Many pages were almost completely cut away. The Gospels weren't the Gospels without those stories. Could it be that the church isn't the church when people with disabilities are “cut out?” Every week my friends in the class teach me. I learn from them! I need their faith and warm honesty. My hope is that the beauty of Jesus will be seen through “the least of these!”

“As your words are taught, they give light; even the simple can understand them.” Psalm 119:130.

Many blessings!
Jill A. Miller

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How To Teach The Bethesda Series

MASTER THE CONTENT BY READING LOVE WALKED AMONG US

The book will give you an overview of the material and a summary of each lesson. At the beginning of each lesson and in the comparison chart on the seeJesus website, the chapter in *Love Walked Among Us* that correlates with the lesson is listed.

LEARN THE LAYOUT OF A TYPICAL LESSON



Kim's World:

Q. Questions in bold type and pink are the heart of the material.

“Teach” is a short section that you teach. Don't linger.

“Historical Background” is a short teaching section that introduces historical background information to enrich your Bible study.



“Draw” appears where you will need to draw out the story, a graph or just illustrate visually what you are talking about.

“Review” is a very short teaching section usually at the beginning of a lesson that reviews the previous lesson and shows where this lesson fits in with the unit as a whole.



“Teaching Tip” is a teaching idea.

[Write their answers.] is always with the pencil icon. This means write their answers out on the flip chart or white board. The advantage of a flip chart is you can review previous lessons.

[Teach what they don't say.] is an indication that there are nuances in this answer that you'll likely have to teach after participants have had time to share their thoughts.

“Jill's Personal Illustration” is an example to help with application.



Gospel Connection is a brief explanation of how principles of the lesson relate to the essential gospel message.



What about me? Apply the lesson to your life.

The church will be transformed and the world will be captured by Jesus' beauty not because we are good teachers but because we are obedient servants. If we are just communicating abstract principles and not struggling to obey, then we risk creating Pharisees.

Grace and Law. The Bethesda material moves back and forth between two principle foci: Grace and law. Law is God's perfect standard that reflects his character. There is no better description of God's perfect standard than the person of Jesus. He is what we are to become like. The New Testament is not shy about tell us to "copy him". That might sound legalistic, but that is what the Bible says again and again: look at Him. Do what he does. But we can't. That is why we need grace. We need Jesus' death for us to give us the power to change. We need his Spirit within us to want to be different. Only as we understand Grace can we "copy him". The best place to look for grace is the person of Jesus! He is grace personified. He is constantly showing people that they can't do life on their own, that like the Tax Collector in his parable, they need to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Without grace, law is discouraging and frustrating. Without law, grace is just happy thoughts. We need both grace and law, faith and love.

Every lesson has three goals:

Love: what does it look like to become like Jesus, to love like him?

Jesus: What is something beautiful about Jesus?

Faith: how does Jesus give me the power through the cross and his Spirit to love like him?

List of items in the Prop Kit

Lesson 1	Sponge
Lesson 2	Basket with doll
Lesson 3	Basket with doll
Lesson 4	Ace bandage, money and small cloth bag
Lesson 5	Ace bandage, money and small cloth bag
Lesson 6	Pig
Lesson 7	Party Invitation
Lesson 8	Zip-loc bag filled with dirt
Lesson 9	Small hand-held mirror
Lesson 10	Large sunglasses or x-ray
Lesson 11	Bottle of perfume
Lesson 12	Large sunglasses or x-ray
Lesson 13	Use real coins (not included in the kit)
Lesson 14	Picture of person praying
Lesson 15	Picture of Gaston from Beauty and the Beast
Lesson 16	Cup
Lesson 17	Apron
Lesson 18	Gold rocks
Lesson 19	Small cross





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Lesson 2

Jesus Looks at Us and Knows When We Are Sad

The Widow of Nain, Part 1

Materials:

1. Luke 7:11-17 (refer to the Scripture sheet in the student manual).
2. Flip chart with Scripture written in same colors as in student manual.
3. Chocolate chip cookie.
4. Glass with pitcher of water.
5. Different colored scarves or shawls (enough for each character in the story).
6. Reminder sheet from student manual.
7. Small basket with doll in it. This is the prop.

Chapter 1 in *Love Walked Among Us* and Lesson 1 in *The Person of Jesus*.

Goals:

Love: We will look at people and try to share their sorrow.

Jesus: Jesus looks and shares people's sorrow (that is compassion).

Faith: God looks at us with eyes of love.



Kim's World: Many people affected by disability have led lonely, isolated, and sad lives. Being excluded can be a daily occurrence for folks with disability. Studies show that a high ratio of people affected by disability suffer from depression. Kim (and I) need to know that Jesus moves towards sad people. Jesus looks for sad people. Jesus wants to help sad people.

1. Review the Story

10 Minutes

Summing it up: The way we know about our favorite movie characters is from watching movies and reading books. We learn about Jesus from reading the Bible.

Q. Do you remember what we talked about last week? (Movies, Dorothy.)
Hold up props if necessary to remind students.

Q. How did we learn about these characters? (From TV, DVD's and books.)

Q. How do we learn more about Jesus? (From the Bible.)

2. Experience the Story

15 minutes

Summing it up: We will experience the story through a variety of different means in order to use all the senses.

Prior to reading the passage, tell them that Luke was a doctor.

Point to the words as you read them. If the students are able to read, some of them may have trouble following the words without you pointing them out as you read. This is also a good time to reinforce the students' reading skills.

Read Luke 7:11-17.

Have the students who are comfortable read aloud one verse each until they finish the passage. Adapt for slower readers by assisting them and/or giving them shorter portions to read.

Luke 7:11-17

11 Sometime later, Jesus went to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd went along with him.

12 He approached the town gate. Just then, a dead person was being carried out. He was the only son of his mother. She was a widow. A large crowd from the town was with her.

13 When the Lord saw her, he felt sorry for her. So he said, "Don't cry."

14 Then he went up and touched the coffin. Those carrying it stood still. Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

15 The dead man sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16 The people were all filled with wonder and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."

17 This news about Jesus spread all through Judea and the whole country.

Choose at least two of the next four options to reinforce the primary reading of the passage.

1. Role-play the story.

Use different colored scarves or shawls worn over the head or around the shoulders for costumes.

For example:

Person 1: Jesus

Person 2: Widow

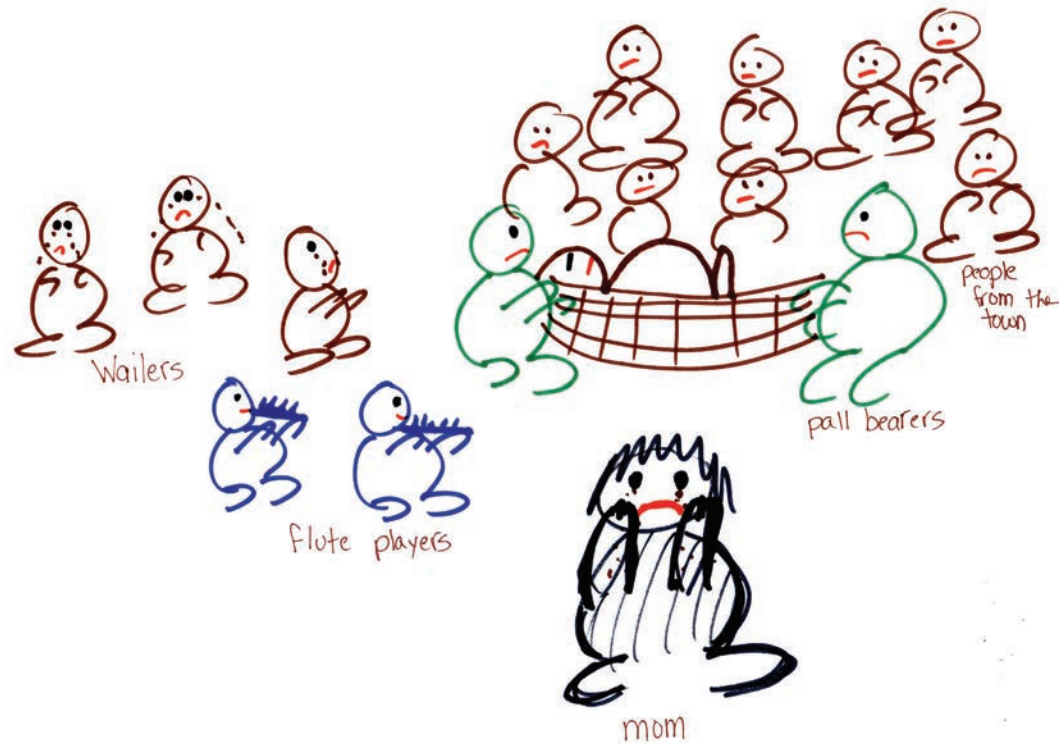
Person 3: Boy

Person 4: Person who “wails”

Person 5: Disciple



2. Draw out the scene as you teach. Below is a completed drawing of the funeral procession.



3. Watch a YouTube video of the widow of Nain [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTpeOcQtXtc>].

4. Use puppets to act out the story. There is a nice series of Bible character puppets from www.thepuppetstore.com/biblical_s/62.htm.



Teaching Note: After you have read the story from Scripture and reinforced it with two of the above options, you will begin to get the students involved in the learning process by asking the interactive questions below:

3. Understand the Story

15 Minutes

Summing it up: We are comparing funerals today with those in Christ's time.

Q. Where are you from? Where do you live? (Answers will vary.)

This story happens in a town called Nain.

Q. What's going on here? (There is a funeral.)

Q. Who's been to a funeral? (I have.)

There is most likely a familiarity with funerals.

Q. Tell me what it was like. (Sad, casket with the body, flowers, music, grave side, crying.)

Divide the flip chart with a vertical line. On the left side write down the title "Funeral in My Town" and put their answers on the left side of the flip chart.

Funeral in Nain

Well, this funeral was different from the ones you went to.

Show them the small wicker basket with the doll in it.

First they didn't put the body in a casket, but in a wicker basket.

Title the right side of the flip chart "Funeral in Nain". Write "wicker basket" underneath the title on the right side of the chart.

Another thing that was different at this funeral was that there were no flowers.

Write on flip chart under "Funeral in Nain".

At the funerals you went to was it quiet or noisy? (Quiet.)

Write that under "Funeral in My Town" side.

Well, at this funeral there was a lot of noise.

Write under "Funeral in Nain" on the right side of the flip chart.

Q. Do you have a job? ("Yes...I walk dogs", "I work at Dairy Queen", "I babysit".)

Back in the time when this funeral happened there were people who had the job to cry really loud at funerals. They called them wailers.

Demonstrate this and then write this on "Funeral in Nain" side.

Q. How did you get to the cemetery? (In a car.)

Write this on "Funeral in My Town" side.



The people in this story walk to the cemetery.

Then write this on “Funeral in Nain” side.



This is what it could have looked like.

Draw the funeral procession. You can use stick figures or just straight lines for the people.



Q. Did the family bury your (mom, grandmother, dad, aunt, etc.) the same day he/she died? (No, we waited almost a week.)

Write their answers on the chart.



Teaching tip: Notice how the question is personalized. It is always beneficial to the students to personalize as much as you can throughout the lesson(s).

The mother in this story buried the boy the same day he died.

Q. Did everybody in your town come to your (family member’s) **funeral?** (No.)
Again, make this question personal to the students.

Everybody in the town of Nain came to the funeral. So there were lots of people at this funeral.

Q. Did you have anyone play the flute on the way to the cemetery? (No, we were in cars.)

There were flute players playing the flute on the way to the cemetery when they were carrying the boy.

Now we are going to see how Jesus loved this woman who had lost her only son.

The three steps of love

Summing it up: This is one of the core truths of this study. Love looks, shares our sorrow, and helps.

Let’s think about the story and see what this teaches us about love.

Step One: Look

Q. Was Jesus by himself? (No.)

Q. What does Jesus do? What is the very first thing Jesus does? (Looks.)
Yes! He is looking at the woman! That is our first step of love: “Look”

Make three steps and put "look" on the first step.



Q. Do you think it was easy to find her? (Answers will vary.)

Step Two: Compassion

Q. If I have a chocolate chip cookie and I asked you if you wanted me to share it with you, what would you say? (Yes!)

Get a chocolate chip cookie and share it.

Q. Has anyone had a cold? (Answers will vary.)

It makes you feel bad, doesn't it?

Blow your nose into a Kleenex and ask if anyone wants to share this Kleenex and blow their nose.

Q. Would you want me to share it with you? (No!)

Q. Tell me why you don't want to share my Kleenex. (I don't want to get sick.)

Q. How about if I were really sad and I asked you if you wanted some of my sadness, what would you say? (Answers may vary.)

Some students may have a keen sense of compassion and would love to comfort you in your sadness. If you get that answer, affirm them with telling them that is how Jesus loves. If some say No, ask the next question.)

Q. Why? (Because I don't want to be sad.)



Gospel Connection: Well, Jesus wants to share our sadness. He wants to be sad when we are sad. The word the Bible uses for sharing sadness is compassion. Look at verse 13. His heart overflowed with compassion. That is why Jesus died for us!



Write “Sharing sadness” on the second step.

Q. What does it mean to overflow? (To fall out of the top.)
Get a glass and fill it up with water till it overflows.

Yes, the water goes over the top of the glass. Well, Jesus’ heart is like a glass and in it he put the woman’s sadness until his heart overflowed with her sadness.

Q. Is it hard to be with people who are sad? (Yes, because I don’t want to be sad.)
Jesus knows when we are sad. He never leaves us. Jesus cares.



4. What about me?

10 Minutes

Summing it up: Seeing how Jesus loves us with the first two steps of the three steps of love.

Q. Do you know Jesus looks at you? (Yes.)
He looks at you all day, every day. **How does that make you feel?** (Happy.)



Gospel Connection: God loves you by looking at you, by thinking about you.

Q. Well, is it hard for you to stop and look at people? (Sometimes.)
It is hard for me because I am usually in a rush.



Q. Name one or two people in the class, **do you like to look at people?** (No.)
Jill’s Personal Teaching Tip: Kim (and others who struggle with autism) especially have trouble looking at people.

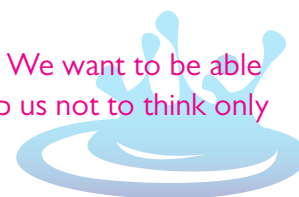
Q. Why? (I don’t know what to say.)
It is very hard for people with autism to look at people and communication is difficult for them.

Q. Is it hard for you to think about other people? (Yes.)

Q. Is it easier to think about yourself or others? (Myself.)
We need to think about others. We start by looking at them. If we see that they are sad we want to find out why they are sad and share that feeling with them.

5. Close in prayer

Jesus, we want to be like you. We want to look at people like you did. We want to be able to be sad with them like you were with the widow of Nain. Please help us not to think only about ourselves, but care about other people like you did.





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