

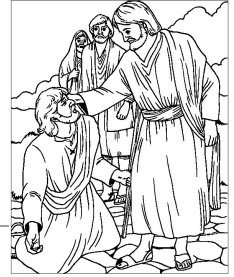
## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

### Readings & Background

Gospel Reading *John 9:1-41*

(shorter form: *John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38*)

Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man.



### This Sunday's Readings

**First Reading** *1 Samuel 16:1b,6-7,10-13a* Samuel is sent to anoint David as king.

**Responsorial Psalm** *Psalms 23:1-6* The Lord is our shepherd.

**Second Reading** *Ephesians 5:8-14* The Ephesians are told to live as children of light.

**Gospel Reading** *John 9:1-41* (shorter form: *John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38*)

Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man.

### Background on the Gospel Reading

As we did last week, we are reading today from the **Gospel of John**.

In today's Gospel, the **healing of the man born blind** invites us to focus on **the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light**.

In the first part of today's Gospel, we hear Jesus' response to a **prevalent belief of his time: that misfortune and disability were the result of sin**. That belief is why Jesus is asked the question of whose sin caused the man's blindness—his own or his parents'. Jesus does not answer directly, but instead gives the question an entirely different dimension—**through this man's disability, God's power will be made manifest**. **Jesus then heals the man**.

The healing is controversial because **Jesus heals on the Sabbath**. The Pharisees, the religious authorities of Jesus' time, understood that the **Law of Moses forbade work (including healing) on the Sabbath**. They also have trouble believing that Jesus performed a miracle. To determine **whether the man was really born blind**, the Pharisees question him and his parents. The man challenges the leaders of the synagogue about their assessment of the good that Jesus has done. In turn, they **expel the man for questioning their judgment**.

The final revelation and **moment of enlightenment** comes **when the man born blind encounters Jesus again**. Having heard the news of his expulsion, **Jesus** seeks out the man born blind and **reveals himself to him as the Son of Man**. In this moment, the man born blind shows himself to **be a man of faith and worships Jesus**. Jesus replies by identifying the irony of the experience of many who encounter Jesus: **Those who are blind will now see, and those who think they now see will be found to be blind.**

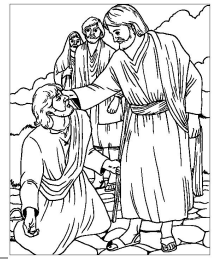
As in last week's Gospel about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, today's reading has many allusions to **Baptism**. The **washing of the man in the pool** of Siloam is a prototype for Christian Baptism. Through the man's encounter with Jesus, the man born blind is healed, his sight is restored, and his conversion to discipleship begins. **The man born blind gradually comes to a greater understanding about who Jesus is** and what it means to be his disciple, while the Pharisees (those who should see) are the ones who remain blind.

## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

### Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading *John 9:1-41*

Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man.



Jesus smears mud on the eyes of a blind man and enables him to see. When people question the man, he tells them what happened. Then Jesus reveals that he is God, and the man worships him.

#### Materials Needed

- Index card prepared as instructed in step 1
- Red cellophane (the size of an index card)
- A pair of eyeglasses
- Magnifying glass
- Dried mud

#### 1. Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

2. Before class write *I believe* in blue ink on an index card. Then write any other words in red ink to cover up the blue letters. If necessary, in order to block out *I believe*, write another set of red letters over them. Put the card aside.
3. Show the children a pair of glasses, a magnifying glass, and some dried mud.

***How do you think these things are the same?***

After hearing the children's ideas, tell them that those things have been known to make people see better.

#### 4. ***We know how glasses and a magnifying glass work—but, mud?***

***Well, in the Gospel this week, Jesus used mud to bring eyesight to a man who had been blind since he was born.***

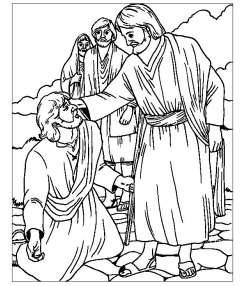
5. Read aloud today's Gospel in its shorter form, John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38.
6. ***How did Jesus use mud to help the man to see?*** (He smeared mud on the man's eyes and then told him to wash it off.)
7. ***When the man did as Jesus said, he could see all the things around him that he had never seen before. But, the most important thing he could see was that Jesus is God, because only God could perform such a miracle.***
8. ***Do you remember what the man said to Jesus?*** Even if the children remember, show them the index card. Ask for a volunteer to hold the red cellophane over the card and to tell the class what is written on the card. If the children cannot read yet, have the volunteer tell the letters he or she sees so you can read them to the class and explain what they spell.
9. ***Sometimes even if we have good eyesight, we can't see well. When things don't go our way, for instance, we may not see that God still loves us. [Show index card.] Sometimes life gets jumbled up, and we need God's help to figure it out. But when we have faith in Jesus, he will help us see God's love.***
10. Pray together that ***we will have eyes of faith to see Jesus and his love for us.***
11. Pray together today's psalm, Psalm 23, or pray the Lord's Prayer.

## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

### Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

#### Gospel Reading John 9:1-41

Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man.



The story of the healing of the man born blind invites us to consider the importance of sight, both physical and spiritual. The blind man is given physical sight, but he is also granted spiritual insight about the person of Jesus. Through Baptism, we are called to walk as children of the light, to live in full knowledge of who Jesus is for us.

#### Materials Needed

- None

#### Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask the children to **close their eyes** for a few minutes. Invite them to notice how their experience of the room changes when they can't see their surroundings. Invite volunteers to describe the experience. Say: ***Now imagine that you have never experienced sight. What if you have never experienced light or colors so that you can't recreate an experience with them in your mind?*** Invite a sample of responses.
2. ***Today's Gospel tells the story of how Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. As we listen to this Gospel, imagine what life might have been like for this man. Think about how much he must have appreciated the gift that Jesus gave him.***
3. Invite one volunteer or several volunteers to read today's Gospel in its shorter form, John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38.
4. ***What did people think about the healing?*** (Some could not believe it. Others wanted to know where Jesus was. Some thought Jesus was a sinner.) ***What did Jesus say to the man born blind when he meets him again?*** (Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man, the Messiah.)
5. ***It was truly a great gift when Jesus healed the man's blindness, but it was an even greater gift when Jesus revealed himself as the Son of Man, the Messiah. And the man received that second gift as willingly as he accepted the first one. He became a believer and worshiped Jesus.***
6. ***In Baptism, Jesus reveals himself to us, and we're called to be like the man in today's Gospel, accepting the gift from Jesus so that we may truly see Jesus as our Lord and worship him.***
7. Conclude in prayer by praying an Act of Faith or the Lord's Prayer.

#### Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

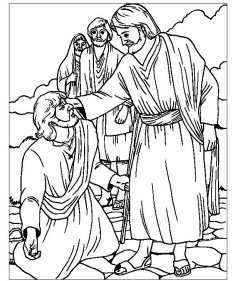
Amen.

## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A Making the Connection (Grades 7 and 8)

**Gospel Reading** John 9:1-41

Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals

himself to him as the Son of Man



Young people today are bombarded with so much stimulation that it is easy for them to miss what is right in front of their eyes. This Sunday's Gospel reminds us that Jesus helps us see what is truly important in life.

**Materials Needed** - None

1. **Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**
2. Invite the young people to close their eyes. Have volunteers attempt to describe from memory what color shirt/top you and others around them are wearing.
3. Then invite them to describe details of other obvious things in the room such as what is written on the board, the color of the walls, or the number of light fixtures on the ceiling.
4. When you are finished, invite them to open their eyes. Point out that even when our eyes are open, there are some things that we do not see or are "blind" to.
5. Explain that in this Sunday's Gospel, we hear about how Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man and told the Pharisees, who could see, that they were blind.
6. Invite one volunteer or several volunteers to read today's Gospel in its shorter form, John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38.
7. *What did people think about the healing? (Some could not believe it. Others wanted to know where Jesus was. Some thought Jesus was a sinner.)*  
*What did Jesus say to the man born blind when he meets him again? (Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man, the Messiah.)*
8. ***It was truly a great gift when Jesus healed the man's blindness, but it was an even greater gift when Jesus revealed himself as the Son of Man, the Messiah. And the man received that second gift as willingly as he accepted the first one. He became a believer and worshiped Jesus.***
9. ***In Baptism, Jesus reveals himself to us. We are called to be like the man in this Sunday's Gospel, accepting the gift from Jesus so that we may truly see Jesus as our Lord and worship him.***
10. Conclude in prayer by praying an Act of Faith or the Lord's Prayer.

### **Act of Faith**

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Amen.

## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A Making the Connection Family

**Gospel Reading** *John 9:1-41*  
Jesus heals the man born blind and reveals  
himself to him as the Son of Man



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### Family Connection

When infants are baptized, parents, with the help of the godparents, assume responsibility for raising the child as a follower of Jesus.

The process of maturation in the faith is much like the example found in the story of the man born blind. The man is cured of his blindness, a symbol of his sin.

Each time he meets someone after the healing, the man comes to a deeper awareness of who Jesus is.

In a similar way, we who are baptized continue to mature in faith as our relationship with and knowledge about Jesus grows.

Invite each member of your family to draw a timeline of his or her life. On the timelines, ask family members to identify significant moments in their lives, especially their life of faith.

Invite each person to reflect upon who Jesus was to him or her at each significant moment.

How has each person's relationship with Jesus changed or matured?

Then read together today's Gospel, John 9:1-41.

Note how the relationship between ***Jesus and the man born blind changes*** and grows throughout the Gospel.

Pray together that your relationship with Jesus will continue to grow and develop, becoming ever deeper.

Conclude by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

## **RESPONSORIAL PSALM PS 23: 1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6**

**R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;  
beside restful waters he leads me;  
he refreshes my soul.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

He guides me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley  
I fear no evil; for you are at my side  
With your rod and your staff  
that give me courage.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

You spread the table before me  
in the sight of my foes;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

Only goodness and kindness follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
for years to come.

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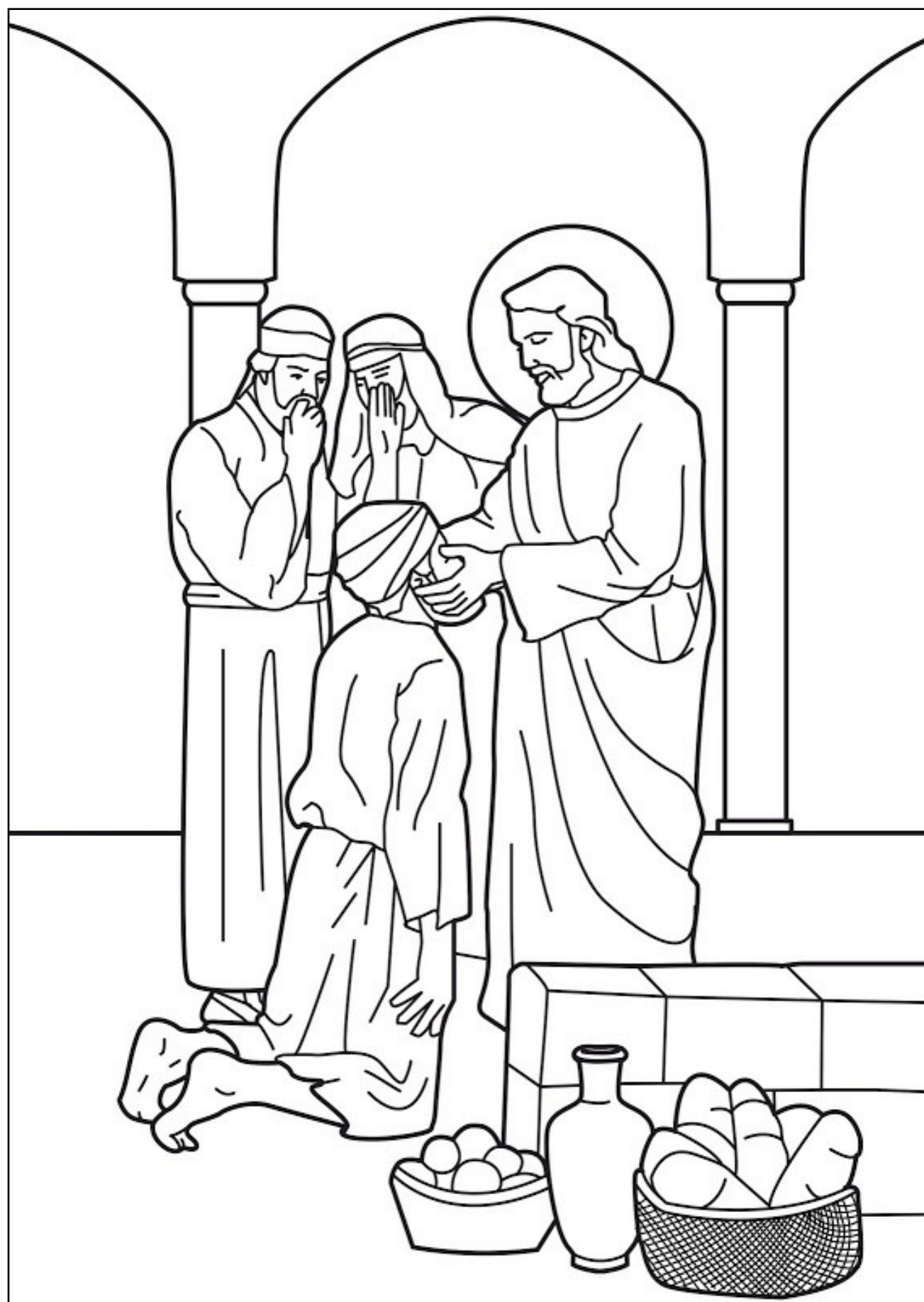
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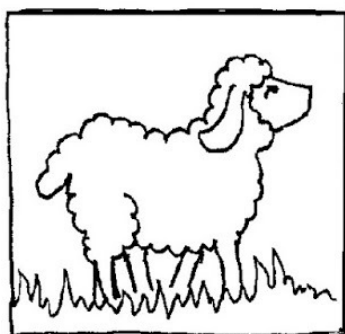
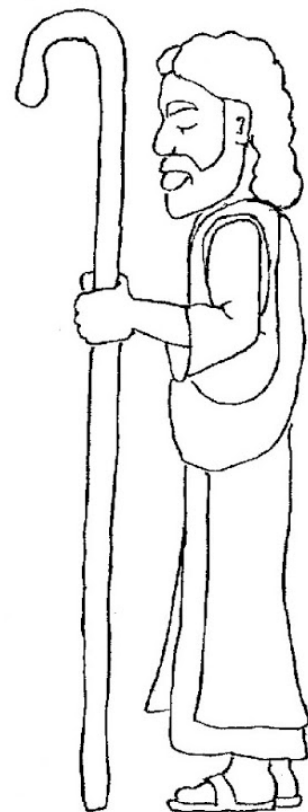








The Lord  
is my  
shepherd;  
I shall not  
want.



Psalm 23:1

