

No borders

Mark 7.24-37

Where Jesus travels to an area that most Jews would avoid and heals a Gentile woman's daughter (most respectable Jewish men wouldn't even speak to a Gentile woman). He then goes on to heal a deaf man, in an unusual way. He tries to keep a low profile but everyone is talking about him.

Now read **Mark 7.24-37** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus knew that his mission, first and foremost, was to the Jews; yet he was inclusive. He made time for this Gentile woman who was outside of the group of people he should normally associate with. The fact that he was travelling in this area at all, and speaking to a Gentile woman, would have been radical. Later, both Jesus and the man born deaf crossed the borders of what was socially acceptable, in order for the man to be healed (would you let someone spit on you and touch your tongue?!). Are we willing to step out of what is familiar and away from people we are comfortable with, in order to include everyone and follow God's prompting?



Ask yourself:
What would the world look like with no borders dividing languages, nations and cultures?



As you go back to school, college or work this week, pray each evening that God will help you to notice the outsiders – the people on the edge. Then, each day, make a conscious effort to include them, even if it's just to smile at them.



Aramaic يسوع



Arabic Ciise

Somali Iesu

Italian Yeshua

Welsh Gesù

Match the language to the different words for Jesus. Jesus crosses every language, nation and culture.

FIND A CONNECTION

Got anything in common with Einstein or a gold-medal-winning athlete? Well, maybe you have! Choose a celebrity – someone you feel is not like you at all. Look on the internet to find three things you have in common with that person. It's easy to have preconceived ideas about people but, when we really get to know others, we often discover that they're not what we expect or that we have more in common than we realise.

WATCH



Jesus was a Jew and, in those days, Jews and Gentiles didn't mix. But Jesus travelled to where this Gentile woman lived, spoke to her and was willing to help her. Watch the first few minutes of the Zootopia clip at www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jknyqafCVM in which all animals live together in harmony. Do you treat all people equally – even the people who aren't like you? What can we learn from spending time with people who aren't like us?



Play dominoes – either in a group or on your own. But instead of the same numbers having to touch each other, the aim is for different numbers to connect – no two numbers that are the same can touch. Can you use the whole pack?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus travelled to a place called Tyre. When he arrived, he went to stay at a house, hoping that nobody had spotted him. But a Greek woman who heard that Jesus was there came in and knelt down in front of him. ‘My daughter is very ill. Please will you make her better?’ she pleaded.

Jesus was surprised, as this woman was a foreigner and a Gentile. He asked her to wait. ‘Please, Jesus, I know you can heal her,’ she begged. And then Jesus knew that she really believed in him. ‘Go,’ he said. ‘Your daughter has been healed.’

The woman returned home and there she found her daughter, lying on the bed, completely well.

After this, Jesus continued on his journey to Sidon, near the Sea of Galilee. While Jesus was there, a deaf man was brought to him. The man couldn’t hear or speak properly and his friends begged Jesus to heal him. Jesus took the man away from the crowd. He put his fingers into the man’s ears, then spat on his

fingers and placed them on the man’s tongue! Looking up to heaven, Jesus sighed and said, ‘Ephphatha,’ which means ‘Be opened.’ Immediately, the man could hear and speak properly. The people were so excited that they wanted to tell everyone what Jesus had done. But Jesus ordered them to tell no one. Yet, the more he asked the people to keep quiet, the more excited they became, and the more people they told.



Mark 7.24-37

Did you know?

- The woman was a Gentile: someone who is not a Jew.
- One of the reasons Jesus might have wanted to keep this healing hidden could be he knew that, for the fulfilment of prophecy, he needed to be tried and crucified in Jerusalem at the right time and not here in a foreign land.

Mark 7.24-37 (NRSV)

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, ‘‘Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.’’ But she answered him, ‘‘Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.’’ Then he said to her, ‘‘For saying that, you may go – the demon has left your daughter.’’ So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘‘Ephphatha,’’ that is, ‘‘Be opened.’’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’’