

HEALING THE HORDES

Jesus the miracle maker

Fame!

It's Sabbath in Capernaum and here's Jesus, heading straight for the synagogue. **BAM!** He's up at the front, teaching people about God. 'WOW!' People are astonished. 'This guy **REALLY** knows what he's talking about!' they say.

BOOM! Here's a man who's been hijacked by an evil spirit. The demon takes one look at Jesus and yells, 'HEY! JESUS OF NAZARETH! Are you here to destroy me? I know you: you're **THE HOLY ONE OF GOD!**'

Jesus snaps back, 'Shut up! Now **BE GONE!**' And with a jerk and a judder and a terrible scream, the evil spirit evaporates. **WOOMF!** The man he leaves behind falls at Jesus' feet, completely cured.

‘**WOAH!**’ People are amazed. ‘Who **IS** this guy?’ they say. ‘He talks about heaven as if he knows the place, and he totally tells off evil spirits!’ Immediately everyone in Galilee knows about Jesus. **POW!** He’s **FAMOUS!**

Spreading the word

That was only the beginning. Jesus went straight from the synagogue to Simon Peter’s house, and the minute he walked in the door, Simon said, ‘She’s so ill, we don’t know what to do!’ He led Jesus to his mother-in-law’s bedside. The poor woman was pale and sweating. Her skin was burning hot, but she was shivering under her damp sheet. You know how bad you feel when you’ve got a temperature? She felt much, much, **MUCH** worse. Her eyes barely focused on Jesus as he came closer. Then he took her hand, helped her to sit up and **WHOOOSH!** Her fever disappeared like steam. She sprang out of bed feeling better than ever, and straight away began to look after her gobsmacked guests.

Jesus' friends told the neighbours what had happened, and they told everyone else. By sunset the little house was surrounded and the rest of the city was empty – **EVERYONE** had come to be cured by Jesus. Broken legs, bleeding heads, boils and blisters; leprosy, lurgy and lice; fever and fits: people with every kind of ailment and all sorts of sicknesses beat a path to Simon Peter's door to see this miraculous healer. When Jesus came out of the little house, the crowd cheered, 'YAAAAAAAAAY!'



Then everyone started shouting at once, '**HELP ME!
MAKE ME BETTER! CURE ME! ME!
ME!**'

Jesus rolled up his sleeves and set to work. He touched the blistered, bleeding, broken bodies around him and cured people left, right and centre. He threw out demons like unwelcome guests. The demons knew who he was and tried to shout about it, but Jesus told them to shut up. The demons did as they were told before disappearing for ever: **POOOOF!**

Very early the next morning, before anyone was awake, Jesus tiptoed out into the dark and left the city. When he was all alone on a quiet, empty hilltop, he began to pray . . .

Meanwhile, back at Simon Peter's house: 'Where's Jesus? Where's he gone?' Jesus' friends searched high and low for him. They hunted for him in the city's backstreets, and a crowd began to follow them, calling, 'Has anyone seen Jesus?' Jesus' friends ran faster and dodged into the desert hills. They found him sitting quietly under the dawn sky.

‘**THERE** you are!’ gasped Simon Peter.
‘**EVERYONE’S** looking for you!’

Jesus smiled at his breathless friends. ‘It’s time for us to head to the next town so I can carry on sharing the good news – after all, that’s what I’m here for. Come on, you lot!’

Friends, fans and followers

Jesus’ tour of Galilee was a huge success: **BAM!** Terrific teaching in every synagogue. ‘**WOW!**’ Impressed people everywhere. **WHOOOSH!** Whole crowds cured of dreadful diseases. **POOOOF!** Demons destroyed, but not before they recognised Jesus: ‘**YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD!**’ they screamed. ‘**SSSHH!**’ said Jesus, but he was becoming more famous than ever. Not only did everyone in Galilee know him, but so did people in seaside towns and distant deserts, and even in far-off Jerusalem.

Everywhere Jesus went, his disciples went with him. Do you remember his dream team (or dodgy dozen)? There was Simon Peter the fisherman (Jesus called him

Peter) and his brother, Andrew; James and John, nicknamed 'the Thunder Boys' because of their stormy tempers; Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, who used to be an unpopular tax collector; Thaddeus, another James, fierce Simon 'the Zealot' and Judas Iscariot (keep your eye on him...). This was Jesus' special squad of disciples, and he put them in charge of spreading God's good news and destroying demons.

Meanwhile, the massive mob that followed Jesus and his disciples grew bigger with every miracle.

This story shows Jesus in action, doing the work God sent him to do. He and his followers kept on the move, walking from town to town where Jesus preached, healed people and taught them about God.

You can read about Jesus healing the hordes in Mark 1:21-39 and Mark 3:7-20.