

Welcome to Sanctuary

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Luke 18:35-43

This evening's worship is a reflection on the story above - on Bartimaeus' persistence and his faith, and on Jesus willingness to meet with him.

Opening reading - With You
(from Visions - <http://www.visions-york.org/words/withyou.html>)

Blind leading the blind

Before we listen to the scriptures, we are going to experience in a very small way what it is like to be without sight. We will ask you to put on a blindfold and allow a sighted person to lead you around the room for a few moments. When you have had enough, sit down and leaving your blindfold in place, listen to the story of Jesus healing the blind man.

Reading Luke 18:35-43

Take off your blindfolds and enjoy the feeling of regaining your sight!

Jigsaw Jesus

On the table you will see some wooden blocks. Select one which appeals to you and hold it in your hand as we move into the iturgy.

Obstacles

There are things which stop us from coming to you, Jesus
Guilt, fear, shame, uncertainty
or simply being too busy

Just as the blind man heard Jesus passing by
and called out 'Have mercy on me!'
Lord, help us to reach out to you

Sometimes people stand in our way
and we can't see you, Jesus
Do we keep pressing through the crowd?
Or turn away, disheartened?

Just as the blind man heard Jesus passing by
and called out 'Have mercy on me!'
Lord, help us to reach out to you

Sometimes when you speak to us, Jesus
we don't recognise your voice
amongst the noise and bustle
of our chaotic lives

Just as the blind man heard Jesus passing by

and called out 'Have mercy on me!'
Lord, help us to reach out to you

As we reflect on those things that prevent us from calling out to Jesus 'Have mercy on me!', we invite you to write or draw on your blocks something which represents those obstacles which stand between you and God.

When you are ready, bring your block to the table. If you turn it over you will see part of an image on one side. Join with the group in assembling these blocks to form a picture - an icon of Christ.

Recognising Jesus

Lord, as we look at the image of your face,
pieced together from the mess of our lives

Help us to recognise you

In the faces of strangers
in the beauty of your world

Help us to recognise you

In our homes, our schools, our workplaces
In our busy daily lives

Help us to recognise you

In the strangest of places,
wherever we encounter love

Help us to recognise you

The blind man heard Jesus passing by
and recognised immediately who he was. He knew what
he needed to ask Jesus.

What do we need to ask Jesus for?

For a moment, talk quietly to Jesus

Ask him to open your eyes

to see what it is you need to ask him for

Take back your block, and write or draw on it something you want to ask Jesus for. Look again at what you wrote earlier. What do you think God is saying to you?

Closing Prayer

Lord, open our eyes
to see as you see
the needs of our hearts
that only you can supply
the needs of our world
which only you can heal.

Amen

Feel free to take home your blocks as a reminder of the conversation you had with Jesus tonight.