



TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL SESSION 6

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 6 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 6
- his or her own Bible, pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least three colors per student)
- one 3-by-5-inch card for each student with “blind spot” items drawn on them (See Open.)
- optional: a few yardsticks
- marshmallows
- one pair of cheap plastic sunglasses with colored frames (so that marking on them in black will show up) for each student
- Black Sharpie markers
- optional: bucket (or bowl) of water labeled *SILAM*

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 6

As students experience this session, they will—

- see what can happen when the work of God is displayed in a person.
- examine their personal “blind spots.”
- be challenged to let the work of God be revealed in them by allowing Jesus to heal their spiritual “blind spots.”

PRAYER

After your students have gathered, spend some time silently praying. Give your students a chance to forget about their busy schedules and practice listening for God’s gentle voice. Then ask any volunteers to pray specifically for the group session—that students’ hearts will be open to the work God wants to do in their lives.

OPEN

Blind Spots

Make a 3-by-5-inch card for each student using the following diagram. Make sure the cross is on the right of the dot.



Have your students hold the card at eye level, about an arm's length away. Tell them—

Close your right eye and look directly at the cross with your left eye. You should also see the dot. Focus on the cross, but be aware of the dot as you slowly bring the card toward your face, keeping the card at eye level. (You may place a yardstick to the side of your nose to help you keep the card level).

The dot will disappear and then reappear as they bring the cards toward their faces.

Now close your left eye and look directly at the dot with your right eye. This time the cross will disappear and reappear as you bring the card slowly toward your face.

What just happened?

The optic nerve carries messages from your eye to your brain. This bundle of nerve fibers passes through one spot on the light-sensitive lining, or retina, of your eye. In this spot, your eye's retina has no light receptors. When you hold the card so that the light from the dot falls on this spot, you can't see the dot. This is known as your blind spot.




Jesus performed many different types of miracles (such as feeding the 5,000). Which type of miracle would you guess is mentioned most often in Scripture?

After they've made a few guesses, share that giving sight to the blind is the most frequently recorded miracle in the Gospels.

3. Digging In

Here's Mud in Your Eye

Today's session deals with such a miracle, so have students read on their own John 9:1-7 using their Scripture sheets and colored pencils. As they read, have them—

- 1. Mark a cross  over every mention of Jesus.**
- 2. Use another color to draw a pair of glasses  over every mention of the blind man.**
- 3. Use a third color to draw an ichthus  over every mention of the disciples.**

When most have finished, prompt a discussion with these questions:

Look back at verse 3. Why was the man born blind?

He was born blind so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

What do you think “the work of God” means?

As they study this chapter, an accurate understanding will emerge. For now, let the students brainstorm without giving them an answer. Possible answers include—

- a sign for others to believe, like a miracle (This would follow John's theme.)*
- a sign connecting Jesus to the Father, as in John 8*
- something for the personal benefit of the blind man, such as salvation*
- a way for God to receive glory for the healing*

4. Digging Deeper

The Man Formerly Known as Blind

Share with your group that this wasn't an open-and-shut miracle. In fact, it caused a lot of trouble and laid the groundwork for quite a chain of events. Have your group read John 9:8-38 as a play. The script is printed on the student journal page (and below for your reference).

Parts needed:

-Narrator (John)

-Neighbors and Others (This could be the same group of students.)

-Blind man

-“Some” Pharisees

-“Other” Pharisees

-Jews

-Parents (A guy and a girl would be good.)

-Jesus

John 9 (Adapted for Reading in Parts)

Narrator: The blind man's neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked,

Neighbors: "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

Narrator: Some claimed that he was. Others said,

Others: "No, he only looks like him."

Narrator: But he himself insisted,

Blind man: "I am the man."

Others: "How then were your eyes opened?"

Blind man: "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

Others: "Where is this man?"

Blind man: "I don't know."

Narrator: They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him,

Pharisees: "How did you receive your sight?"

Narrator: The man replied,

Blind man: "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see."

Narrator: Some of the Pharisees said,

Some Pharisees: "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

Narrator: But others asked,

Other Pharisees: "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?"

Narrator: So they were divided. Finally they turned again to the blind man and said,

All Pharisees: "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

Blind man: "He is a prophet."

Narrator: The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. They asked,

Jews: "Is this your son? Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

Parents: "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."

Narrator: His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." A second time they summoned the man who had been blind.

All Pharisees: "Give glory to God! We know this man is a sinner."

Blind man: "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

All Pharisees: "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

Blind man: "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

Narrator: Then they hurled insults at him and said,

All Pharisees: "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

Blind man: "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

Narrator: To this they replied,

All Pharisees: "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!"

Narrator: And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said,

Jesus: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

Blind man: "Who is he, sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Jesus: "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

Narrator: Then the man said,

Blind man: "Lord, I believe,"

Narrator: and he worshiped him.

After the reading, ask—

So, what happened after Jesus healed this guy?

Use this question to establish an overview of the chapter and to allow students to share their initial reactions.

Write the group's responses to the following questions on the whiteboard.

How did things get worse for the blind man before they got better?

-The authorities interrogated him (v. 15, 26).

-His parents were called in, like when your folks get a call from the principal (v. 18).

- His parents feared being kicked out of the synagogue (v. 22).
- The authorities hurled insults at him (v. 28).
- They threw him out (v. 34).

What happened to the blind man in the end as a result of his healing?

- He got to see Jesus (v. 35).
- Jesus personally ministered to him (v. 35).
- He worshiped Jesus (v. 38).
- He believed (v. 38)!

Take another crack at this question: What works of God were seen in this man’s life?

- The miracles of healing and salvation were seen.
- In this scene, the blind man was the one who got the main benefits of his healing; he wasn’t just an “object lesson” to cause others to believe. Because he was born blind, he enjoyed—
 - being healed by Jesus.
 - being ministered to individually by Jesus.
 - getting to see Jesus personally.
 - coming to believe in Jesus as the Son of God.
 - worshipping Jesus while Jesus was right beside him!

Who was the first person to seek out the blind man after he was cast out of the synagogue (kicked out of church)?

Jesus was the first person to see him.

What was Jesus’ first concern?

His first concern was the blind man’s soul.

5. Cross-Checking

Write If You Find Work

Distribute at least three marshmallows to each student and ask a volunteer to read John 6:28-29 aloud. Tell your students to listen for words such as *work* and *believe* as the volunteer reads the passage. (Make sure to read from a version that uses a form of the word *work*, such as the New International Version, Today’s New International Version, the New King James, or the New American Standard.) Each time they hear these words, they should throw one marshmallow at the volunteer reader.

What light do these verses shed on what “the work of God” means?

It has to do with salvation, believing that Jesus is sent from God.

6. Taking It Inward

Shades of Blindness

After you’ve picked up the marshmallows, have your students sit in a circle on the floor, and pass out a pair of cheap sunglasses to each student. Also give a Sharpie marker to every two or three students—they can share. (You can get these online or at a dollar store.) Tell them that just as our eyes have blind spots, there are often areas in our lives that we need to be able to see more clearly. A spiritual blind spot could be the place where you keep getting hit with temptation—or a struggle, a hurt, or a loss that keeps you “blind” to the comfort or encouragement Jesus can give. Use these questions to prompt students to think of specific areas:

Do you lose your temper easily?

Are you struggling with lustful thoughts?

Are you friends with anyone whom you always seem to be fighting with?

Are you constantly fighting with your sibling or a parent?

Has anyone close to you died? How are you recovering from that loss?

Tell your students to hold their glasses in their hands and think for a moment about their blind spots—areas that need healing or that hinder their relationship with Jesus. Allow them time to share their blind spots.

After students have shared, have them use a Sharpie marker to write a word that represents their biggest blind spot on the arm of their glasses.

7. Cross-Checking



The Cure for Darkness: Light

Have your group members hang on to their glasses. Share that you want them to have the same opportunity as the blind man in John 9—to have Jesus himself come to them and heal their blindness, so that the work of God can be displayed in them.

Explain that they'll do the exercise on their journal pages in solitude. Share—

- 1. Find places where you can be alone with God (perhaps a corner of the room, an empty room nearby, or a hallway).**
- 2. You'll need your Bibles, journal pages, Scripture sheets, a pen, and sunglasses.**
- 3. You'll be doing the Cross-Checking exercise on your journal pages.**

8. Wrapping It Up

The Bucket of Siloam

While your group is doing the Cross-Checking exercise, fill a small bucket (or bowl) with water. Label it **SILAM** (pronounced *sigh-LOW-um*), the name of the pool Jesus sent the blind man to wash in. When you call the group back together, have them sit in a circle around the bucket. Tell them to put on their sunglasses. Share that you want them to have an opportunity to fully experience Jesus' healing of their "blind spots." Point out the significance of the "bucket of Siloam."

Ask any volunteers to, one at a time, come to the bucket, take off their sunglasses, and drop them in the "pool of Siloam." As they do, they can share as much or as little as they'd like about the healing they desire.