

# LESSON: THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

Matthew 15:12-28; Mark 7:24-30

Adapted from: [www.ministry-to-children.com](http://www.ministry-to-children.com)

## **\*\*THE FAITH OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN**

Use lesson to teach kids to be humble in their faith and be careful how we judge.

### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

- Bibles
- a small ball or paper wad
- strips of paper with "Faith" written on them

### **LESSON INTRO GAME: Dogs and Leftovers**

Choose one student to be the Master. They turn around with the rest of the students behind them. They then throw a ball or paper wad (their Leftovers) over their head behind them.

The rest of the students are the Dogs who try to catch the Leftovers. The student who catches the ball or picks it up then has to run from the rest of the Dogs to keep their prize.

If they make it in front of the Master, they're safe and become the new Master. If another Dog tags them, they're out of the game, and the Dog who tagged them becomes the new Master.

### **BIBLE LESSON:**

Ask students, Does our country have any enemies? Are there any other countries that we're fighting with?

What about you? Do you have any enemies? Is there anyone at school that you really don't like, or who you fight with a lot?

**\*\*Read Matthew 15:21-22.**

"Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to Him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.'"

What kind of woman was she? (A Canaanite.)

Canaanites were old enemies of the Jewish people. Most Jewish people, like Jesus' disciples, wouldn't have liked this woman because she was a Canaanite.

What did the woman want help with? (She wanted Jesus to heal her daughter, who was demon-possessed.)

Do you think Jesus will help the woman, even though she's a Canaanite?

**\*\*Read Matthew 15:23-24.**

“Jesus did not answer a word. So His disciples came to Him and urged Him, ‘Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.’

“He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.’”

Why didn't Jesus help the woman? (He said He was only sent to help Jewish people. He wasn't supposed to help Canaanites.)

Do you think Jesus should help the woman, anyway? Why or why not?

**\*\*Read Matthew 15:25-26.**

“The woman came and knelt before Him. ‘Lord, help me!’ she said.

“He replied, ‘It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.’”

Why did Jesus call the woman a dog? (Because she was a Canaanite, an enemy of the Jewish people, and didn't deserve to have Jesus help her.)

**\*\*Read Matthew 15:27.**

“‘Yes it is, Lord,’ she said. ‘Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.’”

What did the woman call herself? (A dog.)

The woman was saying that she knew she didn't deserve to have Jesus help her. And the thing we have to remember is that none of us deserve to have Jesus help us, either. God doesn't have to do anything for us.

He doesn't owe us anything. So, we're all like that woman. None of us deserve to have Jesus do anything for us.

**\*\*Read Matthew 15:28.**

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that moment.”

Why did Jesus finally help the woman? (Because she had great faith.)

Jesus helped the woman because she had faith in Him.

She believed in Him. That shows us that anyone can have faith in Jesus, even people who are supposed to be our enemies, like the Canaanite woman was supposed to be Jesus' enemy because Jesus was Jewish. But anyone can believe in Jesus, no matter where they're from or what the rest of the people in their country are like.

And we can believe in Jesus too. We can have great faith, just like the Canaanite woman did.

So let's remember three things today:

1. None of us deserve to have God do anything for us.
2. Anyone can believe in Jesus, no matter who they are.
3. Jesus wants us all to have great faith, like the Canaanite woman did.

If we all have great faith like the Canaanite woman did, then God will be happy with us for believing in Him.

**PRAYER ACTIVITY: Humble Gratitude**

Have kids spread out around the room and pray silently. Direct them to think about all the ways God has helped them, including sending Jesus to take the punishment for their sins.

Then, have them acknowledge to God that they didn't deserve His help.

Finally, have them thank Him for helping them in all the ways they listed even though they didn't deserve it.

Remind students that God and Jesus help us because they love us.

**GAME: Finding Faith**

Before class, hide strips of paper around the room with the word "Faith" written on them. Then, divide students into two or more teams. When you say, "Go!" the team members search the room to find the slips of paper. Once someone finds a slip of paper, they return to their team's starting area and wait for the others to find theirs. The first team to have all their members find a slip of paper and make it to their team's starting area wins.

When the game is finished, remind students that we all need to have faith, just like the Canaanite woman did, if we want Jesus to help us.

**GAME: Dogs and Leftovers**

Play the intro game again and remind students of how the woman was humble when she asked Jesus to help her.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Jesus, thank You for everything that You do for us. Help us to be humble like the Canaanite woman was and help us to remember that anyone can have faith in You, no matter who they are.