

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

After you've completed the five readings in this section, get together with another person or group to talk about the things you've learned. Begin by sharing the insights you gained from your own reflection on the passages. Then use the following questions to help you continue the conversation.

- 1 Reflect on some of the supernatural things you've read about in the actions of Jesus. How would you define a miracle? Do you think miracles still happen today? Have you ever experienced one? Share your experiences.
- 2 Why do people try to explain away the miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible with explanations borrowed from science?
- 3 Can you think of a time in your life when you were overwhelmed by fear? What happened and what helped you cope? Has faith in Jesus ever helped you at such times? How?
- 4 Has Jesus ever miraculously provided for you? What happened?
- 5 Is there anything you've so far encountered in these readings about the life and ministry of Jesus that seems unbelievable to you? If so, what is it and why?
- 6 How would you articulate 'the case for Christ'? If you had to present belief in him in a court of law, what would be the most convincing evidence that he was the Son of God?

MORE MIRACLES OF JESUS

I don't blame people today for being sceptical about healing. I once watched a television documentary on a well-known faith healer. The cameras rolled as people from the audience were helped onto the stage. After the faith healer put his hands on them and dramatically prayed, people threw away crutches, got up out of wheelchairs or reported instant recovery from disease... all to great applause. But when the documentary-makers followed up months later, they had trouble finding anyone who was still 'healed'.

Even so, most people still believe genuine healing is possible. Why? First, because suffering and sickness are so awful; in our desperation we become open to possibilities we would not be willing to consider when everything is just fine. And second, because there are many documented examples of real healing throughout history. Not only that, medical professionals today regularly report unexplained recoveries. And just about everyone knows somebody who has experienced a miraculous healing. We may not understand or agree on the reasons why, but we have to admit one thing: healing happens.

The challenge for us in the next five readings is to examine the healing miracles of Jesus with an open mind. We'll read how Jesus enabled a blind man to see, caused a paralysed man to walk, restored a demon-possessed man, cured a woman with an incurable bleeding problem and brought two dead people back to life. These accounts are some of the most exciting and inspiring parts of Jesus' entire ministry.

They also give us a deeper understanding of the **Essential JESUS**. The most basic thing we learn is that Jesus had *compassion* for people; he wasn't too busy or important to help people overcome their problems. Next, the healing miracles of Jesus demonstrate his *power* and *authority*, not just over sickness, but also over sin. Finally, the healings provide us with more evidence of his *divinity*. Jesus was who he said he was, the Son of God.

That's a lot to absorb. So let's read through the healings one by one. As you do, try to imagine that you are there. Perhaps you could be the person receiving the healing, or one of the disciples, or even a person in the crowd. What would you have felt and said and done? Try to step into the story so you can experience the healing ministry of Jesus for yourself.
