

Mission: Forgiveness

A Discovery Mountain Interactive Faith Exercise



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Jean Boonstra



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Introduction

There is nowhere in the world like Discovery Mountain. Mr. Simon founded the small town in 1968 when he landed his plane, Blue Birdie, in the picturesque mountain valley. Mr. Simon believes that God sends just the right people to Discovery Mountain—and it's true! One day Jacob P. Donovan—better known as Jake—thought that he was running away from God. Instead, God sent Jake to Discovery Mountain, and he became a chaplain and Bible teacher.

God sent Jamey to Discovery Mountain too! She's Mr. Simon's granddaughter. Jamey and Kayla will help you with your mission—listen to their advice. God sent Harold Peabody to town, too, when his dad became the church pastor. God called Logan Lewis away to the mission field and then sent him right back to Discovery Mountain.

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God sent Lana, Gracie, Judah, Miss Michelle, Natasha, and, well, you get the idea. God sends just the right people to this special small town. You're on your way there, you'll see what I mean!

—Ms. Jean

PS Listeners visit Discovery Mountain each week through the podcast program *Discovery Mountain*. If you've never listened to the program start with the introductory mini adventure found at DiscoveryMountain.com/welcome and meet the characters who will help (or hinder) you on your mission.

Preface

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to visit Discovery Mountain? Could you exercise your faith if you were put to the test? Would you make the right choices if you were challenged?

If you're ready to apply your faith, I challenge you to turn the page. Inside you'll find your first Discovery Mountain faith exercise. It begins in Chaplain Jake's Bible classroom. Where will it end? That's up to you! With the help of your favorite characters, you choose what happens next. Will you follow their advice (warning—they might not always be right) and find forgiveness? Or will you choose a different path? What will the consequences be? Will you leave with your faith strengthened? Or will you leave Discovery Mountain weaker than when you started?

Remember, you can always turn the pages back

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and make a different choice. If you're ready, turn the page!

—Ms. Jean

PS Warning—keep your eyes open for the plant thief, and you might spot her!

Ring! Ring!

You walk as quietly—and quickly—as you can down the hall. You heard the bell ring, but you couldn't find the classroom. This is your first visit to Discovery Mountain Academy. Maybe Chaplain Jake won't hear you come in late. Carefully, you open the classroom door.

“You're late,” Chaplain Jake says with a questioning tone. The class turns and looks at you, and you feel your cheeks flush red with embarrassment. Pointing to the empty desk in the front row, Chaplain Jake motions you into the classroom. You walk to the front and nervously tuck your legs under the chair.

“Do you belong in this class?” Chaplain Jake asks. He's trying to remember if he's seen you before.

“I’m visiting,” you answer.

Chaplain Jake nods—he accepts your presence.

“We’re reading John five,” he explains to you. You reach into your coat pocket. Did you remember to bring your Bible? Your fingers touch the leather cover, and, feeling relieved, you set your Bible and multicolored pen on the desk. Quickly, you find the book of John and flip to chapter five.

“Who will read for us?” Chaplain Jake asks the class. You avoid his eyes—you don’t want to draw any more attention to yourself than you already have.

“I’ll read,” a familiar voice says. It’s Harold Peabody. You pinch yourself—this isn’t a dream! You’re really in class with Chaplain Jake and Harold!

Harold reads. “Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water” (John 5:2, 3).

You click your pen to the red color and neatly underline the word “waiting.”

“There are a lot of people waiting by the pool of Bethesda. One has faith. Read verse five, Harold,” Chaplain Jake says.

You turn to peek at Harold. He brushes his hair out of his eyes as he bends over his Bible. “Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years” (John 5:5).

You write “thirty-eight” in red in the margin of your Bible.

“Thirty-eight years? What was his ‘infirmity’?” a voice asks. She’s sitting right across from you. It’s Lana!

“The man had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. But his wait was almost over,” Chaplain Jake answers. “Lana, read the next verse for us.”

Lana squints at her Bible and reads, “When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ ” (John 5:6).

You underline the last part of the verse. *Did the man want to be made well?* you wonder.

“Chaplain Jake,” someone asks. “Did the man want to be made well?” You glance over your shoulder—it’s Logan Lewis. He just asked the very question you were thinking!

“Let’s find out,” Chaplain Jake answers. “Logan, read the next few verses.”

You hear Logan turn the page in his Bible and

begin to read, “The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked” (John 5:7–9).

You underline the words “no man” and Jesus’ words to the man, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” You’ve never read this story before—at least not like this. Jesus healed the paralyzed man! As you think about it, you draw a heart in the margin next to the verse. You don’t want to forget this miracle. You’re so absorbed in your thoughts that you don’t hear Chaplain Jake’s voice.

“What do you think?” Chaplain Jake says again, and you realize he’s asking you the question.

“What do I think?” you stammer. “About which part again?”

Chaplain Jake smiles. “Did the paralyzed man have to do anything to be healed?”

You look at your Bible and the red-underlined words. You’re too nervous to think clearly. “I’m not sure,” you manage to say.

Chaplain Jake scrunches his eyebrows and seems to wonder if you really belong in his classroom.

“He had to believe that Jesus would heal him,” Harold says.

Chaplain Jake turns to Harold. You breathe a sigh of relief. “Yes! He had to believe and stand up in faith,” Chaplain Jake says, leaning over Harold’s desk.

“There’s another verse that I don’t understand,” Harold adds.

“Read it,” Chaplain Jake answers.

“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you’ ” (John 5:14).

You underline the words “worse thing.”

“What would be worse than being paralyzed with no one to help you?” Harold asks.

“Jesus made the man physically well,” Chaplain Jake answers. “He told him to ‘sin no more.’ Not having forgiveness for his sins would be worse.”

“Worse than being paralyzed with no one to help you for thirty-eight years?” Logan asks.

“Yes! Forgiveness of sin means that we will live forever with Jesus. Missing that would be worse than lying at the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years,” Chaplain Jake explains.

You hear the bell ring. Class is over—but you still have unanswered questions. As everyone leaves, you have an idea! You'll write your questions in your notebook—you might have a chance to ask Chaplain Jake about them later.

Standing up, you search your pockets for your notebook. You find it, but it's wedged in a small pocket. It's stuck.

"Welcome to our class," Harold greets you.

You turn to say hello to Harold, still struggling to get your notebook unstuck from your pocket. Suddenly, the notebook comes free, and you feel your arm swing out wildly. Your arm crashes into something—hard.

"*Oof*," you hear Harold say, and horrified, you realize what happened. You just accidentally hit Harold across the throat with your outstretched arm!

Gasping for breath, Harold falls to the floor. "I, I can't breathe," he croaks.

If you choose to run home before anyone realizes what you just did, turn to page 57.

If you choose to find help for Harold, turn to page 17.

You run around the corner. You see an open window at the end of the hall. You run as fast as you can and jump out of the window. Landing in the grass, you stand up and check yourself. You're all right!

"Wait!" you hear Chaplain Jake call from inside the school. You start running again, and you don't turn around.

You finally stop to catch your breath when you reach the river on the edge of town. A car pulls up and stops, so you hide behind a tree. A family exits the car and sets up a picnic lunch on the table by the river. You realize they aren't looking for you, and you relax.

Looking out at the river, you think about the verse that Harold shared with you, Matthew 7:7. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will

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find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

You wish that you could ask God for forgiveness. You want to.

You watch the family enjoy their lunch.

Opening your notebook, you write these words: “God’s forgiveness is free if you *ask* for it.”

Then you add, “I wish that this promise was for me too.”

You button up your coat, walk over to the family, and ask if you can ride with them to the city. They agree, and you climb into the back seat of the car.

You look out the back window as the car pulls away and wonder if you’ll ever be back.

The End

For another chance to exercise your faith,
turn to page 92.

You jump up so quickly that you drop your notebook on the classroom floor. You run into the hallway and look around frantically for anyone you know.

“Kayla, wait up,” you hear a voice say to someone behind you. Turning, you recognize Jamey Simon.

“Jamey,” you say. “Where’s your mom?”

Jamey looks at you quizzically. Your eyes are frantic with worry. Suddenly, Jamey realizes that you don’t just need her mom—you need a doctor.

“My mom’s either at the hospital or she’s at home sleeping,” Jamey answers.

You run down the hallway toward the doors and outside.

“Do you need help?” Jamey calls out after you.

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You don't hear her—you're already on your way to find Dr. Simon.

If you run to the hospital to find Dr. Simon,
turn to page 84.

If you run to Jamey's house to find Dr. Simon,
turn to page 82.

Gracie smiles at you, and you decide to trust her.

“Where are we going?” you ask.

“Hop on back,” she says, handing you a helmet.

You put the helmet on and jump on the back of Gracie’s scooter. She pushes away, and you hold on tight.

You scoot like this all the way to the café. “What smells so delicious?” you ask Gracie.

Gracie shrugs her shoulders. “Let’s find out!” she says.

You follow Gracie through the café and into the kitchen. You both spot what smells so delicious. Gracie hands you one of her mom’s famous trail-mix brownies.

You both nibble on the snacks and wander out to the garden.

“Look!” Gracie yells so loudly that you almost drop the brownie.

Turning, you see her. It’s Peachie! You watch the moose nibble on her snack—all the plants and flowers in the garden.

“See,” Gracie says with a smile. “I knew that you weren’t the plant thief.”

“If you tell everyone, maybe they’ll believe you,” you say.

Gracie frowns. “No,” she says. “You have to tell them. They’ll believe you!”

“Quick,” you say, brushing the brownie crumbs off your hands. “We have to go back to the school!”

“Let’s scoot!” says Gracie.

Turn to page 86.