



JUST A BIT OF MAGIC?

What do you call a magic dog?

A labracadabrador!ⁱ



"I have a magic trick," the just-turned-five-year-old states with a huge smile.

My face shows anticipation and interest, but inside I groan. *Not this again.* We'd been doing Kindergarten online for two months in the spring of 2021. Teaching this age group comes with challenges at the best of times, but this wasn't the best of anything. One parent referred to our time online each day as the Valda & Holly Show. This aptly described the effort my teaching partner and I put in to keep these little ones entertained. We competed with everything else they encountered on that screen outside of the school day, and we wanted to keep them engaged. Let's just say neighbors on the floor of my condo building commented on my showmanship! It was the most exhausting form of teaching. However, I digress, and the magician waits for my attention here.

"Okay, let's see your magic trick, Sarah!" I lean in toward my computer screen so she sees I'm watching.

"Close your eyes and count to ten," the magician says. I bite my tongue. It was cute the first couple of times.

After my obedient counting, which I did in French so there would be some educational value to this exercise, I open my eyes.

"Oh, my goodness, she's gone!" I exclaim. "Where did Sarah go? One minute she was there and the next, she was gone! Wow! She's such a magician!"

Yes, I'm aware that this praise only invited more similar magic tricks, not only from Sarah, but from her attention-seeking classmates as well.

But the trick isn't over yet. A faraway voice calls, "Close your eyes again!" I do.

"Now, open them!"

I do. And there she is, all smiles and pride, the producer of magic.

"Now she's back! What a trick! That was fun, Sarah. Let's see what Matthew is up to at his house, shall we?"

As I said, it was cute the first few times. The 'trick' became so popular, we actually told them we'd like for them to learn some new magic to show us. And some of them stepped up their game, coming to online school a couple of days later with an actual trick, as a result of some parental help with research and some practice. Less motivated magicians put their disappointed energy into something else. (The new trick for them became turning one toy into another—while we closed our eyes! *Groan.*)

A magic trick done well is quite amazing, isn't it? We can't help but try and figure out the magician's secrets. If you've ever watched a magic show on a device with the capability of pausing, rewinding and playing at a slower speed, you might have taken an even closer look at the mind-blowing event to see if you can catch a slight-of-hand or fake panel. The best magicians, however, continue to stump us and leave us in wonder. It's an ethereal feeling, isn't it? It's like peeking into a portal of the supernatural.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to stand in the crowd when Jesus worked His magic? Lame people walked, lepers lost their sores, blind people saw, dead people came to life! "How did He do that?" the audience must have exclaimed. They too would have watched Him closely looking for signs of it being just a trick.

No one watched Him more closely than the religious leaders. They even

accused Him of doing the miracles through the power of Satan! This man was clearly no ordinary magician.

But, unlike most magicians, Jesus revealed His secret. His miracles were done through FAITH. And not just *His* faith, but those people who needed the healing to happen. Often, He said to the healed person, "Your faith has made you whole!"

One particular man in need of healing was Bartimaeus. This man was blind and spent his days begging on the side of the road. When he heard that Jesus was coming his way, he began calling out, not caring who heard him or how he might have looked to others.

While it would seem his biggest problem was that he couldn't see, Bartimaeus didn't call out, "Jesus, heal me! Make me see!" He cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47)

Bartimaeus' FAITH:

He was determined to meet Jesus.

He knew who Jesus was.

He came humbly.

He told Jesus what he wanted when He asked.

Jesus did heal this blind man, stating that his faith had healed him. He was both persistent and energetic in his request.

Let's be persistent and energetic in our prayers too, friend. If we present our needs to Him with faith like Bartimaeus', Jesus will do miracles in our lives too! And Jesus' magic is no trick. His touch will bring lasting healing to our bodies and souls.

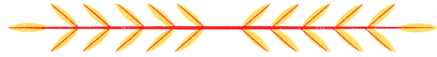
However, He is not to be confused with a genie in a bottle. Sometimes we might ask for things, but the magic doesn't happen. The miracle seems beyond our reach. This is when we need to look at our motives and question the posture of our hearts.

God wants us to come humbly like Bartimaeus. Coming humbly means asking God for His will. Sometimes we aren't asking for the right thing when we put in our request for a miracle. Maybe we need to start by asking for mercy.

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a loyal spirit within me (Psalm 51:10).

Father, I submit to You and Your will in my life. Heal me. Amen.



LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. (Psalm 30:2 NIV)

*"But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds," declares the LORD...
(Jeremiah 30:17 NIV)*

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. (James 5:14-15 NIV)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24 NIV)

What about you?



In which part of your life do you need healing? God knows what you need, but He still wants you to ask Him for His healing touch. Reach out in faith. It doesn't have to be physical—God cares about every facet of your life.

Take some time today to write a prayer, asking God to search your heart; to reveal unrepented sin and ungodly motives. Ask Him for mercy and forgiveness, then tell the Good Doctor where it hurts. Ask and believe for healing, while also giving Him permission to follow through with His will in your life. Let Him be your Healer.

i. <https://www.reddit.com/r/dadjokes>