

# JESUS HEALS THE LEPER

All Activity Sheets

## KEY WORDS

BELIEVE CREATION OLD NEW EXPERIENCE

## BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Mark 1:40-44

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students believe and experience the love of Jesus.

## MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV\*).

## PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

One of the most effective teaching tools in all areas of learning is behavior patterns. Elementary aged children observe behaviors at home, at school and at church, and begin to incorporate them into their own actions and attitudes with ease. They can be positive or negative characteristics, depending on the circumstances.

The story of Jesus healing the leper is a dynamic lesson that will enable our students to understand compassion and care for the less fortunate. No matter how strong the children's lives are in the home and how much Christian instruction they have, they will surely find questionable attitudes towards people in their experiences outside the home. While they are beginning to understand the feelings and problems of other people, this new knowledge can often be "suffocated" by the need for acceptance of their peers. For your students to feel compassion and love for others, they must have role models. This will help them understand that Jesus loves them.

This lesson will show them the truth that Jesus loves people who are rejected, and that his love and care also extend to them. At the same time, the children will learn that they can take their needs and problems to Jesus.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Mark 1:40-44. Jesus was continually in contact with people who had different physical and spiritual needs. None of them was as devastating as leprosy. At that time any skin disease was labeled leprosy. The fact that Jesus touched a man with leprosy is of great importance. The lepers were considered ceremonially unclean, and whoever touched someone in that condition was included in the same category. For this reason, lepers were asked to leave their family and friends and stay at a distance, away from everyone.

Jesus' compassion was much greater than any ritual. While he had respect for the law, he consistently demonstrated that the needs of the people were more important. When observing the man with leprosy, Jesus saw someone in great need and did not worry about violating the religious protocol. When Jesus healed the leper, he did it because he loved him, not because he wanted to win favors in the eyes of public or religious leaders.

It is easy to feel compassion for good or clean people. When our friends are sick or in need, it makes sense to do something to help them. But, what if the person in need stinks, dresses in rags or is clearly different from us? Can we show compassion for that kind of person? Can we show affection for them?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of how easy it is to love those who love us (Matthew 5:43-48). The difficult thing, he said, is to show love for those whom you consider enemies. It is also very difficult to really love those who seem to have no love. Let's look at our own situation. It is not hard to love children in our group who behave well, but with children who refuse to obey, the situation is different. It is easy to hug children who are clean and well dressed, right? It is very difficult to offer the same to those who constantly smell bad or come to sessions with dirty clothes.

In this session, you will have the task of teaching your children about God's love. Through this interesting story, children will learn about Jesus' compassion and love. They will see that he was not afraid to touch someone in a deplorable condition. Jesus was not afraid to touch the leper, even though he could catch the disease.

However, the lesson about compassion begins before you start teaching. It begins the moment the children enter the room. According to the way you treat each of them, they will or will not experience the love and compassion of Jesus through you. As you approach this session, ask God to reflect through you Jesus' love as spoken of in today's story. Show that you are interested in the children regardless of their actions or appearance. Allow them to see a living demonstration of Jesus in their group each week.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Symbol of love

You will need for each child: a square of red paper of 10 cm. x 10 cm., glue, a popsicle stick or stick from ice cream about 20 cm. long, and scissors. Before the session, fold each square in half and with a dotted line draw the shape of a heart.

During the session, ask the children to cut out the heart from each square. The child will then glue the heart to the stick. When they have finished with the craft, ask them: "What does the heart represent?" (Love) Say: "We will use the heart to illustrate today's lesson. You will raise your heart every time you hear something that indicates that Jesus showed his love to someone."

## TEACH THE LESSON

### A leper finds help

"Unclean, unclean!" The sad and sick man shouted these words every day. He was always sitting on the street looking at the happy and healthy people who walked by. The leaders of the city had a law that required that a leper had to shout "unclean" so that nobody would come near and be infected with his illness. The infected person was not allowed to enter buildings or get close to other people. His clothes were often torn and dirty. How difficult it must have been for him to find food! And the sores, all over his body, were painful and ugly. People pointed at him and ran the other way. The man felt very lonely.

Every day, the same thing happened. But one morning, while shouting, "unclean, unclean!" to warn people not to approach, the leper noticed a man he had never seen before. "Is it possible?" he thought with enthusiasm. "Is that the Jesus I've heard about, the one who they say can heal diseases? I'm dying with this terrible leprosy, and maybe this man can help me." Then, the man approached Jesus. On his knees, he begged saying, "If it is your will to cleanse me, you can do it."

Jesus looked at the sick man, who was kneeling before him. He loved him, and at once, he helped him. He extended his hand and touched the man saying, "I want to ... be clean." The man got up healthy! He was not sick anymore! He did not know what to think! His dream had come true! Yes, it was possible! It was no longer a dream. What people said was true. Whoever approached Jesus received healing, forgiveness, mercy and hope.

"Oh, thank you, Jesus!" the man exclaimed, while observing that his arms and legs, which had been covered with sores moments before, were now clean and soft. His skin was new. The man exclaimed with happiness, "I'm so grateful and happy that I must hurry and tell everyone what has just happened to me!" But Jesus told him, "Look, do not tell anyone anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your purification to show that you were healed."

The joyful man answered, "Thank you, thank you, I'll do it immediately. I'm so happy!" Then he disappeared into the crowd, telling people what Jesus had done for him. It was a wonderful day for the man. In the morning, he had awakened sick, leprous and unclean, but that night, he went to bed clean and healthy, understanding also that Jesus loved him, despite his terrible illness.

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Jesus makes the difference

Give the children Student Activity Sheet #215-A and #215-B for this session. Allow the children to look at the two scenes Student Activity Sheet #215-A and read the instructions to them. Let them compare the pictures and talk about the differences between the two scenes.

Be sure that each child understands the concept of before and after Jesus healed the leper. Ask: "In what situation was the man in when he asked Jesus for help?" (He was sick with leprosy). "What did Jesus do?" (He healed him) Say: "Jesus healed him, that's why he became a new man. Our memory verse talks about a new creation. The leper experienced the blessing that Christ brought him." Give the children time to color the picture.

Help the children find the hidden verse in Student Activity Sheet #215-B. Encourage the children to take home their activity sheets to share the lesson with their families and friends.

### What if they were us?

For this activity, prepare cut outs from magazines and newspapers of "different" people: people sick in bed, children and adults in wheelchairs, children with eyeglasses or with guide dogs, anyone who expresses the idea of "different". Hand out a picture to each child and ask: "What do you see in that picture? How would you feel if that were you, sitting in that wheelchair or lying in that bed? Does Jesus love that person? Can Jesus heal that person if he chooses to?" Emphasize the healing power of God. Talk about how sad it must be for those people when we avoid them or make fun of them. Say: "Let's ask the Lord to help us be merciful, to tell those people that Jesus is a God of love and that they are loved by him and for us."

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Repeat the memory verse several times with the group. This memorization activity can be used in the four lessons of this unit. Before the session, write the memory verse on a piece of cardboard or on a blackboard. For example: "Therefore, if \_\_\_\_\_ is in \_\_\_\_\_, the new \_\_\_\_\_ has come; The \_\_\_\_\_ has gone; the \_\_\_\_\_ is here" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Leave blank spaces for the children to complete with the corresponding words, which will be written on pieces of cardboard and hidden in different places in the room. The children should look for the words, run to the blackboard and place them in the correct places, until the memory verse is completed. (These will be noisy times, warn other teachers near your room.) You can make two sets of cardboard with the text to divide into two groups. The competition will be very fun for the children.

Say: "This verse is one of the happiest in the Bible. It means that Jesus loves you very much and that if you ask him, he can change your life. He helps you and can be your Savior. In the same way that he cleansed and healed the leper in our story, Jesus can cleanse you and forgive your sins. Provide time for children to complete the activity page from the students' resources: "Hidden Verse".

## WRAP-UP

### Pray

Gather the children for a time of prayer. Say: "Thank you, God for showing us your love through the story of Jesus healing the

leper. Thanks for loving us. Help us to have more love for others, especially for those who are not loved, for those who are sick and for those who are different from us. Amen.”

**Encourage**

Ask the children to look for opportunities to help and pray for someone in an unfortunate situation.

**Invite**

Tell the children that in the next session they will be able to tell the rest of the group how they felt helping others. Are they helping others join this disciplship group?