

# JESUS CLEANSED TEN LEPERS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 17:11-21



*The forgiveness of our sin is the greatest healing we can receive.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Ten lepers cry out for mercy** – Ten lepers met Jesus on His way to Jerusalem. They called out to the Lord to have pity on them. The whole countryside was stirring with excitement regarding the ministry of Jesus. He had multiplied the fishes and the loaves. He had turned the water into wine. He had healed many people of all kinds of diseases. As Jesus approached their village, these lepers called Jesus by name. They called Him “Master”, the title given to a teacher or rabbi. Little did they know what was about to happen.

**Ten lepers called out to Jesus for mercy but,** Jesus did not immediately heal the lepers. He directed them to show themselves to the priest. Since the priest was the one to verify the healing of a leper, there was hope in Jesus’ order. All the men left to see the priest and were healed on the way. The power of God miraculously healed them. These ten men had lived as outcasts, even from their own families who could not go near them. By the power and grace of God, they could return to their families again.

**Ten lepers were healed** - nine Jews and one Samaritan. Only the Samaritan returned to give thanks to the Lord. Here the Jewish rulers, the Pharisees, asked Jesus (the King of the kingdom) when the kingdom of God would come. They were looking for an earthly kingdom and for their country to be set free from Rome and the surrounding Gentile nations. Jesus told them that the kingdom does not come with their careful observation. It would not be one they could see with their natural eyes. Rather, God’s kingdom is one that is built in the hearts and lives of His people. The presence of God had dwelt with Israel in the temple made of stone. Now God’s presence, His Holy Spirit, would dwell in the hearts of man. Many of the Jews who were more interested in an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem never came to know the King of the kingdom.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Only one leper out of ten returned to give thanks for his healing! Jesus commented about his status as a foreigner, suggesting that the other nine were native-born Jews. This episode foreshadowed that the message of the kingdom would be missed by the Jews, even those who had seen the power of the kingdom.

Though many Jews believed, the Jewish nation as a whole would reject Jesus as the Messiah. But the Gentiles would gladly receive the gospel. Here we see the Samaritan throw himself down at the feet of Jesus. Clearly this man was affected, not just in an outward healing, but within his heart. The others found healing; this man found Jesus. By healing the man's illness, Jesus saved his life. Our lives are also sick with sin and condemned to death. By dying on the cross, Jesus saved our lives and gave us a greater healing, the forgiveness of our sins.

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Zechariah 13:1**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Zechariah tells of a day when a fountain will come from the house of David to cleanse sin and impurity. Hebrews 9:28 tells us that Jesus was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many. Jesus is the only sacrifice that cleanses us from sin.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- Read Psalm 51. What does it mean to cleanse someone from sin? (Psalm 51 gives us the answer: "Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin". To cleanse means to clean away, or remove. Our sin will be washed away by the fountain of Jesus.)
- What did Jesus do to clean away our sin? (Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for sin. He lived a sinless life, which He then gives to us. We receive Jesus' righteousness, and, in exchange, He received our sin and God's wrath for our sin.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

#### WHAT KIND OF LEPERS ARE WE?

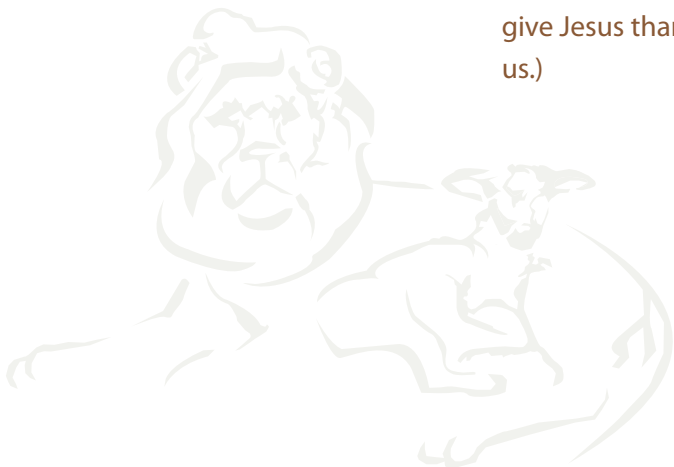
##### Supplies:

white board (to write down the class' answers)

The object of this lesson is to help the class identify with the lepers. Like the lepers, Jesus has healed us of our sin and provided so much for us.

Draw out the class and ask them the following questions:

- How are we like the lepers? (We have sinful hearts that need to be cleansed by Jesus.)
- The lepers were called to go to the priest as a demonstration of their faith. Does God call us to do anything as a demonstration of our faith? (Yes. We must believe the Gospel and be baptized.)
- What is the Gospel? (Draw out a complete answer from your class.)
- What else besides our salvation do we have to be grateful and thankful for from Jesus? (Every breath we take, every possession we own, our family, the Bible, and more. It is a blessing from the Lord.)
- How can we make sure we are not like the ungrateful nine lepers? (We can give Jesus thanks every day for our salvation and everything else that He gives us.)



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### WHO WILL BE THANKFUL?

**Supplies:**

eleven chocolate bars and  
a package of small bite  
size chocolates

The object of this lesson is to help the children identify with the lack of gratefulness of the nine lepers.

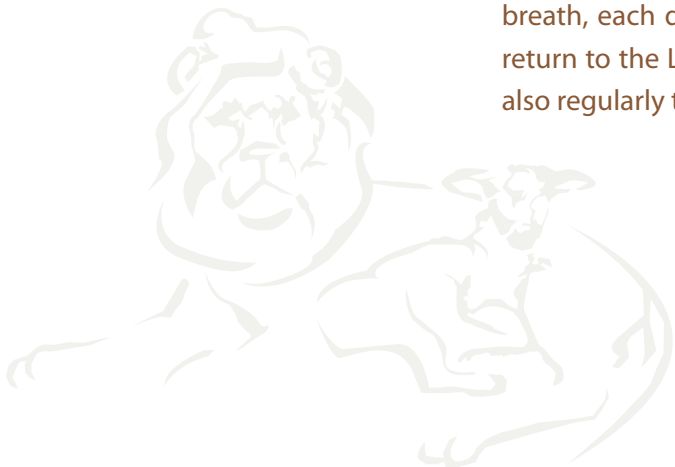
Early in your class pull out ten of the bite-sized chocolates and ask a student if he or she wants one. Toss it to them from a distance. This should set off a cascade of requests. Toss out the remaining nine. You and your helpers should listen carefully to see if anyone says thank you. (Hopefully, at least one of the children will.)

Ask one of the children to pray to open up the class. Then go on to read the story of the ten lepers.

Go back to those who said thank you and give them one of the large chocolate bars.

Then ask the following questions:

- If I did the exercise all over again, how many would say thank you now? (Everyone would say thank you because they now know they would get a large chocolate bar)
- So, what was better - the first blessing (little chocolate) or the chocolate bar? (the larger chocolate bar.)
- What was better for the lepers, their physical healing from leprosy, or knowing Jesus? (The answer, of course, is knowing Jesus. The leper who returned is the only one who is commended for his faith.)
- If the other lepers knew who Jesus really was, just like you realizing the chocolate bar was better, what should they all have done? (They should have returned.)
- We know who Jesus is. How should that affect the way we live? (Each breath, each day, is another gift and a reason to praise the Lord. We should return to the Lord in our devotions and give Him praise each day. We should also regularly thank the Lord for the Gospel.)



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### TELL THE STORY AS A LEPER

**Supplies:**

burlap cloth and sheets  
(enough to cover your  
face and body for a  
costume)

Cover your face and pretend to be a leper from the story who is not yet healed. Here is a suggested monologue. Memorize this one, ad lib on your own, or have an actor from your church play the role. If you play the role, once you exit the room at the end of the skit simply wait a moment, remove the leper clothing and come back in as the teacher.

(Class enters. The leper is sitting in corner and begins acting and telling his story in the present tense as though the students are villagers back in time. The leper starts the skit by shouting loudly) "Unclean! Unclean! Leper! Stay away! Unclean!"

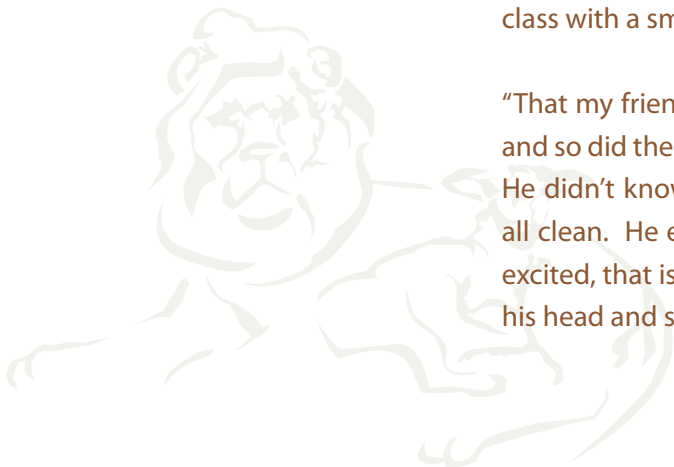
"For your own safety, stay away. You are all young. The last thing you want to do is catch this miserable disease. I am sorry, I am not from around here. Several of us lepers have come. There is a teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, who had done great things among His people. Some crippled people have walked. The blind are given back their sight."

"But not me, I am a Samaritan. I only find myself accepted by the other Jewish lepers because of my disease. Leprosy is no respecter of peoples. Jews, Gentiles, we all are afflicted with this disease. When you have leprosy, the disease is your only enemy."

The leper looks left and sees Jesus and cries out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us. Have pity, oh Jesus, have . . . . Go to the priest. He said go to the priest." (turning as though he is talking to other lepers)

"We must go! Come." (The leper slowly stands up and, walking in slow motion across the classroom, throws off the rags covering his face and then turns to the class with a smile and begins telling the story in the past tense.)

"That my friends, is just how it happened! In a flash I was healed. Then I ran, and so did the other nine with me. We all ran to see the priest. He was amazed. He didn't know me, but the Jews, he knew each of them. He declared them all clean. He even declared me, a Samaritan, clean. Imagine that! He was so excited, that is, until we mentioned that it was Jesus who healed us. He turned his head and said something about a trouble maker."



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"The other men went home, but not me. I ran back after Jesus. My family could wait. I wanted more than anything to see him again."

"I caught up with him. The moment I saw him I was overcome with joy. I fell at His feet and praised God and thanked him. I thanked him over and over. He touched my shoulder..." (Leper touches himself tenderly at the spot where Jesus touched him.) "...and then He asked about the other nine. It's funny. I didn't realize there were nine others, but he knew."

"Then he said something wonderful to me. He said, 'Go. Your faith has made you well.' My faith. I am still wondering what that means. Well, anyway, I have to go. I hear Jesus is staying with Zaccheus. I want to see him again."

Leper leaves.

- Draw the class out about the story and what most affected them.
- Ask them what we learn about Jesus from this story.
- See if they know what the significance is of the returning leper being a Samaritan, not a Jew.
- Challenge them to draw near to Christ. The Lord has done so much for us. We have every reason to come back to him with thankful hearts every day.

## PRAYER

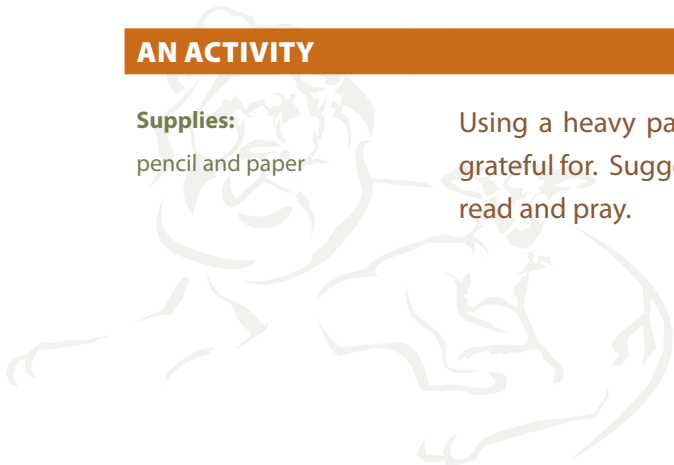
Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

### AN ACTIVITY

**Supplies:**  
pencil and paper

Using a heavy paper, have the children make a bookmark listing what they are grateful for. Suggest that they tuck it into their Bible to remind them each time you read and pray.



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### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### THE JEWS REJECT THE MESSIAH, BUT THE GENTILES RECEIVE HIM

Have the children look up the following verses to get an understanding that the Jews (just like the nine Jewish lepers not coming back to thank Jesus) rejected Jesus: Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22, Acts 4:7-12

Paul teaches that though the Jews rejected Jesus, the Gentiles accepted Him. Because of their faith, the believing Gentiles are considered Abraham's children by faith (Romans 9:3, 9:30-33 and Jesus' prediction of this in Matthew 21:42).

The story of the ten lepers with only the Samaritan returning to give thanks is a foreshadowing of this rejection.

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Samaritans** – After the fall of the Northern tribes of Israel, when foreign armies invaded the north, the remaining Israelites in the land intermarried with foreigners. This was something Israelites were not to do. As a result, they worshipped foreign gods and still claimed to worship Yaweh also. Because of this their descendants were not allowed to participate in the rebuilding of the temple a few generations later (Ezra 4:2-5). They also claimed that Mount Gerizim in the north, not Mount Zion in Jerusalem, was the true place of worship. Eventually they came to reject all the Old Testament, except the books of Moses. Samaritans came to be a term not just for those living in Samaria but for all those who followed this cult. As a result the Jews despised the Samaritans.

