

JESUS HEALS A PERSON WITH LEPROSY

About:

The Leprosy Mission New Zealand is an organisation working to eradicate the disease leprosy. Our goal is no child with leprosy by 2035. This children's talk looks at how Jesus showed us that we need to love everybody, even those who are feared and rejected. We discuss what leprosy is, what it was like in the biblical times, and what it is like today.

Ice Breaker:

Bring

- a pair of oversized gloves / oven mits
- some small objects that need to be moved around.
- a shirt to be buttoned up
- a pen and paper

Set the children a few tasks and have them take turns doing them whilst wearing the oversized gloves. (e.g. moving a small car through some blocks, buttoning up a shirt, or using a pen).

It should be tricky! Tell the children that sometimes when people get sick with a disease called leprosy, their hands claw up and loose feeling. This makes it really difficult to use their hands - a bit like wearing the oversized gloves!

Introduction

Today we are going to be talking about how Jesus shows love and compassion.

[Ask the children about a time when they or a family member were sick.] Ask "Have you ever been to the doctors? Who looked after you when you were sick? What did they do to make you feel better?"

Explain: Leprosy in the bible

In biblical times, there was a disease called leprosy that made people feel really sick. It was not like having a cold at all! People with leprosy lost the feeling in their fingers and toes. This meant they easily hurt themselves by getting cuts and burns. On their arms and legs, people with leprosy would develop skin patches that made it obvious to everyone else that they had this disease. Sometimes, they would even lose body parts or die - isn't that awful!

In Jesus time, people with leprosy were seen as dirty and no one wanted to be near them. Some wore torn clothing and by law they had to live away from their families and their community. When they were near other people they had to call out "unclean".

Can you imagine if when you got sick you couldn't live with your family anymore? It was a very hard life for people that had leprosy.

Bible Story: Luke 5: 12-14

In the bible there are stories about people with leprosy. One day, while Jesus was walking in Galilee, a man came along who had leprosy and was very unwell. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean".

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing", he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Activity: Holding Hands

In the bible story about Jesus, we heard that he reached out and touched a person with leprosy. Jesus was showing us that no matter what we are going through he will always love us and want to help. We don't need to be afraid when someone is a little bit different to us. Instead we should love them and show compassion. Let's all reach out and hold hands with the person next to us. Tell the person next to you, "Jesus loves you no matter what".

Explain: Leprosy in 2020

In the past there was no cure for leprosy. Today we know a lot more about the disease and there is medicine you can take to get better. We can even touch people affected by leprosy and give them a hug without getting sick. Isn't that amazing!

There isn't any leprosy in New Zealand anymore but there still is leprosy in countries like Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Sometimes even children get leprosy.

This is a picture of a girl called Shabnam (get picture). Shabnam was 16 years old when she was frightened to see her hands swelling up and discoloured patches appeared on her face. Soon, she had no feeling in her hands at all. She was really scared. Shabnam's leprosy began to destroy her face and her body. Her hands soon became clawed and the patches spread across her face. Then, the bridge of her nose collapsed. But the thing that made Shabnam the most sad was the way some of her family treated her once she got leprosy. She had to drop out of school and felt isolated and alone.

Her family took her to the Mission's Shahadra Hospital in Delhi where she was diagnosed with leprosy. They gave her the medicine that cures leprosy called multi-drug-therapy which she has to take once a day for two years.

But things are looking up for Shabnam. She is receiving the medical care she needs and will get counselling to restore her confidence. She will also be taught physiotherapy to ease the stiffness in her hands.

Even though having leprosy was really scary, Shabnam can be cured and go on to live a happy life.



Craft Activity Ideas

Message in my hand

Materials: paper, pens/crayons, scissors.

Let's write a message to a little girl or boy with leprosy like Shabnam. First take a piece of paper and trace around your hand. We are tracing around our hands to show that we want to reach out and touch people with leprosy like Jesus did.

Then let's write a message in the middle of your paper hands. Maybe you can tell them that God loves them, or that you are praying for them? You can then post these messages to TLM at PO Box 96262, Balmoral, Auckland 1342 NEW ZEALAND and we will send them off for you.

Greetings from Nepal

Some of the main areas leprosy mission works in are Nepal, India, and Papua New Guinea. In Nepal people greet each other by saying "Namaste" with their hands pressed together. In Papua New Guinea people greet each other in the morning by saying "Morin-Tru" and at night they say "Gudnait-Tru". Give these greetings a try!

Stick Puppets

Materials: popsicle sticks, scissors, glue/tape, resource sheet 2, paper.

Prepare: Using the provided resource sheet, print out the stick puppets page for each child in your group (if the children are too young to use scissors, cut them out as well). Provided is a colour version for the leader.

Let's make stick puppets to remember how Jesus healed the person with leprosy.

You each get a Jesus puppet, and a person affected by leprosy that is now cured! Colour them in and then tape the Jesus puppet onto a popsicle stick. You can now tell the story of Jesus healing leprosy!

Game Ideas

Puzzle Scramble

Materials: cardboard/cereal box, 2x resource sheet 3, glue, blindfold.

Prepare: Stick two copies of the "resource sheet 3" onto a piece of cardboard and cut them out along the lines.

Let's have a race. Put the children into two groups and give them a puzzle each. Have a race on which group can put the puzzle of children that have been cured of leprosy together first.

To make it harder, you could do a second race. Now give one member of each team a blindfold. See if the rest of the team can give this member instructions to guide them to each puzzle piece.

How much harder is it when you can't see and have to rely on your team mates!
People affected by leprosy sometimes lose their eye sight making life much harder.

Thankful Musical Chairs

Materials: Strips of paper in different colours, chairs (enough for each child)

Prepare: Set out the chairs in a circle and place a coloured strip of paper on each chair.

Let's play a game. This game is like musical chairs. When the music stops you need to find a chair, otherwise you are out! Each round we will remove one chair.

When you sit on a chair there will be a coloured piece of paper. Because this is a thankfulness game you will need to think of something you are thankful for that starts with that colour. For example if you get a blue piece of paper you might be thankful for swimming, water, or a blue sky day.

We will go round in a circle and say what we are thankful for before we start the next round.

Overview

Wow we have learnt so much about leprosy today! What can you remember?

- Leprosy has been around for a really long time
- In Jesus time, people with leprosy were seen as dirty and no one wanted to be near them.
- People with leprosy can lose the feeling in their hands and feet, which means they can easily hurt and burn themselves.
- In some countries like Nepal and India, people still get leprosy, like Shabnam
- Jesus cared about people with leprosy, he even reached out and touched them
- Jesus showed us that no matter what we are going through he will always love us and want to help.
- We don't need to be afraid when someone is a little bit different to us. Instead we should love them and show compassion.

Prayer

Dear God,

We come to you today to pray for people affected by leprosy. Please help them to know your love, and to get the medicine they need to get better.

Help us also to remember to be kind, especially to our friends and family when they are unwell or hurting.

Thank you for always loving us no matter what.

Amen.



Teachers Note: We don't use the word "leper" to describe a person affected by leprosy

This word has been historically used to refer to someone affected by leprosy. Because leprosy was thought to be highly contagious, this word also came to be used more generally to mean "outcast" or "a person to avoid". It is an offensive term that has also been used to justify appalling treatment against people affected by leprosy and the passing of stigmatizing legislation.

Please refer to someone with the disease leprosy as a "person affected by leprosy".

EXTRA STORIES

Oswald

Meet Oswald! Oswald is just 5 years old and is from a place called Papua New Guinea. He lives in a small village with his grandmother Josephine.

Recently when Josephine was receiving the medicine to cure leprosy, she noticed that little Oswald too was showing telltale signs of this terrible disease. He already had patches on his body and face, thickened earlobes and an ulcer on his right foot.

If his grandmother hadn't recognized the signs Oswald could have faced a life of disability, but thankfully he is now receiving the cure and his future is bright.

Questions: Oswald's grandma is looking after him so that he gets better. What would you do to cheer someone up who is unwell?



Kanti



Meet Kanti! Kanti is from India and is 11 years old. She lives with her mum and brothers and sisters. Her dad has to work far away and Kanti only gets to see him once every two years!

When Kanti was 8 years old her mum Sarita realised there were discoloured patches all over Kanti's body. Then an ulcer developed on the sole of Kanti's right foot, and she took Kanti to the local hospital. Kanti was diagnosed with leprosy.

Because Kanti didn't get the medicine for leprosy straight away, she had to have surgery to help her foot. She also had to leave school and spend some time staying at the hospital until she got better.

The good news is that Kanti is now much better and can play with her friends again! She can also go back to school.

Questions: Kanti was very brave when she had to have surgery to help her foot. Can you think of a time that you have had to be really brave?

Niran

Meet Niran! Niran is 11 years old and is from India. He has two sisters and three brothers. He lives with his older brother in Delhi.

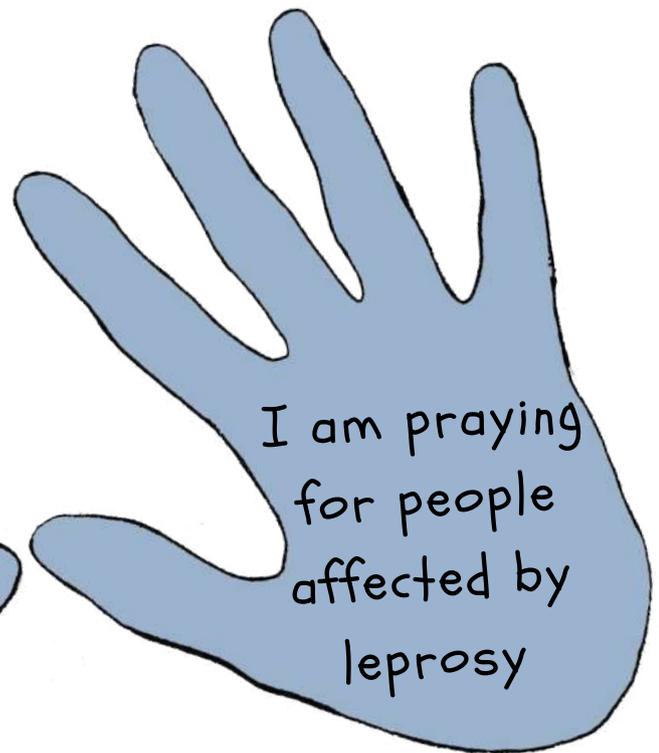
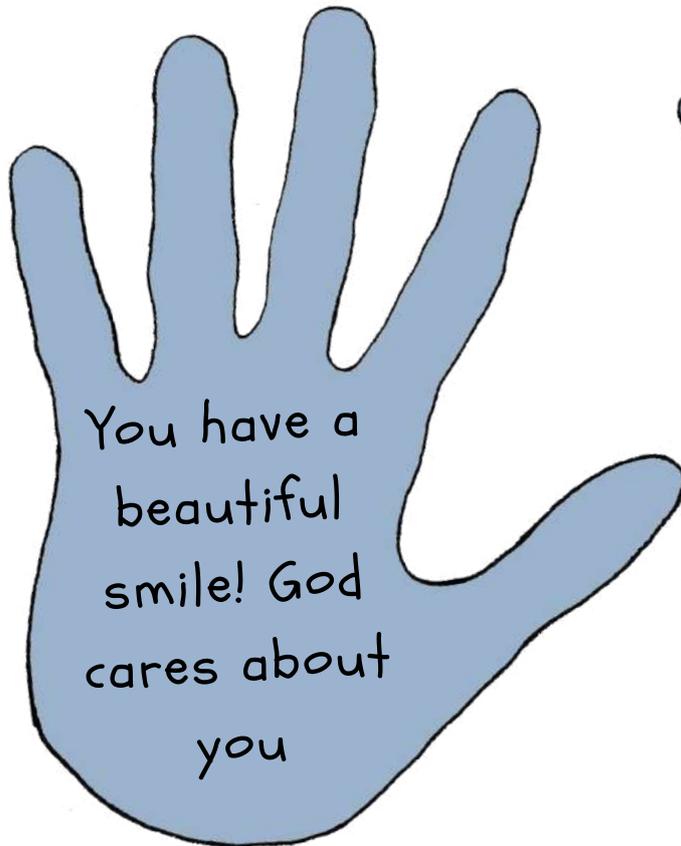
When Niran was 9 years old he started to notice patches appearing on his face. Then his hands became clawed and it was difficult to write. He also became unable to close his left eye. Niran's brother took him to a hospital where he was diagnosed with leprosy.

Thankfully Niran is now on the path to recovery and has received surgery to help correct his clawed hand. He is excited to be able to play cricket with his friends and go back to school.

Questions: Niran's favourite sport is cricket and he loves to play it with his brother and friends. What is your favourite sport?



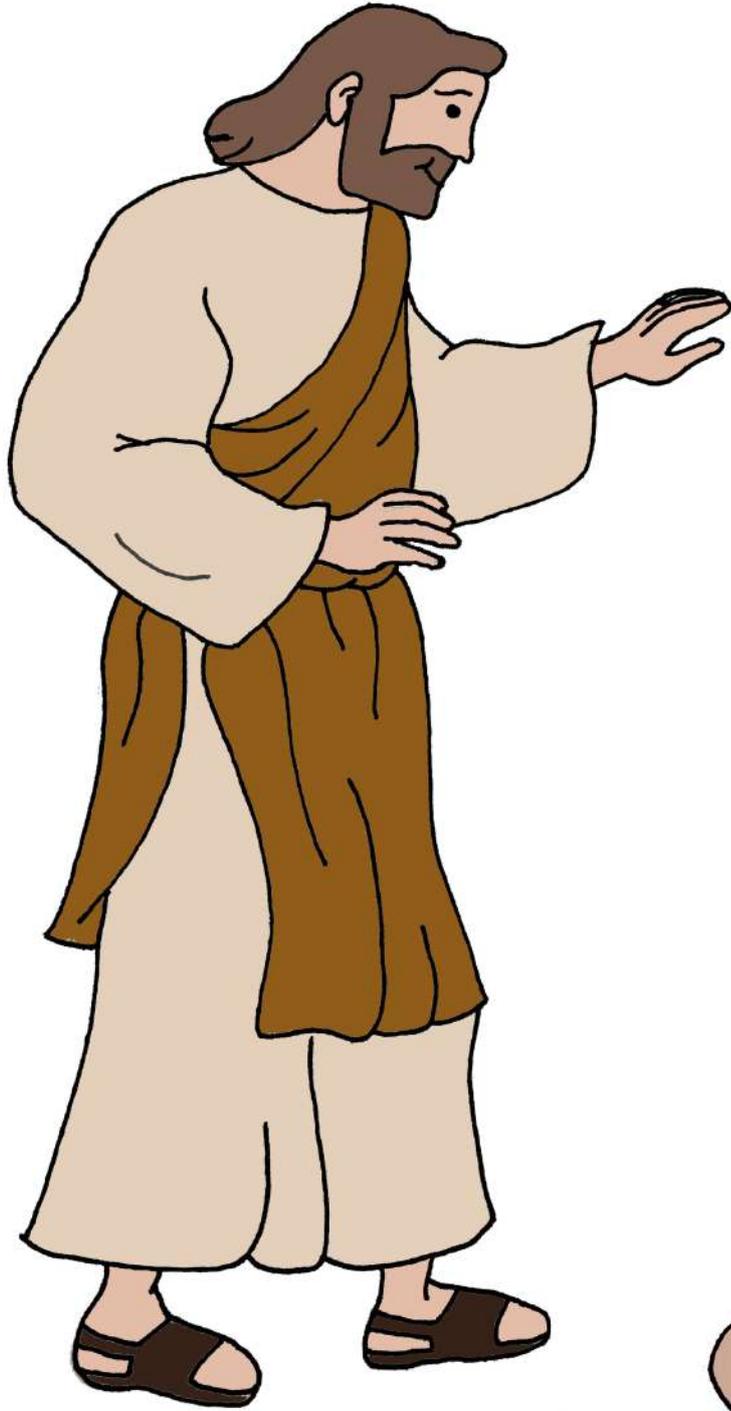
RESOURCE SHEET 1: MESSAGE IN MY HAND EXAMPLES



RESOURCE SHEET 2



RESOURCE SHEET 2 (colour)



RESOURCE SHEET 3

