

## Children's study and activities for ages 6 - 11

You will need a shirt, a pair of gloves and the activity sheets and the posters that go with these notes.

### Introductory talk

- What is leprosy? Give the children 30 seconds to talk to the person next to them. Feed back to the whole group.
- Explain that leprosy damages nerves, which make us feel.
  1. Many people who have had leprosy can't feel when they burn or cut themselves, and so ignore any wounds they have, which can then get badly infected.
  2. Sometimes the nerves are so badly damaged that a person's muscles in their eyes, hands or feet stop working.
  3. Over time, repeated injury and infection can cause the bones and skin to shrink, so that the person's fingers and toes may actually get shorter.
- But leprosy is curable with three drugs called multidrug therapy. If treated early most of the above problems won't happen.
- Leprosy is thought to be spread through the air but is **not** easily caught, so you won't catch leprosy by touching or shaking hands with someone. Almost as soon as someone starts taking their medicine the leprosy can't pass to anyone else.
- There is no longer leprosy in countries like England, but there is still leprosy in many hotter countries where there is poverty.
- A lot of people don't know leprosy is curable, or that it is very difficult to catch. This means many people who have had leprosy have very difficult lives. Sometimes no one wants to talk to them, they might lose their jobs or their families might not want to know them any more.
- The Leprosy Mission works to help people who have had leprosy get jobs, training and education and get back into their communities.

### Group activity

We have already mentioned that leprosy damages the nerves. It is a bit like wearing gloves, you can't feel what you are touching. This makes ordinary tasks difficult to do.

Ask a child to try to put on and button the shirt with the gloves on.  
Is it difficult? How does it make you feel?



The Leprosy Mission England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ

t: 01733 370505 f: 01733 404880 e: [post@tlmew.org.uk](mailto:post@tlmew.org.uk) [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1050327 A company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3140347

## **Passage** Luke 5: 12-16

Either as a group or in small groups, give the children different parts and have them dramatise this story. You will need a narrator, someone to be Jesus and someone to be the man with leprosy, a group of children as the crowd when Jesus healed the man (to 'wow' and whisper at the appropriate places), and another group as the people who later came to Him to be healed.

### **Script (from *The Message*)**

**Narrator:** One day in one of the villages there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus he fell down before him in prayer and said ...

**Man with leprosy:** If you want to, you can cleanse me.

**Narrator:** Jesus put out his hand, touched him, and said ...

**Jesus:** I want to. Be clean.

**Narrator:** Then and there his skin was smooth, the leprosy gone. Jesus instructed him ...

**Jesus:** Don't talk about this all over town. Just quietly present your healed self to the priest, along with the offering ordered by Moses. Your cleansed and obedient life, not your words, will bear witness to what I have done.

**Narrator:** But the man couldn't keep it to himself, and the word got out. Soon a large crowd of people had gathered to listen and be healed of their ailments. As often as possible Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer.

## **Talk**

In Jesus' day, as soon as someone was found to have leprosy they would have to leave all their family and friends and live outside the city.

- How do you think the man with leprosy felt before he met Jesus?
- What other problems would the man have had apart from being sick?
- How was Jesus different to the other people the man would have known?
- What does this tell us about Jesus' character (and about how He feels about people no one else wants to know)?

What Jesus did was amazing, because no one would have wanted to touch the man. Instead of seeing the disease as everyone else did, Jesus saw a person who was very precious to God. Instead of copying everyone else and staying away, Jesus was different and reached out to the person who needed Him.

Jesus was different from the people around Him, he did not ignore the man with leprosy or make fun of him, He helped him. Ask the children to think about how they can be different. Is it ok to ignore someone unpopular at school, to tease/ bully people or to always leave someone out? We need to be different like Jesus and show care and friendship. Get the children to think about one person they could be nicer to and tell them to remember them so they can pray about them later.



The Leprosy Mission England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ

t: 01733 370505 f: 01733 404880 e: [post@tlmew.org.uk](mailto:post@tlmew.org.uk) [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1050327 A company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3140347

## **Children with leprosy**

Even today, lots of people with leprosy go through some of the same bad experiences as the man in the story. Use the posters, and information below, to discuss Sita and Bubake.

### **Sita, Nepal**



(First photo: Georgina Cranston)

Five years ago, Sita's teacher noticed she had patches on her hand and that the fingers of her hand had started to curl over and become stiff. This is a typical sign of the beginning of leprosy. Sita's uncle took her to The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban hospital, Nepal, and she was given multidrug therapy.

At the hospital, Sita has been taught how to look after herself, so she is less likely to hurt herself, and how to take care of any injuries, even if she can't feel them. She has now had surgery on her hands which she can use normally again.

Sita's family are afraid their village will not speak to them if they let her come home, and so she is being looked after by a woman called Indira. Sita's father visits once a month. Teachers at Sita's school found out she had leprosy and will not let her go back. Staff at Anandaban hospital applied to five schools before finding one that would take her. Sita is happy to be back at school and has made friends. She is learning English and plans to study to become a doctor.

### **Bubake, DR Congo**



(Photo: Georgina Cranston)



The Leprosy Mission England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ

t: 01733 370505 f: 01733 404880 e: [post@tlmew.org.uk](mailto:post@tlmew.org.uk) [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1050327 A company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3140347

Bubake lives in Kaziba in DR Congo. Both his parents had leprosy, and in 2001 the doctors told him he had also caught it.

Leprosy medicine is very strong, and sometimes people can have a bad reaction to it, a bit like an allergic reaction. Unfortunately when this happened to Bubake it gave him eye problems. Now bright light hurts his eyes. He says, 'My eyes itch sometimes. It is very painful when I don't wear glasses and they weep.'

Bubake was only comfortable inside his dark mud hut, until he was given a pair of sunglasses by the leprosy staff. At first his school friends teased him for trying to be 'cool', but sunglasses protect Bubake's eyes and mean he can go outside.

Bubake likes school and also wants to be a doctor. The Leprosy Mission is giving him a scholarship to help pay for his education. Bubake breeds guinea pigs, which he sells to buy the things he needs for school.

## **Prayer**

Split into groups for prayer. Get the children to think about the person at school they need to be more of a friend to. Have a prayer time about them. Then choose one of the children mentioned above and pray for them. Also pray for the work of The Leprosy Mission and similar organisations.

## **Activities**

Explain to the children that a cat can be an important gift for someone who has had leprosy. Because leprosy is often a problem in poor and hot parts of the world, people affected by leprosy can have a problem with rats. Wild rats steal food, put holes in clothes and bring diseases and germs - having a cat gets rid of this problem. For people away from their family and friends, cats are also great company.

Have the children colour in the comic strip of the passage, or use the cat activities (origami or making Ginger the cat).



The Leprosy Mission England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 5GZ

t: 01733 370505 f: 01733 404880 e: [post@tlmew.org.uk](mailto:post@tlmew.org.uk) [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1050327 A company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3140347