INTRODUCTION:
Leprosy is a disease of poverty. Leprosy not only makes people sick and can cause problems and deformities with their hands, feet and faces, but it also is seen as a curse upon those who catch it. People with leprosy are often bullied and rejected by the people around them - they might not be allowed to go to school or to work or even marry, they become outcasts even in their families. We cannot catch leprosy in Britain, it is only found in very poor countries and it only affects the very poorest of the poor. The Leprosy Mission not only helps to cure people of their leprosy, we help them get back on their feet too. We work hard to break the effects of poverty so that leprosy is not a disease of the future. We also endeavour to bring people back to their families and communities so that they are no longer outcast.

Jeremiah 30: 17 says ‘But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,’ declares the Lord. ‘Because you are called an outcast.’

We want to see people’s lives transformed and restored. We want people affected by leprosy healed and all the bad things associated with leprosy gone.

You know what would work for your group so pick whichever activities will suit your situation best. For more information on leprosy check out our website.

GAMES:
Choose one or more of the following games (depending on time and suitability to the group)

‘Stuck in the mud’ Transforming the lives of those who are stuck by poverty and ill health.

Stuck in the mud is a classic game for any age. Two people are ‘catchers’, they have to chase the others and tag them.

When they have tagged another person, that person is ‘stuck in the mud’. They stand with legs and arms out and they cannot move. The only way to release them is if another person who is not stuck goes under either of their arms to free them.
This continues for about five to 10 minutes or until everybody is stuck. To increase the difficulty level, use more catchers.

To help the children think about the effects of leprosy, half way through the game, you could hamper some or all the children that are not catchers by telling them that they cannot run because they are too poor and unhealthy...this will hopefully emphasise the fact that as people who have healthy lifestyles they can run away from the dreaded catcher but people who are poor have little food and water, lack even basic housing and are more vulnerable to the catcher (disease).

**Tower block game** *To introduce how precarious health is in an impoverished lifestyle.*

Things you’ll need: 54 wooden blocks with words that describe those things that contribute to a healthy life, like: good food, house, clean water, medicine, education, etc;

Two or more players

Lay three wooden blocks side by side. Add the next layer so that each of the three blocks lays across the three blocks underneath it at 90°

Continue alternating layers of blocks until all of the blocks are used.

Start the game by letting the person who built the tower remove the first block of their choice from anywhere under the top layer and then place the removed blocks in a pile to the side.

Watch the tower tumble as the things that are good for us are removed, talk about the effects of poverty and how you can work together with us to transform and rebuild people’s lives who are affected by leprosy.

Use the blocks to talk about the differences in living conditions that some people face.

**Odd one out game**

People with leprosy don’t always look sick, because leprosy is a sneaky disease that likes to hide, with patches on the skin being one of the first signs. Leprosy can damage the nerves in a person’s hands, feet and face. It can make straight hands clawed, sighted eyes blind. We cannot repair people’s nerves but can restore movement through surgery and physiotherapy. Leprosy is a disease of the poor not the rich. It is a disease with many consequences that have nothing to do with the bacteria that causes it. People with leprosy are rejected they are disrespected and made to feel unloved. Leprosy can make hands and feet numb and weak which hinders normal life. Shame and mean people cause those with leprosy to despair, it destroys their hope for the future. We can help people with leprosy; we can make them well with medicine. We treat them with honour and respect. We show them that they are loved by God, by sharing the kindness that God shows us. We teach people the truth about leprosy so that they will include rather than exclude people in normal daily life. By helping people to accept those with leprosy we support communities, and help people to live a whole life not a broken one which makes them feel emotionally strong again.
Using the table of paired words from the passage above create some cards for the children to match together numb being the odd one out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help</th>
<th>Hinder</th>
<th>Restore</th>
<th>Destroy</th>
<th>Repair</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Reject</th>
<th>Accept</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Despair</td>
<td>Clawed</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>Sick</td>
<td>Well</td>
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<td>Strong</td>
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<td>Kind</td>
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Organise the children into groups of four. The dealer deals out five cards for each player and puts the remaining cards face down in a pile in the centre of the table.

Each child looks at their cards and if they already have any pairs, they put them down face up on the table in front of them.

If there are no pairs or when students have finished putting down the pairs that they have found, they can then start taking cards from the stack placed in the middle of the table.

When new pairs are found, these should also be put down on the table in front of the respective child.

When all of the cards from the pile have been picked up, the children then start drawing cards in the following way: the first person who did not have the chance to pick up a card when the pile in the centre ran out, takes any one card from the remaining cards held by the person to their left.

The game continues in this way until all but one of the pairs has been put down on the table. At this point there will be two students left, one with part of a word pair and the Odd One Out and another with the matching word card.

The person who is left with the Odd One Out at the end of the game can be asked how they think having a numb hand or foot would affect them. To enable the person to rid themselves of the card the group must decide whether they agree with the person’s answer or not. People affected by leprosy are often ganged up against and end up as the odd one out but God loves all of us and no one is left as the odd one out with God.

**BIBLE STORY:**

Looking at the issues of being outcast and the idea of being restored can be difficult. Hopefully this adaptation of the early verses of Matthew 8 will help...

Jesus was going around healing people and telling stories. Word spread about Jesus, so people would follow him because they wanted hear what he said or wanted to see a miracle.

While Jesus was walking and talking with people a man with leprosy approached him, fell to his knees and begged him, “Lord if you want to, you can heal me and make me clean”.

Something amazing happened next. As if it was a normal thing to do, Jesus just reached out and touched the man!

Yes that’s what I said -- Jesus reached out and touched a man with leprosy! This was not allowed! According to everyone else Jesus would now be unclean. Besides this man looked really bad and was sick too!

But none of this mattered to Jesus, he just reached out his hand and said to the man, "I will heal you. Be clean." Right in that moment he was transformed, all signs of the leprosy were gone. Jesus said, “Don’t talk about this all over town. Just quietly present your healed body to the priest, along with the appropriate expressions of thanks to God. Your cleansed and grateful life, not your words, will bear witness to what I have done.”

Jesus didn’t care what other people thought, he was in the restoring game. People with leprosy often have problems with their arms and legs as a result of the leprosy bacteria attacking their body’s nerves. This means that movement and mobility are limited as well as their ability to feel things. Their face too can be affected, with leprosy sufferers battling with blindness and sunken noses which make them look different to the people around them. Sometimes their body tries to fight the disease and they end up getting lots of bumps all over their body. Even though the leprosy disease has given them disability, even though they have patches of skin that look different to their ‘normal’ skin, even though they move differently because of disability, they are still loved by God. God hates it when people are treated badly just because they are sick or different.

Leprosy affects people in lots of different ways. During the time when Jesus was around people thought leprosy was caused by people’s sin, in fact some people still think this. So, if someone had leprosy it was because they had done something wrong.

For all these reasons people affected by leprosy, were kicked out and had to live outside of their towns and cities. They weren't allowed in shops or churches or any public place, so often they would go to live in the rubbish dumps, to find food and other things they needed. No one wanted to see them for fear of touching them and catching the disease or becoming ‘unclean’ because of their sin. Unfortunately this still happens to people but with your help The Leprosy Mission can make a difference!

Questions from the story

Why didn’t people like the person affected by leprosy?  
Describe how you think it would feel to be made to live away from other people.  
How do you think someone with leprosy might feel to be so alone and without friends?  
What do you think Jesus thought about the man with leprosy?  
What does Jesus’ example teach us to do?  
What did Jesus ask him to do?  
What made Jesus touching the man so shocking?  
What does this story tell us about our lives?  
How have you learned to love as Jesus loved?  
How could you love people affected by leprosy as Jesus loves them?

After an encounter with Jesus the man’s life was changed, he was healed and, once seen by the priest, could be restored to normal life in the community again. We too can have healing in our
lives when we call out to God and ask for help; we can know restoration in our lives when we say sorry for the things we have done wrong and try to treat people with love.

**Nepal: Introduce the situation for people affected by leprosy in Nepal.**

Nepal is a beautiful country dominated by the Himalaya mountains. But like so many countries in the developing world, it is wonderful to visit but not so wonderful to live in. It has a population of 30 million and 55 per cent live below the poverty line of US$1.25 a day, hence life expectancy is just 68 years. Just 59 per cent of adults can read and write and only 88 per cent have access to safe drinking water. In many parts of Nepal healthcare is hard to access especially in the rainy season when roads are washed away. Life is hard in Nepal! Therefore it is of no surprise that Nepal has about 3,500 new cases of leprosy a year and has one of the world’s highest rates of leprosy-related disability.

**Dipak’s Story**

Dipak lives in Nepal. He was diagnosed with leprosy when he was 10 years old. Although he received treatment for the disease, his right hand was already damaged. As the years went by Dipak was finding it increasingly difficult to work at his family’s small furniture business because of the damage to his hand. He has also become anxious about his future. How would he earn a living? What girl would marry him when he had visible signs of leprosy?

Thankfully, Dipak’s village is served by a Leprosy Mission clinic. When his hand started to ‘claw’ as a result of leprosy, Dipak was referred to Anandaban Hospital - a specialist Leprosy Mission hospital. The clinic knew that only Anandaban Hospital could provide Dipak with the life-changing surgery needed to restore his hand, completely free of charge.

After a five-week stay and surgery at Anandaban Hospital, Dipak is amazed by the mobility in his hand. He is starting to use his hand once again and feels that he can have hope for the future.

“I was feeling afraid before the surgery and did not know what would happen or whether my hand would be better or worse,” he said. “But I am so much better than before and can feel my hand getting stronger by the day.”

**Explore Dipak’s story**

Follow any natural discussion that comes from this story and perhaps have an atlas at the ready to look at where Nepal is.

Then get the children to write a list of differences between their own lives and that of Dipak. You might want to do this as a group exercise on a flip chart or individually. If the children are struggling you might want to prompt them with questions such as

What do you do when you are feeling ill? What makes you afraid? Do you think that being ill would stop you getting married? What difference did having reconstructive surgery make to Dipak?
**CRAFTS:**

Choose one or more of the following (depending on time and suitability to the group)

**First aid kit...healers help**

You will need: A4 card or paper; scissors; red card or paper; coloured pencils; optional black paper; glue; cellotape.

Fold a piece of white card or paper in half (to make a book).

Turn so that the fold is at the bottom. Draw or glue a red cross (plus sign) onto the front.

Optional: Cut two identical U shapes from black paper and glue or tape them onto the kit as handles.

Stick a few example supplies inside: eg Plaster, cotton wool ball, draw round scissors, glue in a bit of bandage, a picture of ointment tube.

Have a look at a real first aid kit. Talk about what the contents are used for, then use the first aid kits that you have made to help you pray using the ‘supplies’ as symbols to aid prayer.

For example

Lord of compassion and restoration; may your Love wrap the hurts of this world like a bandage, protecting and caring for people like Dipak. May our love and care for others be like a plaster and like your healing touch, gentle like cotton wool.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will touch people who are sick or injured and bring comfort and healing like antiseptic cream does to our cuts and scrapes. Amen

**Cut out hands**

Fold a piece of paper in half

Draw round your hand so that your thumb and index finger touch the fold.

Cut out the hand BUT remember NOT to cut the join at the finger and thumb,

Open out to find love in your hands (heart shape)

Use the hands to write down all the ways that your group can bring help, restoration, and transformation to others in your community and the world.

For example helping hands can do jobs for a small amount of money which is then given to The Leprosy Mission to help cure someone of leprosy or to help stop stigma (bullying) or to provide for surgery.
Large group painting using your hands.

As we have seen people affected by leprosy often have difficulty, like Dipak did, with their hands. Why not use different parts of your hands to create a large picture. You could do a Nepali scene or maybe a picture of Everest (see challenge below). Eg use the sides of your hands for straight lines or the palm of your hand to make circles see what you can come up with using such a ‘limited’ tool.

Dotty picture:

You could even draw the outline of a shape and allocate a colour to each child. Then using one fingertip only they dot their colour with everyone else in the group to fill in the outline. Ask the children to sign the picture by dotting their fingerprint and writing their name below it.

You could perhaps talk about how our finger prints are unique, how we are all different but God loves us equally, he has no favourites.

Become a hand print design company!

This year we are challenging churches to climb Everest (see below). How about creating designs on hand cut outs as a service to your church then sell them to the congregation for £1 and a few pence more, give all your proceeds to The Leprosy Mission! This will make your church’s contribution unique and will raise a little more to help people in great need.

You might want to create a collage of Mount Everest from all the hands collected - do email or send us a photo! As soon as you know how many hands your church group has collected, please email the total to HelpingHand@TLMEW.org.uk and we can track the progress on our website www.worldleprosyday.org.uk

(For many people affected by leprosy, rebuilding a broken life feels like climbing Everest. For this reason we’re asking you and your church/ group to take part in our challenge of climbing Nepal’s highest peak Mount Everest - one hand at a time! We’re asking people to draw around their hand, cut it out and write a prayer on it. On World Leprosy Day 2015 we’re asking for churches/ groups to collect all the paper hands, along with £1 from everyone taking part to benefit patients at Anandaban Hospital. We need 48,664 hands to scale Everest’s 8,848 metres. Can you help us?)

MUSIC: If your group enjoys singing the following songs might be suitable to use:

If I were a butterfly
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
Father I place into your hands
When I needed a neighbour
Jesus hands were kind hands
Make me a channel of your peace
PRAYERS:

Use your First Aid kits to pray or try...

Hand prayers

It was a touch that made all the difference, in our story, to the man with leprosy. A touch, and a prayer that brought restoration. We too can be a part of God’s work of healing and restoration when we pray. To help your group pray how about using your hand.

Each digit on the hand represents a different group of people. As in the picture.

Pray together by bringing each digit in turn to the palm representing Jesus.

Start with the thumb praying for those closest to us. Move to the index finger (pointer) for those who give direction, to the largest finger for those in authority. The weakest finger in the hand represents those who are sick and finally pray for oneself.

You might want to pray for people like Dipak all over Asia and Africa. For doctors and nurses who provide care for people affected by leprosy and for the communities they live in. For researchers who try to find new ways of helping and curing people with leprosy.

Or... Give God a round of applause!

How about showing your appreciation for God by giving him a round of applause?

Get into a circle and encourage each child to say thank you to God for something in their lives then each thank you has been prayed everybody claps in appreciation for God's faithful care, help and provision.

Join us in our thanks to God.

Thank God for his guidance and provision over the last 140 years.

Thank God for surgeons, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, counsellors and other health professionals who care for folk affected by leprosy.

Thank God for churches and groups like yours who support our work.

A suggested prayer

Lord Jesus we thank you for the story about the man with leprosy. We thank you for his bravery in asking for help when all around him would reject and insult him. Help us to be brave in seeking your help too. We thank you that you saw the man with leprosy and reached out to him with compassion and love. Help us to respond to your call to reach out to all bringing your healing touch here on earth. We thank you that after his encounter with you the man was restored and healed and no longer an outcast. Help us to change and to be people who love and care for others all the time.
We thank you for The Leprosy Mission who work hard to love and care for people with leprosy today. Help them to bring healing and restoration in the lives of those with leprosy. Help us to know how we can best support them in this work as we seek to bring your healing touch of love to everyone you care for. We ask these things in your precious name, Amen.