



Session 13

Winter 2015–16

Early Childhood

# One leper says thank you

LUKE 17:11–19

## prepare



### PRAYER

*God of all, you give many gifts that go unacknowledged. Cultivate a spirit of gratitude in me. Amen.*

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

To see Jesus as a friend who cares

### STORY SUMMARY

While traveling in the region between Galilee and Samaria, Jesus heard ten lepers calling to him. Jesus told them to go to the priests. On the way, they realized they had been healed. One of the ten turned back to praise God and thank Jesus. Jesus asked where the other nine were, and pointed out that the one who returned was a Samaritan. Jesus told the Samaritan that his faith had made him well.

### teaching tips for early childhood

Today's Bible story shows Jesus healing people who had leprosy. They were the outcasts of the community. Miraculous healing stories, while encouraging, can be difficult for those with ongoing health concerns. Children in your group may be sick themselves or have family members facing cancer or other chronic illnesses. Be careful not to convey that if someone has enough faith, they will be healed. Some people are healed and others are not; some people recover while others do not. Extend empathy and compassion if children ask hard questions. Do not be afraid to say something like "That is hard for me to understand, too. It does not seem fair. I am glad to know that God is with us when we feel sick and when we feel healthy."

Go to [www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras) to find tips for working with younger children. Decide which Explore activities you will do, and check Supplies and To Do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

## Jesus on the margins

The story of Jesus and the ten lepers is one of only a few healing stories in the long middle section of the Gospel (9:51–19:44). Luke comments that “Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.” This might strike readers as odd, since Samaria and Galilee were right next to each other; however, Luke’s point is not geography. Jesus is traveling on the margins, through “in-between” space. In this space he has a transforming encounter with someone on the margins of social and religious life.

As Jesus enters a village, ten men with leprosy call out to him. The affliction called “leprosy” in the Bible is not the same as modern-day leprosy (Hansen’s disease). It was a term used broadly to identify skin conditions with diverse symptoms and degrees of severity. Most importantly, the condition rendered the person unclean, so that the leper had to be segregated from the community (Leviticus 13:45–46). The social and religious ramifications of leprosy were thus even more serious than the physical condition. If the leprosy was cured, the person had to go to a priest for confirmation of healing; and after performing sacrificial rites, he or she could be restored to the community.

## Only one returns

The men know Jesus by name and beg for mercy. Maybe they were simply begging for alms. Or maybe they knew of Jesus’ reputation for healing lepers (Luke 5:12–14; 7:22). Jesus tells the men to go show themselves to the priest, as the law prescribes. More noteworthy than the healing they experience on the way is the response it elicits. Only one of the ten turns back. His response is threefold: to glorify God, to fall on his face at Jesus’ feet, and to give thanks. To glorify God is the proper response in the Gospel to a miraculous healing (cf. 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 18:43). But the man would not have had to return to Jesus to glorify God. The fact that he does suggests



that it is precisely in Jesus that he sees God at work. Because Jesus is God’s agent, bringing about the restoration characteristic of God’s reign, he falls at Jesus’ feet in an act of reverence and pours out his gratitude. Jesus is the locus of God’s activity and the appropriate place to glorify God.

## Only the Samaritan

Only at this point in the story does Luke say that the man was a Samaritan. This has some shock value, coming so late in the story, since most of Luke’s readers would have assumed all ten men were Jewish. As both a leper and a hated Samaritan, the man was doubly

marginalized. This story has echoes of Elisha’s cleansing of Naaman, who was also a foreigner with leprosy and whose story Jesus knows (cf. Luke 4:27). It is one of many examples in Luke’s Gospel of how Jesus’ ministry extends to the marginalized and how these “little people” often see Jesus more clearly than insiders (Luke 10:21–24).

The contrast between the Samaritan, who returns to give thanks, and the other nine is stark. Three consecutive rhetorical questions, as well as Jesus’ reference to the man as a “foreigner,” make the point emphatic. Many people benefit from Jesus’ healing power, but the experience is not complete without recognition of who Jesus is and an appropriate response. That is why the story ends with Jesus saying “Your faith has saved you” (NRSV: “made you well”). This is a phrase that Jesus says to three other people in the Gospel, each time to someone on the margins who has experienced Jesus’ saving power and expresses trust in him (7:50; 8:48; 18:42). The Samaritan and the other nine lepers all call out to Jesus with confidence in his authority, all set out to see the priest before they are healed, and all are cured of their disease. Only the Samaritan recognizes Jesus as God’s agent and responds appropriately. He experiences “salvation” that consists not just of the curing of physical and social ills but salvation that touches all dimensions of life.

# gather

## supplies

- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player

## resource pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 4)
- Jesus figure

## BUILD COMMUNITY

Invite the children to join you in a rhythm chant about friends. Pat your legs or clap your hands as you say each word in the sentence. Use a pattern, such as *pat, pat, pat, clap* or *clap, pat, clap, pat*. Repeat for each person present, as well as for children who are absent. If you have mostly older children, vary the pattern periodically.

\_\_\_\_\_ (name) is our friend.  
Jesus is our friend.

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

Use relevant motions (smile, wave, and so on) as you sing "Come Along" from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 8. Song lyrics are at the back of this guide.

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Express gratitude to God through movement. Ask children to stand. Say:

**Let's think of things we are thankful for. You might be thankful for something small, like your fingers or a butterfly. (Crouch down.) You might be thankful for a medium thing, like a dog or a bike. (Straighten up, but stay slightly bent over.) You might be thankful for a great big thing, like a church or a house or your family. (Stand tall with your arms raised high). What are you thankful for?**

As children name things, the group can use the demonstrated postures, or move in other ways that reflect big, medium, or small. Allow freedom of movement, provided everyone is safe. Close with a spoken prayer, expressing gratitude for the big, medium, and small things we have.

## media connections

- *Let's Say Thanks to God!* by Mark S. Bernthal
- *Thank You, God* by J. Bradley Wigger
- YouTube search for "Jesus Heals Ten Lepers" by PowerSurgeKids
- YouTube search for "Ten Lepers" sung by Anthony Chow

### Bible memory

Sit near the Bible memory poster. Give the Jesus figure to one child. Say the verse as the child "walks" the figure along the paths on the poster. Pause during the verse so that the entire group can shout "good news."

**For smaller groups:** Give each child an opportunity to move the Jesus figure.

**But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also."  
—Luke 4:43a**

# experience

## SHARE THE STORY

Open the Bible to Luke 17:11–19 and show children the words of the Bible story. Fold the Landscape poster from the resource pack in half so only the town portion is visible. Secure the folded poster to the side of a packing box. Set the crowd figure from page 92 in this guide a short distance away from the box. Place another figure from page 91 behind the box, out of sight. This will be the healed man. Hold a third figure (Jesus) in your hand.

The Bible story is found on the back of the story picture in the resource pack. Follow the instructions there for movement of the props.

## WONDER AND REFLECT

Reflect on the story, helping the children to engage with the story by wondering together.

- I wonder how the ten knew that Jesus could heal them.
- Imagine having to stay far away from others if you were sick. (*Pause.*) Imagine being close to your family when you are sick.
- I wonder why only one person came back to thank Jesus.
- I wonder if you ask for God's help when you feel sick.

## PEACE NOTES

One of the men showed his love for Jesus by saying thank you. Expressing gratitude to others helps build strong, loving relationships.

Hold up the Friendship wheel from the resource pack. Show the picture of the girls who are hugging. Have children join you in saying, "Thank you for being my friend." Turn the wheel to the picture of the children playing. Together say, "Thank you for sharing." Turn the wheel to the picture of the boy on the balance beam. Together say, "Thank you for helping me." Younger children can just say "thank you" each time.

### teaching tip

If children ask about leprosy, explain that it is a sickness that makes the skin spotted and bumpy. The people in the town were afraid of getting this sickness. So they made these ten friends stay far away. They could not live with their families.



**One leper says thank you**

**Luke 17:11–19**

## supplies

- Bible

## storytelling props

- Story figures from Additional resources (Jesus, man, crowd)
- Box

## resource pack

- Landscape poster
- Friendship wheel
- Friendship wheel cover

## to do

- Choose and prepare story figures from page 91 in this guide to represent Jesus and one man. You will also need the crowd figure.
- Fold and tape the Landscape poster on the side of a box so that the town scene is visible.
- Attach the Wheel cover to the Friendship wheel in the resource pack. (if you did not already do so in session 11)

# explore

## CREATE

Have children press one finger on a washable ink pad and make fingerprint “people” on page 3 of the leaflet. Older children may want to use a marker to add features like arms or legs to the fingerprint “people.” If washable ink pads are not available, color the pad of the child’s finger with a washable marker or spread washable tempera paint on a kitchen sponge, without soaking it. Children can press a finger onto the sponge and make prints.

### supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- Washable ink pad or washable marker
- Markers

## MOVE

March around the room as you enjoy songs about following Jesus. If there is not space to do so, play instruments or wave streamers as you stand in one place. There are several songs on the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD* that will work well for this: “C’est une Belle Chose” (It’s a Beautiful Thing), “Yo tengo un amigo que me ama” (I Have a Friend Who Loves Me), and “Follow, Follow Jesus” (tracks 6, 29, and 10, respectively). Lyrics are at the back of this guide.

### supplies

- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player
- Instruments or streamers (optional)

## RETELL

Guide children in acting out the Bible story. Do the finger play on page 2 of the Early Childhood leaflet. Then use the Story script on page 102 in this guide. Wrap bandages or strips of cloth around children’s arms if they wish to play a person who has leprosy. Use simple robes or towels as costumes.

### supplies

- Early Childhood leaflet
- Story script (from Additional resources)
- Cloth bandages or strips of cloth
- Robes or towels

## DISCOVER

Discover how various items can affect how our voice amplifies. First practice saying “thank you” in various voice levels, such as whispering, inside voice, and a calling voice. Explain that this is not screaming or yelling, just using a louder “inside voice” to call to someone across the room. Experiment saying “thank you” into various items, such as a cardboard tube, jar, pillow, or megaphone at various voice levels. Talk about the similarities or differences. End by communicating “thank you” silently using American Sign Language. (See page 96.)

### supplies

- Items to talk into, such as cardboard tubes, a jar, pillow, megaphone, and so forth



## other ideas

- Go to [www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras) to learn to say *Thank you* in many languages.
- Retell the story using craft sticks to represent the people in the story. Help children count out of the number of people who were sick and the number who said thank you.

# bless

## PRAY

Gather the group in a circle. Sing “Friends Around the World” from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 11. Song lyrics are at the back of this guide.

## SEND

Offer a blessing based on John 14–15:

**Jesus said, “You are my friends. I will give you my peace and joy.”**

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.

Let families know that there is a free download of the song “Yo tengo un amigo que me ama” (I Have a Friend Who Loves Me) on the Shine website ([www.ShineCurriculum.com/Music](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/Music)). Instructions for downloading the free song are on the back of the Early Childhood leaflet.

## supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player

### leader's closing prayer

Thanksgiving is an attitude of the heart that goes beyond words. Children express their thanks to God by taking delight in what they are doing at the moment. How can you reclaim the gift of a grateful heart?

*God, I remember the faces of the children and the profound joy of being alive in this moment. Amen.*

*Before praying with children, I ask about their day. Then we thank God for the good things and ask for help with the struggles. It has helped make our prayer time more meaningful.*

—Janice Eigsti Miller  
Goshen, Indiana

