Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Heals the Leper

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is willing. He touches the people others keep away from, and He calls us to come to Him and to obey Him exactly.
Bible passage: Mark 1:40–45. Students read it out loud themselves, with Leviticus 13:45–46 and 14:2–3.
Memory verse: "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean." *Mark 1:41 (KJV)* and "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." *1 Peter 5:7 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Mark 1:35–45, Leviticus 13:45–46 and 14:2–3, and 1 Peter 5:7. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Outside the Circle (5–10 minutes)

Ask for one volunteer to stand outside while the rest of the class makes a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. The volunteer's job is to get in, but the circle keeps closing up (gently, no pushing). After thirty seconds, stop. Ask the volunteer: *How did it feel to be on the outside?* Ask the class: *Where do people your age feel left outside the circle?* Say: "Today we read about a man God's law kept outside, and what Jesus did when he came to Him."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud first: Leviticus 13:45–46. Say: "This is the law God gave through Moses for a leper." Old words: **rent** (13:45): torn; **cry, Unclean, unclean**: call out so people would know; **defiled** and **unclean** (13:46): not allowed to come to worship or live among the people; **without the camp shall his habitation be**: he must live outside, away from everyone.

Then read: Mark 1:40–45. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in this passage:

- **beseeching** (1:40): begging; **If thou wilt, thou canst**: if You are willing, You are able
- **moved with compassion** (1:41): filled with deep pity and care; **put forth his hand**: reached out
- **immediately… departed** (1:42): went away at once; **cleansed**: made clean
- **straitly charged** (1:43): strictly commanded; **forthwith**: right away
- **shew thyself to the priest… for a testimony** (1:44): show yourself to the priest as proof (Leviticus 14:2–3)
- **publish it much, and… blaze abroad the matter** (1:45): tell it everywhere and spread the news
- **desert places** (1:45): lonely places; **from every quarter**: from every direction

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Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **He never doubted Jesus' power.** "Thou canst" (Mark 1:40): he was sure Jesus could. His question was "if thou wilt." Jesus answered that question first: "I will" (1:41).
- **Jesus touched before He spoke.** Under the law a leper lived apart (Leviticus 13:46), but Jesus "put forth his hand, and touched him" (Mark 1:41). The leprosy left "as soon as he had spoken" (1:42). Jesus' touch showed His compassion for a man who had to live apart.
- **Jesus honored God's law.** He sent the man to the priest to offer "those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (1:44; Leviticus 14:2–3).
- **Disobeying had a cost.** Jesus "straitly charged" the man to tell no one (1:43–44), but he told everyone, and Jesus "could no more openly enter into the city" (1:45). Mark doesn't tell us why the man did it, so we don't guess. Still the people "came to him from every quarter" (1:45).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The leper was sure Jesus *could*, and asked if He *would* (Mark 1:40). Which do you find harder to believe about Jesus, that He can or that He will? Why?
2. Jesus touched the man first, then spoke (1:41). What does that tell you about the way Jesus treats people others avoid?
3. Who is "outside the camp" in your school or neighborhood? What would reaching out to them look like?
4. The man meant to tell good news, but he disobeyed a clear command (1:44–45). Can good intentions make up for not doing what Jesus said? Why or why not?
5. 1 Peter 5:7 says to cast all your care on Him, "for he careth for you." What care could you bring to Jesus this week?
6. Mark 1:45 says people came to Jesus "from every quarter." What keeps people from coming to Jesus today, and what helps them come?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **moved with compassion** means filled with deep pity and care; **put forth his hand** means reached out His hand; **saith** means said. In 1 Peter 5:7, **casting** means throwing or handing over, and **careth for you** means cares about you.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Mark 1:41 this week; keep working on 1 Peter 5:7 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said 'I will' to the leper, and He is willing to save you. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is something I have wondered if Jesus is willing to help me with?
2. Who is one person "outside the circle" I could reach out to this week, and how?
3. Write a short prayer handing your cares to Jesus (1 Peter 5:7).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read Mark 1:40–45 again at home. Each day, name one care and hand it to Jesus in prayer. Do the reaching-out you wrote in question 2.

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You that You are willing and that You care for us. Help us bring every care to You, obey You exactly, and reach out to the people others leave outside. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Mark 1 does not say what the leprosy looked like, how long the man had it, or whether he went to the priest; don't add those details. Matthew 8:2–4 and Luke 5:12–16 tell the same healing, but this lesson stays with Mark.

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