

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Mark 1:40-45**

**Background**

Epiphany means several things: a gift is received; the gift must be shared. Jesus appears to be suggesting a rhythm, a balance to our lives. We go inward to be with God, to receive; we go out in the world to share what we have been given – still with God. We are called to balance the pouring out of our love with the resting in God. We are called to heal by just showing up, by laying on hands, by sharing what we have. This good news that was for the few people who heard it up close and personal is ours because they reached out and shared it. It will belong to those who have not yet heard, if we accept our call to share the story by how we live out our lives and as St. Francis said, “with words, if necessary.”

**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

The rhythm extends to include proclaiming the new while honoring the tradition. Good News does not eliminate the nurturing liturgies already in place. A leper comes to Jesus, humbly and almost apologetically. The leper is confident Jesus has the ability to heal him, and he is pretty sure he is not worthy of this healing. Jesus proceeds to dispatch the illness that has made this man not only ill, but outcast. Jesus does not measuring worthiness, but he does honor the tradition. "Go," he tells the man. Go to the priest, make the offering, and also, keep all this to yourself.” But of course, the man is unable to keep this good news to himself, and Jesus would henceforth be mobbed whenever he came to town.

**Theme: I Do Choose**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the script found at the end of this lesson and copies of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

One of the suggested activities in this lesson plan is an outreach project. Be sure to find support for this before presenting it to the children. If there is an outreach committee in your church, perhaps they could help you find a project that would welcome the children's participation.

**Beginning:** Does anyone know anything about the leprosy? If not, explain to the children that it was a common disease in the time of the Bible, and since ways to treat it had not yet been found, it was feared that it might be contagious, so people with the disease were kept apart from others. Today's story is about a man who had this disease and who came to Jesus for help.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for listening to us, helping us, and loving us. We will listen to hear what you have for us in our story for today. Amen.

**The Story: Mark 1:40-45** Invite children to read the different parts: the leper, Jesus, and the narrator.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What might have been going through the mind of the leper when he could see that Jesus would cross his path?
- What do you suppose gave him the courage to speak to Jesus?
- Get inside the leper's head and think of some of the things he might have considered saying to Jesus, before he came up with what he did say.
- What do you think the leper expected Jesus to say to his request?
- Why does the Bible say Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the leper?
- What risk was Jesus taking in doing this?
- Notice the words Jesus uses.
- What two things did Jesus tell the leper to do?
- Did the leper do them?
- Why do you think the leper did not keep his healing a secret? (Could he? His disease was so obvious before and now it was gone!)

**Act it Out:** Invite the children to act out the story, give each child a chance to play the role they want. The children that are not one of the main parts can play the crowd around Jesus and imagine what their reaction may have been.

**Helping Others:** We do not have the skills or the resources to go out and cure leprosy, but is there anything else that our community needs that we could help with? Is there anything here at our church such as a soup kitchen we could help with, food for the hungry we could sort and package, toiletries we could collect for a homeless center, or toys we could gather for a shelter? Perhaps we could get information about Episcopal Relief and Development on their website (<http://www.episcopalrelief.org>) to help needy children.

Brainstorm with the children and come up with some ideas. It might be good to have a simple outreach project for them to do in class that day as well as think of an ongoing project you can all do together.

**Getting Closure:** Think about a time when you were given a gift that you were excited about. How did that gift change your life? How did you use it? Did you have to tell someone about it or show it off? Who gave you the gift? Does that person know how much you like it? Is it possible to say thank you to that person again? What would you say?

**Closing Prayer:** Invite the children to select a prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*, perhaps prayer 36 on p. 826. Or, they may find another prayer they want to use. Pray together.

**Mark 1:40-45**

**Narrator:** A leper came to Jesus begging him, and kneeling he said to him,

**Leper:** “If you choose, you can make me clean.”

**Narrator:** Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him,

**Jesus:** “I do choose. Be made clean!”

**Narrator:** Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him,

**Jesus:** “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

**Narrator:** But the man who had been healed went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

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