

World Leprosy Day

'The man with leprosy' Matt 8 : 1 – 4 and Mark 1 : 40 – 45 RETOLD

If you are looking for ways for your children to participate in church this is an easy little play which does not need lots of extra resources.

Have a **narrator** speak the plain text and then have the children mime the instructions in the brackets. You will need at least four people (**man with leprosy**, **Jesus** and **the crowd**) but it is good to get everyone involved.

Narrator: There was once a man. A kind and friendly man.

Man (smiles and waves)

Narrator: He was well respected and liked by many people from the village in which he lived.

Crowd (a group come up and greet him – shaking hands, hugging and smiling)

Narrator: They all lived happily together in their village.

Crowd (everyone gives the thumbs up)

Narrator: That is until the man caught leprosy . . .

First he saw patches of discoloured skin on his body.

Man (man acts out finding these patches)

Narrator: He recognised that these were from leprosy, a disease considered a curse in his culture, so he tried to hide them from his friends and neighbours.

Man (man looks side to side shifty and covers his patches with his hands)

Narrator: But as the leprosy took hold his hands started to become clawed and deformed.

Man (claws his hands)

Narrator: And his feet drooped.

Man (limps around dragging his feet)

Narrator: And he found it difficult to blink which caused him to start to lose his sight.

Man (acts blind)

Narrator: And all the time this was happening, his friends and neighbours started changing too.

They stopped being friendly.

Crowd (frowns and sneers)



Narrator: They stopped being helpful.

Crowd (make a point of turning their backs as the man reaches out for help)

Narrator: They even started making fun of him and teasing him for his illness and deformities.

Crowd (mocking and jeering)

Narrator: Then one day they decided that they didn't want him anywhere near them or the village anymore and so they told him to leave.

Crowd (push him away)

Narrator: And so the man, once loved and respected is now sad and alone.

Man: (sits down and hugs himself looking sad)

Narrator: Until one day another man came along.

Jesus: (enter Jesus)

Narrator: This man was different to everyone else – he was special.

Jesus: (Jesus holds his arms open wide and gives a big grin)

Narrator: He had followers wherever he went.

Crowd: (crowd follows him as he walks to and fro)

Narrator: He taught about God.

Jesus: (Jesus stands and pretends to preach as the crowd sits eagerly at his feet)

Narrator: He did amazing miracles and could walk on water.

Jesus: (Jesus walks around as the crowd pretends to be swimming)

Narrator: He healed people.

Jesus: (Jesus touches people lying on the floor and they suddenly leap to their feet)

Narrator: He was the Son of God.

Jesus: (Jesus resumes position with arms open wide and big grin)

Narrator: But not everyone realised that yet.

Jesus: (Jesus puts his finger to his lips and looks around)

Narrator: So Jesus and his crowd of followers were passing by the man with leprosy.

Jesus: (Jesus walks past man who is sat on the floor and the crowd follows shortly after)

Narrator: The man with leprosy looked up and into the face of Jesus.

Man: (man dramatically looks towards Jesus and their eyes lock)

Narrator: In that instant he knew that Jesus was different, was special, was powerful and was more than any other man he had ever met. He knew that Jesus had the power to help him.

Man: (man's eyes light up and he smiles broadly)

Narrator: Lifting himself off the ground the man called out to Jesus to stop.

Man: (man gets up and reaches arm out in stopping motion)

Jesus: Jesus stopped and turned.

Crowd: (all eyes are now turned towards the man)

Narrator: Begging him on his knees.

Man: (the man gets on his knees in a begging position)

Narrator: The man says to Jesus, 'If you are willing you can make me clean, you can take away my leprosy.'

Man: (man points to Jesus and then back at himself and his clawed hands)

Narrator: At this point the crowd broke out into laughter.

Crowd: (crowd laughs)

Narrator: Why would Jesus even talk to this man let alone heal him – the idea was so silly it was funny.

Crowd: (more laughter)

Narrator: Because if Jesus touched this man then, by their rules, it meant that Jesus would have to be outcast as well. He would be seen as cursed and unclean.

So the crowd, eager to show Jesus how silly it was to interact with the man with leprosy, started making fun of him and teasing him.

Crowd: (mocking and jeering)

Narrator: But Jesus ignored them.

Jesus: (Jesus puts his fingers in his ears)

Narrator: And turned back to the man with leprosy.

Jesus: (turns to face man)

Narrator: He was filled with compassion for the man.

Jesus: (puts his hands on his own heart)

Narrator: And reached out and touched him.

Jesus: (reaches out his hand and touches man)

Narrator: The crowd was shocked and appalled.

Crowd: (looks of horror from the crowd)

Narrator: The man was healed

Man: (man looks at his body and, seeing it is healed, jumps up from his kneeling position)

Narrator: Jesus is pleased.

Jesus: (Jesus gives a big smile)

Narrator: The man is pleased.

Man: (man gives Jesus a hug)

Narrator: And the crowd is confused by why Jesus would choose to ignore everyone's discrimination of the man with leprosy and touch him.

Crowd: (crowd scratches their heads and looks confused)

Narrator: But the man with leprosy knew that he had encountered someone very special.

Jesus: (Jesus holds his arms open wide with a big grin)

Narrator: And he couldn't keep that kind of experience quiet, so he ran about telling everyone the amazing thing Jesus had done for him that day.

Man: (man runs from person to person to tell them the good news – a massive smile)

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