



## STORY 58

# Mr. Clean

## MARK 1

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Mark 1.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

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### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

In Leviticus (that's the third book in the Bible) we find a list of laws that tell God's people what is clean and unclean. Just like sinful people couldn't perfectly reflect a holy God, neither could unclean people. So, this very important list of rules included what is clean or unclean, who might be clean or unclean, and how to get clean if you are unclean. For example, Israel could eat lamb. That animal was clean. But not pigs. That animal was unclean. Other animals like bats and rats, lizards and vultures, wasps and hornets were also considered unclean. (Don't eat hornets, especially when they are still alive!) To touch a dead body made someone unclean. A woman was unclean after she gave birth. And if someone was unclean, they had to wash themselves. In the days of Jesus (and the days of Leviticus too) the most unclean person was a leper. A leper was

**1**  
**Read**

**2**  
**Teach**

not someone who looked like a leopard (the spotted cat), but someone who had an itchy, scratchy, sore, ugly skin disease that wouldn't go away. To keep other people from getting the terrible disease, lepers were to shout "Unclean, unclean" if they were coming close to people. Today's story is about how an unclean leper gets clean.

## TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

**Big Truth**  
Our sins make us  
dirty; Christ can  
make us clean.

Imagine how awful it would be to be a leper. It's *not* like having a big mosquito bite that itches but doesn't bother you for too long. It is like having a bad case of poison ivy, because if people touch the plant's oil on your skin, they can get the poison ivy too. But it's *not* like that, because poison ivy doesn't usually kill people. With leprosy you lose feeling throughout your body, so you can't feel if you cut yourself or something bit you. You also scratch off parts of your body because you can't feel. This made lepers look ugly. They had sores on their skin, and they had parts of their limbs and faces missing. And people wouldn't get close to them. They had no friends, other than other lepers. And they couldn't go to worship in the temple or at synagogue.

One day, a very courageous leper believed that Jesus could turn his sad and scary life around. He was desperate. He came to Jesus, bowed before him, and begged him, "If you will, you can make me clean" (Mark 1:40). Notice he didn't say, "If you can, will you make me clean?" He believed that Jesus had the power to do the impossible—to clean the incurable unclean! Mark's Gospel tells us about what Jesus felt: he was "moved with pity." Then it tells us what Jesus did: he "stretched out his hand and touched him." Then it tells us what Jesus said:

“I will; be clean” (1:41). And do you know what happened? A miracle! “Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean” (1:42). A leopard may not be able to change its spots, but this leper was spot clean!

Next, Jesus commanded him to do what Leviticus said to do: “Go to the priest and show him you are now clean” (see 1:44). This way he could return to society—get a job, be with family and old friends, and worship. He also commanded him not to tell anyone else what had happened. But do you know what he did? He disobeyed! It was good news he was sharing, but it is not what Jesus asked him to do. In fact, it created a big problem for Jesus. Now he couldn’t go anywhere without people mobbing him. Jesus now had to act like an outcast and secretly enter towns! To heal this leper cost Jesus something, but that’s why he came—to give his life for others.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher. {5 minutes}*

Why did Jesus touch the leper when he healed him? Did Jesus need to do that? No. Sometimes he healed people just by saying a word. (The centurion’s servant was healed miles away when Jesus just gave a command.) Plus, the moment Jesus touched the leper, according to the laws in the Old Testament, he should have become unclean. Ah, but that’s just it. Here’s the bigger miracle! Because Jesus is perfectly holy, he didn’t become unclean the moment he touched the man. Rather, the man became perfectly clean. Jesus took away the man’s uncleanness and gave him his cleanness. In that way, it’s like a little picture of what Jesus would do on the cross—the very biggest miracle of all! Jesus, “who knew no sin,” took on our sin so that everyone who bows before Jesus and believes in him (like the leper did!) becomes clean—we become “the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). So, you see, as the Snake Crusher is crushing Satan, he is also cleansing us of all our ugly sins.

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### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** Since God was perfectly holy, what were his people to be? What did they have to do to remain holy?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because God is perfectly holy, he wants his people to be holy.

**Memory Verse**  
I will . . .  
cleanse them;  
and they shall  
be my people,  
and I will be  
their God.

EZEKIEL 37:23

2. **QUESTION:** Who was the most unclean person in our story? What was it like to be a leper? Was there any way that lepers could be made clean? What did the leper believe only Jesus could do for him?

**TAKEAWAY:** The unclean can be made clean by Jesus.

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus healed the leper, what did he tell him to do? What did he tell him not to do? What did the leper do? When someone does something amazing for you, what do you want to do?

**TAKEAWAY:** When God makes us clean, we want to tell others!

4. **QUESTION:** Why didn't people touch lepers? Why did Jesus touch the leper to heal him? How can Jesus make us, not just the leper, clean and righteous?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus took our uncleanness to make us clean.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Leprosy Tag

*Supply List: none*

Have children line up on one side of the room. Assign one child to have leprosy and to stand in the middle of the room. When the leper calls out “Unclean,” the other children try to run to the other side without being tagged. If a child is tagged, he becomes a leper and helps tag others. Play continues until one child remains. Remind children that Jesus had compassion on the man with leprosy and healed him.

### Option 2: Helping Relay

*Supply List: adhesive bandages, table*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Spread out adhesive bandages on a table on one side of the room.*

Divide children into teams and line them up across from the adhesive bandages. On “Go” the first two children from each team link their arms together and walk to the table with adhesive bandages on it. Each child opens one and places it on the hand of his or her partner. They then walk back arm-in-arm to tag the next two children on their team. The race continues until every player has raced. The first team to have their whole team bandaged and back to the starting point wins. Remind children that Jesus healed the leper. We should follow his example and care for others when they are sick too.

3rd–5th

### **Option 1: No Touch Race**

*Supply List: balloons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one for every two children, plus a few extra).*

Divide children into pairs and give each pair a balloon. Have pairs line up along one side of the room and place the balloon between their shoulders (the balloon should prevent the two children from touching one another). On “Go” each pair tries to walk to the opposite side of the room without touching each other and without letting the balloon fall. If it falls, the pair must stop and reposition the balloon before continuing. The first pair to reach the other side wins. Continue to race as time allows. Remind children that lepers were unclean and unable to touch others, but Jesus had compassion on a leper and touched him.

### **Option 2: Do Not Touch Musical Game**

*Supply List: string, music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place a long string on the floor to form a circle big enough for all children to walk around in it.*

Tell children that when the music is playing, they should move around inside the circle, being careful not to touch anyone. If a child touches someone, he or she is out and must leave the circle. When the music stops, all remaining children freeze. The leader then pulls the string to make the circle smaller. Play continues in the same manner, with the circle getting smaller each time the music stops. The last two children remaining win. Remind children that people with leprosy couldn’t touch others but had to stay at a distance and yell, “Unclean!”

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Adhesive Bandage Cross

*Supply List: construction paper, adhesive bandages, crayons, heart stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of construction paper and three adhesive bandages. Set crayons and stickers on tables. Have children write “Jesus is our healer” on the paper. Have them open their three adhesive bandages and use them to form a cross on their paper. Have them add heart stickers to remember Jesus’s great love and compassion for us.

### Option 2: Stick Puppets

*Supply List: cardstock, paper, scissors, crayons, glue sticks, craft sticks, white dot stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make an outline of a sad face and a happy face (one per child). Print the words Unclean and Clean and cut out. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a sad face / happy face paper, *unclean* and *clean* words, and scissors. Place crayons, glue sticks, craft sticks, and white dot stickers on tables. Have children color and cut out the two faces. Glue the sad face and *unclean* to one side of a craft stick, and the happy face and *clean* to the other side. Have them place white dot stickers on the sad face to show they have leprosy. Remind children that people with leprosy had sad, lonely lives, but Jesus healed the leper and made him clean.

### Option 1: Handprint Picture

*Supply List: red copy paper, colored construction paper, pencils, scissors, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a 2-inch heart on red paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two pieces of construction paper (different colors) and a red heart paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children trace their hand on construction paper and cut it out. Next, have them cut out the red heart. Have the children glue their handprint to the second piece of construction paper and glue the heart to the middle of their handprint. Remind children that Jesus had compassion on the leper and touched him when no one else would.

### Option 2: “Create in Me a Clean Heart” Puffy Paint

*Supply List: shaving cream, glue, bowls, paint brushes, cardstock, string, stapler, glitter (optional)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut string into 18-inch lengths. Stir together equal parts white liquid glue and white foam shaving cream to make a “paint” mixture (add glitter if desired). Put mixture in bowls and set on tables. On colored cardstock, print the words “Create in me a clean heart” in bubble letters and put a large heart under it (one copy per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a heart paper and string. Place glue mixture and paint brushes on tables. Have children fold the top of their paper down over the string for hanging and staple to hold in place. Have children paint the bubble letters and heart with the glue mixture. Remind children that our sins make us dirty, but Jesus can make us clean!



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.