

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ are made clean by the saving work of Jesus.

### SCRIPTURE

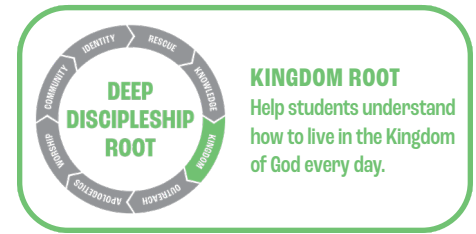
LUKE 5:12-16

### BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The isolation and exclusion that lepers faced were devastating. Here's how one commentator described the extreme mandates lepers had to follow:

The deep significance of leprosy in the Jewish life is probably most clearly appreciated by a study of the rules they had devised to protect themselves from ceremonial defilement by a leper. If upwind of a leper, they would not approach closer than six feet of him; if downwind, a separation of 100 feet was required to maintain ceremonial purity. A leper tore his clothes as a sign of his disease; he was obliged to go about bareheaded, to cover his upper lip, and to constantly shout, "Unclean, unclean."<sup>1</sup>

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/816585491>



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

## OPENING

### PRAYER

1-2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

*OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.*

### OPENING QUESTIONS

3-5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- Share a story about a time you got super sick. What happened, how did you feel, etc.?



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3-5 minutes

Few people understand being an outcast as deeply as lepers did in biblical days. Even their loved ones were forced to keep their distance. Today, we'll look at a leper who took a risk to meet with Jesus. After his encounter with Christ, the leper was restored physically and spiritually because *disciples of Christ are made clean by the saving work of Jesus.*

**Read Luke 5:12–13 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- **What is significant about the way the leper approached Jesus?**  
He was submissive by bowing to the ground. He recognized Jesus' authority over disease. He took a risk approaching Jesus when the rules required him to keep his distance.
- **How do you think everyone else responded when Jesus didn't move as the leper approached him?**  
Answers will vary, and we can't know for sure, but it might be comparable to watching people who don't run from charging bulls or attacking bears.
- **Why do you think Jesus was willing to heal the leper?**  
Over and over again, we see Jesus respond to those who call out to him. He loves us and wants to have a relationship with every person (1 Tim. 2:3–4).

ASK INTENTIONAL  
QUESTIONS

*Say something like:* In these two verses, we see Jesus treat this leper differently than anyone else was willing to do. It changed the leper's life. When we follow Jesus' example and treat people the way he did, two things will be true: we'll be different from everyone else, and God will use us to change others.

**Read Luke 5:13–14 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- **Why do you think Jesus touched the leper instead of using just his words to heal the leper?**  
Answers will vary, but this speaks to the detail of Jesus' healing. This leper probably longed for human contact. Jesus not only met the man's physical needs but also his emotional needs.
- **Why is it significant that the leprosy left this guy "immediately"?**  
It demonstrates Jesus' ultimate power and provides proof of his divinity.
- **Why did Jesus want this healing to be kept secret?**  
A few possibilities: 1) People would only want Jesus' physical healing, not spiritual healing. 2) Crowds would become too intense and make Jesus' ministry more difficult (Mark 1:45). 3) Jesus wanted the former leper to go straight to the priests. Whatever the reason Jesus had, we can be sure that his timing is best.

ASK INTENTIONAL  
QUESTIONS

*Say something like:* Jesus can heal us in ways we might not even think are possible. When we go to him for help, he brings complete healing. It may not always be in the way we expect, but it will be what we need.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

**Read Luke 5:15–16 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:**

7–10 minutes

- **What do you typically do after an encounter with Jesus?**  
Answers will vary—worship, tell someone, pray, attend church, etc.
- **How do you think your stories about Jesus can impact others?**  
Answers will vary—knowing how God works in your life can make nonbelievers curious about Jesus and encourage believers that God can work in their lives.

ASK INTENTIONAL  
QUESTIONS

*Say something like:* Our encounters with Jesus are powerful events in our lives and can make a big difference in the lives of others. The good news of Jesus is most impactful when it is shared.



**CONNECT & APPLY**

**CONNECTION**

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of a time someone stood up for you.



SHARE PERSONAL STORIES

*Example:* Once there was a guy with a pretty shady past. He had plenty of horrific and sinful mistakes that made him a pretty scary guy. But then he met Jesus in a miraculous way. When he tried to join a nearby church, the people turned him away. They had serious doubts about the man’s supposed conversion. The church wanted nothing to do with him, except for one faithful man, Barney. Barney stood up for the new guy and shared stories about the changes he recognized in the new guy. Because of Barney’s persistence, the church decided to welcome the new guy. Eventually, the new guy changed his name to Paul and, with the help of his friend Barnabas, planted many churches throughout the region. The apostle Paul is arguably the greatest example we have of what a Christ-follower looks like, but even he needed the help of someone else to bring him into a community of faith (Acts 9:26-28, 11:25-26).

- Who has played a role in getting you involved in a community of believers? How did they do it?  
*Answers will vary, but most of us get involved at church because someone invited us. A friend or family member talked to us about their beliefs in Jesus and asked us to join them.*

**MARK OF A DISCIPLE**

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ are made clean by the saving work of Jesus.  
Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

**APPLY IT**

5-10 minutes

What story about God’s work in your life can you share this week? Pray for God to provide an opportunity to share something he has done in your life with someone else, then follow through.



MAKE LIFE APPLICATION

*Be specific:*

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



HOLD STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



**CLOSING****PRAYER***2–3 minutes*

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks. Spend time praying for your students to embrace the cleansing touch of Jesus.

*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

**MEMORY VERSE**

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

"And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.'

And immediately the leprosy left him."

Luke 5:13 (ESV)

**NOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> M. S. Mills, *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999), Ch. 22.

