

Hope for the Hopeless



Theme: When you have nowhere to turn, turn to Jesus. 6th Sunday after Epiphany Yr. B

Object: A bottle of calamine lotion

Scripture: A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. Mark 1:40-42

Do you know what this is? It is a bottle of medicine called calamine lotion. Calamine is a medicine that is sometimes used to help stop itching. Have you ever had the chicken pox? When you have chicken pox, it starts out like a cold -- you feel lousy, have a runny nose, and run a fever. Then, all of a sudden, itchy red bumps start to break out all over your body. The itching drives you crazy, but you can't scratch, because that just makes it worse. It is a very uncomfortable feeling, but it isn't hopeless. Rubbing on some calamine lotion may help to ease the itching. In a few days, the sores go away, the itching stops, and life is back to normal again.

During the time when Jesus lived upon the earth, leprosy was very wide-spread and was a dreaded disease. When someone had leprosy, they were covered with sores all over their bodies. Unlike chicken pox, these sores didn't just go away. When someone had leprosy, it was hopeless, because there was no cure. To make matters worse, other people considered them to be unclean and were not allowed to touch them. Many people believed that people who had leprosy got the disease because of some terrible sin they had committed.

One day a man with leprosy came to Jesus. The man knelt down before Jesus and said, "If you will, you can make me clean." Jesus looked at the man and he felt love and compassion for him. He reached out his hand and touched the man and said, "I am willing, be clean." Immediately, the leprosy left the man and he was cured.

Sometimes, we may find ourselves in a situation where we are uncomfortable, like when we had the chicken pox. But there may come a time in our lives when we find ourselves in a situation that is truly hopeless. When that happens, where can we turn? How do we find hope in a hopeless situation? We can turn to Jesus. When the situation is hopeless, Jesus is our only hope.

Dear Father, you sent your Son to bring hope to the hopeless. When we find ourselves in a hopeless situation, we will put our hope and trust in him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

TURN,TURN,TURN: Children can stand in a long line or they can scatter around a designated area or stand in a circle, as teacher desires. The teacher can tell the children to TURN to the RIGHT or TURN to the LEFT, or TURN toward the MIDDLE of the room, or TURN toward the teacher or the window, or the door, etc. The teacher can have a very LARGE lettered J-E-S-U-S on one wall and from time to time the

teacher can say to TURN to JESUS. Play as time allows and let children hear today's Bible story after sharing our THEME and today's Bible verse.

CLEAN MACHINE: Divide the class into two teams. One team can be given washable markers to put dots of marker on the other team members' arms or faces, if desired. The team with the dots will then be given wet toweling or wipes to wipe off the dots. Let children know about today's Bible lesson and the leprosy that was the dreaded disease in Jesus' time. Then switch markers to the other team and continue the same way as the first team.

TURN TO HOPE: Before classtime, the teacher can make a big poster to say HOPE and decorate to hang in the classroom. During the classtime, tell the children that the teacher will be telling the children to TURN TO HOPE through out today's lesson and at many different times. The teacher can move the HOPE poster from place to place while doing the lesson while children are busy and not paying attention and then tell the children to TURN TO HOPE and continue this through out the classtime. Discussion about HOPE and TRUST with the children each time would help them to remember today's lesson.

BANDAID MAN: Give children supplies to cut out part of a person and glue or tape to a piece of construction paper. The teacher will come to each child's paper and put a mark on a couple of places on the body and then give the children 2 bandaids to place on those marks. Tell children to write HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS on the shirt of their paper person and talk about today's lesson with leprosy and Jesus healing the man who had hope and trust in Jesus.

FINGER PAINTING HOPE: Children can be given paper and paint to do a finger painting project. After children have played with the paints and made designs on their paper with the paint, encourage the children to use their finger and write HOPE on the artwork and let it dry throughout the class time.

HOPE AND TRUST ACROSTIC: The teacher can write HOPE/TRUST down the left side of a poster board or the chalkboard and let the class work together to find words for each of the letters that would encourage people to have hope and trust in Jesus. The ideas could be ways that Jesus shows us to trust Him as well.

BIG LETTER HUNT: Before classtime, the teacher/leaders can make large construction paper letters (one letter for each piece of construction paper) to hide around a designated area. There should be a large letter for every letter of HOPE and TRUST. Children can HUNT for the letters and bring them back to tape to the classroom door or a special wall or poster board! Tell children to ask each other questions about today's lesson.