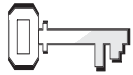


Naaman and the Dirty River



References

2 Kings 5:1-16;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 244–250



Memory Verse

“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another” (John 1:16, NIV).

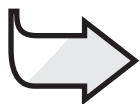


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God’s gift of grace is for all people.

Feel the joy of God’s superabundant grace.

Respond personally to God’s grace and desire to share it with others.



The Message

God’s grace is for everyone.

Monthly Theme

God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Naaman, a captain of the army of the king of Aram (Syria), has leprosy. Working for his wife is a young, captive Israelite girl. The girl suggests that Naaman ask the prophet Elisha for healing. The king of Aram agrees, and Naaman goes to Israel. Elisha sends a messenger to tell Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman resists, but is persuaded by his servants. He follows Elisha’s instructions, is cured, and acknowledges the God of Elisha, vowing to worship no other.

This is a lesson about grace.

God offered healing to Naaman, who had been an enemy of His people. When Naaman finally agreed to try God’s way, he received both physical and spiritual healing. God offers the same grace to anyone who will receive it.

Teacher Enrichment

“There are three features that set leprosy apart from other diseases: 1) The incubation period is unusually long, being from two to twenty years with an average of two to three years. . . . 2) Leprosy is believed today to be spread primarily by droplet infection. 3) The outstanding feature of leprosy is an anaesthesia—the loss of feeling” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, p. 668).

“Suspected lepers were quarantined for seven days, then examined by a priest. If the condition persisted, they were confined for another seven days (Lev. 13:4, 5). Those still afflicted were cast out from the community. . . . Houses could also be deemed leprous, probably because of dry rot, lichens, or mold, which polluted anyone who entered” (*Illustrated Dictionary of Bible Life and Times* [The Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., 1997], pp. 212, 213).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door, hear pleased/troubled	
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Excluded!</i> B. <i>Mystery Boxes</i>	small white circle stickers two boxes, small familiar articles (key, brush, comb, pencil, etc.), unfamiliar objects (compass, piece of hardware, or obscure tool)
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> gift box offering device none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	white stick-on dots, small empty medicine bottle, pictures of healing methods (medicine, shots, surgery, doctor kit, etc.) small pieces of paper, empty medicine bottle Bibles, slips of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Especially for You!</i>	slips of paper, pen, bowl or basket, Bible
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Especially for Them!</i>	2" x 4" (5 x 10 cm) pieces of heavy paper, pencils, crayons, markers, Bibles

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- small white circle stickers

A. Excluded!

Move around the class and randomly stick white round stickers on about a third of the children. Say: **We are going to pretend that those of you with white stickers have leprosy. If anyone comes near you, you must call out "Unclean! Unclean!" and hurry to the back of the room.** Then encourage the children to greet one another and shake hands as a way of saying hello. When everyone has been greeted, have the children with stickers remove them and stick them on someone else. Repeat the activity a third time so everyone experiences being excluded.

Debriefing

How did you feel about being excluded from the rest of the class? Would you like to have to call out *unclean* every time someone comes near you? That is what happened to people with leprosy in Bible times. With God, no one is excluded. Our lesson today is about an important man who had leprosy. Here is the message we will learn from his story:



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERYONE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- two boxes
- small familiar objects such as a key, brush, comb, pencil, etc.
- unfamiliar objects, such as a compass, piece of hardware, or obscure tool

B. Mystery Boxes

Prepare in advance two boxes, each with a hole just large enough for a child's hand. In one box place small familiar objects such as a key, brush, comb, pencil, etc. In the other place unfamiliar objects such as a compass, piece of hardware, or an obscure tool. (Have enough items between the two boxes so that every child has the opportunity to pull something out once.) Large group: Have a set of boxes for each six to eight children.

First, use the box with familiar objects. Then use the one with unfamiliar objects. One at a time, let the children put their hand into a box, pick up one of the objects, try to identify it by feel, and then pull it out to see if they were right. (They leave the article out of the box.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you were unable to identify things in the second box?** (not surprised; I did my best, etc.) **Did you like trying to tell what things were?** (yes) **Our Bible story today is about a man who had a disease that took away his**

ability to feel things. His story will show us that today's message is true. Our message is:



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERYONE.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 40)
- "God Knows Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 47)
- "Can You Imagine?" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 29)
- "He's Everything to Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 43)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Say: **We give to help spread the news that God's grace is for everyone.** (Collect offering.)

You Need:

- gift box offering device



Prayer

Encourage the children to share a time when they were healed from a scratch, fever, stomachache, cold, etc. Remind them that God can heal small hurts and large hurts. During group prayer give each child opportunity to thank God for healing.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- white stick-on dots
- small empty medicine bottle
- pictures of healing methods (medicine, shots, surgery, doctor kit, etc.)

Experiencing the Story

Let the children stick the adhesive dots to their hands and arms. Let them know when to remove their dots to represent God's removing Naaman's leprosy.

Read or tell the story.

Namaan was the commander of the army of Aram (Syria). He was famous for his ability to win battles, and he was a close friend of the king.

One day this warrior got very sick. His skin began to dry up. It turned white and began to fall off. He couldn't feel things as well as before. Naaman had leprosy, a disease no doctor could cure. *[Children attach white sticky dots to their arms and hands.]*

A young Israelite girl worked for Naaman's wife. She was a captive from one of the raids against Israel. Even though the girl now lived far away from home among her enemies, she had not forgotten the great things God had done for Israel.

"Why doesn't your husband go ask the prophet in Israel to heal him?" she asked Naaman's wife. "Elisha could ask God to cure the leprosy."

Naaman had seen every doctor in Aram; he had tried every medicine. Nothing had worked. Elisha was his last hope.

Naaman left for Israel with several companies of Aramean soldiers and wagons loaded with treasure to pay for a miracle cure. What a strange sight that must have been!

Elisha didn't give Naaman any medicine. *[Hold up empty medicine bottle and shake head "no."]* He didn't burn incense or whisper secret spells. He told his ser-

vant to tell Naaman to go take a bath—not just anywhere, but in the Jordan River that flowed nearby.

Naaman was frustrated. Elisha hadn't even talked to him! He had expected the God of Israel to do something big, but all he had been told was to take a bath in a dirty river! Not once! Seven times! He was ready to go home. If God wanted him to wash in a river, why not do it at home? The rivers near his home ran fast and clear. But the Jordan was a muddy stream not much wider than a camel path!

Fortunately, one of Naaman's servants stopped him. "If Elisha had asked you to do something big, would you have done it?" he asked.

Of course I would, Naaman thought. He had conquered entire countries. There was no big thing he couldn't do. Except heal himself.

The servant continued. "Then what is so hard about doing such a little thing?"

So Naaman decided to do what God's prophet said.

He went to the Jordan River. Six times he lowered himself into the water. Nothing happened. As he rose from the water a seventh time, something had changed. His pale, dry skin was gone. He was covered with the soft, healthy skin of a young man. *[Tell the children to remove their white spots.]*

Not only was he changed outside, Naaman had also changed inside. "I know that the God of Israel is the true God," he exclaimed. "I will worship Him from now on."

Only the love of God could make a captive servant girl kind to her captors. Only the power of God could work miracles through the prophet Elisha. And only God's grace could heal a foreign warrior of his sin and his sickness.

God wants to give His gifts of grace to everyone.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you think Naaman felt when he discovered he had leprosy?** (afraid, worried, sad, etc.) **If you had been a captive and a slave, would you have told Naaman about Elisha?** (Yes, no, maybe, why should I?)

Why didn't Naaman want to do what Elisha said? (He expected something more exciting; he was disappointed, he didn't want to wash in dirty water; it was too easy; etc.) **What do you think happened when Naaman came home?** (He had a party, a celebration; he told others about the God of Israel, etc.)

What are some ways used to help heal illness today? (medicine, shots, surgery, go to doctor, etc.) Show the pictures as you discuss ways to treat illness today. **Do you think God still heals people today?** Encourage belief in God's healing power.

God asks people to cooperate with Him while He is healing them. How did Naaman cooperate with Him? (He humbled himself and bathed in the Jordan River.) **Whom did Naaman learn to trust?** (God)

What does Naaman's story say about God? (He loves everyone; He even heals people who do not know or love Him; He wants to help everyone.) **Let's remember today's message . . .**



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERYONE.

Memory Verse

Prepare in advance: Take small pieces of paper and write one word of the verse (John 1:16) on each. **"From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another"**

You Need:

- small pieces of paper
- empty medicine bottle

(John 1:16, NIV). Number the pieces in order. Crumple each piece of paper into a tiny ball. Place the balls of paper into an empty medicine bottle, symbolizing pills.

One of the children can open the bottle and pour out the "pills." Volunteers each open one of the "pills" and read a word. Using the numbers on the paper, children work together to put the words in order and then say the verse together. Repeat until children can say the verse from memory.

Bible Study

Prepare in advance: Write the names below on slips of paper, each with their appropriate verses. Select six children to read aloud the story of Naaman from 2 Kings 5:1-16. Assign to each child one of the characters, giving them the verses in which they will read whatever the character they represent does or says. Adults assist the readers as necessary.

Characters:

- Naaman (verses 1, 4, 5b, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15)
- Captive Maid (verses 2, 3)
- King of Aram (verse 5a)
- King of Israel (verse 7)
- Elisha (verses 8, 10, 16)
- Naaman's servants (verse 13)

Debriefing

Ask: **What is your favorite part of this story?** (Accept answers.) **Did you learn anything new from hearing the Bible version?** (Accept answers.) **What did it teach you about people who are different from you? What will you remember about people who are different from you? Who is the best doctor of all?** (God, Jesus) **Let's say today's message:**



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERYONE.

You Need:

- Bibles
- slips of paper

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- slips of paper
- pen
- bowl or basket
- Bible

Especially for You!

Personalize one of the following texts for each student, including the student's name. (For example: ". . . and the grace of God was upon (name) .") Write the texts on slips of paper and place in a bowl or basket. (You can find and use other texts as well.)

The children take turns choosing a paper and reading it to the person whose name is written in the verse. Be sure to have extra papers that can be read for visitors.

Proverbs 3:34

Acts 4:33, last part

Romans 1:7, last part

Galatians 6:18

1 Timothy 1:14

1 Timothy 2:4

Save these papers for the next activity.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you like finding your name in a verse of the Bible?** (This makes the Bible real and personal, etc.)

When you are tempted to think that you can't do anything right, or that no one cares about you, what will you remember? Let's say our message:



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERY-ONE.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Especially for Them!

Using pieces of heavy paper, have the children make a personalized Bible verse for someone in particular. (See examples from Applying the Lesson.) The children should plan to deliver the card to the person in the coming week.

Debriefing

Ask: **Who has someone in mind with whom to share your Bible verse card?** (Accept answers.) **How do you think they will feel when you give**

them your card? How will you feel?

Why will it be good to give someone a Bible verse with their name added? (So they will know that God's grace is for them personally.) **Let's say our message together again:**



GOD'S GRACE IS FOR EVERYONE.

Closing

Sing together "Amigos de Cristo" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 69). Ask a child to have a Thank-You prayer and thank God that His grace is for everyone.

You Need:

- 2" x 4" (5 x 10 cm) pieces of heavy paper
- pencils, crayons, markers
- Bibles

Naaman and the Dirty River

References

2 Kings 5:1-16;
Prophets and Kings,
 pp. 244–250

Memory Verse

“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another” (John 1:16, NIV).

The Message

God’s grace is for everyone.

Touch your elbows. Then lightly rub your index fingers together. Which could you feel more? There are lots more nerves in your fingers than on your elbows. God gave us special nerves to help us know when we touch something hot, cold, hard, soft, or painful. People who have leprosy lose the ability to feel those things. Here’s what happened to one man who had leprosy.

Naaman was the commander of the army of Aram (Syria). He was famous for winning battles. And he was a close friend of the king.

One day this warrior got very sick. His skin began to dry up. It turned white and began to fall off. And he was losing some of his ability to feel things. Naaman had leprosy, a disease no doctor could cure.

A young Israelite girl worked for Naaman’s wife. She was a captive from one of Aram’s raids against Israel. The girl now lived far away from home, among Israel’s enemies. But she had not forgotten the great things God had done for Israel.

“Why doesn’t your husband go ask the prophet in Israel to heal him?” she asked Naaman’s wife. “Elisha could ask God to cure the leprosy.”

Naaman had seen every doctor in Aram. He had tried every medicine. Nothing had worked. Elisha was his last hope.

Naaman led several companies of Aramean soldiers to Israel. Wagons followed, loaded with treasure to pay for a miracle cure. What a strange sight that must have been!

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would do it at home. The rivers near his home ran fast and clear. The Jordan was a muddy stream not much wider than a camel path!

Fortunately, one of Naaman’s servants stopped him. “If Elisha had asked you to do something big, would you have done it?” he asked.

Of course I would, Naaman thought. He had conquered entire countries. There was no big thing he couldn’t do—except heal himself.

The servant continued. “Then what is so hard about doing such a little thing?”

Naaman thought about it, then made up his mind. He would do what God’s prophet said.

He went to the Jordan River. Six times he lowered himself into the water. Nothing happened. As he rose from the water a seventh time, something had changed. His pale, dry skin was gone! He was covered with the soft, healthy skin of a young man!



Not only was he changed outside, Naaman had also changed inside. "I know that the God of Israel is the only true God," he said.

Only the love of God could make a captive servant girl be kind to her captors. Only the power of God could work miracles through the prophet Elisha. And only God's grace could heal a foreign warrior of his sin and his sickness.

God wants to give His gifts of grace to everyone, including you.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go on a nature walk with your family. Collect things such as leaves, seeds, burrs, grasses, flowers, acorns, nuts, pine cones, and twigs. Sort the things by making piles of similar objects (all the acorns together, all the seeds together, etc.). Do they feel the same? Read your Bible lesson. Then thank God for your sense of touch.

Sunday

- With an adult, make an ink spot on a scrap of cloth. Spray the spot with hair spray. What happens? Naaman would have been happy if he could have removed his spots with hair spray. Why did he have spots? Read 2 Kings 5:1.*
- Write your memory verse on paper and decorate it with pictures of blessings God has given you. Thank God for those blessings.

Monday

- During family worship, read and discuss 2 Kings 5:2-6.
- Deliver the verse you made for someone in Sabbath School. Or make a card for someone using their name with a Bible verse such as Romans 1:7: "Grace and peace to ___[name]___ from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (NIV). Tell the person that God's grace is for everyone—including them.
- What river is nearest to your home? Would you like to bathe in it? Why?
- Pray for someone who is sick.

Tuesday

- With your family, read 2 Kings 5:7-12. What are some healing methods used today?
- Write "Ways to Stay Healthy" at the top of a paper. Draw examples on the paper.
- Say your memory verse without help. Then sing

"Seek Ye First" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 67) before prayer. Thank God for His healing power.

Wednesday

- Read 2 Kings 5:13-16 with your family. Why did God heal Naaman?
- Think of a time that you didn't like God's instructions. Ask for His forgiveness in a silent prayer and thank Him for loving you anyway. Ask Him to help you to do His will.
- Make a bookmark. Find and write Psalm 40:8 on one side. Write Philippians 4:13 on the other. His strength is another gift of grace. Ask God for strength to do His will.

Thursday

- The Bible tells about other lepers. Can you unscramble their names?
Numbers 12:10 mairim _____
Exodus 4:6 soems _____
Matthew 26:6 isnom _____
Luke 17:12 net sreple _____
- What did God do for them?
- What can you do to prevent sickness?
- Say your memory verse, then sing "Redeemed!" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 68) before prayer. Thank God for good health.

Friday

- For sundown worship, hang a sheet between two chairs. Imagine that the River Jordan is behind it. Act out the story of Naaman. How many times will you have to dip in the "water"?
- Read Psalm 98, taking turns reading the verses. Ask each person to tell about a "marvelous thing" God has done for them.
- Say your memory verse together. Sing "All Praise to Thee" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 19) before prayer.

*Adapted from Kathie Reimer, *1001 Ways to Help Your Child Walk With God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1994), p. 77.