What would it be like to feel no physical pain? For many of us, that may sound like an attractive prospect, but for the thousands of people diagnosed with leprosy each year, not feeling pain can have devastating consequences.

Pain is a warning signal – it tells us that something is not quite right. We know when we have a piece of grit in our eye, or when we have cut our foot or touched a hot pan. We take action. We react quickly to prevent further pain and we seek medical attention if we need it.

If leprosy is not diagnosed early enough, it can cause insensitivity in a person’s hands, feet or face. They no longer feel pain.

WHAT IS LEPROSY?
Leprosy still exists. Each year over 215,000* people around the world are diagnosed with leprosy, with the majority of new cases in India. (*World Health Organisation, 2013)

Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease that attacks nerves in the skin’s surface resulting in loss of sensation. If a person affected by leprosy steps on a piece of glass in bare feet, they would feel no pain. Without any immediate action, infection sets in, wounds do not heal and lifelong disabilities can occur, including blindness and the loss of limbs. Around four million people in our world today live with leprosy-related disabilities.

Feet damaged by leprosy

And yet leprosy is completely curable. A course of drug therapy provides the cure and, if caught early enough, the person will have no lasting effects of the disease. But because leprosy primarily occurs in poor countries and communities, many of those who have it do not have access to good healthcare. They may ignore the symptoms because they can’t afford to see a doctor, or because they are afraid their family or community will reject them if they have the disease.

Sadly, even today, many people affected by leprosy live in colonies with other leprosy-affected people because they are stigmatised and discriminated against. There are 850 such colonies in India alone.

ABOUT THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND (TLM NI)
The Leprosy Mission works to change people’s perceptions of leprosy and integrate people who have been cast out of their homes back into their communities.

TLM NI is part of a global organisation that exists to defeat leprosy and transform lives.

We support hospitals and projects in Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Nigeria and Tanzania that cure, care for and restore the lives of people affected by leprosy.

Because leprosy and poverty are inextricably linked, the Leprosy Mission provides holistic health care, education, skills training, small business loans and low-cost housing, all with the aim of transforming the lives of the poorest of the poor.

At its heart, the Leprosy Mission follows the example of Jesus to demonstrate compassion for the poor, the lonely and the outcast.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
There are lots of ways you and your group can support the Leprosy Mission. We would love you to stand in the gap, helping to cure, care for and restore people affected by leprosy:

Give: TLM is reliant on the generosity of churches, community organisations and individuals for financial support to make a lasting difference to the lives of people affected by leprosy. We would love you and your group to partner with us to bring change where it’s needed most.

Act: The Bible encourages us to speak up against injustice and to give a voice to the voiceless (Proverbs 31:8). One of TLM’s key aims is to raise awareness about leprosy and combat the stigma that so often surrounds the disease. Your group can speak up for people affected by leprosy.

Pray: You can use the information in this resource to help you pray, individually, or as a group, for the work of TLM.

On page 3, you will find lots of inspiration for getting your group motivated to make a big difference to the lives of people affected by leprosy, all while having lots of fun!

HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES
In these resources, we will be encouraging you to explore with your group what living without pain might be like and to step into the shoes of people affected by leprosy to see how their lives are impacted by the disease.

There are two sessions to choose from, one aimed at children under 11, the other at young people aged 11-16. The sessions are split into several sections, it’s up to you how many of those sections you use. Feel free to tailor the session to fit your group and the time you have available. If you follow all the activities, the session will last for about an hour.

Additional resources, activities and worksheets can be downloaded from www.nopainnogaintlm.org
How you can help The Leprosy Mission change lives

GIVE
One great way to support The Leprosy Mission is to raise money. It’s also a great team building opportunity, and a fun way to create memories!

Why not choose as a group which fundraising activity you will do together, how much you plan to raise (use the information below to guide you) and decide which day or which session you will do it at.

Under 11s – can become a ‘helping hand’, helping TLMNI make a difference to many lives. £5 is equivalent to one ‘helping hand’. When you run your fundraising event, you can download and print certificates of a ‘helping hand’ for each child that takes part, to say a big Thank You from The Leprosy Mission NI! You can also order stickers from TLM NI office to give out to every child in your group.

Over 11s – Feet first £10 can buy a pair of sandals that will help protect a leprosy-affected person’s feet from blisters and infection. Ask your group to think about how many sandals they could ‘buy’ together. Get them to think of fundraising activities related to feet or shoes, or use one of the ones we’ve listed below.

Fundraising ideas for all ages
• Wear odd shoes for an evening or day – the stranger the combination the better!
• Run 100m wearing wellies filled with water, or baked beans!
• Have a paint your friend’s hands or feet evening
• Have a paint your own face event (without using a mirror!)
• Draw round your hand and write a chore that you could do for family or friends on the thumb and each finger.
   They can ask friends and family to sponsor them or they could pay an agreed ‘fee’ to take part, such as a few pounds.
   (A more complete list of fundraising activities and sponsorship forms are available to download)

ACT
Telling others about leprosy and the work of The Leprosy Mission is a great way to partner with TLM. Sometimes we need to tell people in positions of power (like MPs) about the injustice other people face in different countries so that they can use their influence to bring about change.

LEADER’S NOTE: any advocacy campaigns we run will be on our website and will be emailed to you if you’ve signed up to receive our news!

Ask the group what they’ve learned about leprosy and The Leprosy Mission NI today.
• Not many people realise that leprosy still affects so many people around the world. Encourage the children to tell their parents, siblings and friends what they’ve learnt about leprosy.
• They could share what they’ve learnt about pain being an essential warning system to protect our bodies from harm. And how hard it might be to live without it.
• The Bible encourages us to speak up against injustice (Proverbs 31:8). Life can be very unjust for people who are diagnosed with leprosy. We should use our voices to make other people aware of this; if more people know about it, the more likely it is that lives will be changed!

Activity
• In pairs or a small group make a poster to explain what leprosy is and how challenging life might be if you can’t feel pain. Display it in your church or ask a local shop to put it in their window.

PRAY
Under 11s
• Give the children a piece of A4 paper each. Get them to draw round either their hand or a foot. Then, on their hand or foot, get them to write a short prayer relating to what they’ve learnt today. You could display all the prayers in your church or hall.
• Make prayer chains. Cut up several strips of paper, enough for at least one per child. Ask your group to write prayers on the paper strips. Use these to decorate your church or hall.

Over 11s
• Download and print off TLM ‘prayer stations’. These include words and images relating to the session that can be used to encourage the young people to pray. Give each young person a pen and ask them to walk round the room and write a prayer or even one word, relating to the words and images, on the print outs.

How your support can change lives
Why not aim, as a group, to cure, care for and restore one leprosy-affected person!
£5 can buy a pair of glasses that will protect eyes from damage
£10 can buy a pair of sandals that will keep feet from getting cut and infected
£50 can buy school uniform, shoes and school supplies for one child
£200 can cure/care for and restore one leprosy-affected person
£1,000 can cure, care for and restore five leprosy-affected people

Thank you for partnering with us to help transform the lives of people affected by leprosy!
OBJECTIVES:
• To help children understand how being able to feel physical pain is essential to our lives
• To help them understand the consequences of living without it for people affected by leprosy
• To inspire them that they can make a difference to people’s lives by raising funds and through small acts of kindness that make a big difference

SUMMARY OF RESOURCES REQUIRED
• Print out of photo of Arati and the map of Nepal
• Oven gloves (preferably the ones that are like large mittens, but other types could be used too)
• Some packets of chocolate buttons (perhaps giant buttons for the younger children and small ones for the older children)
• A plate (to put the chocolate buttons on)
• A few items of spare clothing, a scarf, hat, a zip up cardigan or jacket
• A watch with a second hand or a stop watch
• A copy of the Bible study
• Print outs of worksheets, enough for one per child
• Coloured pens, felts, pencils, glue, sheets of A4 paper

ICEBREAKER (5 mins)
The line-up game
Split your group into two teams. The aim of the game is to be the first team to line up in the right order, based on the instructions given by the leader. (You can add your own ideas to the list below).
• Line up in age, youngest at the front, oldest at the back
• Line up according to your month of birth, January at the front, December at the back
• Line up in first name alphabetical order
• What is your pet’s name? (line up in alphabetical order, with no pets at the front to Z at the back)
• How many cousins do you have? (line up starting with one or none at the front)

ARATI’S STORY (10 mins)
LEADER’S NOTE: Show the photo of Arati and the map of Nepal. We have included some questions for the group within the text, but feel free to add your own, or not use them, depending on how much your group likes to contribute!

Arati is eight years old. She lives in a country called Nepal (does anyone know anything about Nepal?). In Nepal many people work as farmers, looking after cows or growing food. Life can be quite hard as sometimes people don’t have enough to eat and there aren’t big supermarkets or shopping malls like the ones we have here.

If someone gets sick they may not always be able to find a doctor or have the money to pay to go to a hospital. (Who has been to hospital or seen a doctor before? Did you have to pay to see him or her?)

Arati lives in a small village. When she got sick, her mother took her on a bus to the nearest clinic – it took four hours to get there!

Arati has a disease called leprosy. It can be quite difficult for someone to know they have it as it requires a specially-trained doctor to spot. Arati noticed some funny-looking patches on her skin, and when she touched them they felt numb. (Has anyone ever slept on their arm, or sat in one position for too long and had pins and needles? It can feel a little bit like this).

If leprosy is not caught early enough it can mean that people are unable to feel pain. What would happen if you touched a hot kettle without realising it was hot? You would pull your hand away very quickly because it hurts! But a person who has leprosy wouldn’t know it was hot, they wouldn’t have any pain, and they could end up burning their hand very badly.

At the clinic the doctors gave Arati medicine to make her well again. She has to take it for a whole year, but it will mean that she is completely cured!

The doctors are still a little bit worried about Arati because she has some signs that she has lost feeling in her hands and feet. She is also very thin. Her family are poor and they do not always have enough to eat. But, with the help of The Leprosy Mission, the clinic staff will do all that they can to help her.

The Leprosy Mission helps children like Arati by supporting special skin clinics like the one Arati and her mother attended. They also train doctors to spot leprosy. And they run projects to help people like Arati’s mother gain new skills so they can earn enough to provide food, a home and education for their children.
GAME: A taste of chocolate (5-10 mins)

**LEADER’S NOTE:** This game aims to help children get a taste of what it might be like to live without feeling in their hands or feet.

You will need the spare clothes, the oven gloves and the chocolate buttons

**To start:** get all the children to take their shoes off. If you have a large group you could split them into two teams.

**The game:** Explain that the aim of the game is to eat as many chocolate buttons as they can. But first they have to get dressed up. They will have one minute to put on a hat, a scarf, their own shoes and a zip up jacket. Ask them how many chocolate buttons they think they will be able to eat. Then tell them they need to do all this with a pair of oven gloves on their hands (if you want to make the game less difficult, they can wear a glove on just one hand, preferably the one they write with). Now, ask them again how many buttons they will be able to eat (they have to pick them up one at a time). We have suggested one minute but decide whether you think this is enough or whether longer is needed for your group.

Have ready each item of clothing and a plate of chocolate buttons. Get the first child up, give them the oven gloves to put on and start the timer. They have to put each item of clothing on correctly, zip up the zipper and make sure their shoes are done up properly. Once they’re dressed they can try and eat the buttons, one at a time! After his or her time has finished get them to take the clothes off and then start again with the second child.

**Alternative method:** instead of using the oven glove(s), use a blindfold. Once the child is blindfolded start the timer, they have to put the clothes on and then find the chocolate (without help from their friends!)

**Ask:** What was frustrating about the game? Did they learn anything from the game?

**Explain:** Having the oven gloves or blindfold on made it much harder for their hands or eyes to work the way they need them to in order for them to do everyday tasks like getting dressed and eating. This is what it can be like for people with leprosy – when you don’t have feeling in your hands, or your hands are damaged or you lose your sight, life can become much more challenging.

---

**BIBLE FOCUS** (10-15 mins)

Mark 3:3-6

**Key Learning:**
1. Consider what it would be like to be able to do something for the first time
2. Understand the importance of being kind to people in need

Learning a skill like writing or drawing can take time. But once you have mastered it, and you have written a full sentence, or drawn a picture of your favourite animal, you feel so pleased with yourself and excited about what you can do. For the man in the Bible story, not being able to use his hand must have been very frustrating. How thrilled he must have been when Jesus healed him. Now he would be able to do all those things he’d always wanted to do. Can you imagine what that would be like?

Jesus was kind to people in need. He helped the man in this story. He fed 5,000 people when they were hungry and he went to dinner with the unpopular tax collector. We can be kind to other people in big ways and in small ways. We can be kind to our friends, to those who feel left out sometimes, and we can be kind to people we’ve never met – people like Arati who have leprosy and who need a ‘helping hand’.

**WORKSHEET** (5-10 mins)

Chose from a selection of downloadable activity worksheets such as a puzzle or quiz.

**RESPONSE** (see page 3) (5-10 mins)

**LEADER’S NOTE:** the aim here is to get the children to think about how they can make a difference to the lives of children like Arati. Depending on time, you may need to pick just one or two of these responses.

---

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Dear Jesus, thank you for your love for people who are hurting and forgotten. Help us to show other people what your love is like. Help us to show how we can care for the poor and for children like Arati who have leprosy. Thank you for The Leprosy Mission and all it does to help people who face difficulties because they have leprosy. Please give The Leprosy Mission lots of opportunities to cure, care for and restore people affected by leprosy. Amen.
There, he was diagnosed with leprosy and, finally, given the treatment he needed.

Do you know anything about leprosy?

Leprosy is only mildly contagious yet many people and communities around the world are fearful of it. Leprosy attacks nerves in the skin resulting in numbness and loss of feeling, particularly in the hands, feet and face. This means that people affected by leprosy often cannot feel pain.

What do you think are some of the issues that people face if they cannot feel pain?

Why do you think God gave us the ability to feel pain?

Because Aboubacar did not receive the treatment he needed when he was very young, he has lost feeling in his hands and feet. This means that if he steps on a nail in bare feet, or touches something that he doesn't realise is hot, he may cause damage to fingers and toes and other parts of his body.

Recently a cut in Aboubacar’s foot became infected – he found it very strange as, although the wound was very bad, he did not know how he had done it and did not feel any pain. Aboubacar returned to the hospital and he is now receiving treatment as an inpatient – the wound will take several weeks to heal.

Aboubacar's hands have also been damaged by leprosy, and have begun to curl into fists. He would benefit from surgery to improve the movement in his hand.

But surgery is expensive. The Leprosy Mission raises funds to enable people like Aboubacar to experience life in all its fullness; if he has corrective surgery on his hand he will be able to finish his education, and he really loves going to school!

Activity: Feet Fishing

(5-10 mins)

To start:

Fill two bowls with cold water and place several marbles at the bottom of each. Have ready the flip flops and the blindfold. Ask the group to remove their own shoes and socks. Split the group into two teams.

The game:

Explain that the aim of the game is to pick up as many marbles as possible from the bowl using their feet. One team will do this with bare feet and blindfolded, the other with flip flops on but no blindfold. Each person has one minute to see how many marbles they can collect and place on the floor next to the bowl (reduce this to about 30 seconds if you have a large group). It's highly likely that the winning team will be the ones without the flip flops on!

Ask: What was frustrating about the game? Who found it easiest?

Explain: Not being able to see or feel the marbles made the game much harder than it would have been if your sense of sight or touch hadn’t been restricted. For people who live with leprosy-related disabilities, which can include blindness, everyday tasks like washing, cooking, eating and cleaning become much more difficult.

ICE BREAKER (5 mins)

The line-up game

Split your group into two teams. The aim of the game is to be the first team to line up in the right order, based on the instructions given by the leader. To make this a bit more difficult, get them to do all or a few of these in silence!

- Line up in age, youngest at the front, oldest at the back
- Line up according to your month of birth, January at the front, December at the back
- Line up in first name alphabetical order
- What is your pet’s name? (line up in alphabetical order, with no pets at the front to Z at the back)
- How many cousins do you have? (line up starting with one or none at the front)

CASE STUDY (10 mins)

LEADER’S NOTE: Show the photo of Aboubacar while you tell the group his story, or have it on a PowerPoint slide

Aboubacar is 14 years old. He lives in Nigeria and has been in and out of hospital for much of his young life.

When he was four years old Aboubacar developed some strange patches on his skin. He also started experiencing pins and needles in his arms. His family had no idea what was wrong with him. They took him to many doctors and even to a large hospital but the treatment the doctors gave him did nothing to relieve the symptoms.

When Aboubacar was eight his mother took him to a hospital about an hour away from his home. The hospital, supported by The Leprosy Mission, specialises in treating people with leprosy. There, he was diagnosed with leprosy and, finally, given the treatment he needed.
CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, give us courage and strength when we face difficult situations, especially when we are tempted to do the easy thing rather than the right thing. Help us to care for those who are isolated or lonely. Thank you for the work of The Leprosy Mission. We pray that you will use them powerfully. Inspire us to act, to know how we can partner with them to cure, care for and restore people affected by leprosy. Amen.

ACTIVITY: DILEMMAS (5-10 mins)

You will need several copies of the 'dilemmas' worksheet, enough for one per pair.

Ask the group to discuss, in pairs, what they would be do in these uncomfortable or difficult situations.

RESPONSE (see page 3) (10 mins)

LEADER’S NOTE: the aim here is to get the young people to think about how they can make a difference to the lives of teenagers like Aboubacar. Depending on time, you may need to pick just one or two of these responses.

BIBLE FOCUS (10 mins)

Key learning:

• Understand what it would be like to live with disability in Bible times
• Consider why God has given us the sense of touch
• Consider the cost of helping others

Together, read Mark 3:3-6

We are not told how this man’s hand became disfigured. It might have been in an accident, it might have been like that from birth, or it might have been as the result of a disease like leprosy. If it was due to leprosy, he wouldn’t have been able to feel any pain in his hand. We have already seen in the story of Aboubacar how this can be a big problem.

Jesus was in a very awkward position here. People were trying to catch him out. He chose to do the right thing and bring healing instead of worrying about what people will think of him. Jesus restores the man’s hand. Now, he can feel, his sense of touch returns and the hand is fully functional – something he may never have experienced.

The passage tells us that the religious leaders began to plot to kill Jesus as a result of him healing the man on the Sabbath. Jesus shows courage and strength when faced with a difficult situation – how do we respond in situations that require us to put other people’s needs first in order to be of help?

(Download teaching material and questions for discussion)

www.nopainnogaintlm.org
Our vision: leprosy defeated, lives transformed

Phool (centre) in India is able to go to school thanks to one of The Leprosy Mission’s projects.