

How Can I Get Clean? Discussion and Reflection Questions

This reflection will help youth understand that only Jesus can make us clean. And he wants to do it. All we need to do is ask.

- Who here has ever spilled anything which made a stain?
- Or accidentally put a pen mark on your favorite shirt?

Give them a few minutes to give examples of stains and how they tried to get them out. Be prepared with a few examples of your own.

We don't like stains.

- Why do you think we try so hard to remove them? *(Let them give their ideas.)*

I think it is because they remind us of our mistakes. But I don't think any of us go through life without some spills and stains.

The same is true of sin. We all sin. And it leaves us feeling imperfect and unclean.

Read [Mark 1:40-45](#):

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean."

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean."

The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning the him sternly, he dismissed him at once.

He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."

The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

[Mark 1:40-45](#)

In this gospel reading, a leper asks Jesus to make him clean. And Jesus does.

We are not unclean like the leper. But we probably have some unclean habits in our lives. These things might include gossip, pornography, immodesty, substance abuse, being unchaste, an unhealthy friendship.

- Are there other examples you can give?

Just like he made the leper clean, Jesus will help us with the things which are unclean in our lives. Let's look at this scripture reading a little more closely.

First of all the leper asks Jesus to make him clean. Jesus doesn't force anything on us. We can live in sinfulness if we want to. So step one is always to ask Jesus for help.

- What special sacrament do we have which will help us ask Jesus to make us clean?

That's right. We have the sacrament of Reconciliation. But sometimes people are hesitant to use this sacrament.

- What are some reasons that people don't go to confession?

It's important to remember that the priest is acting "in persona Christi" – like another Christ. Your sins are not going to shock the priest. He has heard it all before. He will not think less of you for going to confession.

In fact, look at what Jesus does in the gospel. First he looks at the man with pity. He feels compassion for him. Jesus was a human like us. He knows how hard it is to avoid temptation.

And Jesus says "I do will it. Be made clean." This is what Jesus wants for us. And the priest who is there at confession, is acting as Christ. He wants you to be free of your sins. Priests see penitents with the loving eyes of God.

Jesus tells the leper to go to the priest and follow the precepts of the law. We might think that we can get clean without the help of the church, but even Jesus knew the importance of the faith he belonged to.

The leper then goes out and tells everyone about what Jesus did for him. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this is how we felt after receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation? Most of us are probably not that excited.

This week, think about some way you would like Jesus to make you clean. Pray for his help. If possible, receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. And then have a little celebration for yourself. If you can get your family involved, go to the sacrament together and then go out and celebrate with some ice cream or another treat.