



Key Bible passage: Mark 1: 40-42 The healing of the man with leprosy

1 This assembly explores the choice that we have when we see someone in need. Do we react with compassion or with selfishness?

2 You'll need a pair of easy-to-step-into distinctive shoes. You'll also need five actors to help. They don't need to learn any words, but will need to rehearse the moves beforehand.

3 Here is a person who is in trouble.

(Person A, wearing the distinctive shoes, freezes, hunched up miserably)

And here comes someone else.

(Person B freezes with hands held palm upwards in a shrug of hopelessness)

And someone else.

(Person C freezes, pointing a finger at person A accusingly.)

Here's another person.

(Person D freezes with hand held up in a 'stop' gesture, half turned away from person A)

And one last one.

(Person E puts a hand on the shoulder of Person A)

I wonder what these people are saying. What is B saying, do you think? And C? D? E?
Which one of these might be Jesus? Why do you think that?
And I wonder which one might be you?

When someone is in trouble we have a choice.

We might shrug it off and say it's too big a problem for us. (person B)

We might tell the person it's their own fault anyway. (person C)

We might say it's nothing to do with us. (person D)

Or we might reach out and help them somehow. (person E)

Jesus never turned his back on anyone who needed him. He would even help people with really big problems, even when it might be their fault they were in a mess. Even when it was none of his business. If people asked him for help, he always gave it to them. And the feeling that made him do this was something called *compassion*. Compassion was the way he could put himself in their shoes and imagine what it was like to be them. Compassion made him imagine how he would like to be treated if he was in their place.

(Person A steps out of the shoes and leaves the shoes where they are. He offers the shoes to B C and



D with a gesture of invitation. They shake their heads as if that's the last thing they want. They leave. A offers them to E and E climbs into them and sits the same way that A had done. A and E swap back. A kneels down. E is neutral)

A man with a horrible disease called leprosy came to Jesus and knelt down in front of him.' Lord,' he said, 'if you want to you can make me well.' Jesus looked at the man and he felt compassion for him.

(Person E takes the place of Person A again, pauses to feel what it's like having leprosy, and swaps back.)

He put his hand out and touched him and said, 'I do want to. Now you are well.' Straight away the man's illness left him and he was well again.

(A and E walk out happily together)

Christians believe Jesus wants us to show compassion for people around us and treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves. Sometimes it isn't safe to go near strangers in town or especially when we're on our own, but with people here in our school, we can try hard to feel what it's like to be in their shoes. Perhaps that will change the way we behave towards them.

4 As we look at these shoes, let's pray.

Jesus, thank you for the way you show compassion to other people. Thank you for the way you help us when we're in trouble. Please help us to put ourselves in other people's shoes today and feel what it's like to be them.

Amen