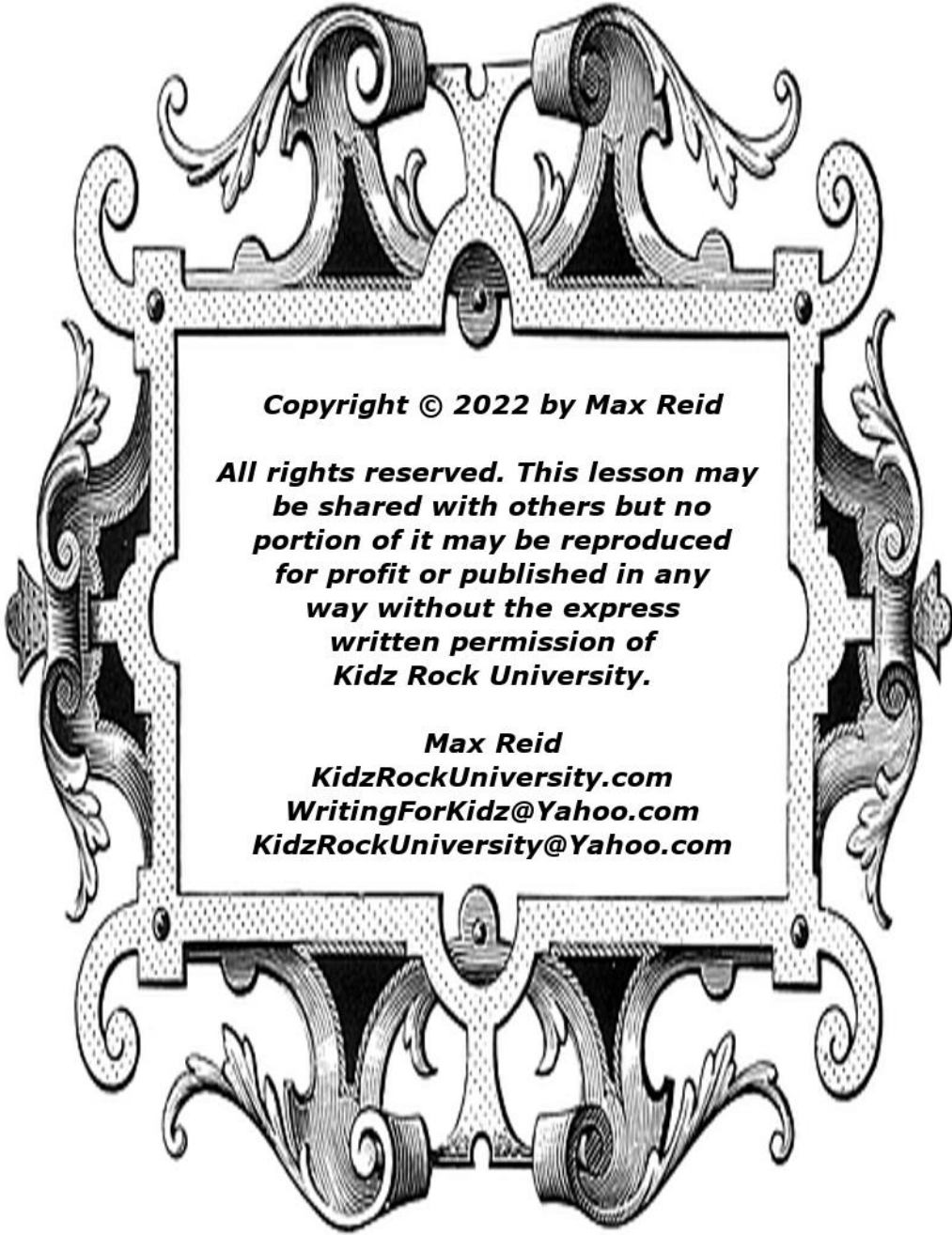


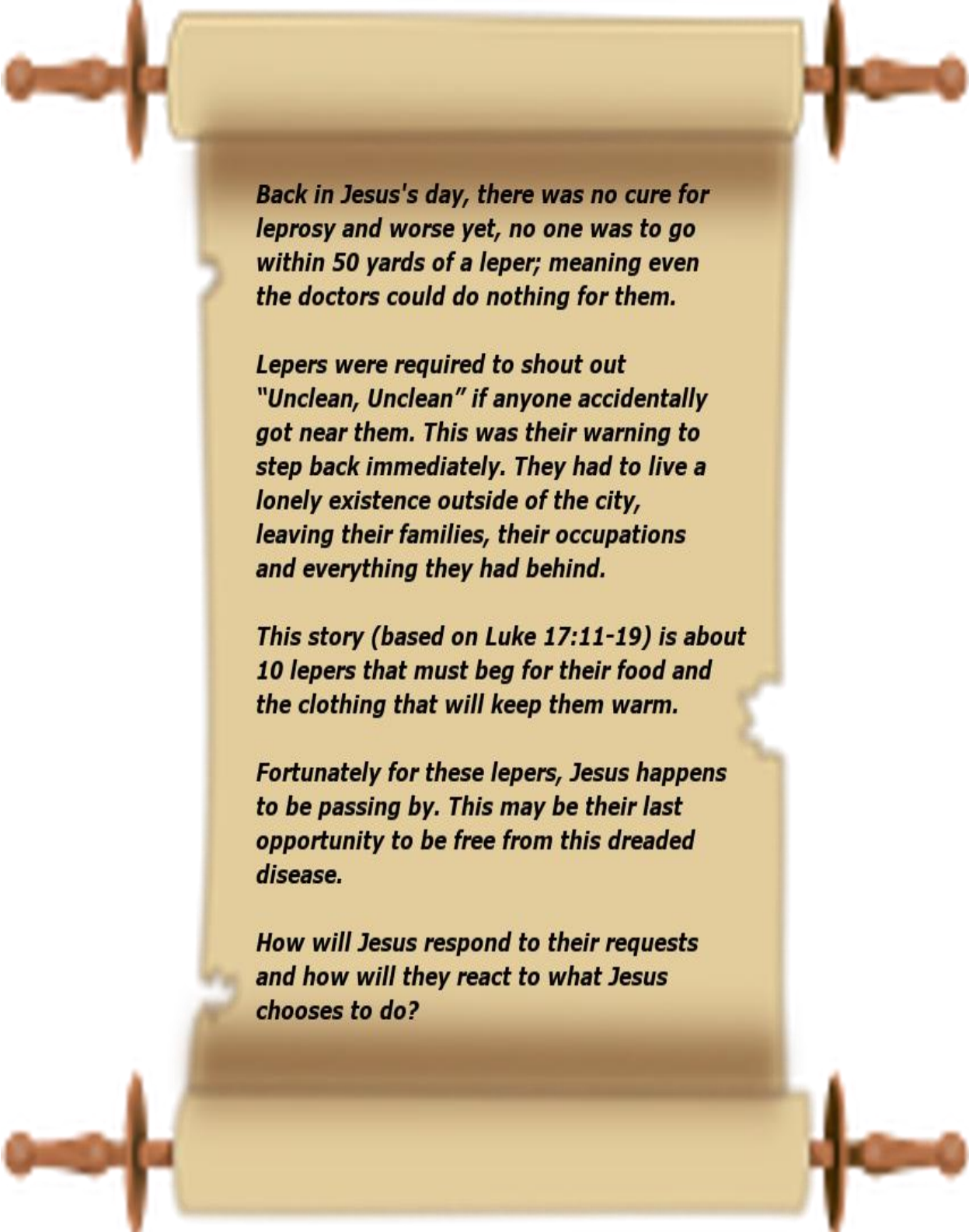
Thankfulness



Kidz Rock University

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Back in Jesus's day, there was no cure for leprosy and worse yet, no one was to go within 50 yards of a leper; meaning even the doctors could do nothing for them.

Lepers were required to shout out "Unclean, Unclean" if anyone accidentally got near them. This was their warning to step back immediately. They had to live a lonely existence outside of the city, leaving their families, their occupations and everything they had behind.

This story (based on Luke 17:11-19) is about 10 lepers that must beg for their food and the clothing that will keep them warm.

Fortunately for these lepers, Jesus happens to be passing by. This may be their last opportunity to be free from this dreaded disease.

How will Jesus respond to their requests and how will they react to what Jesus chooses to do?

Story Time

My wife, son and I are olive farmers in Samaria. We harvest and process the olives, bottling the oil we extract from them. We then sell it in our city and its neighboring towns.

My son Levi and I were getting ready to make a delivery to a synagogue in the town of Jezreel. As we finished loading the cart, my wife called out, **“Amos, come get the lunch I packed for you and Levi to take on your trip.”**

I was surprised when I saw the size of our lunch and said, **“Dinah, that’s way too much food for just the two of us.”** She smiled and replied, **“I just wanted to make sure you both have plenty to eat.”** Soon, we were on our way to Jezreel.

Just outside of the city gates, there they were, the lepers. When they saw us coming, they started doing what they did best, begging. One of them yelled out, **“Please sir, could you spare a little bit of food? I haven’t eaten in three days.”** An old man then cried out, **“I am so cold. Do you have anything that might keep me warm?”** I began to walk a little faster and pretended not to notice them.

I then looked over at Levi. He wasn’t there. I turned around and saw him walking towards the lepers with a slice of bread and some walnuts in his hand. I called out, **“Levi, stop, don’t go any closer to them.”** He froze in his tracks and pleaded, **“But father, we have plenty of food and they are hungry. Can’t we share some of it with them?”**

I replied, **“Alright son, stand back and give me the food in your hands.”** I set the food on the ground, grabbed my son’s arm, and got us out of there as quickly as I could.

When we arrived at the synagogue, there was Jabin the Priest, sitting in the courtyard. He looked over at us and said, **“Amos, I’m so glad you made it today. We were just about out of oil. Who is that with you, your young apprentice?”**

“This is my son Levi,” I replied. **“He just turned ten and is now old enough to come with me when I make my deliveries.”**



He got up, smiled, and shook Levi's hand. My son and I then took the oil inside and collected our money. As we were about leave, Jabin insisted that we wait for a moment. He quickly returned and presented Levi with a beautiful blanket. **"It's getting pretty chilly out there so I want you to take this with you,"** he said. Levi thanked him, then we headed back home.

All the way back to Samaria, Levi talked about how much he loved his new blanket. As we approached the city gates, we saw the lepers once again. As usual, they started calling out to us.

My son headed their way, stopping a short distance from them. He laid his new blanket on the ground, looked over at the old man who was so cold earlier that morning and told him that he could have it. The old man smiled and thanked Levi for being so thoughtful.

I looked at my son and said, **"Levi, are you sure you want to give your beautiful blanket away to a leper?"** **"Yes, he needs it more than me."** he replied.

I was touched by his kind act. Even though I didn't think much of the lepers and it bothered me that he gave up his nice new gift, I was proud of him for doing it.

We then returned to our home.

The next day, I felt a small sore on my forehead but didn't think much of it.

As I awoke the following morning, the sore felt larger and now the skin around it was tender. I jumped out of bed and examined it with my wife's shiny bronze mirror.

My wife then woke up and asked, **"What are you doing with my mirror?"**

I responded, **"Dinah, I have a sore on my forehead and it's growing. This is going to be the end of me."** She looked at it and laughed. **"Come on Amos; that is nothing to worry about. I'm sure it will go away in a few days."**

I strongly disagreed. **"I don't think so. I don't feel good about this at all."**

"Well then Amos," she suggested, **"Why don't you drop by the synagogue and show it to one of the priests? Then when you get back home, we can have a good laugh together and get on with our lives."**



The synagogue was close by so I went at once. A short time after I arrived, a priest appeared and said, **“Hello, my name is Micah. What can I do for you?”**

I then pointed at my forehead. **“I have had this sore for just a few days. I’m sure it’s nothing but thought I should get it looked at.”**

He closely examined my forehead. After a minute or so, he responded, **“I don’t think it’s anything.”** I quickly thanked him and started for the door. He then continued, **“But we can’t be too sure. I think we should keep you here for a week or so, then take another look at it.”**

My heart sank. I responded, **“But what about my family? They are expecting me to be back home soon.”**

The priest replied, **“One of my servants will let them know that you will be staying here for now. I wouldn’t really worry about that sore. By the end of the week, it will probably be healed and you will be going back home.”**

That was easy for him to say but not very reassuring for me.

Micah walked me to the small room I’d be staying in and said, **“I will see you in about a week, just to make sure that you are fine. My servants will make sure you have plenty to eat and bring you some blankets.”** He then left.

Now I was all by myself. I began to focus on why I was here. It was all because of that silly little sore on my forehead. I then felt it with my index finger. Yep, still there. Just then, one of Micah’s servants brought me a small loaf of bread, a piece of fish and a few blankets.

I awoke the next morning and discovered that I now had a sore on my right cheek as well. Things were not getting better; they were getting worse. Could it be that I was becoming a leper?

Break Time!!!



*Time to
Stretch,
Ask
Questions,
Snack...*





As the week went on, more sores appeared. The servants would now leave my meals, call out to me and run away before I could open the door.

One week later, Micah came back. He studied my face closely, then said, **“Well, the sore on your forehead doesn't look too bad and the new ones look like a rash.”** He then paused. I started thinking that maybe I was going home. Then he finished his thought, **“But it can't be. They are too big. I am very surprised; you do indeed have leprosy.”**

He opened the door and called out, **“Eli, please bring me a fresh change of clothes right away.”** I was then instructed to change out of my old clothes and into the new ones he just provided.

I quickly changed clothes. Micah then said, **“I am so sorry, Amos. I feel so bad when I must cast someone out of the city because of this dreaded disease. We will tell your family the unfortunate news.”**

He then handed me a couple of sacks, one filled with bread and the other containing apples, figs, nuts, and berries. Eli used a pole to pick up my old garments and place them into a basket. Micah then commanded him to lead me out of the city and burn my clothes.

As we headed out that day, I thought about how much I would miss my family. My thoughts then drifted to the lepers. Not long ago I couldn't get far enough away from them, now they would be my only friends, that is, if they would forgive me for how I treated them. Once we were outside of Samaria, Eli reminded me that I couldn't go back into the city for any reason. He then tore my new garment as a sign that I was now a leper, wished me good luck and headed out further to burn up my old clothes.

Just then I heard someone chuckle and say, **“Amos, where is all of your precious oil? Don't you have a delivery to make?”** I looked over and there they were, the lepers. Another joined in, **“I see that you are now one of us. Guess you are no better than us, now are you?”** Then their leader spoke up. **“Calm down everyone. You all remember what it was like when you found out you had leprosy and were tossed out of the city. Amos may not have showed us any kindness, but how many people really do? I say we welcome him into our group; besides he has two sacks of food that I'm sure he is willing to share with us.”**



I looked at him and replied, **“Yes, I would be happy to share all that I have. Please forgive me for how I treated all of you. Things sure look a lot different through the eyes of a leper.”** They all agreed and watched closely as I dumped out my food onto the ground.

It didn’t take long for all of it to disappear. Their leader then came over to me. **“Amos,”** he said, **“I’m Abel. I had a beautiful family and a wonderful job, then in an instant, it was all taken away from me so I know how you feel right now.”**

“Had you ever noticed that we never beg for money? Do you know why? Because we can’t go into the city to spend it. We only ask for food, clothes and things that will keep us warm. You have no idea how much it meant to us when your son gave us that new blanket.”

I now realized that the lepers were just like everyone else, except they happened to have leprosy.

The next day, the sores had spread to my arms and legs. It didn’t matter anymore, I was already a leper. I now found myself crying out just like the others whenever someone would pass by, hoping they would feel sorry for me and part with a morsel or two of their food.

The days turned into weeks and the weeks into months. Some days, a caring person would come by with food. Other days, we would receive nothing. It was a difficult way to live, not knowing when you would eat again.

Sadly, I was now coming to the realization that this was how things would be for me for the rest of my life. But then, unexpectedly, hope returned.

Jesus and his disciples were coming our way. I had heard of a man covered with leprosy just like me. Jesus reached out and when he touched him, he was healed. The other lepers saw and recognized Jesus too. We all started calling out to him, **“Master, please have pity on us.”**

Strangely, Jesus didn’t come near us. He simply said, **“Go and show yourselves to the priests.”** I then looked at my arms and legs. They were still full of sores. As I felt my face, it was the same as before. Why would he want us to go see the priest if he hadn’t done anything yet?



I glanced over at the rest of the group but they were not there. They were already off to the temple. I quickly caught up to them. As I moved forward, the sores started to disappear from my body. It wasn't long before I was healed.

Although the others kept going, I turned around and headed back to thank Jesus for what he did for me. When I saw him, I fell to the ground at his feet.

Puzzled, Jesus asked his disciples, **“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? How come just the Samaritan came back to say thank you?”** He then said to me, **“Rise and go, your faith has made you whole.”**

I returned to the synagogue to visit Micah once again.

As I entered the courtyard, he saw me and yelled out, **“Amos, what are you doing here? Didn't I make it clear that you could no longer come into the city? Did you forget that you are unclean and a danger to us all?”**

I then said, **“Micah, come and see, Jesus has healed me.”**

Micah cautiously approached me. As he got closer, he could see my sores were gone. He then declared, **“It's a miracle, you are clean!”**

“Can I go home now or do I have to spend another week with you?” I replied with a little grin on my face.

He laughed and said, **“Well Amos, we can't be too careful.”** He paused for a moment, then continued, **“But I say you go home and hug your family. I'm sure they will be very happy to see you again!”**

So, I headed back home. My wife was sitting out front and as she saw me, she jumped up and shouted, **“Levi, come quickly, your father is home!”** They both ran out to greet me. Dinah wrapped her arms around me and Levi climbed on my back. The three of us fell to the ground and laid there for quite a while, thanking God for my miracle.

I had taken a lot of things for granted, but now I will be thankful for every good thing that comes my way. Open your eyes and look around. You too, will also see so many things to be grateful for.

Discussion Time



1.) If you had just been healed by Jesus, do you think you would have run with the others to see the priest or would you have come back to say thank you?

2.) Will you now be sure to say thank you more often than you had before?

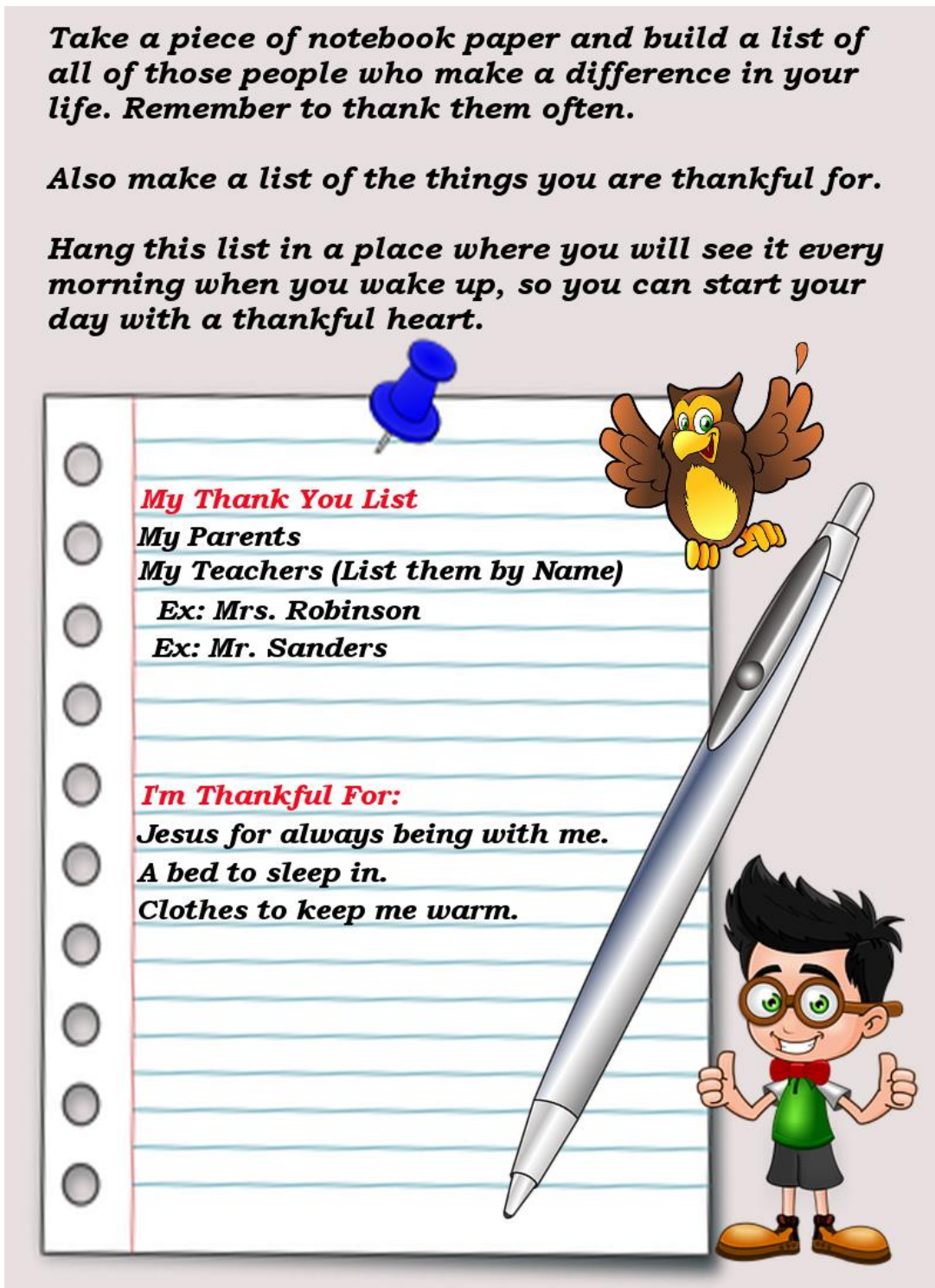
3.) How do you think Jesus feels when we say thank you to him?

Activity Time

Take a piece of notebook paper and build a list of all of those people who make a difference in your life. Remember to thank them often.

Also make a list of the things you are thankful for.

Hang this list in a place where you will see it every morning when you wake up, so you can start your day with a thankful heart.



Our Big Takeaway:



What's Yours?





So Long for Now

If you enjoyed this lesson, PLEASE send it on to others.



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Have an AWESOME Day!

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