



## S1.Lesson 23: Clean/Unclean

Middle School Lesson Plans

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**Supplies:** A way to show the class the square with the 3x3 line pattern in it (as shown later in this lesson plan); TV or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at [rfour.org/curriculum.html](http://rfour.org/curriculum.html));

### OPENING PRAYER

#### TELL

- We're going to start today's class by watching a movie clip from the movie, Wall-E.
- In this clip, a new character is introduced: Mo.
- Watch for what's most important to the Mo character.

**WATCH** Wall-E movie clip

#### ASK

- What was Mo's job? (to clean)
- At the end of the clip, what's more important to Mo, to stay on the line or to go clean? (to go clean)

#### TELL

- The scripture story we're going to read next involves Peter.
- This story happens after Jesus has resurrected and ascended and so Peter is now continuing Jesus ministry and is telling the Israelites the good news that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

#### READ Acts 10:9 - 23

10:9 About noon the next day, as Cornelius' servants were on their journey and approaching the city of Jerusalem to see Peter, Peter became hungry and wanted something to eat. 10 While a meal was being prepared for him, he went up on the roof of where he was staying to pray. While praying, he had a vision. 11 He saw the sky open and something like a large sheet came down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 Then Peter heard a voice (more like a thought) saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." 15 The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call unclean." 16 This happened three times, and then the sheet with the animals was suddenly taken back up into the sky.

17 Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the servants sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Peter and were standing by the gate. 18 They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. 20 Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them." 21 So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" 22 They answered,

"Cornelius, a Roman centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well-spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." 23 So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went with Peter.

### TELL

- In the first part of the story, Peter is told to kill and eat the animals in the sheet.
- Peter's first response to this command is to say "No way! Those animals are profane."
- What Peter is referring to are laws that came from Moses...1400 years before Peter's life! These laws can be found in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy.
- These laws are referred to either as Mosaic law (as in: law from Moses' time) or more commonly as the Torah (which is Hebrew for The Law).
- Some of these rules involved not eating certain animals, like pigs, rabbits, reptiles and birds of prey, like hawks, owls, etc. These animals were considered "unclean."
- The Israelites were pretty unique in their dietary requirements.
- The surrounding people in nearby countries ate these animals that the Israelites considered unclean.
- So then in a "you are what you eat" sort of way, the Israelites came to consider those who ate unclean food to be unclean themselves.
- The Israelites wanted nothing to do with people who were unclean.

### ASK

- In the second part of the story, who comes to talk to Peter? (servants of Cornelius)
- Is Cornelius an Israelite? (No, he's Roman).
- And thinking about what we just talked about regarding clean and unclean: As a good Israelite, what should Peter's response be towards the request from this Roman Centurion? (to reject the request, say no to it).
- Instead, what does Peter do? (he invites them in, says yes to the request and goes to Cornelius' house).

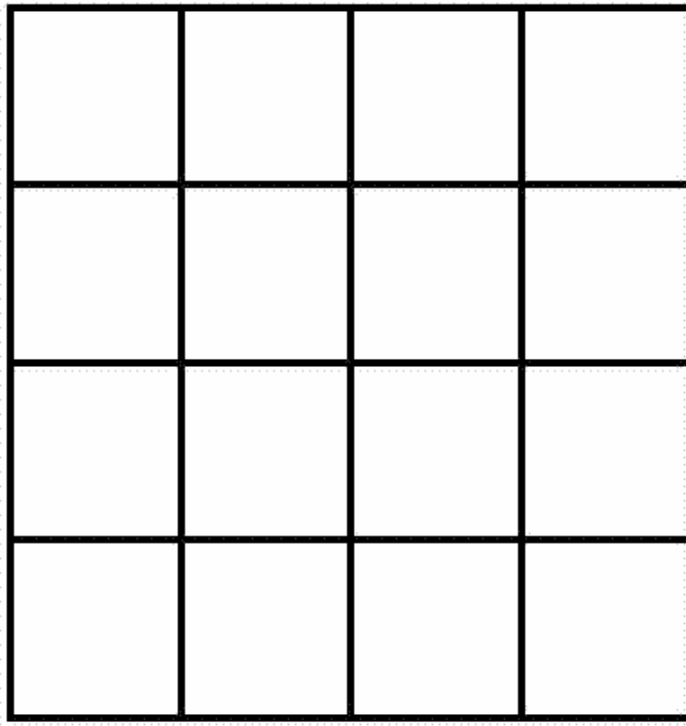
### TELL

- Most of us in this room, if not all of us, are *not* Jewish.
- Which would mean that we are unclean according to Jewish law.
- This means we would've been excluded from hearing about the Good News that Jesus shared: That the Kingdom of God is at hand.
- In other words, we would not be invited to the Kingdom of God.
- But part of that Good News is that *all* of us are invited to participate in God's Kingdom.
- This story is about who's in and who's out. Peter's way of thinking has been formed by his culture's way of thinking. God tells him its time to think differently. And then Peter *does* think differently!
- And not only that, but then Peter *acts* on his different thinking.

### EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- Peter had a narrow view of who belonged and who didn't.
- With God's help, Peter was able to better see how others belonged.
- On your handout is a 4 x 4 grid of squares.
- Your job is to count the number of squares you see.

- You may not help each other.
- Ready, go!



### DO Square Counting Activity

#### ASK

- First, what is a square? (4 equal sides)
- How many squares did you see? (answers will probably range from 16 to 30. 30 is the highest amount of squares in the grid).

#### TELL Answer (if no one found 30 squares)

- There are 30 squares in a 4 by 4 grid. Here's how it breaks down.
- There are 16 of the 1 x 1 squares.
- There are 9 of the 2 x 2 squares.
- There are 4 of the 3 x 3 squares.
- There is 1 of the 4 x 4 squares.
- It's fairly easy to see the individual 1 x 1 squares and count them. Same with the 4 x 4 square, as it's the perimeter of the whole array. With the 2 x 2 squares, start with a 2 x 2 square in, say, the upper left corner and "move" the square one space to the right. Then one more to "complete" the top row.

Then move it one square "down" and continue until arriving at the place you started. There will be 9 different "positions" for the 2 x 2 square.

#### **TELL Good News**

- So some of us (or all of us) could not see all the squares that were represented in the grid and so we excluded those squares from our counting.
- Sometimes the rules in our culture keep us from seeing who we're excluding.
- This story then, and the activity, is to help us remember that we don't always see everything and that we need God's help to see others how God sees them.
- The Good News is that God has reached out to us through others (parents, \_\_\_ church name \_\_\_\_, Teachers) and calls us to do the same for others.

#### **CLOSING PRAYER**