

Preventing the Spread of Sickness

TIME: 1 hour

OBJECTIVES:

- Participants will understand the way that germs are spread through respiratory and droplet transmission
- Participants will understand the importance of soap in the elimination of viral germs
- Participants will be able to name 5 practices for preventing the spread of respiratory viruses to others

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A bowl of water (preferably with a light-colored interior, like white or yellow)
- Black pepper
- Soap (preferably the more normal kind used in that particular setting)
- Glitter
- “Do the 5!” handout

For the Facilitator:

Any information inside of gray boxes like this, is information just for you. Sometimes it contains responses that you would like to get out of your participants so that the right information is taught. Sometimes it is instructions on how to do the activities that demonstrate the concepts in the lesson. You do not need to read these sections aloud, they are just for you. The rest of the text are things that you will say out loud. And questions that are marked with an arrow, are questions you should ask the participants and allow them to give responses.

INTRO

All of us are familiar with viruses that affect our respiratory, or breathing, system. Who has had a cold before? We generally think that diseases like a cold are so common, that we don't think much about them. But some viruses that cause our respiratory systems to become sick, such as Coronavirus, or COVID-19, are much more serious, and they spread very fast. There are things that we can do to keep those viruses from spreading to others. In Mark 12:31, Jesus tells us that the most important thing we can do, after loving God with all that we are, is to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. None of us wants to get sick with a cold or a more serious virus! So, to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves means that we want to keep our neighbors from getting sick as much as we ourselves don't want to be sick.

WHAT WE THINK

- What are some of the ways that we think people catch colds and viruses?

Allow for various answers:

Think of traditional beliefs and lore – getting your head wet, being in a cold place, sleeping with wet hair, etc.

- Do we think that we give our colds and sicknesses to others?
If not, why? If so, how?

Allow for various answers.

- What are the symptoms we notice with colds and respiratory viruses?

Sore throat

Stuffy nose

Cough

Sneezing

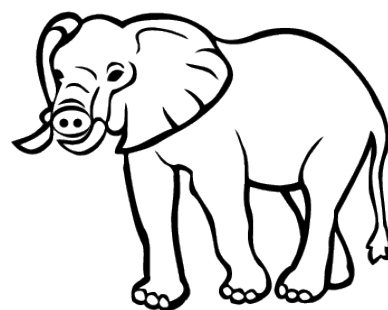
Fever

Body aches

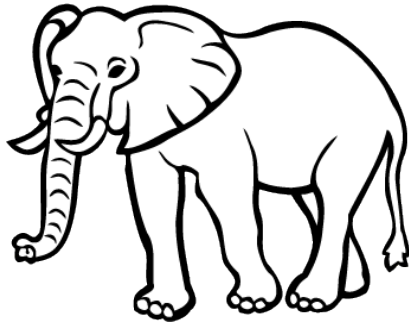
WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Let's listen to a story about days long ago, and how the elephant got his long nose.

Long, long ago, the elephant did not look like he does today. He did not have a long nose at that time. Oh no, no! He had a very short nose, just like everybody else and he ate the tops of bushes and tall grass. But elephants were often sick in those days and, like other animals, they only lived a short life.



Now the elephant is a very arrogant animal. He thought that since he was the biggest animal on the grasslands, he should also be the animal that lived the longest. So, he went to see the mori-man (witch doctor). The elephant complained bitterly that he had been cheated at creation. He was the biggest and strongest of all the animals and he should also live the longest! The elephant's attitude made the mori-man (witch doctor) angry, but since the elephant was so large and powerful, and he wanted him to go away, he told the elephant he would grant his request. "Go to the riverside and look at yourself," he said. "You will have your wish and live a very long life." When the elephant reached the river and looked into the water's reflection, he was embarrassed and upset! His nose was SO long! He thought it looked very ugly, and he was angry at the mori-man (witch doctor), but what could he do? His wish had been granted, so he couldn't complain too much, but this may explain why elephants today are known to have bad tempers!



And how did a long nose help the elephant to live longer than any of the other animals in Africa? Because elephants do not sneeze into each other's faces. Whenever the elephant sneezes or has a nose full of snot, all of that nasty snot that sprays from his nose goes down onto the ground, where it cannot cause trouble by making other elephants sick. So, all elephants live a long and healthy life, because they don't cough or sneeze on each other, passing diseases from one to another.

- Of course, we know that these stories are told to teach a lesson and are not really telling us the reason that an elephant has a long nose! But in the story, what did elephant want to change about himself?

He wanted to be the animal that lived the longest of all the animals.

- What did the mori-man (witch doctor) do to the elephant?

He gave the elephant a long nose.

- How was the long nose going to help the elephant live longer?

When the elephants coughed and sneezed, the snot and spit would go onto the ground, and not into the faces of other elephants.

- What does this tell us about the way we get sick?

The germs that make us sick pass from one sick person to a healthy person through that person's snot and spit. The snot and spit carry the viruses, or germs, into our noses and mouths, and when we breathe them in, we get sick.

- We are not elephants! How can we keep our snot and spit from going into other people's faces when we cough and sneeze?

- *Cover our mouth and nose when we cough or sneeze with our elbow or shirt to catch the germs.*
- *Cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw it away.*
- *Wash our hands with soap when we cough or sneeze on our hands, so we don't pass it to others on our hands.*
- *Stay far from others when we are sick, so that we don't pass our sickness on to them.*

- How will doing that keep others from becoming sick?

They will not breathe our germs into their nose and mouth, or touch our snot or spit and take it into their own mouth and nose with their hands.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

There are five (5) things that we can do to help prevent the spread of viruses and diseases from one person to another. These things are helpful in almost any disease, but they are particularly helpful with respiratory viruses like colds, flu, and COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

We can call these actions – “Do the 5!” It’s easy to remember, because we have 5 fingers, and each finger represents one action.

1. **Hands** – Wash them often with soap and water.
2. **Mouth** – Cover them when we sneeze or cough. We should always use either our elbow, our shirt, or a cloth to cover our mouth and nose. Not our hand. Because otherwise the virus is on our hands, and we spread it to others with our hands.
3. **Face** – Don’t touch your face. Viruses like COVID-19 and colds enter our bodies through our nose and mouth. These are open places on our bodies that lead to our lungs. If we have the virus on our hands, and we touch our nose or mouth, we could put the virus inside our bodies.
4. **Arms** – Stay 2 arms lengths (6 feet) apart from other people, especially if they are not well.
5. **Body** – If you don’t feel well, stay home and keep to yourself. Don’t be around others who might catch the virus from you.

Let’s talk about each of these and how we can do them to keep ourselves, each other, and our community safe and healthy.

1. **Hands** – Wash them often with soap.

Take a small bowl half-filled with water. Ask for one volunteer to assist you. Have all of the other participants gather around to watch.

- *Sprinkle black pepper all over the top of the water. Explain that the pepper is going to represent germs – like viruses. We can’t see viruses or germs because they are too small. But we are going to imagine that the pepper represents germs, only much bigger.*
- *Have your assistant stick one finger into the water and pepper and pull it out.*
- **What happens?** *(the pepper sticks on their finger)*
- *Wipe off the finger and then rub it on some soap. Make sure soap is all over their finger.*
- *Now stick the finger in the water again.*
- **What happens?** *(the pepper scatters to the sides of the bowl, and the finger comes out of the water clean)*

Soap drives away viruses and germs from our hands, just like it drives away the pepper! But water *alone* cannot drive germs from our hands. They will stick to our hands, just like the pepper, and then be passed on to others by the things we touch.

2. **Mouth** – Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze and cough.

*The best way to do this demonstration is to put glitter into your mouth. Not a large amount, just the amount that would fill the tip of a teaspoon. You are going to need to do this twice. It would be good to have a glass of water for rinsing your mouth afterward, and maybe even a toothbrush and toothpaste. Glitter will not hurt you if you swallow a little bit of it. **If you do put the glitter in your mouth, be careful not to inhale. You don't want glitter in your lungs!** If you don't have glitter, you can use flour instead. Just be sure you don't let the flour get wet in your mouth before you do the activity, or it won't come out right. Also, don't inhale flour!*

We want to see how viruses and germs get from one place to another, and from one person to another. We know that we can't see viruses, because they are too small. So, we are going to use this glitter/flour (show the glitter/flour) to demonstrate what happens with viruses, and how they can be passed around. Watch for this glitter/flour in everything I do! Wherever you see it, imagine it is the virus!

Put a small amount of glitter in your mouth, right at the opening (not deep inside) – or in the palm of your hand. (If you can do this, or have an assistant do it, without showing the participants, that will be even better.) Stand so you are facing to the side, and the participants are looking at the side of your face. Now sneeze loud and hard, spewing the glitter/flour out of your mouth.

➤ What did you see?

They should have seen glitter/flour (germs) come out of your mouth, and float in the air in front of you and land on the ground or other objects.

➤ What does that glitter represent?

Germs or viruses

➤ Where is the virus now?

*In the air in front of you.
On the ground.
On whatever is in front of you.*

➤ What if a person was in front of me?

The germs would go on the person.

So sometimes, we cover our mouth and nose with our hands when we cough or sneeze. But this is not very good either. Why not? (We usually don't wash our hands afterwards, and then we are spreading the virus with our hands.) Let's demonstrate this.

Put a little more glitter or flour in your mouth. Now “sneeze” or “cough” into your hand. Show the participants your hand.

- What do you see?

They should see glitter or flour on your hand.

- What does this glitter/flour represent?

Germs and viruses

Now walk around and greet some of the participants. Shake their hands while greeting them. Pick up a cup or glass and hand it to another person. Make sure you are leaving glitter or flour on their hands.

- What just happened?

You passed the viruses and germs from one person to another.

Don't let those people wash their hands – and continue on to Point Number 3.

3. **Face** – Don't touch your face.

We touch our faces all the time! People have done studies to see how often we touch our faces, and they have found that most people touch their faces over 100 times every day!

- How are some ways we touch our faces, even without noticing?

We scratch our nose.
We scratch or wipe our eyes.
We pick our noses.
We pick food out of our teeth.
We put food in our mouths.
We lick our fingers.
We wipe sweat off of our faces.

Now I want the people that I just shook hands with to rub their nose or mouth with the hand I just shook. Also, the person holding the cup that I touched. Put the cup down and rub your face.

- Can you see “the virus” on their faces?

When we have touched people or objects that have the virus on them, we can transfer the virus to our own mouths and noses with our hands. So, we need to work hard to not touch our faces UNLESS we wash our hands – with soap!

4. **Arms** – Stay 2 arms-lengths from people who could be sick.

Since viruses and colds are transmitted through our spit and snot, we need to stay away from people who might be sick. If a person sneezes or coughs, and they don't cover their mouth and nose, the spit can fly for 6 feet! So, if we stay away from them, the virus cannot land on our faces – just like the elephant!

Have participants stand up and hold out their arms to distance themselves from each other. Keep in mind that this holds true of sitting as well, especially if someone is sick, or if you are in the middle of a virus epidemic.

5. **Body** – If you feel sick, stay at home, and don't let others come in.

➤ What are the symptoms that we feel when we have a virus in our head or chest?

Coughing*

Sore throat*

Fever*

Difficulty breathing*

Headache

Sneezing

Stuffy nose

*(The ones with a * are the symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19 Coronavirus, though the others can also be present.)*

In order to protect our family and our neighbors, we need to stay home when we are feeling sick. Going out to market, or church, or visiting our friends takes the virus to other people, and spreads the disease around our community. If we just have a common cold, this might not be very serious, but in the case of an epidemic, like Coronavirus (COVID-19), it can be very, very bad.

One More Thing!

There is one more thing that we can do to keep ourselves and our families healthy! When a virus enters our body, our body has small things called “antibodies” that begin to fight the virus and drive it away. These are like tiny soldiers in our body that fight enemies that want to attack us.

One way to help keep viruses from making us sick, is to make sure that our “soldiers” are strong and healthy, so that when any viruses or germs DO get inside us, we are ready to fight them – and win!

Making our bodies healthy will help our bodies fight any germs and viruses that do get inside. Here are 3 things you can do to keep your body healthy and ready to fight away germs:

- Eat healthy food – lots of fruits and vegetables
- Drink plenty of clean water – at least 3 liters every day
- Get enough sleep – all people need at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night

REMEMBERING WITH PICTURES

Give everyone a copy of the “Do the 5!” handout.

- Who can explain the first thing we need to do to stop viruses from spreading?
- The second? Third? Fourth? Fifth?
- Let’s use our fingers to count the 5 things we need to do.

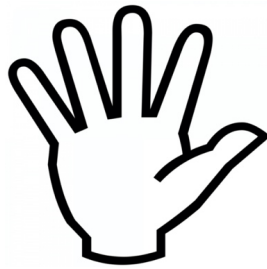
KEY VERSE:

Mark 12:31 – You must love your neighbor as yourself.

REINFORCING GOOD BEHAVIORS – An Activity

If you are leading a class, or have a group of people who meet together and want to start practicing these good behaviors, you can play the following game to help people catch themselves, and others, doing things that will spread viruses.

1. At the beginning of your time together, give every person a plastic clothespin attached to their shirt.
2. Each time someone in the group is caught doing one of the following things, anyone can take their clothespin away from them:
 - a. Not washing their hands when they enter the meeting, before eating, after coughing or sneezing, or after using the bathroom.
 - b. Touching their faces (wiping sweat with hand, picking noses, fingers in mouth, etc.)
 - c. Not covering their mouth and nose with their shirt or elbow if they cough or sneeze.
3. Everyone can watch everyone else, including themselves, to monitor these behaviors. When they catch someone doing the wrong thing, they get that person's clothespin.
4. At the end of the meeting or class, you can give a small prize or incentive to those who still have clothespins. (Either give one prize to the person with the most clothespins, or give one to everyone who still has *any* clothespins.) This can be just a small incentive, like a cup of rice or beans tied in a small bag, or any other small prize.
5. Be sure to praise those who kept their clothespins (meaning they didn't do any of the risky behaviors), and encourage the others to try again.
6. Encourage people to try this activity with their kids and families at home too, to help their kids learn healthy behaviors!



DO THE 5!

Help stop the spread of Coronavirus and ALL viruses!

1. Hands

Wash them with soap!



2. Mouth

Cover it with your shirt or elbow when you cough or sneeze.



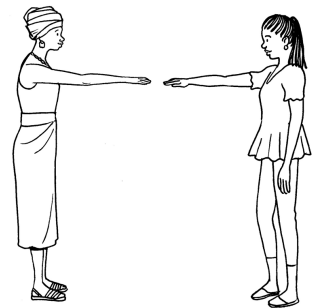
3. Face

Don't touch it.



4. Arms

Stand 2 arm-lengths from others, especially if they are sick.



5. Body

Stay at home if you are not well.

