

February 2, 2014

# Lesson 17: Woman at the Well

## John 4:1-42



Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, ‘Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John’— although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and

with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest”? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.’

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.’



# Woman at the Well

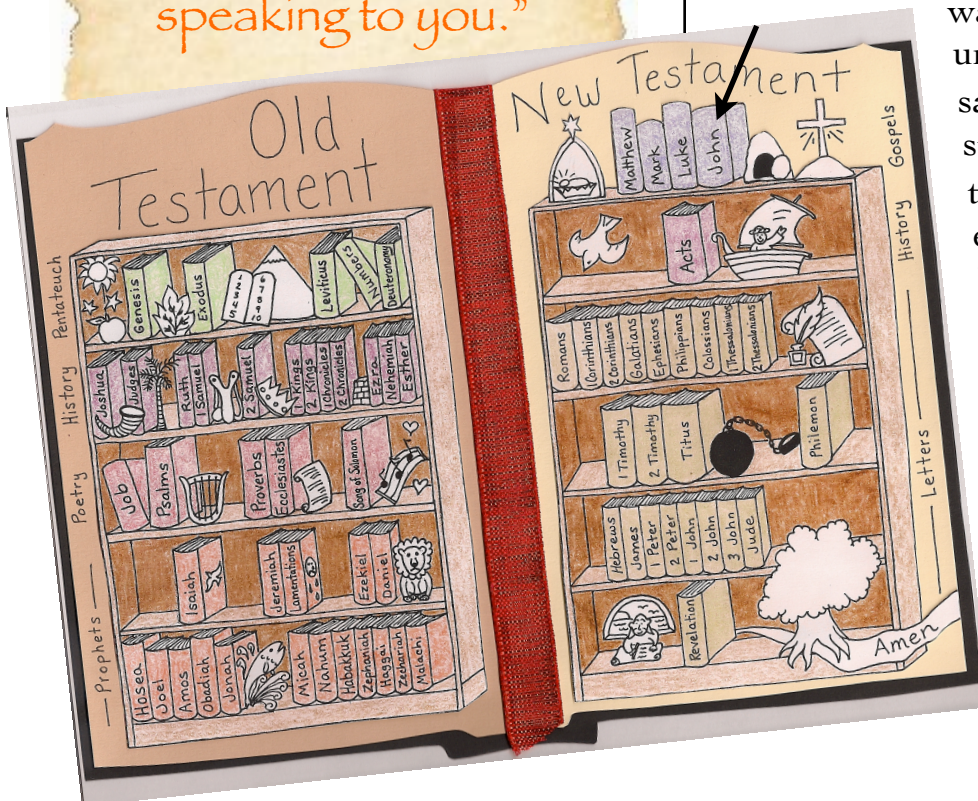
John 4:1-42

“The woman said, ‘I know the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said, ‘I Am, the one who is speaking to you.’”

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**The Big Story Truth:** Jesus overturns expectations! Jesus comes in unexpected ways and gets rid of anything that separates people from God and from each other.

**About This Scripture Passage:** The woman at the well is the exact mirror opposite of Nicodemus who we met last week. Nicodemus is a leader of the Jewish people who comes to Jesus at night. The woman, in contrast, isn't introduced by name. But we know that she is a Samaritan, which means that she would have been regarded by the Jews as a foreigner, an enemy. As a woman, she has little power and really shouldn't have been talking to Jesus at all. Unlike Nicodemus, her conversation with Jesus takes place during the light of day and she leaves the conversation testifying to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah- and because of her the whole town listens and believes Jesus. Jesus talks to her about “living water” (which can mean fresh running water or life-giving water). At first she doesn't understand what Jesus is saying, but by the end of the story she runs off leaving even the jar she came with to tell everyone about Jesus. She has learned that Jesus is indeed greater than the ancestor Jacob, that he is even more than a prophet, He is “I Am!” (Remember where we heard that “I Am” before?!?!)



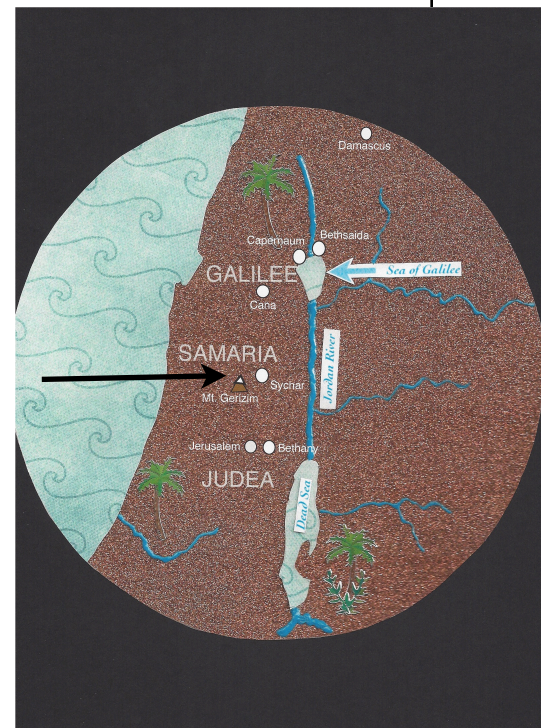
**Making the Connection:** Picture a school lunch room. Imagine the seating arrangement of the room. The “popular” kids sit together in one spot. Perhaps there are tables made up mostly of star athletes and cheerleaders. Maybe there are tables of kids that have been friends since kindergarten, or those that share certain interests. Somewhere in the lunch room is a table made up of kids who don’t fit in at any of the other tables. Life is different at that table. Now imagine a popular guy walking from one table of friends to another suddenly stopping mid-way and striking up a conversation with a girl at that “other” table. And not only talking, but sitting down and finishing the meal there. That’s the sort of scene playing out in this story. The fear of Jews about the Samaritans is that they would become “unclean” by associating with them. But Jesus stopped and stayed 2 days in Samaria!!! In this day and age when we worry so much about bullying in our schools, about kids who are lonely and don’t have meaningful connections with others, this story is an opportunity to point out how our faith in Jesus bridges all the gaps between us as people, and between us and God!

### For Your Reflection:

*Think about the kids in your classroom. Are there any kids that might be feeling excluded from the group? What might be the cause of that? What could you do this week to help draw that child into the group? Pray for your students by name and for their friendships with kids in school and in Sunday School.*

### **Where in the World Are We?**

Jesus is on his way from the region Judea to Galilee (two Jewish areas). But his travels take him through the region of Samaria, where he encounters the woman by a well in the city of Sychar. Samaria was an area in which the descendants of Jacob had intermarried with the Assyrians (around the time of the exile) so they were of mixed heritage (which was a big no-no according to God’s law). One big controversy between Samaritans and Jews was over what the proper place to worship was. The Jews believed the temple in Jerusalem was the place to worship God. Samaritans believed that the place to worship God was on Mt. Gerizim, the highest mountain in the region in Samaria. As soon as this woman realizes that Jesus is a prophet, she asks him about this controversy. Jesus’ response, though, is that she doesn’t need to worry about which place it is that is the “proper” place of worship, because the time has already arrived when access to God won’t be through a particular temple, but through the gift of the Spirit. Jesus is announcing that he is the “I Am” - the Messiah- and that the time for a new kind of worship has already arrived!







# *Large Group Gathering*

Welcome everyone and get right into your family groups for Faith 5 time. When you are finished, dismiss adults who need to leave.

**Say: Who remembers our story last week? It was about a man named Nicodemus. And when did he come to talk with Jesus? Nicodemus came at night. Well, today we are going to hear a story about a woman and its a conversation that Jesus had with her during the middle of the day. Nicodemus was someone who knew God's laws well but he wasn't sure who Jesus was. The woman in our story today was from Samaria, a place and a people that usually didn't get along with the Jews who were God's people. But Jesus spoke with her and after talking with Jesus, she came to believe that he was the Messiah, the anointed one! She told everyone in her town the good news, that Jesus was the Messiah who loved and cared for them too! Let's sing that song we learned last week about God loving the whole world and sending Jesus.**

Sing John 3:16.

**And let's practice again the part of the Apostles' Creed that tells us more about Jesus.**

Sing any additional songs that you have time for and then dismiss to classes.

# Family Faith 5

February 2, 2014

1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)

2. Read together this Bible Verse:

“The woman said, ‘I know the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said, ‘I Am, the one who is speaking to you.’”

3. Talk about how the Bible verse relates to your highs and lows.

4. Pray aloud for one another's highs and lows.

5. Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's heads and say these words: \_\_\_\_\_, Remember you are a child of the Messiah!



# *Preschool & Early Elementary*

## **Materials Needed:**

- Spark Story Bible
- Paper Doll Chains (1 per student)
- Gingerbread Cookies (candies and decorating supplies)
- Two clear rubbermaid containers
- Water
- Bucket

## **Before the Children Arrive:**

Draw a line on one of the Rubbermaid containers near the top. For the preschool class, prepare and cut out paper doll chains for each student ahead of time. For early elementary class, decide whether or not your class will need pre-cut doll chains. To make a doll chain: Fanfold a legal size piece of paper evenly. Then draw your design for the paper dolls. Make sure the design touches both sides of the paper so that the dolls “hold hands.” Draw only one half of the doll since the other half will be across the top fold. Cut out the pattern. When you unfold the paper, the doll you drew will have many friends!

## **Experiencing the Story:**

After kids have gathered, ask them to tell you about some of their friends. It may be friends that they know from school or even family members like a sibling or a cousin. What is something that they like to play with their friends? Say: **It is so much fun to have friends, isn't it! Sometimes, though, even good friends disagree or fight. Have you ever disagreed with a friend? Sometimes it happens, doesn't it. In our story for today, the woman that Jesus stopped to talk to was from a place called Samaria. People from Samaria and people that were from the same place as Jesus didn't get along. They used to be friends, but weren't any more. They disagreed on lots of things. But Jesus loved even the people from Samaria! Let's read the story together.**

Read “Woman at the Well” (Spark Story Bible pages 420-425).

### **Activity Options:**

**Jesus Loves Everyone Dolls-** Give each child a paper doll chain. (Or for an early elementary class that you think is competent to make their own, teach them how to cut out their own paper doll chain.) Have children decorate the first doll to look like Jesus. Help them remember John 3:16 about God loving the whole world. Have kids decorate the second doll to look like themselves. The third to look like their friend or a family member. Then have the kids draw one that represents someone that they maybe disagreed with or someone that used to be their friend but isn't so much anymore. God loves that person too! We are all part of God's family, no matter who we are!

**Snack: Gingerbread Friends-** Give each child a gingerbread cookie to decorate with candy/frosting for eyes and other details. Emphasize how Jesus loves all of us- every person! Serve your gingerbread friends with glasses of water. Jesus' gift of life is for us all!

**Filled With Love Relay-** Set up a clear Rubbermaid bin on one end of the room filled with water. Set up the bin (with the line drawn) on the other end of the room, empty. Show children how to walk quickly from one end of the room to the other, fill a bucket with water, and carry it carefully (without spilling!) back to the other end of the room and dump it into the empty container. Then, have students take turns doing the same. As they dump the water into the container, have them name someone that Jesus loves. Keep going until the kids reach the line at the top of the bucket. Then rejoice together and celebrate Jesus love for all of us!



# *Upper Elementary Middle School & High School*

## **Materials Needed:**

- Spark NRSV Bible
- Eco Packing Peanuts (FedEx sells peanuts made of corn that dissolve in water)
- Large bowl of water
- Markers
- Props: Sign that says “to Samaria”; Pitcher of water; Food

## **Before the Students Arrive:**

Talk to your pastor and/or lector for the morning to make sure they are remembering your plans for helping with the gospel reading this morning!

## **Experiencing the Story:**

As each student arrives, give them a handful of packing peanuts and a marker. Ask students to write a word or two on each peanut that describe a conflict, a disagreement, or a problem that they have had with someone.

Then have them hold onto their peanuts while you read together John 4:1-42.

When you have finished reading, talk about how Jesus “dissolved” all the things that separate God from us and us from each other. Have kids toss their peanuts into the bowl of water and stir until all the peanuts are dissolved.

Tell the kids that today they have the opportunity to help others in the congregation hear the good news that Jesus’ love dissolves all the boundaries that separate us.

## **Activity: Stop Action Drama**

Say: Today for the Gospel reading, our class will be illustrating the story for those in the congregation. Here’s how it works. The congregation will be asked to close their eyes. While their eyes are closed, we’ll get into position to show the first scene of the story. Then we’ll have them open their eyes.

**After a few seconds, we'll have them close their eyes and we'll get into the second scene and then have them open. We'll keep going, having them open and close their eyes and open again until we've shown them the whole story. So... what we need to do now is to decide on who will do what parts and how we are going to show each scene.**

Use the attached script as a suggested way of breaking up the reading into scenes or come up with your own scenes and actions. Be sure to include all kids in some way or another (Try to be as creative as possible, encouraging kids but keeping the experience positive. A student who is really not wanting to be seen might be the eyes open/closed caller, etc.)

When you do your drama during the church service, do it through once with the congregation closing and opening their eyes to view the scenes in silence. Then, do the whole drama through a second time having a reader read the corresponding scripture passage as the congregation is invited to view each scene.



# Stop Action Drama: Woman at the Well

## Parts

Actors: Jesus, Samaritan Woman, Disciples, Crowd from town

Narrator(s) to read the Scripture and/or to be the person who asks the congregation to close/open their eyes.

## Props

“To Samaria” Sign, Water Pitcher, Food

## Directions

\*Instruct the congregation to close their eyes and keep them closed as each scene is changed. Tell them to open when the scene is set and the actors are still. Tell them to close again before actors shift their position.

\*The first time through the drama, show each scene in silence. The second time, have the narrator(s) read the scripture as each scene is shown.

SCENE SUGGESTIONS	SCRIPTURE SCRIPT
1. Jesus Walking	Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, ‘Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John’— although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria.
2. Jesus Sitting By The Well (Jesus sits with his tongue out, looking thirsty)	So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.
3. Samaritan Woman and Jesus (Samaritan Woman holds pitcher with her mouth open like she is talking. Jesus is listening.)	A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)

SCENE SUGGESTIONS	SCRIPTURE SCRIPT
<p>4. Jesus Talking (Jesus has his mouth open like he is talking and the Samaritan Woman is listening carefully.)</p>	<p>Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'</p>
<p>5. Jesus Talking, Continued (Jesus continues talking. The Samaritan woman now holds out her hands as if to receive the water Jesus is talking about.)</p>	<p>The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'</p>

SCENE SUGGESTIONS	SCRIPTURE SCRIPT
<p>6. Jesus Pointing (while the Samaritan Woman kneels at his feet).</p>	<p>Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'</p>
<p>7. Disciples Enter (Disciples stand looking confused, pointing at the woman.)</p>	<p>Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?'</p>
<p>8. Woman with Crowd (The woman stands as if she is motioning to a crowd of people to come.)</p>	<p>Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.</p>



SCENE SUGGESTIONS	SCRIPTURE SCRIPT
<p>9. Disciples with Food (The disciples stand as if they are handing food to Jesus. Jesus holds his hand up to refuse.)</p>	<p>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.'</p>
<p>10. Jesus Standing (All the others are sitting around Jesus with their arms raised in praise.)</p>	<p>Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.'</p>