

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Third Sunday in Lent**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: John 4:5-42**

Lent invites us to step off our mental treadmills, take a breath, and look around. Lent invites us to ask: Where are we demanding solutions? Where can we risk staying in tension? Where are we blind just not noticing? What do we thirst for? Where are we bound or stuck? What will we risk doing during these 40 days of Lent to clear a space in which Easter can break through?

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

Politically incorrect: she was of a gender without voice and a race without acceptance. Yet she may well have been the first evangelist. "Come and see!" she said. They did, and they believed.

**Theme: Come and See**

**Before Class:** This week, and the weeks to come in Lent, the passage is quite long and complex. You will need either Bibles or copies of the scripture for each person in the group. If you wish to read the passage using readers for each person, see the script at the end of the lesson and make sure to have enough copies for those who will need to read.

**Beginning:** Tell the group that today's passage involves a conversation between a Jew (Jesus) and a Samaritan woman. The conversation startles the disciples because (1) Jews and Samaritans avoided each other at all costs, (2) men would not speak to a woman they did not know, and (3) this woman had a lifestyle that was suspect.

**Opening Prayer:** Help us, God, to hear in this passage the message Jesus has for us today. Open our ears and minds so we may hear your word. Amen.

**Option:** Suggest the group be thinking of a parallel setting in our own time of two people of such different perspectives that they would not be expected to hear each other.

**The Scripture: John 4:5-42** Invite people to read the following parts: Narrator, Jesus, Samaritan Woman, Disciples, and Samaritans.

**Questions:**

- I wonder what stood out for you in this passage?
- What caught you by surprise?
- If you have heard this passage before, what did you hear differently today?
- What might be going on in the head of the Samaritan woman when she approached the well at noon, a time when she was confident she would be alone? (Oops. A man! How odd. Double oops, it is a Jew so I must be especially careful, but he will probably pretend he does not see me. Wow! He speaks to me, he even asks me to get him a drink of water. Surely he would not take a drink from my bucket and he seems to have no bucket of his own.)

- What would you say is happening in the interchange between Jesus and the woman? (Jesus is portraying a large picture, she responds to the parts she understands and Jesus is firm but patient with her.)
- What risk does she take when Jesus reveals to her just who he is? (She rushes back to her town where she probably has little status and tells all who will listen that she has found the Messiah. Her testimony is so persuasive that “many” go back with her to see for themselves.)
- What was the disciples response to all this? (Astounded as they might have been to find him talking with a woman, and a Samaritan at that, they said nothing. Perhaps they were now used to Jesus approaching people they would not have approached.)
- What do you think the disciples understood of what Jesus said to them in verses 34-38? (The work they thought they were just beginning to do was already bringing results. Things were happening that they had not initiated.)
- What caused these Samaritans to believe? (First it was the testimony of the woman; then it was hearing for themselves.)

**Option:** If time permits, invite the group to notice the steps in the woman’s movement from being a person of low self-esteem and distrust of Jews to believing in Jesus and becoming an evangelist. What might be the implications for us as we seek to share our faith? (She came to a faith she truly believed in, her energy caused others to risk checking out what she said, she pointed to Jesus — inviting them to see for themselves.)

**Option:** Invite the group to talk about what a similar situation might be today. Think about situations in your own community, region, state, country, and world.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the group to a few moments of silence. Suggest they picture themselves seated beside the well, with Jesus sitting silently beside them. Tell them that Jesus is accepting them just as they are right now and loving each one of us. After a time of silence, simply say Amen.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for your patience with us. Guide us to the well so we may find your life-giving water and love. Amen.

## **John 4:5-42**

**Narrator:** Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her,

**Jesus:** 'Give me a drink.'

**Narrator:** <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him,

**Samaritan Woman:** 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?'

**Narrator:** (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her,

**Jesus:** '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.'

**Samaritan Woman:** 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?'

**Jesus:** 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>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.'

**Samaritan Woman:** 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

**Jesus:** 'Go, call your husband, and come back.'

**Samaritan Woman:** 'I have no husband.'

**Jesus:** '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!'

**Samaritan Woman:** '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:** '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.'

**Samaritan Woman:** ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’

**Jesus:** ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

**Narrator:** 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?’<sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

**Samaritan Woman:** ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’

**Narrator:** They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him,

**Disciples:** ‘Rabbi, eat something.’

**Jesus:** ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’

**Narrator:** So the disciples said to one another,

**Disciples:** ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’

**Jesus:** ‘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 labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.’

**Narrator:** 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,

**Samaritans:** ‘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.’

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