

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Third Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Older Children

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: Be thinking of who in your community are the Samaritans: those we avoid because they are different. Be prepared to invite the children to notice who gets treated as different. The passage for today, as are all of them in Lent, is so long it would probably take most of the class period for the children to read it aloud. An option is offered to let the children read key passages, and the teacher provides a summary of the other parts. To help the children get into the story, the technique of news reporting is suggested.

Beginning: Tell the children that in today's story Jesus talks with a woman from Samaria. Tell them that Jews and Samaritans had very different ways of worshipping, and each thought the other's way was very wrong. Ask the children to think about people who get discriminated against in our community and in our schools. Is there a child no one wants to play with? Are there people in our community who have a hard time getting good jobs, decent houses, etc.?

Opening Prayer: "Help us, God, to see people as Jesus sees them. Amen."

The Story: John: 4:5-42 Look to the end of the lesson for directions for how to shorten the reading with summaries and key passages. Have copies for each person.

Questions:

- I wonder what you liked about this story?
- I wonder what questions or thoughts you have about this story?
- What do they remember about the Samaritan woman? (She would not have expected Jesus to speak to her for she was (1) a Samaritan, (2) a woman, and (3) a woman outcast even in her own community.)
- How does Jesus see this woman? (A child of God; a person who could receive his message. Possibly even a person who could bring others to believe also.)
- How do the disciples see the woman? (As a foreigner. Someone who is different. They are shocked that Jesus would even speak to her.)
- How did the people in her community respond to her excitement? (They risk going to see for themselves if she is right.)

Activity: Newscast

Tell the children that their task is to report this story as a newscast, so they will need to decide who is going to play each part. They will need at least one reporter, Jesus, and the Samaritan woman. If there are sufficient children in the class, other characters are the Samaritan people who return with the woman and the disciples. You can also divide them into groups having one group do what they read and another do a modern day version of this story.

Invite the children to present their newscast for you.

Getting Closure: Ask the children if any questions occurred to them as they were presenting the newscast. Invite them to share how they think this might apply to their lives today.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you see us as we really are and that you love us. Help us to see ourselves and each other in the same way you see us. Amen.

John 4:5-42

Setting: Jesus and the disciples were walking home to Galilee. To get there, they had to walk through the country of Samaria, which must have made the disciples nervous. They agreed to let Jesus stay all by himself by the well while they went into town to get some food for lunch. The well was Jacob's well, and most people came to get water either early in the morning or late in the day when it was cooler. The middle of the day was so hot no one was likely to come, so they thought he would be safe. While he was resting by the well a Samaritan woman came to the well. The fact that she was coming in the middle of the day when no one else would be there was Jesus' first clue that this was a woman whose lifestyle was probably not very respected.

John 4:7-9: Ask for a volunteer to read these verses.

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.)

Teacher Summary: Jesus is gently inviting this woman to notice who he is and what he could offer her if she believed in him. The more they talk, the more she realizes who he is and that she can trust him.

John 4:27-30: Ask for a volunteer to read these verses.

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.

Teacher Summary: The disciples urged Jesus to eat the lunch they had brought, but he needs to remind them that his ministry and work is more important than food. Meanwhile, the woman was racing back to her town, telling everyone who would listen to her that she had found the Messiah, the one they had all been waiting for, and that he was sitting by the very well they went to daily for water. A bunch of them raced back to the well with her.

John 4:40-42: Ask for a volunteer to read these verses.

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.'

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