

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Third Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Younger 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: Few children will have seen a well like the one in today’s story. An option is suggested for letting the children experience something of a well. To create this you will need a plastic trash bag (to protect the floor), a clean trash can, a broomstick (or similar piece of wood), a length of rope, something to serve as a “bucket” (could be a child’s plastic bucket, or some other small container), and water poured into the trash can until it is about half full. Secure the rope to the center of the stick, tie the other end to the bucket making sure the rope is long enough for the bucket to go below the level of the water. The children can hold the opposite ends of the stick and twist it until the bucket is lowered into the water, then reverse the direction of the twisting until the bucket is high enough to reach in and grasp. (You may choose to rehearse this a bit before showing the children!) You will need a towel or two for spills, a pitcher of fresh water, and small cups so each child may have a cup of water.

If you have access to watercolor paints bring them for the closing art project. If you do not, provide art supplies you do have on hand.

Beginning: If you are going to use the well, ask the children how we get water at our house. How do we get water when we are at a park? Tell them that when Jesus was telling this story, no one had water piped into their houses or into drinking fountains in parks. They had to go to a well, lower a bucket into the well and pull the bucket back up to get the water they needed to drink, cook with, take baths in and give to their animals. Show the children the well and let them experiment with getting water from it. If this activity does not fit your space, print out some pictures of a well and describe it to the children. Ask them to pretend to get water from a well, pantomiming the motions necessary to lower a bucket, turn the crank, and pull the bucket up to the surface.

Praying: Thank you, God, for giving us water. Thank you for chances to hear about you more. Help us to know you more each day. Amen.

The Story: It was hot and Jesus was tired so Jesus sat down by a well to rest while the disciples went into town to get food for lunch. A woman came to the well to get some water, so Jesus asked her to get him a drink of water. She was very surprised that Jesus talked to her. She did not have many friends so she didn't expect Jesus to speak to her. She didn't know who Jesus was, but as she listened to him, she decided he must be this Jesus she had heard about. So she raced back to her town and called the people there to come with her and see Jesus. They came. They listened to Jesus, and they decided to be Jesus' followers too.

Activity: Offer the pitcher of water and cups so each child may have a cup of water. (If they ask, you can tell them that our well might not have water clean enough to drink, so we will drink water from the pitcher). As you sip your cups of water, ask the children to name their favorite thing about water. Has anyone gone swimming in a river? The ocean? A pool? Played in the sprinkler? What else does water do for us? Has anyone seen what we do with water at a baptism?

Getting Closure: Gratitude Pictures

If you have watercolors, use the water from the well (putting it into small cups) and let the children paint things for which they are grateful. You can paint along with the children. If the paintings are too wet to put in the Gratitude Box, put them in a secure place for next week (taking them home, if necessary) when the children can place their pictures in the box.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the things we can do with water and for the love that you show each of us. Amen.

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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