

JESUS AND THE PEOPLE

Lesson 1: The Woman at the Well

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

Every since Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered this world, humans have been like a puzzle with a missing piece. We spend our lives trying to fill that piece, but in the end, only one thing can fill it. This lesson will look at Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman and the radical life change in her life by Jesus offering her a true, lasting solution to fill the empty gap.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: The answers and fulfillment we seek through many activities, goals, and pursuits can only be found through Jesus.
2. WHY: Knowing that Jesus is the only real, lasting solution to filling the empty gap in our lives makes trying anything else seem pointless—which it is.
3. HOW: Students will be encouraged to see that even if they have tried other ways to fill the empty gap in their lives, Jesus offers a true, lasting answer.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

John 4:1-30, 39-42

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read John 4:1-30, 39-42.

John 4 starts off by talking about Jesus and his disciples leaving Judea and returning to Galilee. Because of their disdain for Samaritans, Jews often followed a different path to avoid Samaria. Jews didn't like the Samaritans because they were seen as a mixed race



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for intermarrying with non-Israelites, and it was common for a Jew to go completely out of his or her way to avoid going through Samaria and interacting with the Samaritans.

In this passage, Jesus sat at the well in the village of Sychar, and soon his encounter with the Samaritan woman began to unfold. The time of day that this encounter occurred (“the sixth hour,” or noontime) gives the reader a major indication that something is different about this woman. She made her trip to the well in the middle of the day—not the usual time of day for drawing water.

The timing can be interpreted as an indication that this woman was attempting to avoid contact with any of the other residents of Sychar. She was a citizen of that town, yet she was still an outsider. Perhaps she hoped to avoid the judgmental and condemning stares from other women in the community who would be filling their water supply later in the day, when the midday heat had diminished.

The woman, like many of our students, secluded herself when things got messy. It is obvious her life was a big mess when we discover that she had been married several times and was living with a guy who wasn’t her husband. She desired acceptance but was constantly met with judgment from those around her. She moved from guy to guy trying to find genuine and authentic love, but it wasn’t until her encounter with Jesus that she discovered it.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We’ve provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry

- What can we learn from the day a thirsty Jesus asked an outcast person for a drink? It’s a conversation we can all relate to! See you tonight!
- What if I gave you a drink and you were never thirsty again? Find out how when the group meets!



Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We're beginning a three-lesson series titled "Jesus and the People" that promises to be an incredible exploration of some awesome encounters with Jesus.

The first encounter we discussed was between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, found in John 4. It's incredible and exciting to read about Jesus' interaction with this woman and the transformation that took place. Jesus helped her realize that what she was searching for in her relationships could only be found in him.

This week, help reinforce this teaching in your child's life by asking the following questions as you have the opportunity:

- The woman in John 4 tried to fill the gap in her life through her relationships with men—what are some specific ways teenagers try to fill the gap in their lives?
- Why is a changed life such powerful evidence that God exists and offers forgiveness through Jesus?

Have a blessed week!



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2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Preview the following YouTube video for your group: [youtube.com/watch?v=Q49BbfgJbto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49BbfgJbto). You will need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, show the video clip, and then ASK:

- What was your overall reaction to this video?
- When have you felt like the woman in the video?
- At one point, the speaker said this: “To be known is to be loved and to be loved is to be known.” What does that statement mean to you?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This video helps us enter the world of people who have been labeled as “outcasts” by others. Many of us can relate to her life story—or we know people whose lives mirror the words she spoke. We sometimes forget all the emotions and feelings behind pain. Often when we experience pain, we try to numb it with some kind of escape or release, but it is only a temporary fix to our problem. Fortunately, God offers a true answer and solution.*

TEACHING GUIDE

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) Jesus knows your past but loves you anyway, (2) Nothing except Christ can fill the empty gap in your life, and (3) An encounter with Christ produces a changed life.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read John 4:1-30 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.



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SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's take a few minutes to consider the significance of Jesus' conversation with the woman in this Scripture and his offer of "living water."*

1. Jesus knows your past but loves you anyway

ASK:

- *Tell us about a time when someone gave you something that you didn't deserve or hadn't earned. What was that experience like?*
- *Do you find it difficult to love people who have hurt you—even after you've offered them forgiveness?*
- *How has forgiveness strengthened and benefited your friendships?*
- *In this passage, Jesus told details about this woman's life that a stranger couldn't have known—he knew about her shady past. How might you respond if a complete stranger started listing off your sins or big mistakes?*
- *What is your response to the truth that Jesus still loves you and wants to forgive you, regardless of your past mistakes? Have you struggled or do you struggle to accept that truth? Explain.*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Forgiving someone is one of the hardest things you will ever have to do in life, especially if it involves forgiving someone who has caused hurt or pain. But Jesus wants to forgive us, even though our sin has caused him pain. Reading about how Jesus offers this woman a second chance—despite her past—can give each of us hope, too. We can experience the hope that we no longer have to cling to our past or allow our past to define us—the hope that Jesus loves us and wants to forgive us, regardless of what we've said or done in the past.*

2. Nothing except Christ can fill the empty gap in your life

ASK:

- *The woman in John 4 tried to fill the gap in her life through her relationships with men—what are some specific ways teenagers try to fill the gap in their lives?*
- *How and why do those efforts fall short of meeting the need in people's lives?*
- *Look at verse 14—what do you think it means to have a "fresh, bubbling spring" inside you?*



SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Have you ever tried putting together a puzzle but when you get to the very end you discovered that you're missing a piece? The puzzle is incomplete. It doesn't matter how many pieces are correct and in the right place—even if you're missing just one piece, it is still incomplete.*

3. An encounter with Christ produces a changed life

ASK:

- *When in your life have you felt that you encountered God? What was different about you after your encounter?*
- *Verses 39-42 reveal the results of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman. Why is the message of Jesus so appealing to people who might be viewed as outcasts by society?*
- *Why is a changed life such powerful evidence that God exists and offers forgiveness through Jesus?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Once we stop trying to force something else into the gap that only Jesus can fill, we truly can encounter Christ. We can hear him tell us to stop trying to do it on our own. We can reach a place where we finally realize that he came so that we could experience a changed life, a life that we live to the fullest.*

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

ASK:

- *Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. If you're a follower of Christ, how often do you find yourself continuing to feel guilty about things that are in your past—things God has forgiven through Jesus?*
- *If you're a follower of Jesus, how does it feel to be described as a "new creation" and to know that the old is gone?*
- *This passage talks about us being God's ambassador—sharing the message of Jesus with people around us. How can our conversation about the woman in John 4 encourage and inspire you as you share this message with others?*



Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

APPLICATION

ASK:

- *The next time you turn toward one of the “gap fillers” instead of toward Jesus, how can you make the right, best choice?*
- *We often feel like we’re useless if we’ve made a mistake or if we don’t closely follow or obey God for a period of time. How can you respond to those thoughts and feelings, based on our conversation today?*
- *How can you share this message with your friends or family members this week?*
- *How can we as a group help you to remember the truths from today’s conversation?*

SUMMARY

End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



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FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17).



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