

The Woman at the Well

WATER

John 4:5-42

What's happening in this story?

On one level, this is simply a story about a man and a woman at a well. Of course, in Jesus' day it wasn't normal or even socially acceptable for these two to be speaking at the well at the same time. This is because they were of opposite genders, and on top of that, the woman was a Samaritan. Clearly the event is recorded to illustrate that Jesus' approach to women, even foreign women, was radically different from the religious life in which he had been raised. Not only that, but he opened a door to dialogue with a representative of a culture that the Israelites were at odds with and considered heretics.

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids love telling other people what they're excited about. The woman in this story gives a testimony about her exciting encounter, and it leads others to faith. Kids can explore how sharing interests with their friends can lead people to Jesus. This is also a great opportunity to draw connections between the different identities kids carry, and Jesus' presence there. Jesus is present at soccer practice, and it's a chance for kids to show others who Jesus is. That's a testimony worth listening to.

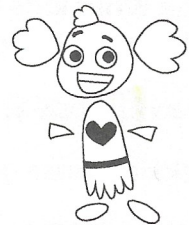
Why this theme?

Water is a central theme and image throughout scripture, both as essential sustenance for our bodies and, in this story, as nourishment for our faith.

TEACHING TIP

Living water is an abstract concept for most kids.

Understanding God's love as living water that isn't actually water might be tricky. Remind kids that our bodies are more than 60 percent water, and just as we are made of and filled with water, we are made of and filled—100 percent!—with God's love.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Mural paper
- Markers
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Food coloring
- Mason jars (at least 8)
- Mason jar lids (2)
- Wooden spoons
- Water source
- Pitchers (4)
- Towels

WELCOME 15

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Spread out a sheet of mural paper, and set out markers. Invite kids to draw or write a list of all the different bodies of water (lake, creek, ocean, etc.) they can think of.

Discussion of different bodies of water, sources of drinking water, other water reserves, etc...

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

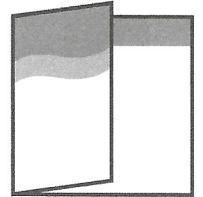
Here are some facts about water: 71 percent of the earth is covered in water. Our bodies are made of more than 60 percent water. Our brains are 75 percent water, our blood is 92 percent water, and even our bones are 31 percent water. Go around the circle, and invite kids to name one way they use water in their daily lives. **God created us, and God created all that water! God also created something Jesus called "living water," and we'll be learning about that today.**

Pray together: ~~Thank you, Living God, for the water we drink and for the love we receive that fills us up as well. Amen.~~ Be still and know that I am God...

Pass out leaflets and pencils.

Where do you get water to drink? Listen for responses. On your leaflet are pictures of places we can get water. Put a star in the circle by places you drink

water from. Put an X in the circles by each picture you don't drink water from. Give kids time to mark their leaflets. **How many did you star?** Give kids a chance to share their total and one example. **Today's lesson takes place at a well, where Jesus asks a woman for a drink of water.** Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The Whirl kids have some homework from Sunday school class today. Let's see what they have to do.

View Episode 2, "Bottled Theology," on the Year Blue Spring DVD. (4 min, 7 sec)

Ask kids these questions about the video:

* How did Ruby describe Jesus?

- What do you think of Ruby's idea to sell bottles of living water?
- Why do you think Jesus used the term living water?

* If you had to tell someone about living water, what would you say?

- Share a time when knowing something about Jesus was helpful to you.



HEAR 15

Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles and Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Have older kids find a younger buddy. Invite them to find "The Woman at the Well" on page 294 of the Whirl Kids Story Bible. In the middle of the day, Jesus met a woman at a well. The woman was surprised that Jesus knew so much about her! As he talked to her, Jesus offered the woman "living water" and shared with her who he truly was.

~~Read the story aloud. Pause each time you read the word "water," and invite kids to say, "Gulp, gulp, gulp."~~ Living water fills us up with God's love.

~~Read Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page. Then read John 4:7-11 and what Mimi says about that passage on page 1275 of the Whirl Kids Study Bible.~~

Ask these questions after you read the story:

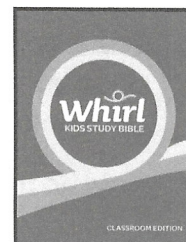
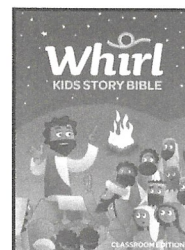
- What did Jesus ask the woman for?
- Why was the woman surprised that Jesus spoke to her?

* Who is someone new you could talk to?

- What happened after the woman learned Jesus was the Messiah?
- Who could you share good news with?

Play together!

Today, we are going to have a water relay race. Remind kids that in many places, people still have to walk long distances to get water from a well like the woman did in the story. Split into two teams. Have teams each stand in a line. At one end of each line, place a pitcher of water and a mason jar with a lid. At the other end, place an empty pitcher. The team member closest to the pitcher of water will fill the mason jar and screw on the lid. Then, using any parts of your body but your hands, pass the mason jar down the line. The person next to the empty pitcher unscrews the lid and empties the water into the pitcher. Then they screw on the lid and pass the empty jar back without using hands to be filled again. The goal is to transfer all the water from one pitcher to the other. The team members next to the pitchers can use their hands to fill and empty the jars and screw and unscrew the lids, but otherwise, remember: no hands! Play once through or as long as time allows. Why is water important? Why is living water important?



BIBLE BIT

This is the only moment in Jesus' life, prior to the resurrection, when he reveals that he is the Messiah. That he shares this truth with a woman is significant.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to Ruby and Otto's marketing pitch for living water. Would it have convinced you?

OUR CHURCH

Go on a search to see if you have any symbols of "living water" in your church. Look in stained glass and near the baptismal font. What symbols do you find?

RESPOND ⑩

Pass out leaflets, mason jars, food coloring, pitcher, water, wooden spoons, markers, and pencils.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Today we are going to create music with water!** Work together to create a musical xylophone by filling eight mason jars with different levels of water; dyeing the water with food coloring in rainbow order; and lining them up from the lowest to the highest tone, as shown on the leaflet. If teaching a large class, create multiple stations.
2. **Jesus told the Samaritan woman about God's living water. Then the Samaritan woman told more people, and these people came to see Jesus. We can tell about Jesus and God's living water too. Let's tell about Jesus by creating some water-inspired music of our very own.**
3. Hold up the square and read the text: **Living water fills us with God's love!**
4. Hand a wooden spoon to a volunteer. As a class, say the text from Step 3 as the volunteer strikes each matching mason jar with the spoon. Repeat, using the tones from the mason jars to sing the phrase.
5. **Let's mix up the tune! Everyone can now write a new tune. Color the blank jars in the order you would like your tune to go and write the numbers on the lines. Then we can take turns playing our new tune.**
6. **Whether we use words or action or music, we can share the good news of Jesus' living water.**
7. If time permits, kids can create a second tune in class. Otherwise, encourage them to try the activity at home.

* Maybe ask if anyone is doing any water activities at home? We sometimes play a game called 'Sink or Float' where we fill a small bin with water and predict if things sink or float. Some might play water balloon fights, slip n slide, watercolor painting...

LAUNCH ⑩

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What's something new you learned about water during today's lesson? Give kids time to respond. We are made of water, and God's living water fills us up!

Pass out leaflet panels and markers.

Pretend the bottle on your leaflet is a bottle of living water. What does God's love look like? Write words or draw pictures on the water bottle that show God's love.

Send kids out with a blessing.

→ Help and Thanks

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.