

Third Sunday of Lent – year A

Preparation

Read [John 4:5-42](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/lenta3.htm>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115827_ENG_HTM.htm

http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=179

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/thirst-quencher.html>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/womanatwell.htm>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/samaritan.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/lent3mles.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/3Lent-a/A-3Lent-a.html>

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/curr184.pdf>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Purple candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Purple cloth
- Rocks of various sizes
- Streamer or balloon from previous week
- Bowl or container with deep sides filled up just over half way with water
- Map or globe showing water and land

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Have the children put the rocks and materials from previous weeks around the candle. Ask the children if they know how many days of Lent have gone by since you were last together (6, because we do not count Sunday). Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

Walking with God, we learn to love;

Walking with Jesus, we learn to care;

Walking with the Spirit, we learn to share. Amen.

Blow out the candle. Put the bowl/container of water where everyone can see it. Ask the children where water comes from – they will probably have a number of different ideas – keep track of them. Look at the map/globe and see how much water the earth is made from. Spend a few moments talking about how we can live without food for a long time but we can't live without water for very long. Explain that in today's story Jesus does a surprising thing with a woman at a water well. Place the map or globe on the worship table.

Story Time

Materials

- Container with water in it – use the one from the gathering time
- Jug of water and cups to drink from

Instructions

- Place the container with water in it in the middle of the children. Have the jug of water and cups handy for later in the story.

Jesus and his friends had been walking a long way. They were all tired. They were making their way back to Galilee where many of them lived with their families. They came to a city called Sychar. It had a big well in the middle of it. This well had a special name; it was called Jacob's Well for an ancestor of their people. It was also in a country where Jesus and his friends did not usually go. They were strangers in that town.

Jesus sat down by the well. The water looked very good and he was very thirsty. Then he noticed a woman coming to the well. She was carrying a jug to get some water for her home. Jesus was just a bit curious. It wasn't the usual time for women to be coming to the well. He decided that he needed to talk to her.

When the woman put her jug down, Jesus said to her, "May I have a drink?"

Pause here and pour a drink of water for everyone from the jug of water.

Well the woman was so surprised. How was it that a stranger was talking to her?

She said, "How come you are talking to me? You are a stranger here. I am a woman and you are a man."

Jesus smiled at her. "If you knew who you were talking to and the gift of God that I could give you, you would be asking me for the living water."

The woman was astonished by what Jesus was saying. She looked at Jesus and said, "You don't have a bucket and this well is very deep. Where does this living water come from?"

Jesus knew that this woman was curious about what he was saying. He looked at her and said, "When you drink the water from this well you will get thirsty again and need some more water. The water I want to give you is the water of God's life. It will satisfy you all the time. It will be like a spring bubbling up inside of you."

Now the woman didn't understand what Jesus was saying. She said to him, "Then give me this water, so that I never have to come back here and get water again."

Jesus told her, "I know so much about your life. You are very sad. Things have not gone the way you wanted them to."

"What you say is so true. I can tell that you are someone who comes from God."

The woman was looking straight at Jesus when she said this.

"The time will come," said Jesus, "when your people and my people will be together. We will worship God together and know God together."

The woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming. The one who will save us all."

Jesus said to her, "You are looking at the Messiah. I have come from God to bring the living water to everyone."

Jesus' friends showed up just then. They were astonished to see Jesus speaking to this person who was both a stranger and a woman.

Right away the woman left Jesus and went into the city. She told everyone she met to come with her and meet the man who told the truth about her life. She told them that she had found the Messiah. Many people came to see Jesus and they too came to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the one from God.

Response

Project Idea 1: Water Containers

This idea connects with Jacob's Well where Jesus met the Samaritan woman. It probably won't be a good idea to use it for water, but the children can put other things in their containers when they are dry.

Play Clay Recipe (for two children) – to be prepared ahead of time

- 250 mL (1 cup) of flour
- 125 mL (½ cup) of salt
- 20 mL (1 ½ tbsp.) of vegetable oil
- 10 mL (2 tsp.) of creme of tartar
- 250 mL (1 cup) of boiling water

Put all the ingredients except the water into a bowl and mix thoroughly. Pour the boiling water over and mix with spoon. Take out of bowl and knead with hands. If the dough seems sticky add some more flour, if too dry add a little bit more water. Knead until smooth. Put into plastic bag or container to keep before using. This recipe makes enough for one child to use – so you will need to make enough for each child to have some.

Instructions

Make up the play clay ahead of time. The recipe is about enough for two children but can be easily multiplied if needed. Give each child some of the clay. Let them feel the clay in their hands. Explain that they are going to create water containers like the woman would have used at the well. Let them use the clay to create their containers. When they are finished have them put them on the cookie sheet. They will take a few days to air dry so tell the children that they can have them the following week.

Project Idea 2: Spirit Fans

This idea is one that will make the connection between water and the promise of life that Jesus gives to the woman at the well. In First Nation communities' water is important to everyone – it is used for cleansing and drinking. Water is also used for leisure and travel. The gift of water comes from God.

Materials needed

- card stock (white if you can get it)
- white crayons or white candle
- blue tempera paint and water
- paint brushes
- containers for paint
- newspaper

Instructions

Give each child a piece of card stock and a white crayon (with the paper removed) or a white candle. Have the children print with the white crayon or white candle the words “**Living Water comes from Jesus**”, and if they have room try to make it look like water is gushing out of the words onto the card stock. They might also want to put the following symbols on which come from the First Nation tradition – a river, lake, or clouds. Mix up the tempera paint with more water than usual so that it is quite thin. Spread the newspaper on the table where the painting will be done. Show the children how to spread the paint over the card and when they are done show them how the words come up to the front. When the paint is dry invite the children to put up the print where they can see it and remember the story of Jesus at the well.

Project Idea 3: Outreach Water Project

This idea will help the children connect with the issues of water around the world. Water is a precious resource for all of us. Jesus emphasized this when he talks about eternal life being like living water.

Materials needed

Visit the websites below:

- <http://www.onedrop.org/>
- <http://www.globalwater.org/>
- <http://thewaterproject.org/water-missions/churches-helping-churches.asp>
- <http://freethechildren.com>

Instructions

Take a look at the above websites. Find an idea or project that you are willing to present to the children. With the children explore the issue of water shortages, accessibility to clean water, and any others that may come up in your explorations. With the children decide which project they want to take on. This may take a few weeks to complete, so if you decide to go with this idea, make time each week to connect with the children on how things are going.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Loving God, be with us every day;
Caring Jesus, be with us every day;
Sharing Spirit, be with us every day. Amen.**