



seeking:

Will you give me a drink?

children's curriculum

JOHN 4:5-42

by Rev. Anna Strickland

MAIN IDEA: We can take care of each other, especially when we are different.

engaging the story

storytelling materials

- **Samaria:** A brown, tan, or gray piece of felt, fabric, or paper.
- **Jesus and the woman:** Clothespin people, Godly Play® people of God figures, or felt figures.
- **well:** a small cylinder (e.g. a piece of construction paper rolled and taped together, or a toilet paper roll cut down to size, etc.).
- **Sychar:** A medium box, a collection of wood blocks or milk carton houses, etc.



scripture retelling

(Stage directions are in italics. Words to speak aloud are in **bold** text.)

Jesus was traveling through Samaria. *Lay down the Samaria backdrop and place the Jesus figure on it.*

The people who lived in Samaria, called Samaritans, worshiped God differently than people from Judea, called Jews. Because they were different, Samaritans and Jews didn't get along.

Jesus came near the town of Sychar. *Place the town of Sychar on the edge of the backdrop.*

scripture retelling *(continued)*

Near Sychar was the well that Jacob, the ancestor of both the Samaritans and the Jews, had dug many generations ago. *Place the well in the middle of the backdrop.*

Jesus was getting tired from his journey, and his disciples had gone into town to buy food, so he sat by the well. *Place the Jesus figure next to the well.*

Around noon, a Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water. *Place the Samaritan woman figure by the well. As each person is speaking in the following exchange, place your hand on the figure.*

Jesus asked her for a drink of water, which surprised her. She asked, "Why are you, a Jewish man, asking me for a drink? Don't you know that I am a Samaritan?"

Jesus responded, "If you knew who I am, you would be asking me for living water."

The Samaritan woman was confused. She said, "You don't have a bucket, and the well is too deep to get water without one. Where are you going to get this living water? This is the best well around—our ancestor Jacob drank from it himself!"

But Jesus wasn't talking about that kind of water. He said, "Everyone who drinks the water from this well will get thirsty again. But the water I have to give is like a spring that never runs out, so anyone who drinks it will never be thirsty again."

The Samaritan woman asked Jesus, "Please give me this water so I never have to come back to the well to get water!"

Jesus told her to bring her husband to the well, but she told him, "I don't have a husband." He already knew this and told the Samaritan woman, "You are right. But I know you have had five husbands, and the man you live with now is not your husband."

The woman was amazed that Jesus knew so much about her. She said, "I can see you are a prophet, so tell me: where are we supposed to worship? My people have always worshiped on this mountain, but your people say we have to worship in Jerusalem."

Jesus told her, "The time is coming when we won't need to worship God on this mountain or Jerusalem, but only in our spirits. God is spirit, so anyone who wants to worship God should worship in their spirits."

The woman said, "Yes, I know that when the Messiah comes, he will explain everything." Jesus told her, "I am the Messiah."

The Samaritan woman was so excited to tell everyone about Jesus that she left her water jar at the well and ran into town. *Move the Samaritan woman figure to the town of Sychar.*

The Samaritan people were amazed at the woman's story and came to see Jesus, and he stayed with the Samaritans for two more days.

This is one of our sacred stories.

wonder wall

Ask the children what questions they have about the story. Add these questions to your "Wonder Wall." To model, you might ask some of the following questions:

- I wonder... What was the woman's name?
- I wonder... What is living water?
- I wonder... Did people believe her that Jesus was the Messiah?

discussion

- Jesus and the Samaritan woman were very different from each other but weren't afraid to talk to each other. Can you think of a time when you talked to someone who was different from you? What made you different? What did you talk about?
- How did Jesus and the Samaritan woman help each other?
- Jesus and the Samaritan woman were both part of Jacob's family, so Jacob's well was like common ground for them. What are some things all people have in common?

prayer

Dear God, thank you for making us all different. Help us to take care of each other well and to celebrate our differences. Amen.

extension activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. We also recommend making storytelling materials available to children to retell the story, either as an option for independent play during the Sunday School hour, as a take-home kit, in worship bags, or any combination of these. Instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children are included separately with this resource.

Activity A) Play a Game: Common Ground

Materials:

- Mailing labels or sticky notes.
- Pens, markers, and/or pencils.

Instructions:

Each person should think of something they like. It could be an animal, a favorite snack, an item, a hobby, a movie, etc. The wider the variety, the more challenging, so you might choose a specific category for the first round to help children learn the game. Have each child write their selection on a large mailing label or sticky note to put on their clothing. (*This is optional, but helps children remember what they chose.*) Invite children to find a partner. If there is an odd number, one group can form a group of three. They must find something in common between their selections. For example, if one child chose a lion and the other chose a frog, they might say that both have four legs. Once they have found common ground, they can sit down. Repeat the process with groups of three, groups of four, and groups of five, depending on the number of children. Play as many rounds as you like with different categories.

extension activities *(continued)*

Activity B) Read a Book: *Pup and Bear*

Pup and Bear. Written by Kate Banks, illustrated by Naoko Stoop. Schwartz & Wade, 2017.

Despite their differences, Bear still takes care of Pup, who then pays that love and care forward. Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

Activity C) Creative Expression: Living Water Watercolor Cards

Materials:

- One sheet of watercolor paper per child, approximately 9"x12", or pre-folded blank watercolor notecards with envelopes.
- Watercolors and painting supplies, such as paintbrushes, water cups, and table covers.
- Markers, crayons, pencils, and/or pens.

Instructions:

Invite children to create a card to care for someone different from themselves. Some ideas for prompts might include:

- Create a card to put in a "blessing bag" for an unhoused neighbor.
- Create a card to wish a Muslim family a blessed Ramadan.¹
- Create a card to welcome a refugee family to your country.
- Create a card to care for someone living in a nursing home, prison, or group home.

If your church has an ongoing partnership with another community, this might be a good opportunity to educate children and build connections. To create the card, fold the watercolor paper in half and use watercolors to decorate. Add a message using marker, crayon, pen, or pencil.

¹ In 2023, Ramadan begins March 22, and often overlaps with the season of Lent.



about the creator

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Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a native Austinite and graduated from the University of Texas where she now works as a college minister, especially serving LGBTQ students.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.