

Middle/High School Sunday School Lessons by

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Year 4: Session 6 – Jesus and Outsiders

Class 16: John 4:5-15, 27-29, 40-42 – The Woman At the Well

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Introduce the idea of survival instincts
- Highlight how survival instincts can lead to isolation and feeling like you or someone else does not belong
- Note in the scripture story how the living water that Jesus talks about restores belonging / community

Materials needed:

1. Movie clip (available on rfour.org) from *It's A Wonderful Life*
2. Electronics that show the video clip
3. *For activity:* You'll need a deck of cards for every four students (in other words, if you have 11 students, you'll need 3 decks (Deck 1 for first 4 students, Deck 2 for second 4 students, Deck 3 for the next students, even though there are not four of them). You'll also need a playing space (preferably a table, maybe the floor) where everyone can gather and be able to equally reach the cards when put in the middle of the gathering

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- One of the things we do every class is ask and answer the opening question at the beginning of class – because it helps us 1. Learn more about each other and 2. Helps “warm us up” for some of the ideas in the upcoming lesson. So we’re going to do that now.
- So here’s the opening question for today’s class. I [the teacher] will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle and each of us will answer.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- *Here’s this week’s question:* What is a group you would like to somehow better belong to / be part of?

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- We start a new session today
- Our new session consists of three stories that looks at how Jesus welcomes outsiders into community
- To get started, we’re going to do an opening activity that will, hopefully, help us think about how competition and survival instincts can undermine community and a sense of belonging.

EXPLAIN OPENING ACTIVITY

- So our opening activity for today is called “Rat Slap” – it’s a card game
- We’ll use a 52-card deck (no jokers) for every 4 players (so if we have 6 players, we’ll use two decks – shuffled together, of course)
- We’ll sit in a circle and we’ll deal out the cards until there are none left
- Do NOT look at your cards
- Instead, stack them into a deck, face-down
- How to win: You win the game by getting ALL the cards
- How to lose: You are out of the game when you run out of cards
- The player to the left of the dealer begins by drawing the top card from their own deck and placing that card face-up in the middle of the circle – that’s the one and only discard pile.
- NOTE: When playing their top card, every player must reveal the card to all players at the same time, drawing to reveal the card away from themselves and then flipping face up. (This action prevents a player drawing a card towards themselves and revealing the card to said player first.)
- Then the next player (on the left) takes the top card of their own deck and places that card face-up on the discard pile (in the middle of the circle) atop the previous face-up card
- Play proceeds around the circle, each player taking their turn by discarding their top card, face-up, on the discard pile.
- Things change once a face card or Ace is played
- When this happens the next player has a number of chances to play another face card or Ace, as follows: four chances after an Ace, three after a King, two after a Queen, and one after a Jack.
- For example, say player 1 played a King
- Then, player 2 has three chances to play a face card or ace
- If player 2 doesn’t play a face or ace card during their three card discard, then Player 1 picks up the discard deck, puts the cards under his/her own deck and then plays the next card from the top of their deck
- If player 2 DOES play a face or ace card (for example a Queen), then player 3 has TWO chances (because the card was a Queen) to play a face or ace card.
- If player three doesn’t play a face or ace card during their two-card discard, then player TWO gets the central discard deck and plays the next card of the top of their own deck.
- If a player runs out of cards while trying to match a face or ace card, then the previous player picks up the pile and starts the next discard pile
- Any player who takes a pile is always the one to start the next pile. When taken, piles are always added to a player's deck underneath, face-down. Cards are rarely or never shuffled.
- Again, the player who collects every card in the deck wins the game.

Slapping

- At any point in the game, if two cards of equal rank (a double) are played back-to-back and someone in the group slaps the discard pile BEFORE the next card is played then that person gets to pick up the discard pile
- Sandwiches can also be slapped. A sandwich is a double (two cards of the same value, like 2 eights) with a different card (like a king) between them.
- Since more than one person might slap, the first person to slap the pile gets the pile
- It is considered unfair to hover one's hand too close to the pile or to slap frequently – you have to see the cards

- Be sure to take off rings and watches and beware of jammed fingers/knuckles
- If players slap the pile when the card combination does not merit a slap, the slapper must discard four cards and place them face-up at the bottom of the discard pile
- If a player runs out of cards, then that player can get back in the game by slapping the pile – however if a person who is out slaps three incorrect times without a correct slap, then the player can no longer slap back in.

DO Activity

Note: The game can go on for a long time; so be sure to set a time limit and stop the activity when the time is up, even if no one has won yet. There may very well be some voices of discontent that the activity is done – but rule #1 is always leave them wanting more – and then you can promise, if there’s time afterwards, another round can be played

ASK

- So, did anyone get their hand slapped? (yes!)
- But I thought we were FRIENDS! Do we usually slap each other? (No, not in class anyways)
- So what made today different? (WINNING! Doubles! Sandwiches!)
- In order to win, did others have to lose? (yes)
- And on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being worse, how bad did you feel that some of us were out of the game while you were still playing? (most likely not bad at all)

TRANSITION to SCRIPTURE

- So last class, we read a parable called the Good Samaritan
- And one of the things we might remember from that class is that Israelites and Samaritans did NOT like each other
- So much so that the idea of there was a Samaritan who was good was an offensive idea for Jesus to share
- We also talked about how Jesus used the idea of the “Good Samaritan” to remind his students and the people around him that there were no loopholes in sharing God’s love and mercy with your neighbors – that your neighbors equaled EVERYONE
- So...in today’s story, we see that Jesus not only tells stories about Good Samaritans...he actually goes into Samaritan towns and talks to the Samaritans.
- Let’s see what happens

READ John 4:5-15, 27-29, 40-42 (*recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse*)

5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. 7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who

gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” 28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 “Come and see a man who told

me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

40So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41And

many more believed because of his word. 42They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

ASK

- Verse 5 – What kind of city does Jesus arrive at? (A Samaritan city)
- Verse 6 – What time of the day is it? (Noon)
- Verse 7 – Who does Jesus speak to? (A Samaritan woman)
- Verse 9 – Who notices how much of an issue this is? (the Samaritan woman)
- Verse 10 – When Jesus talks about "living water," do you think he's talking about regular or special water that you drink? Or do you think he's talking about something else? If something else – what do you think he's talking about?
- Verse 11 – What does the Samaritan woman think Jesus is talking about? (regular water – she says he doesn't have a bucket, though she might be, believe it or not, joking around with him – hard to tell)
- Verse 13 and 14 – What does Jesus say the living water does that he offers? (keeps on giving)
- Verse 15 – Does the Samaritan woman sound interested in living water? (Yes)
- Verse 15 – Even though she sounds interested, does she seem to understand exactly what Jesus is talking about? (Nope, probably not, since she says, "never...have to keep coming here to draw water")
- Verse 27 – Are the disciples ok with Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman? (Probably not – but they manage to not say their disapproving thoughts out loud)
- Verse 28 – Who does the Samaritan woman talk to about Jesus? (The people of the Samaritan city)
- Verse 40 – Because of the woman's words to the people of the city, how do the Samaritans respond to Jesus? (they invite him to stay)
- Verse 41 – During their time together, what happens? (the people of the Samaritan city are believing what Jesus is telling them)
- Verse 42 – And what do the people of the city tell the woman who was at the well? (that they too think that Jesus is the Messiah)

TELL

- Again, remember that Samaritans in Jesus' time were strongly and greatly disliked by Israelites – and vice versa.
- Samaritans and Israelites had a lot in common and a shared history, but over the centuries, there was a splitting apart due to invasions and because of that splitting, the politics and religious practices varied just enough to cause the two groups of people to really really dislike each other.
- So the idea that Jesus would visit a Samaritan city, much less talk to someone in the city is pretty unexpected, even a little bit...crazy – as in "outside of acceptable social norms" type of crazy
- But, what we see is that Jesus is doing what he teaches – not only does he use Samaritans in his parables and calls them "good" and then says that there are no loopholes with sharing mercy, even with Samaritans -- he then DOES what he teaches.
- Good for Jesus, right?
- But there's even more going on here than just the Samaritan / Israelite tensions.
- There is also a Samaritan / Samaritan tension in this story.
- Because, not only is the Samaritan woman at odds with Jesus, she is also an outcast in her own town (something that is more obvious in the verses we skipped)

- One of the hints that tells us this is that she's at the well at noon – that's not the usual time to get water: Morning and evening are the usual times to get water.
 - In other words, the woman is there *because* no one else is. She knows that's not the usual time you'd go get water. She's there at noon so that she can avoid the rest of the townspeople
- In other words, getting water was usually a community event, but for this one woman, getting water had become something that REMINDED her that she wasn't part of the community
- We can see how water, this essential thing for survival, can bring people together since it is the topic of conversation that brings these two supposed enemies, Jesus and the Samaritan woman, together
- But, survival doesn't always include people.
- As we saw in our opening activity – survival, even if just in a card game, can cause us to EXCLUDE people and be mostly ok about it
- But we were not made to be *excluded*, but to belong
- Which is why Jesus talks about this LIVING water with the excluded Samaritan
- Living water is Jesus' metaphoric way of talking about receiving and living God's life instead of just surviving life.
- And then, we see how this living water, even just TALKING about it, starts to restore the woman to her community
- She goes and tells the townspeople about Jesus.
- And they listen enough that they go and give Jesus a chance
- And, then, because of this Living Water that Jesus is talking about, the townspeople really start to respond to Jesus AND they include the woman from the well, too (verse 42)
- So, it really is an amazing story to see how Jesus and the Samaritans come together AND how the woman is restored / brought back into the community

TRANSITION to MOVIE CLIP

- To help us see an example of how the survival instinct by itself can diminish a community, we're going to watch a movie clip from the movie, "It's a wonderful life"
- The clip starts with a bank run
- A bank run is when people are afraid that the banks won't return the money that the people had put into the bank
- So then what happens is that the people try to get all their money out of the bank before the bank runs out of money
- If the bank DOES run out of money, then it has to close its doors and that's only going to scare the people even more and cause longer lines / angrier people the next day.
- How banks work today are a bit different. For one, the money in a bank is insured by the federal government. For another, very few banks are locally-owned these days. Plus, due to credit cards, cash just isn't as important as it used to be
- But in this clip, those things do not exist (yet) and if the bank runs out of cash money, then it'll have to close its doors.
- Let's see what happens

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK

- Where is the crowd going to go at first? (to the other bank to get 50 cents on the dollar)

- How much does the first person want and then get? (\$273 – he closes his entire account)
- Does the next person try to close their account as well? (Yes)
- Does she reconsider, though, when asked to just receive what she needs ? (yes)
- And do the other people in the crowd follow suit? (Yes)
- Because of the people not trying to JUST survive, is the bank able to stay open during for the whole day? (Yes)

TELL

- And because the people stayed with that bank, they did not lose 50% of all their savings (which is A LOT)
- So – a win-win for all!
- We all like to win
- Because winning is really just another way of saying, “We’re surviving”
- But we can also see how JUST surviving and JUST winning can lead to people not belonging.
- But there is a better way
- When we invite God into our lives and decisions, we’re then given something that we can share, instead of just take
- God’s way invites us to not just survive but to thrive and invite others to belong and thrive as well
- And that’s the good news that we see in today’s scripture story

CLOSING PRAYER