



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: John 2:1-11

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

Jesus said to Mary, "...My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." There is the phrase, "All in God's Time" that is often used to encourage ourselves and others to stick in there and not give up and to persevere. But what this phrase does not counsel us and others to do is what Mary does in this verse: As we wait on God, we are to prepare to listen and to act. Mary is told, "My hour has not yet come," but this does not stop Mary from preparing the servants to "Do whatever [Jesus] tells you." Preparation is crucial when choosing to follow Jesus. All four gospels start with John the Baptist who prepares the way for Jesus. And just like when going on a trip, there has to be planning as you await the time when you eventually travel. So it is with Jesus. This passage reminds us that "All in God's time" does not absolve us of responsibility or action.

⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. When we do prepare as we wait for God and God's time, the temptation might be to prepare on our own, in our own way. But if we do that, then we might miss what we're supposed to be doing as we wait. The servants in this passage do exactly as Jesus says. They aren't busy serving other people, they aren't arguing with Jesus, nor are they out on a coffee or smoke break. They are attentive to what they've been told, to do exactly as Jesus said to do. Because they remained diligent to what was asked of them, that then makes it possible for what comes next. Also, more of a sidenote, though its an important one: Jesus needed help with this miracle. If the servants are unwilling or disobedient, this whole story doesn't happen.

¹⁰"Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." "Good things come to those who wait," right? But how is it that we wait upon the Lord? By being attentive, patient and obedient. When we do that, then we become part of something much bigger than can help large groups of people. Because of Jesus, Mary and a few servants, the entire gathering at the wedding party got to experience a fullness and goodness of life that otherwise would not have been experienced. Are all of Jesus' miracles about something like this? For the good of the greater? Yes. Because every time one person chooses to be intentional about paying attention to God through Jesus, that can easily change the surrounding environment.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Transforming Chaos into Life – as has been a recurring theme in this year's rotation, water is a symbol of chaos. Jonah got tossed about in it, and Jesus walked above it. Now we have a story where Jesus, as his first miracle in John, changes chaos into wine. Wine is not for 1st century citizens like it is for us now. Wine in the first century was a lifeline, it was plumbing. It was like tap water. The vinegar in the wine kept the water from going bad. This meant the water, when treated with the

wine/vinegar, could be traveled/carried for much longer times and therefore greater distances. Good wine meant that the vinegar/alcohol percentage was higher, which again meant that the water mixed in with it would stay “good” for longer. Not only did Jesus announce his ministry by saying “I’m here to teach and show and lead you from chaos to life” but then showed what he meant by performing this miracle that symbolizes the idea that when we follow and listen to Jesus, then we experience chaos being turned into life.

Waiting – Holding still, being still, ceasing what we want to do or even what we think we should be doing and waiting on God is a much more difficult thing to do than the phrase suggests. It’s hard to be still. But if we can’t focus on what God is calling us to do when we are still, then how are we EVER going to know what God is calling us to do when we are busy? Just like in any relationship, in order to listen, we have to give our whole attention to the person talking. When we don’t, miscommunication and mistakes and arguments break out. Waiting is a primary step in listening.

Preparing – When we wait, and then we understand that there is something that we are to do, often times the hardest part is wanting to know why. Why are we doing this thing? What are we preparing for? We want to know the answers, because then we can decide whether or not the thing we’re supposed to do is worth doing or not. But like the servants in this story, what will help is not asking questions, but trusting that God’s way is better than our way. If we do what we understand we are being called to do, then the rest will be revealed to us as we continue in our preparation and obedience. The obedience needed for preparation is part of the preparation, because when we see the results, it helps us to trust more the next time around, and more trust means more obedience which means we’ll most likely be called to do a harder/more complex task the next time.

THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: cut in half 2 liter soda bottles, lots of water, lots of water that had cabbage boiled in it (It's good to do that at least an hour before class time so that the water isn't too warm – I usually do it the night before and store it in a closed container), baking powder/soda, Milk, Lemon Juice, Vinegar, cooking oil, spoons, eye droppers, food coloring, crushed Styrofoam, ripped up paper, lots of gravel, lots of sand, cotton balls, plastic cups.

Classroom Statement

This Science class consists of reading the John 2:1-11 story to the class and two science-type experiments. The first experiment is a pH balance experiment that changes the color of water depending on the liquid you put in it. The second experiment is a homemade water filtration system to help demonstrate the symbolic properties of water as chaos and how something (God) is needed to “redeem” the water.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS “Question of the Day.”

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY (Short and simple is perfect)

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- We're going to read a story from the Gospel of John that has water in it.
- In recent previous stories, we've heard other stories with water in them.
- Do you remember what those stories were? (Jonah and Jesus walking on water)
- Do you remember what we said water symbolized in those stories? (yes! Chaos!)
- Well, the same thing holds true for this story.

- Water is still a symbol of chaos.
- Listen for what happens to the water.

READ John 2:1-11

2On the third day of the week, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine at the wedding ran out, Mary, Jesus' mother, said to Jesus, "They have no wine." ⁴Jesus said to her, "Mom, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother then went to the servants and told them, "Do whatever my son tells you to do." ⁶There were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. The jars were as tall as a 12 year old child! ⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And so the servants filled the jars up to the brim. ⁸Jesus then said to the servants, "Now take some of the water out of the jars, and take it to the chief steward." So the servants took it to the chief steward. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become satisfied and less attentive. But you have kept the best wine until now." ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

ASK

- So what happened to the water? (It was changed to wine)
- Why do you think Jesus would do that?

TELL

- In Jesus' time, water was not very clean.
- It was not safe to drink water as it was – it had to be cleaned before you could drink it.
- One of the easiest ways to make the water "safe" was by putting vinegar into it.
- This is often what the people meant when they said wine. They meant water with vinegar.
- So Jesus did not just provide more wine to drink. Jesus provided something that was both tasty and safe to drink for everyone at the wedding.
- By inviting God into the situation, Jesus – just one person – created a big effect upon a large amount of people.
- We're going to do a demonstration of how just a little can affect a lot.

EXPLAIN/DO Activity

- I have here a bottle of water that was heated up with cabbage in it.
- This means it's not going to smell very good.
- I'm going to pour some in each of the cups you have.
- (pour cabbage water in cups)
- Cabbage when boiled emits a chemical into the water that's called flavin.
- Flavin interacts with both bases and acids.
- When you put a base or acid into it, it changes colors.
- The more you put in, the more it changes.
- Things we can put in it:

- Baking powder/soda
- Milk
- Lemon Juice
- Vinegar (sound familiar)
- And maybe even some cooking oil
- What you're trying to do is put just enough in that it changes the color. So try just a drop of lemon juice. What happens?
- What happens if you add another drop?
- How many drops of lemon juice before you see a change from purple to dark red?
- Now try the baking soda. Use the smallest spoons. What color does the water become?
- Try the milk, what happens? (milk doesn't change the color, which is weird, since its so WHITE....however, it might counteract the lemon juice and bring it back to purple).
- Now try the vinegar, how many drops to make it change?
- Lastly, try the oil. What happens when you put it in?
- The point of this experiment is to see how just a little bit can affect a lot.
- So, if like Jesus, we invite God into our problems, that may not seem like much at all.
- But even just a little bit of God can change our problems.
- And even you and I, when we're paying attention to God, can help and change what others are experiencing.
- That's good news (and pretty cool!)

ASK

- Going back to the story, Jesus tells his mom that it's not yet his time, but then Mary goes and tells the servants to listen to her son. Did that surprise you?
- Why do you think Mary did that?

TELL

- Sometimes there needs to be preparation before an event.
- Can someone tell me what preparation means? (to get ready)
- Can someone give me an example of what it means to prepare/get ready for a test at school?
- This is what Mary is doing. She's helping the people prepare for Jesus' instruction.
- Because even though it is not Jesus' time to act yet, it *is* time to get ready.
- And what do you think: Did the servants seem ready? (yes. They did what they were told, even though the instructions that were given them were rather strange).
- We're going to do another activity, but first it requires some preparation.
- Let's prepare.

EXPLAIN Water-filtration activity

- In Jesus' time, vinegar was one way to make water safe to drink.
- Here, in our time, we have water-filtration plants.
- What we are going to do is make some dirty water and then we're going to make our very own water filter that will clean the water.
- This is how we're going to do that.

- First, we gotta make the dirty water. So take ½ a gallon of water and add cooking oil, food coloring, pieces of paper, and tiny pieces of Styrofoam to it.
- Second, to make the filter, take the top half of the soda bottle and put it into the bottom half of the soda bottle, only put the top half in upside down.
- Third, take the cotton ball and stuff it in the nozzle of the bottle. Then pour your sand into the top half of the bottle. Then pour in the gravel.
- Your water-filter is now ready.
- How clean do you think it will make your dirty water?
- Do you think it'll remove the grease? What about the paper? Do you think it'll take remove the food coloring?
- OK, now slowly pour the dirty water through the filter.

ASK

- What does the filtered water look like?
- Take the filter apart and look at the different layers. Can you tell what each material removed from the water?

If there's time: Wipe the bottles clean and try again. Try putting the filter materials in different layers or using different amounts of materials.

TELL THE GOOD NEWS

- With a little preparation, you too changed dirty water into safer water.
- Sometimes God needs us to prepare and get ready before God is going to tell us what to do.
- Two ways that we can practice preparing is by reminding each other to be prepare to be ready – that's one reason we gather as a faith community on Sunday mornings.
- We can also prepare by learning the faith stories – that's why we read and talk about the stories every week in class.
- And the Good News is that when we're prepared and God calls us to act, our actions, even if they seem small, will have an impact on those around us.
- Just like Jesus with God's help changed chaos into something that was safe to drink, so can we with God's help change chaos into something that is better for everyone.

CLEAN UP

DISMISS FOR SINGING

Suggested Variations for age groups

For the younger ages, you might want to just make one water filter and then do a demonstration rather than an experiment.