

Woman at the Well

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference
John 4:5-42

Lesson Focus
Jesus fills us to overflowing with his love and life!

Bible Memory Verse
“The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” John 4:14b

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids build an altar to show you can worship God anywhere.	Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages	Shoebboxes, Bible, candles, vase, plastic flowers, blanket, colored pencils
Circle Time Kids learn about how Jesus crosses boundaries to share God's love.	Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook	Music source
Opening Prayer Kids add “water” to a well and pray about all the ways Jesus invites us into God's love.	None	Bucket or pitcher, 12 foam balls (1-in. diameter)

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Woman at the Well Story Kids participate in the story by acting it out, then open their Bibles for a buddy activity.	Spark Story Bibles Spark NRSV Bible	None
Come and See! Kids talk about what makes us the same and different.	Leaflets	Pencils

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
My Cup Overflows Kids make an origami “well” and fill it with living water.	Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers	Scissors, pencils, crayons or markers, blue construction paper, clear tape
Living Water Relay Kids carry God’s Living Water out into the world in a crazy relay race.	None	Plastic buckets (4), water, paper, marker, large serving spoons (2), drop cloth (optional)

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids review the Bible Memory Verse and look at Faith on the Go!	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids say prayers of thanksgiving until the well from the Opening Prayer overflows.	Spark Family Pages	Large jar or pitcher, foam balls from Opening Prayer

Bible Background

This story is about Jesus breaking boundaries to bring God's love into the world. Jews and Samaritans did not get along—they disagreed, in particular, about where to worship God. Jews and Samaritans did not share eating utensils. In addition, Jewish men did not speak to women in public. Jesus' decision to ask a Samaritan woman for a drink of water from her jar broke multiple boundaries. This rich story has several important themes: 1) Jesus is the living water because he brings life to the world. 2) True worship of God is not limited to a particular place. 3) God's love is not limited to any one group of people. All are welcome to receive God's grace. 4) Discipleship means inviting others to "come and see."

Why This Story Matters

Kids learn the distinctions between "us" and "them" at an early age. They are sensitive to ways in which they feel different or unwelcomed by others. This story teaches that God's love in Christ Jesus is for everyone. The love of Jesus fills them up and overflows out into the world. They can share it joyfully with others.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of an Activity Page and Coloring Page and set them out for kids to try.

Have the shoeboxes and other supplies set out in the middle of the space where you will have Circle Time.

Good morning! Welcome to Sunday school. While we're waiting for everyone to get here, we're going to build an altar. Think about the altar in the sanctuary. What items are typically placed on the altar? Let's use these boxes and other supplies to make our own altar.

You may offer to help as you see fit, but try to allow the kids to work together to create an altar.

Spark Resources

Spark Activity Pages
Spark Coloring Pages

Supplies

Shoeboxes
Bible
Candles
Vase
Plastic flowers
Blanket
Colored pencils

Circle Time

Everyone sit down around the altar we just built. Can someone tell me about how you built it and what's on it? Encourage at least one older kid and one younger kid to share something. **Do you think we can worship God at this altar?** Have a conversation about where the kids think is the "right" place to worship God. **When Jesus was preaching and teaching, not everyone agreed about where they were supposed to worship God. Jesus' people, the Jews, believed you could only worship God in the temple in Jerusalem. Another group of people, called Samaritans,**

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD
Spark Songbook

Supplies

Music source

believed you had to worship God on a mountain called Mount Gerizim (gher-ee-ZEEM). The Jews and Samaritans did not like each other at all. They weren't even allowed to share cups to drink out of!

Today we're going to hear a story about what happened when Jesus met a Samaritan woman by a well and told her about something amazing called "living water."

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "Deep and Wide" (tracks 12 and 29 on Spark Song CD, page 66 in Spark Songbook)

Song 2: "Jesus Loves the Little Children" Enjoy singing this song about God's all-inclusive love.

Opening Prayer

Put the jar in the center of the circle. You may wish to decorate it prior to class time to look like a well. **We're going to put our prayers into this jar as if we're filling up a well with water. I'm going to say a prayer about all the ways God invites us into Jesus' love. For each line of the prayer, I'm going to ask one of you to add a "drop" of water to the well.** Distribute the foam balls. Tell each kid which statement will be their cue to put their "drop" into the well. Then say this prayer:

Welcoming God, you invite everyone into your love in Jesus.

You invite us if we're tall. Pause for a kid to put his or her drop into the well.

Continue in this manner through the prayer.

You invite us if we're small.

You invite us if we like dogs best.

You invite us if we like cats best.

You invite us if we are good at math.

You invite us if we have a hard time with math.

You invite us if we've been nice to our friends.

You invite us if we've been mean to our friends.

You invite us if we are right-handed.

You invite us if we are left-handed.

You invite us if we love to be around people.

You invite us if we are shy.

It does not matter who we are or what we are like. You invite us into Jesus' love no matter what. Thank you, God, for welcoming everyone! Amen.

Set the "well" and "drops" aside. You will use them for the closing prayer.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Bucket or pitcher
12 foam balls (1 inch)

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Woman at the Well Story

Invite kids with NRSV Bibles to each find and sit with a buddy with a Spark Story Bible. Remind kids to keep their Bibles closed until you ask them to open them up.

With your buddy, decide which one of you will pretend to be Jesus, and which one will pretend to be the woman at the well. As I read the story, from your seats, act out what your character does. For example, when I read that Jesus is thirsty, what do you think it would look like to be thirsty? Pause and ask someone to demonstrate for the group. **When I say that the woman was curious, what might that look like?** Again, have someone give an example.

Read the story on pages 420–425 in the Spark Story Bible. Make sure to leave generous pauses and even prompt at appropriate times in the story.

Invite the older kids to look up the story in their Spark NRSV Bibles on page 1175, and the younger kids to find Woman at the Well in the Spark Story Bible. Older kids can help younger kids when they have found their own pages.

Look through the story in the Spark Story Bible together and find where Jesus talks about living water. (top of page 422) Give kids a chance to do this.

Now look at the story in the Spark NRSV Bible together. See if you can find the part that says almost the same thing. (verse 10) **How are the words the same and different?** Make sure to call on at least one older kid and one younger kid to give ideas.

Do you have an idea of what “living water” is? Invite younger kids to help older kids place a Spark NRSV Bible sticker next to this passage, either “I don’t get it,” “Makes me wonder,” or “Makes me feel,” and write what it makes them wonder or feel.

Bible Memory Verse

“The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” John 4:14b

Have an older kid read the Bible Memory Verse. Reread the BMV a short phrase at a time and have the kids repeat it, then combine the phrases into longer phrases until the group can repeat the entire verse. Challenge kids to see if they can recite it by themselves.

Come and See

Jesus wasn’t supposed to talk to a woman of Samaria. But he invited her into God’s love. Then the woman went and invited others into God’s love. As a disciple of Jesus, we are supposed to tell others, “Come and see!” But we’re not just supposed to share God’s love with people who are just like us. We’re supposed to share God’s love with everyone!

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible
Spark NRSV Bible

Supplies

None

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

On the front of your leaflet, work with your buddy to write three things that are the same about the two of you, and three things that are different. Ask each buddy pair to share their list with the group. Remind kids that we are all made in the image of God, and yet we're all different. The love of Jesus is for all of us!

Invite kids to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

My Cup Overflows

We're going to make our own wells and fill them with blue paper to remind us that Jesus is the living water! Have the kids work with their buddies to fold their leaflets into origami cups. It would be a good idea for you to make one yourself in advance so you can help out if needed. Use clear tape to secure the final folds if necessary.

After you have built your well, cut out water drops from the construction paper. On each drop write one thing you are thankful God has given you. You may wish to prepare a couple of examples prior to class time. **You can also write things you like about your buddy. Then cut out the drops of "living water." Exchange the ones with things you like about your buddy with them. Then fill your well with drops of living water.**

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special marking next to the item they find most interesting.

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Scissors
Pencils
Crayons or markers,
Blue construction
Paper
Clear tape

Living Water Relay

Label two buckets "Living Water," and the other two "The World." Partially fill the "Living Water" buckets with water. Lay out the drop cloth if you will be using water indoors.

Jesus' living water is so amazing that we can't possibly keep it to ourselves! Just like the woman at the well, we can go share it with everyone we meet! We're going to do a relay race about carrying living water out into the world. Divide the group into two teams. You can be on one team to make it an even number, if necessary. Kids need to scoop a spoonful of "living water" and carry it to the other bucket, then run back. The next kid on the team then does the same. Continue for a set amount of time. Whichever team has more water in their "World" bucket wins the race! Make sure to congratulate both teams on sharing Jesus' living water with the world, and if you like, award an appropriate prize to all participants, regardless of which team won.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Plastic buckets (4)
Water
Paper
Marker
Large serving spoons (2)
Drop cloth

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Everyone find your origami wells and sit next to your buddy. Find the Faith on the Go! ideas on your well and read them together. Who wants to share one idea they think they can do this week? Encourage kids of different ages to share. **Remember that we can share God's love with everyone, no matter whether they're the same as us or different from us.**

Review the BMV with the group. Have the group recite the whole verse together. Challenge them to try it by themselves.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Distribute Family Pages to kids and point out number 2 under Talk About It. **Think about all the reasons Jesus shouldn't have talked with the woman at the well, but he did anyway. Talk with your family about any kids at school who might be left out, and why.**

Distribute the foam balls to the kids again. **We're going to continue to fill the well from our Opening Prayer until it overflows! This time, we'll say prayers of thanks to God for all the wonderful things God gives us. When you say a prayer, put another drop in the well. I'll start. Thank you, God, for _____.** Allow each kid to add a "drop" and say a prayer of thanksgiving. Continue until the well overflows. **God, we thank you for giving us so much love and life that our wells overflow. Help us to share your love and life with others. Amen.**

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home the leaflet and Family Page.

Spark Resources
Spark Family Pages

Supplies
Bucket or pitcher
12 foam balls from Opening Prayer