

Use Week of:

Unit 21 • Session 4

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

BIBLE PASSAGE:

John 4

STORY POINT:

Jesus loves all people.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 162



TEACH THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 164



EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
PAGE 166



Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com.

For free training and session-by-session help, visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

At the time Jesus was on earth, Jews and Samaritans didn't get along. The strife between the two groups stretched back hundreds of years, to the Babylonian exile.

When the Babylonians attacked Judah, they moved a large group of God's people away from their homes. But some of the people—the poorest, sickest, least able to work—were left behind in the region that became known as Samaria. The exile lasted 70 years. During that time, those left in Samaria began to mingle with their neighbors to the north. They intermarried and practiced foreign customs. While the Samaritans still believed in God, they adapted foreign beliefs as well.

The Jews who returned home from Babylon to rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem rejected this new way of life. They were dedicated to obeying and worshiping God, so they didn't agree with the Samaritans' practices. The Samaritans opposed the Jews' efforts to reestablish their nation. In time, the Jews' hate for the Samaritans grew—so much so that a Jew traveling from Judea to Galilee would take a longer route to travel around Samaria rather than through it.

Jesus broke down barriers when He traveled to Galilee by way of Samaria. Even more surprising, Jesus stopped at a well around noon and asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. Jewish men did not speak to women in public.

But Jesus was kind to her, and He offered her a gift: living water. The woman didn't understand, but Jesus revealed His knowledge of her past. He even gave her a glimpse of the future. The Samaritan woman expected a Messiah to come and fix everything. Jesus said, "I am He."

Explain that the living water Jesus offers is the Holy Spirit. (See John 7:37-39.) The Holy Spirit is a gift that He is eager to give us when we ask Him. Those who receive His grace will never be thirsty again.

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

John 4

Jesus had been teaching in the land of Judea. When it was time to leave, **Jesus and His disciples traveled** toward the land of Galilee. They traveled right **through Samaria**. He **stopped at** one of the towns where there was **a well**. Jesus stayed at the well, **and His disciples went into town to buy food**.

A woman who lived in Samaria **came to the well to get water**. Jesus said to her, **“Give Me a drink.”**

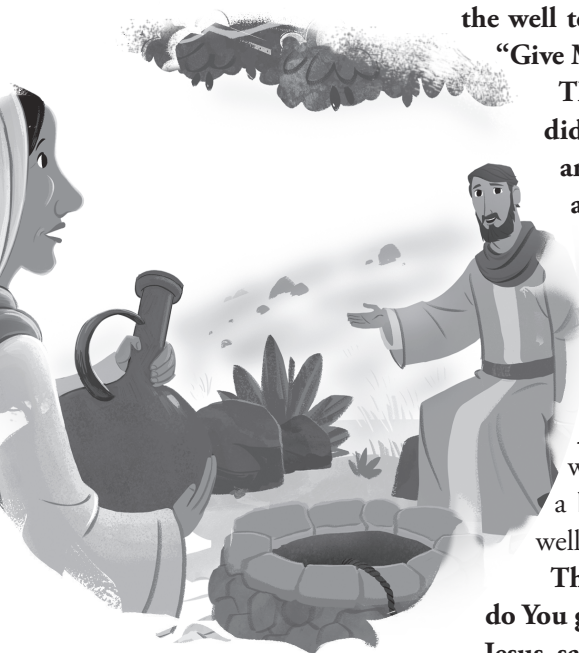
The woman was surprised. **Jews did not like Samaritans!** “**Why are you talking to me?**” she asked. “**I am a Samaritan.**”

Jesus said, “**If you knew who I am, you would have asked Me for a drink. I would give you living water.**”

The woman was confused. Jesus did not have any water with Him. He did not even have a bucket to get water out of the well.

The woman asked, “**Sir, where do You get ‘living water?’**”

Jesus said, “**Anyone who drinks the water from this well will be thirsty again, but anyone who drinks the water I give will never get thirsty again!**” That sounded wonderful! But **Jesus wasn’t talking about actual water. He was talking about God’s Spirit**. **Whoever has God’s Spirit will have eternal life.**



The woman did not understand. **“Sir, I want living water,” she said. “Then I will not have to keep coming to this well to get water with my bucket.”**

“Go get your husband,” Jesus said.

The woman replied, “I do not have a husband.”

Jesus knew she was telling the truth. Jesus knew everything about the woman. **The woman could tell Jesus was wise, so she asked Him a question about worshipping God. Then she said, “I know the Messiah is coming. He will explain everything to us.”**

Jesus said, “I am the Messiah.”

The woman left and told the people in her town what had happened. Many people believed in Jesus because of what the woman said. Jesus stayed in the town for two days, and many more people believed in Him. The people said, “We have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world.”

Christ Connection: Jesus is different from other people. Jesus loves everyone, and He came to give people a free gift: salvation from sin. When we trust in Jesus, we worship Him as our Lord and Savior.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• Puppet

conversation:

Make one male and one female sock puppet to represent Jesus and the woman at the well. Tell the Bible story through the puppet's conversation.

• Watercolor art:

Use watercolors to depict the story. Ask another leader to paint story scenes while you tell the Bible story. You may also paint scenes ahead of time and hold them up at the appropriate moment in the Bible story. Do not be concerned about quality; simple figures are fine.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 4

STORY POINT: Jesus loves all people.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.

Welcome time

- "Take It to the Lord" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Trip Planning" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Help preschoolers trace the straightest path from Judea to Galilee. Read the names of the places as you point them out.

SAY • Good job finding the most direct path! Believe it or not, most Jews who traveled from Judea to Galilee chose to walk all the way around Samaria in the middle. But Jesus walked straight through it. We will find out why in our Bible story today!

**LOW
PREP**

Honor one another

Guide children to sit in a circle and explain that you will say things you like about each person. Start with the child next to you and honor her by saying "I like how you share with your friends" or "I like your red hair" for instance. Then ask the other children what they like about her, but do not force every child to say something. After a moment, move

on to the next child in the circle and honor him. Continue until each child has been honored, reminding children to use kind, respectful words about their friends.

SAY • The Bible teaches us to show honor to one another because all people are made in God's image. ***What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.*** In today's Bible story, we will hear about a woman who probably did not feel special. In fact, she was surprised when Jesus spoke kindly to her! Listen to the Bible story to hear how Jesus showed love to the woman.

Build a well

Punch holes near the rim of a cup and thread a long string through. Explain that a well is a hole in the ground often surrounded by rocks or bricks. In Bible times, people got water from a well by using a bucket. Invite preschoolers to build a well with blocks and practice lowering and retrieving the cup from the well.

- cup
- hole punch
- long string
- large blocks

SAY • Before we had pipes and faucets, people got their water from a well with a bucket. Usually, women did this hard job. One time, Jesus stopped at a well, but He didn't have a bucket to get water. He was waiting to talk to a certain woman there. We will find out more in our Bible story today!

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Walk a round-about path to the storytelling area.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 4

STORY POINT: Jesus loves all people.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.

Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at John 4 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Our Bible story today happened soon after our story last week, when **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's great plan.** The Gospel of John then tells about a very different person whom Jesus spoke to. Let's listen to God's true words in the Bible.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • If people thought Nicodemus was the most special for obeying God's laws, then they may have thought this Samaritan woman was the least special. But **Jesus loves all people** and knows that everyone needs a Savior. Jesus came to give everyone a free gift: salvation from sin. When we trust in Jesus, we worship Him as our Lord and Savior.

Practice the key passage

Before the session, place the key passage marker at John 3:16. Hide the Bible somewhere unlikely. Choose a child to find it, giving specific direction. Invite him to open the found Bible to the key passage. Read it out loud.

SAY • Our key passage tells us that God sent His Son to the world to give everyone who believes in Him eternal life. Most people in Bible times thought only Jews could have life with God. But Jesus is different from other people. Instead of avoiding the woman like other Jews, He went looking for her. Jesus came to offer God's free gift of salvation to everyone.

Sing the key passage song, "For God Loved the World," and the theme song, "Take It to the Lord."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "For God Loved the World (John 3:16)" song
- "Take It to the Lord" song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • The woman at the well was surprised when Jesus spoke to her because Jewish men did not speak to Samaritan women. **Jesus loves all people** because He loves everyone God made. ***What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.***

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Display the "Walk Church in Prayer" photograph.

SAY • Missionaries say prayer helps them every day. Praying for missionaries is very important. Missionaries Heiden and Neena Ratner started a church called Walk Church. Let's pray for them now.

Read the caption on the photograph and pray as directed.

- "Walk Church in Prayer" printable

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 4

STORY POINT: Jesus loves all people.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.

LOW PREP

Modes of travel:

- fly like airplanes
- row a boat
- march like soldiers
- gallop like a horse
- steer like a race car driver

Travel various ways

Name a mode of travel and invite preschoolers to act it out. Allow children to lead one another in transportation modes of their choosing.

SAY • We have so many ways to travel! Usually, we take the shortest and easiest way to get from one place to another. But the Jews took a longer way around Samaria because they didn't like the people there. Jesus didn't avoid anyone though. He walked straight through Samaria because **Jesus loves all people**. *What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.*

Plant seeds

Cut paper strips that will fit around a disposable cup for each child. Encourage children to draw on their strips things a plant needs, such as water, sunlight, and soil on. Help children scoop some potting soil into their cups, add some seeds, and spray some water over the soil. Dry off the cup, wrap the paper strip around the cup, and tape it in place. Remind preschoolers to place the cup in a sunny window at home and keep it watered.

SAY • Our drawings can remind us that plants need things like soil, sunlight, and water to live. People need

- paper
- scissors (adult use)
- disposable cups
- markers
- potting soil
- plastic spoons
- seeds
- spray bottle of water
- paper towels
- clear tape

things like food and water to live, too. Jesus offered the woman at the well living water. But Jesus wasn't talking about actual water. He was talking about God's Spirit. Whoever has God's Spirit will have eternal life with God. **Jesus loves all people**, and He came to offer everyone this free gift!

Filter water

Before the session, cut a gallon-sized plastic bottle in half. Secure a coffee filter over the spout with a rubber band. Invert the top half of the bottle into the bottom half. Allow children to take turns helping you pour sand and then gravel into the inverted bottle top. Then allow children to slowly pour dirty water over the gravel. Comment on the clarity of the water that collects on the bottom.

SAY • Sometimes water from a well can be dirty, so it has to be filtered before drinking. Jesus offered the woman at the well living water! But Jesus wasn't talking about actual water or longer life on earth. He was talking about God's Spirit and eternal life with God. **Jesus loves all people**, and He came to offer everyone this free gift! Some people around the world don't have clean water to drink, and they don't know about Jesus. Let's pray that they can get clean water and hear the wonderful news about Jesus!

- large plastic bottle
- scissors (adult use)
- coffee filter
- rubber band
- sand
- gravel
- dirty water

Option: Use this activity to introduce or support a well-water missions project for your church.

Celebrate diversity

Draw a big heart on a large piece of paper. Write the story point above it. Help children cut out people images from magazines and glue them inside the heart. Encourage children to look for people different from themselves. Repeat the story point as they work. Display the poster.

- large piece of paper
- marker
- magazines featuring people
- blunt-tipped scissors
- glue stick

SAY • The Samaritan woman was surprised Jesus spoke to her because He was a Jew. Jews did not like Samaritans. But Jesus is different from other people. **Jesus loves all people**, and He came to give everyone a free gift: salvation from sin. ***What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.*** All people are made in God's image, no matter what color their skin is, where they are from, whether they are a boy or a girl, or how talented they are!



Count for missions

• pom-poms, 15 per child

Form a circle. Set a large pile of pom-poms in the center of the circle. Direct children to listen to the story and take that many pom-poms when you say a number. Pause after each number for children to gather pom-poms.

Neena is a missionary who loves Jesus very much. She knows that Jesus is the ONE [pause] true God. Neena has THREE [pause] friends who do not know Jesus. Neena bought THREE [pause] Bibles to give to her friends. She met them at ONE [pause] restaurant to eat together. At the restaurant, she saw TWO [pause] other friends. She invited all her friends to church. At church, Neena's friends heard more about Jesus. After church, they asked Neena FOUR [pause] questions about Jesus. Neena answered their questions and told them that she would pray for them. Neena knows that Jesus loves all people. She is ONE [pause] faithful missionary, who always prays that her friends will follow Jesus.

SAY • **Jesus loves all people.** Let's pray for missionaries who tell people that Jesus loves them and ask God to help us tell people near us that Jesus loves them too.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Fill a sanitized, food-grade bucket with water. Fill a cup with water from the bucket for each child. Talk about how the Samaritan woman carried buckets of water from the well to her house every day. She thought if she could get the living water Jesus talked about she would not have to come to the well with her bucket anymore, but Jesus was talking about God's Spirit. **Jesus loves all people**, and He gives God's Spirit to all who trust in Him for eternal life.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Where did Jesus stop to rest? (*a well in Samaria*)
2. Why was the woman surprised Jesus talked to her? (*Jews did not like Samaritans.*)
3. What is the living water Jesus told the woman about? (*God's Spirit.*)
4. Who did Jesus say He is? (*the Messiah*)
5. ***What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- food grade bucket (optional)
- drinking water (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "For God Loved the World (John 3:16)" song
- "Take It to the Lord" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers