

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 08 2025

celebrating with Jesus

Scripture Story: John 2:1-11.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 15.
Key Text: John 2:11.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

As Jesus' public ministry began, He performed His first recorded miracle almost, it seems, against His will. He attended the wedding at Cana as a friend of the family, accompanied by His disciples. He seemed to have no intention of making a public display of His power at this point. But when His mother approached Him with the news that the wedding reception had run out of wine for the feast, she seemed to expect He could do something about it.

Jesus at first said the time wasn't right. Did He change His mind after thinking about it? For whatever reason, He worked His first miracle at a wedding feast, blessing the joyful celebration with His power. It might seem like a frivolous reason for a miracle. But the water-to-wine miracle at Cana not only provided a dramatic, faith-building moment for Jesus' disciples and friends—it also conveyed two very important messages. First, it demonstrated—as Jesus would do again and again throughout His ministry—that He enjoyed being with people in times of feasting and celebration. Second, it illustrated Jesus' power to transform ordinary things into extraordinary—not just water to wine, but ordinary human lives into lives changed by His Spirit.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Recognize that they serve a God who rejoices in our times of celebration. *(Know)*
- Feel that they can enjoy the presence of Jesus and celebrate with Him. *(Feel)*
- Invite Jesus into their lives as a friend who can share the good times and the bad times with them. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Marriage and the Family, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 23: "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. . . . God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. . . . (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Discuss how students responded to this question and to the lesson title "Celebrating With Jesus." What would a celebration with Jesus be like?

Ask students to brainstorm about a celebration they could invite Jesus to if He were on earth now. What types of activities would take place? Write responses on a white/chalkboard. Ask who would want to attend the festivity with Jesus—and discuss their answers.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"It is impossible to genuinely love God without loving the people God brings into your life every day. When God places His love in our hearts, it overflows to the people around us.

"Christian author Corrie ten Boom describes how this love flowed out of the life of her own mother. Mrs. ten Boom was the kind of person who lived to serve. Her hands were always busy knitting sweaters for orphans, baking bread for the homeless, or making birthday gifts. This woman was known and loved by people throughout her Dutch town of Haarlem.

"But then a massive stroke left Mrs. ten Boom partially paralyzed. She could utter only three words: 'yes,' 'no,' and 'Corrie.' It appeared her deeds of love had come to an end.

"This seemingly helpless woman, however, found a way to communicate. Every morning the ten Boom daughters sat their mother in a comfortable chair by the front window so she could watch the busy street outside. And she began to communicate. They began a system much like 20 questions.

"When Mrs. ten Boom saw someone special, she called out, 'Corrie!'

"'What is it, Mama? Are you thinking of someone?'

"Mother would reply with an enthusiastic 'yes.' Then her daughter continued the questioning. Was it the person's birthday? Did the person seem to have some special need? Did they appear discouraged? Once Corrie had some idea of her mother's intentions, she wrote a note of encouragement and hope to the person her mother pointed out. Then she guided Mother's stiff fingers to sign her name.

"For the last three years of her life, this woman sat at her window, and continued ministering to the people outside. Not even paralysis could stop her service of love.

"This kind of service of love can make a difference in our neighborhoods and communities. It can make a difference in our churches. Love revealed in compassionate deeds, kind words, and unselfish actions does make a difference.

"Heaven's love overflowed from the life of Jesus, and He changed the world. When heaven's love flows from our lives, we, too, will change our world" (Mark Finley, *Solid Ground*, pp. 370, 371).

What can we do to be agents of change in our communities?

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Large-Group Versus Small-Group Discussion

This week's teaching activities are mainly discussion-based, as are many of our teaching strategies. While group discussion should not be the only teaching tool we use, it does form an important basis of any Bible study.

How you handle discussion will depend largely on your class size. In a class with fewer than 12 people, most discussions will probably be held with the group as a whole, though you may occasionally want students to talk in pairs or smaller groups. For classes with more than 12 people, breaking off into smaller groups of three or four people for discussion works well, perhaps with a spokesperson from each group reporting back to the larger group after they've talked for a while.

Larger groups can sometimes have whole-group discussions, but it's important to watch out for those one or two talkative people who dominate the discussion and don't give others a chance to speak. While you'll want to avoid interrupting someone, it's OK to jump in when a "talker" pauses and say, "Thanks for sharing that, Sherry. Now, who else has some thoughts about this. Justin, what do you think?" Without being rude to Sherry or putting Justin too much on the spot, try to broaden the discussion to include more people.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Jesus' miracles were all about transformation—Jesus' *life* was all about transformation. He made sick people well, dead people live, hopeless people hopeful. His power can still transform lives. We may claim that we don't live in the age of miracles anymore and that we don't see things like Jesus turning water into wine, but we can see the miracle of His transforming power in lives all around us every day.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Ask: "Why did Jesus perform His first miracle at a wedding?"

- Did Jesus use miracles to build people's faith in Him? Read John 4:48 and John 20:29. What does Jesus seem to suggest here about faith that's based on miracles?
- Today we live in an era in which we don't see the kind of miracles described in the Bible very much. Why do you think this is? Do you think it's harder or easier to have faith in these days? Based on the passages we just read, what do you think Jesus would say about that?
- By performing His first major miracle at a wedding party, what message was Jesus sending?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 22:6; John 2:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 6:1-3.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words. When discussing Jesus in connection with celebrations, particularly in the context of this story in John 2, you may want to discuss how Jesus would feel about parties where alcohol is consumed.

One of the basic principles of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics) is that the Bible never contradicts itself. So when we read about "wine" in the Bible we need to be aware that its use sometimes refers to unfermented grape juice, and sometimes it refers to fermented wine.

Whenever the Word of God forbids the use of wine, it talks about fermented wine that is alcohol.

However when wine is presented as a useful drink, it refers to grape juice.

How can we know that the wine that Jesus miraculously multiplied at the wedding in Cana was not an alcoholic beverage but pure grape juice?

Have students read the following passages: Leviticus 10:9; Judges 13:4, 7, 14; Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29-35; Proverbs 31:4; Isaiah 5:11, 12, 22; Isaiah 28:1; Daniel 1:5, 8; Romans 14:21; Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:7.

Jesus lived a pure and sinless life. Fermentation is the symbol of sin. That is why the Communion sacraments, which point to Jesus' broken body and blood, have to consist of unleavened bread as well

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

as pure and unfermented grape juice. These are symbolic of Jesus' pure life broken for our redemption. That is why it is important that we partake in a worthy manner of these symbols of His suffering and death (see Matthew 26:27, 28; 1 Corinthians 10:21; 1 Corinthians 11:25-29).

Young people can enjoy clean and wholesome recreational activities that Jesus would approve of. If Jesus were here on earth today, He would want to have a good time with them through wholesome conversation, fellowship around food that provides nourishment and ensures health to the mind and body, and engaging in social activities that build up, invigorate, and refresh everyone who is involved.

Refer back to the illustration about how Mrs. ten Boom found her joy in life. Then share more about Global Youth Day as an example of social activity in which we can be sure Jesus would feel welcome to participate. You may share the Global Youth Day video available on the website www.gcyouthministries.org to start the students thinking about this event.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Now that you have talked to your students about the opportunity to participate in Global Youth Day, have them start making plans for contributing significantly in their communities. The possibilities for service are endless. Some examples may include: visiting a nursing home, hospital, orphanage, or prison to comfort, sing, and pray for those who are sick, needy, and destitute, feeding the homeless, etc.

Have them brainstorm and discuss the possibilities and assign responsibilities for each one in the group to be carried out in preparation for the event. Help them concentrate on how they can share their joy of their friendship with Jesus with others.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus chose to perform His first miracle at a wedding. He performed many miracles of healing and mighty acts of power, but His first public act was to make people happy at a simple celebration. What a beautiful image of God we receive as we contemplate the Son of God performing a miracle to bring joy at a wedding reception and affirming in this way His approval of the institution of marriage.

Jesus wants to be involved in and transform every part of our lives—not just the few hours we spend in church each week, but the time we spend with our friends, having a good time. What would change in your life if you took Jesus *everywhere*?

At Creation God has given each of us free will. It is up to us to decide how we spend our time. King Solomon offered the following advice to young people: "Rejoice, O [young man and young woman], in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

There are places where we can be certain that Jesus would accompany us and feel welcome. Such is His house, the church. Jesus would also be delighted to accompany us wherever we go to share Him with others. On March 15 you have the privilege to participate in Global Youth Day. Plan to make a difference in your community for Jesus and invite Him to join you with His presence!



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapter 15.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: John 2:1-11.
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celebrating with Jesus



Photo by Alden Ho

keytext

"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

(John 2:11)

flashlight

"Jesus did not begin His ministry by some great work before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. At a household gathering in a little Galilean village His power was put forth to add to the joy of a wedding feast. Thus He showed His sympathy with men, and His desire to minister to their happiness. In the wilderness of temptation He Himself had drunk the cup of woe. He came forth to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 144).

what do you think?

If Jesus came to a celebration with me and my friends, I would

____ invite Him to come in and bless our company with His presence.
____ ask Him to perform a miracle.
____ stop the party and have a Bible study.
____ start hiding things that He wouldn't approve of.
____ ask questions and allow Him to offer counsel.
____ ask Him to take the lead in how He would want to spend time with us.

INTO THE STORY

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.'

"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.'

"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'

"Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!'

"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

(John 2:1-11)



did you know?

The Sabbath and marriage are two of God's original gifts to the human family. They were intended to provide the joys of rest and belonging regardless of time, place, and culture. The establishment of these two institutions culminated God's creation of this earth. They were His finale—the best of the exceedingly good gifts He gave humanity at Creation. In establishing the Sabbath, God gave human beings a time of rest and renewal, a time for fellowship with Him. In forming the first family, He established the basic social unity for humanity, giving them a sense of belonging and providing them with an opportunity to develop as well-rounded persons in service to God and others" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* [2005], p. 330).

OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think Jesus chose to perform His first miracle at a wedding?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Jesus told Mary, "My hour has not yet come." What do you think He meant by this? Why did Jesus perform the miracle anyway?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why do you think Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them, even though at that point Jesus had said He wasn't going to get involved? What does this suggest about the relationship between Mary and Jesus?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How did Jesus bless the institution of marriage by participating and performing His first miracle at a wedding feast?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How did this miracle reveal Jesus' glory?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" **(1 Corinthians 13:4-8).**

"And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, 'Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance' " **(Luke 5:30-32).**

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" **(Galatians 6:2).**

"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" **(Amos 3:3).**

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" **(Galatians 6:9, 10).**

further insight

"A Jewish marriage was an impressive occasion, and its joy was not displeasing to the Son of man. By attending this feast, Jesus honored marriage as a divine institution.

"In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 150, 151

Sabbath

Read Genesis 1:26, 27.

Read the *Into the Word* section of the lesson and think about the questions that follow it. How did Jesus show His support and blessing on the institution of marriage by participating at the wedding reception in Cana?

_____

_____

_____

Reflect on the following statement: "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith" (Marriage and the Family, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 23).

What counsel does the Bible provide concerning the importance of choosing a spouse wisely? What lessons can you draw from the Bible about wise and unwise marriages? What are the consequences of unwise choices? How can a marriage partner affect a person's lifelong happiness and eternal destiny?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read Matthew 19:4-6.

What does the story of the wedding feast tell you about how Jesus feels when people are celebrating the innocent joys of life? What is the difference between the celebrations Jesus would gladly attend and those where He would not feel welcome?

Write down ways you can be involved in your local community by sharing in people's joys or sorrows and providing for their needs.

_____

_____

_____

Monday

Read John 2:11.

This week's *Key Text* tells us that this first miracle helped build up the disciples' faith in Jesus. Look in John 4, Luke 4 and 5, and Mark 1 to see what some of Jesus' other early miracles were. List five in the chart below, and for each one write what you think the disciples might have thought after seeing it.

Miracle	What the Disciples Thought

Tuesday

Read Philippians 2:4.

Read the *Flashlight* section. This passage contrasts the suffering Jesus went through when He was being tempted in the wilderness (see Matthew 4 or Luke 4) with the joy and happiness that He brought to others when He performed His first miracle at the wedding feast.

How could you use a difficult time in your life to help and bless other people? What can you do to make a difference in the lives of others who are facing challenges?

_____

_____

_____

Wednesday

Read Romans 5:8.

Read the *Punch Lines* section. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding reception. With His presence at that event He blessed once again the bond of marriage between a man and a woman that was ordained at Creation. His miracle was evidence to His desire to meet human needs by contributing to the innocent joys of life and to the well-being of others.

Thursday

Read Ecclesiastes 11:9.

Jesus' life—especially the miracle at Cana—shows that He enjoyed celebrating the innocent joys in life and bringing happiness to others. He celebrated life with His disciples and friends. And He enjoys watching us celebrate in healthy, positive ways too.

Remember that next Sabbath is Global Youth Day. List specific ways you will contribute with other youth from your local church:

_____

_____

_____

Friday

Read Ephesians 6:1-3.

Jesus can take ordinary things in our lives and transform them into something special. What needs to be transformed in your life today?

What changes need to happen in your life so that you can become an effective witness for Jesus in your family, neighborhood, and community at large?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 15.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.