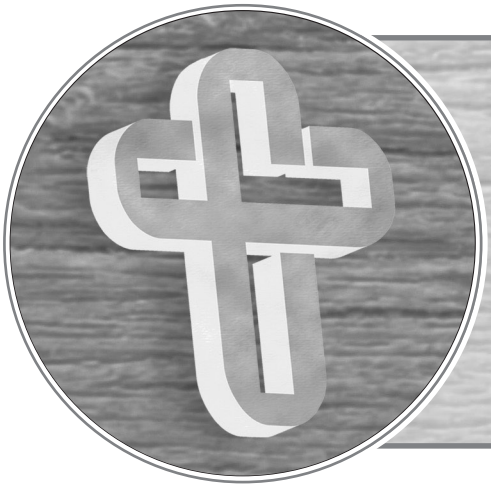


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
APRIL 05 2025

come and see!

Scripture Story: John 4:1-42.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 19.
Key Text: John 4:28-30.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Jesus traveled through Samaria and had an encounter with an unlikely new disciple—a Samaritan, who was a woman and most likely an outcast within her own community. He sat down by a well and asked this Samaritan woman to draw water so He could have a drink. Within minutes of her first conversation with Jesus, not only did this woman become a believer in Jesus but she also became an active missionary. She left the well and went to invite the people of her city to "come, see a man." This was no ordinary man, but Jesus the Savior. On the strength of her firsthand witness, an entire village of Samaritans came to hear Jesus for themselves, and left convinced they had met the Messiah.

The experience of the woman at the well vividly illustrates what the results of a personal experience with Jesus will be. If we know Jesus, we will naturally want to tell others about Him. As members of God's remnant church preparing the world for His return, we need a personal encounter with Him so that we can invite others to come to know Him for themselves.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand why a personal experience with Jesus is important as a member of His remnant church. *(Know)*
- Desire their own personal experience with Jesus. *(Feel)*
- Choose to witness for Jesus by telling one person this week what He has done for them. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Remnant and Its Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 13: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Micah 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)"

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.*

What does it mean to witness for Jesus? Can any Christian be a witness?

Ask students to brainstorm words and phrases that come to their minds when you mention "witnessing" or "missions." Write words and phrases on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or flipchart. When everyone has had a chance to contribute, discuss the words and phrases you've written down. Are they positive images—things that young people feel good about? What are their emotions concerning witnessing? Do they think it's something that they can do, should do, or have to do? Does it excite them, or does it scare them? Or are they neutral?

Emphasize that this week's lesson will focus on the fact that *anyone* who has had a personal experience with Jesus can be a witness simply by sharing what they know with others.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

About 30 years ago, in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., an American teacher developed a simple classroom exercise to illustrate the power of prejudice to her students. She told the children that having blue eyes meant they were more intelligent, and gave greater privileges to the blue-eyed children. Very quickly she observed that the blue-eyed children were bullying and oppressing the brown-eyed children, while those with brown eyes demonstrated fear and low self-esteem—even though she conducted the exercise for only one day! The next day Ms. Elliot returned to her class and told the children that what she'd told them the previous day was untrue—it was actually brown-eyed children who were more intelligent and would have more privileges. The same experience happened in reverse—now the brown-eyed children began to oppress the others.

The experience opened students' eyes—both blue and brown!—to the power of prejudice and the divisions we create between people. Just like the Jews and Samaritans in Jesus' day, we tend to divide people up on the basis of race, language, culture, religion, and many other barriers. We decide who's "in" and who's "out," who's cool and who's not. Jesus saw past all those barriers. He chooses His followers from every race, culture, and background, and He asks us to look past those barriers too.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

When Jesus sat down beside the well and asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, He wanted to tell her about the hope and new life that He offered. He knew that she was an outcast in society, but Jesus looked past the barriers and labels to the person inside. When the woman understood who Jesus really was, she could not contain herself. She went back to her village to tell everyone the good news and to invite them to come see Jesus.

Today we will study what happens when we have a personal relationship with Jesus, and how this relates to our identity as members of God's remnant church.

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.*

Break down the experience of the woman at the well into the following steps, writing the headings on a white or chalkboard and asking students to contribute their ideas.

- What did she need? (some ideas might include: hope, acceptance, belonging, forgiveness)
- What did Jesus offer? ("living water," promise that He was the Messiah, insight into her life)
- How did she respond? (questioned Him at first, ran off to tell others)
- What was the result? (her entire village came to hear Jesus and believed in Him)
- Now ask the students to brainstorm ideas of other Bible stories in which a person had a memorable encounter with Jesus, and do the same for each of those stories. What kinds of needs did people bring to Jesus? (In many cases it was physical healing, but people also came in need of forgiveness and acceptance.) Try to find examples of stories in which the people went on to tell others what Jesus had done for them. (Two examples are given in the *Punch Lines* section of the student lesson

and expanded upon in Wednesday's student lesson.)

- Ask: "What qualifications did this woman, or any of the other people we've discussed, have that made them able to witness?" (personal experience, having met Jesus, been changed by Him) Refer back to the brainstorming discussion at the beginning of the lesson. What kinds of qualifications do we feel like we need in order to be witnesses? Did these people have those qualifications?
- Challenge students to think of ways in which they can use their own personal experience to be witnesses—to share with others what God has done for them.

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: see passages from the *Punch Lines* section of the student lesson.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

There are two major themes within this story: Jesus' willingness to reach out to outsiders and the marginalized within society, and the woman's willingness to become a missionary immediately by sharing her personal experience with others.

These two threads come together when the disciples return and respond to Jesus' interaction with the woman. (For further reflection on this, read *The Desire of Ages* chapter for this lesson: "At Jacob's Well.") The disciples didn't see Samaria as a valid field for evangelism because their racial and religious prejudices were too deeply ingrained—they saw Jesus as the Messiah for the Jews alone. If He were to reach out to someone within the Samaritan community, a socially outcast, five-times-married, living-in-sin female was the last person they would have chosen.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

The Rest of the Story

The concept of "story" isn't new. But especially in our attempts to share our personal stories of our relationship with Christ and how that relationship has impacted our lives, this concept can be challenging.

One way to help students share their stories is to ask them to write down five of their life experiences that have impacted them spiritually. Then ask them to try to identify a particular theme that is woven throughout those experiences. For example: "All of these experiences involved my being afraid of something or someone, but Christ replaced my fear with courage" or "All of these experiences made me feel very inadequate, but God gave me a sense of worth and value."

It's from this theme that students can share how Christ has impacted their lives.

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 quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

Jesus' vision of witnessing is so much broader than ours! It reaches out to everyone—not just those who are like us, those we are comfortable with, but also to the excluded, the outcast, the marginalized. Challenge students to think about who that might be in their community, church, or school. Jesus' idea of a good witness is also broader than His disciples' idea was—He had (and still has) a place in His work for anyone who has had a genuine experience with Him, no matter how others may view that person.

Young people in your group may have experienced prejudice directed at them—maybe because of race or culture or social class, or maybe just because they're teenagers, and adults don't like they way they dress, talk, or do things. Remind them that Jesus wants anyone who knows Him and loves Him to reach out to others. He wants each of us to have a personal relationship with Him that we can share in the last days.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Some preachers and teachers have "soul winning" and "witnessing" boiled down to a formula by which you should be able to tell your personal story of what Christ has done for you in three minutes or less. Real-life conversations aren't often like that. Witnessing works best when we're talking to people who know us and people we can be honest with about what's really happened in our lives.

Give each student a blank card or postcard and ask them to write a few sentences to a friend who doesn't know Jesus, telling this person something about what Jesus has done for them. After giving them a little time to write, challenge them to pray about whether they can share that card, or the message on it, with that person this week.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

We draw so many lines to exclude and divide people. Jesus stepped over those lines. He was interested in including people, not excluding them.

One line that people in the church sometimes draw is to say that you can't work for the Lord unless you're older, or you've had a certain kind of training, or you've gotten everything in your life in order and you haven't made any mistakes for the last 10 years. But that's not the way Jesus recruited workers for His cause. Anybody who had really gotten to know Him was qualified to tell others what Jesus had done for them. It's still the same today. If you know Jesus, if He's touched your life in any way, then you have all the qualifications you need to share Him with others. You don't need to be able to preach or give Bible studies—though those are wonderful gifts if you do have them. All you need is to be able to do what the woman at the well did: tell others, "I met this Man, and here's what He did for me. Why don't you come meet Him too?"



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 19.

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

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: John 4:1-42.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 19.

come and see!



Photo © Thinkstock 2017

flashlight

"As soon as she had found the Saviour the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Saviour" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195).

key text

"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' They came out of the town and made their way toward him."

(John 4:28-30, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following things do you think are necessary to be a witness for Jesus? (Check any that you think apply.)

A person who wants to witness for Jesus should:

____ have read the entire Bible
____ be baptized
____ have finished high school
____ love Jesus
____ be born again
____ be able to lead a Bible study
____ go to church regularly

did you know?

The Samaritans were a group of people living to the north of the land of Judea in Jesus' time. Samaritans believed they were the descendants of the northern tribes of Israel, who had remained in the land after most of their people were taken into captivity to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Jews believed the Samaritans were descendants of Gentiles who had settled there after the Babylonian conquest. Whatever their origins, Samaritans worshipped the God of Israel but had many customs and traditions different from the Jews. They were viewed by most Jews as being an inferior class of people, and the Jews of Jesus' time would have nothing to do with Samaritans, just as they would have nothing to do with Gentiles.



INTO THE STORY

"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' . . .

"The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' . . .

"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

"'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?' . . .

"Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

"The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'

"He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'

" 'I have no husband,' she replied.

"Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'

" 'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

"'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. . . . God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

"The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

"Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you—I am he.' . . .

"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' . . .

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

"They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this

man really is
the Savior of the world.' "

(John 4:7-42, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why was the woman initially surprised at Jesus asking for a drink? What did Jesus reveal about Himself by asking this?

_____
_____
_____

What do you think Jesus meant by "living water"?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think Jesus referred to her having had five husbands?

_____
_____
_____

What really convinced the woman that Jesus was the Messiah?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think the Samaritans came out to hear Jesus?

_____
_____
_____

What role did the woman's testimony play in converting the people of her village?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' " **(Romans 10:12-15, NIV).**

"As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed" **(Mark 5:18-20, NIV).**

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" **(1 Peter 3:15, NIV).**

further insight

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 195

"Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him."

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 58

Sabbath

Read John 4:1-42.

Put yourself in the place of the Samaritan woman. How do you think she reacted to Jesus at different points in the story? Why did she excitedly run to the people of her city and exclaim, "Come, see a man"? "This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent" (The Remnant and Its Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 13). What does the remnant (us) and the Samaritan woman have in common?

Sunday

Read Luke 5:29-32.

Review the *Did You Know?* section of the lesson. In Jesus' day, a Jew who stopped to talk to a Samaritan was really reaching outside his comfort zone, doing something that others wouldn't understand. The same could be said of the fact that Jesus was speaking to a woman—women were meant to keep silent in public discussion, stay at home, and not discuss things with men other than their husbands and immediate family. Why was Jesus so willing to break those kinds of cultural barriers? What does today's Bible reading tell us about how people reacted to the way Jesus related to others? If Jesus were to live on earth today, what groups of people in your society do you think He would talk to and eat with? How would He use these friendships to witness to them?

Monday

Read John 4:28-30.

Notice how the Samaritan woman went straight from her encounter with Jesus to tell others about Him. But she didn't just tell others; she invited them to come see Jesus for themselves. In our world today we don't have the opportunity to invite our friends to come meet Jesus in person. Yet we do want to invite them to have a personal encounter of their own with Him. How do we do that?

- Praying with and for them
- Encouraging them to read the Bible
- Inviting them to worship at church or with our youth group
- Inviting them to help in acts of serving others

Tuesday

Read John 15:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; and Galatians 5:22, 23.

What happens as we experience a personal relationship with Jesus?

_____

_____

Find out, in Jeremiah 20:9, what else happens.

_____

_____

As you get to know Jesus more and more every day, you will find an increased desire to witness about Him now instead of some time in the future. You will also be eager to share Jesus with everyone regardless of what they look like or sound like or what you may think of them initially.

Wednesday

Read John 4; John 9; and Mark 5.

Compare the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4 to the stories of the blind man in John 9 and the demon-possessed man in Mark 5. We often think "witnessing" for Jesus is something complicated that requires a lot of training and experience. But being a witness simply means telling what you know from firsthand experience—what you've seen and heard, and what's happened to you. Although we cannot see Jesus face to face, as the woman at the well did, we can come to know Him through reading His Word, prayer, and trusting in Him at every moment. Decide today to have a personal experience with Jesus.

Thursday

Read John 3:16.

Jesus was never afraid to associate with people who didn't fit in. Even when others questioned or criticized Him, He was willing to talk to anyone. It was through His love, acceptance, and openness that His message was able to be spread to all kinds of people. Read John 3:16 or repeat it from memory. Write down the first six words. Replace the word "world" with three individuals, or groups of people, who are considered "outsiders" in your community, church, or school. How do you relate to those people? How would you relate to them if you followed Jesus' example? Read again the second part of the sentence in John 3:16: "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish" (NASB). What will happen to those who believe? What is our role in helping people believe? How important is witnessing then?

Friday

Read John 4:28, 29.

The woman at the well went back to her village, told people about Jesus, and asked, "Could this be the Messiah?" (NIV). Even though she didn't know everything about her new faith in Jesus, she "witnessed" by telling what had happened to her and asking a question to get people curious. Then they came and learned about Jesus for themselves. Following the example of the woman at the well, what could you tell people about your own experience with Jesus?

_____

What question could you ask that would get people interested in checking out Jesus for themselves?

_____

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 19.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.