

The Woman At The Well

John 4:1-42

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 4:24

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many pieces of black construction paper as the number of children in your class. Additional colored pieces of construction paper, scissors, glue, glitter, sidewalk chalk, pom-poms, pipe cleaners, other paper decorating items and large tongue depressors.

A large red construction paper heart, tape, chalk, and a blackboard.

As many 8 1/2" x 11" pieces of white paper as the number of children in your class, scissors, and pre-made "valentine" looking cards with John 4:14 printed on them.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Let's Make a Mask

Prepare as many construction paper masks before class as the number of children in your class. Make each mask an oval shape with eyes and mouth holes cut out.

Provide additional construction paper, glue, sidewalk chalk, glitter, pom-poms, pipe cleaners, etc., for your students to decorate each of their masks. Glue a large tongue depressor on the back of the chin of each mask so the children have a place to hold it.

Tell your children that they are on their own as far as decorating each mask. Try not to pay too close attention to any one mask (this will be necessary for a later activity).

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever seen someone with a mask on? Masks come in lots of shapes and expressions. Some are ugly and scary. Some are pretty. Some are funny. Some are a copy of something, like a tiger mask or a monkey mask. When we are little, masks often frighten us. We think they are real. If we know they are pretend, we are frightened because we do not know who is behind the mask. As we get older, we know they are not real. We know they are just covering up someone's real identity.

Today we will learn about a woman who tried to put a mask on in front of Jesus so He would not know who she really was. It was not a mask you could see. It was a mask over her heart. She tried to pretend with Jesus that she was something she was not. Jesus lovingly let her know that she could not hide from Him. He knew all about her. **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us.** We can be truthful with Jesus about the things that go on inside our hearts. He loves us and has the power to change us. Let's look at Jesus' visit with this woman.

JOHN 4:1-6

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

But He needed to go through Samaria.

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Jesus left Judea. Some of the followers of John the Baptist were beginning to get jealous of Jesus because He baptized more people. John the Baptist reminded them that he was not the Messiah but was sent to prepare the way. It brought him joy to see Jesus' ministry grow because that was the whole purpose of his ministry, to prepare the way for Jesus. But in order to avoid controversy or arguments, Jesus left and headed for Galilee. Remember, it was Jesus who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Jesus was showing His disciples how to be peace makers as He stopped arguments by leaving for Galilee.

He picked a strange way to go on this journey. At least it was strange to everyone else. He went through Samaria. Jesus was a Jew, and Jews did not go through Samaria. They did not like Samaritans. Jews thought Samaritans were low and vile people because they were only half Jewish. Jesus was going there for a purpose.

Jesus did not like the prejudice that the Jews had for the Samaritans. He went to Samaria to show that God loves all people. Jesus was the Savior of the Jews and the Samaritans. He came to save the whole world. We are all the same to Jesus. **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us.** We are all sinners, but He loves us and will forgive all of those who ask Him to.

We find out in these verses that Jesus was thirsty. Have you ever been thirsty? Maybe you played out in the hot sun, or ran a long way, or hiked up a very high hill. Jesus had been on a long, dry, dusty journey. He was tired and thirsty. Remember that Jesus was God, but He had put on the body and the physical limitations of a

man. So, God was experiencing the hunger and thirst of being a human. He knows how we feel.

JOHN 4:7-15

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

"Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Jesus sat beside a well. His disciples had gone off to buy food for dinner because they were hungry. Jesus had a purpose for staying behind. He knew someone was coming to the well. Someone He wanted to share truth and salvation with. Do you remember who came? It was a Samaritan woman. He asked her for a drink. This was very significant to her. She knew Jews hated Samaritans, yet He talked to her and asked her, a Samaritan, for a drink.

Jesus' answer is so great! Jesus did what He always does. He left behind the unimportant and went straight to the important. He began to talk about spiritual things. We tend to focus in on the physical things about our lives, like hunger, appearance, etc., but Jesus is thinking about our spirits, the real part of us that will live forever. He told the woman about a different kind of water, living water that gives your spirit what it needs to live. He was talking about Himself.

When we have Jesus in our hearts, our spirits are made alive, and we are no longer thirsty on the inside. The Samaritan woman was filled with curiosity and wonder at the thought of this living water. She wanted some. She did not understand yet that Jesus was talking about spiritual water, the refreshing that the Holy Spirit brings to every accepting heart.

JOHN 4:16-19

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'

"for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."

Jesus offered her living water. She asked for some, but Jesus said, "Go, call your husband..." Why did He say that? Remember that **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us**. He knew this woman's heart. He knew she had something wrong going on in her life. She was not only physically thirsty, she was spiritually thirsty. She needed Jesus! If she was to have His living water springing up inside her, she had to let Him fix the wrong things in her. She had to be honest with Him. He knows everything anyway. We cannot hide anything from Him. We have to come to Him with honesty. Jesus was saying to this woman that He could hear her spirit crying for this living water. He had some water to give her, but there were things in her life that needed to be dealt with.

Immediately, she tried to avoid what He was saying. She quickly said, "I have no husband." She was really saying that this was none of His business. She was trying to make Jesus be quiet. She did not like that He seemed to know about her sins. She wanted to wear a spiritual mask. She wanted Him to think she was fine.

But Jesus lovingly removed her mask and said that she had had five husbands and now lived with a man that was not her husband. Wow! Jesus is very honest. **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us**. No mask that we try to hide behind fools Him. He loves us enough to pull off the masks that we try to wear to hide the fact that we are sad and scared. He gets close to us and tells us that we cannot hide from Him; He knows all about us.

The woman knew Jesus was someone extraordinary. She called Him a prophet. But He was more than just a prophet. He was her

Messiah, her Savior. He was the one who could heal her spirit and give her new life. Jesus was the One who could give her living water, if she would come to Him honestly.

"Mask" Game

Explain to each child that you are going to turn around and not look at the class. While your back is turned, have the children change places and put their masks in place over their faces.

When each child is in place, turn back and begin to try to guess who each child is. To make the point, it is important that you not be too accurate in your guesses.

Explain to the children that when we wear masks to cover who we really are, it is very difficult for others to see the real individual, but Jesus knows all about us. He sees right through the mask. **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us.**

JOHN 4:20-26

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

"You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

The woman still tried to avoid Jesus. She thought that if she could get into a discussion about God, Jesus might forget about her and her need, but He did not. He continued to remove her mask and help her be honest about her life, her sin, and her need for Him. She wanted to know where to worship, but He simply told her that where one worships is not important. To truly worship God, we all must get down to the deepest things in our hearts. We must be open and honest before God, no masks. We must be real. When you are prepared to do that, you do not need to discuss the place of worship; the place is nothing. But worshipping in spirit and truth is everything.

There was something so right, so honest, so wise about Jesus that this woman began to wonder if He could be the promised Messiah, the Savior. Then He boldly claimed, "I who speak to you am He." Wow! She was face to face with Jesus, the Messiah. She could not pretend in front of Him. He knew all about who she really was. He knew all about her sin, her failing, her "bad" side. **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us.** He came to save broken, sinful people just like us. We can lift our faces to Him without any masks or coverings over our sinful hearts and say, "Here I am. Please forgive me. Cleanse me and do what You need to do in my heart. Please fill me with Your living water." Jesus loves to do that for all who ask!

Undercover Hearts

Before class begins, draw a heart shape on the blackboard the same size as a red, cutout, construction paper heart. Inside the blackboard heart, write down some of the things that a person might struggle with and try to hide from others (the more personal you make these things, the more impact they will be for the children. Do not, however, share anything inappropriate for the age level of the child).

Tape the construction paper heart over the top of the blackboard heart.

Explain to the children that often people try to hide the areas of struggle in their lives. Take the taped heart away from the blackboard and reveal the things that are in that heart. Explain that God wants us to reveal and confess those things to Him. Systematically erase the words in the heart with the blackboard eraser. Explain that when those things are revealed, confessed, and given to God, He removes them from our lives by the power of His Spirit. Be sure to explain that this is a discipline that may need to be repeated daily, hourly, and sometimes minute by minute.

JOHN 4:27-38

And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

"And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

"For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'

"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

The disciples came back to Jesus with food for their tired and hungry Lord. And there He was talking to a Samaritan woman. Wow! They were shocked! A rabbi was not supposed to talk alone with a woman, but Jesus was doing just that! He was showing them that their rules had nothing to do with God.

They offered Him food, but he explained to them that His food was doing the Father's will. There is a hunger that goes deeper than the need for food. God has the bread to satisfy that deep hunger of our hearts. Jesus only wanted to do one thing, the will of God. What was God's will here at this well in Samaria? To talk to that woman and lead her into God's light.

He then told His disciples that there were people everywhere who needed spiritual food just like the Samaritan woman, people whose spirits were dead and miserable, hopeless and thirsty. They needed the living water of Jesus in their hearts. We are His disciples, and we can go out and tell others about Jesus. If we share what Jesus has done in our lives, people will go to Jesus to see what it is He has for them.

JOHN 4:39-42

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."

So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

And many more believed because of His own word.

Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

The woman had left her water pot and run off to tell the people in the city about Jesus. She told them that **Jesus knows all about us and He loves us**. The people came to hear Jesus for themselves. He removed their spiritual masks too. Then He filled

them with living water. He stayed with them for two days. Many of them believed in Jesus.

This was the city that realized the great truth about Jesus after they had listened to Him. They called Jesus "the Savior of the world," and He is. Is He your Savior? Do you have His living water bubbling up inside of you? You can today by simply asking Him.

Paper Hearts

Pass out to each child an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of white paper. Fold each piece of paper in half on the 11" side. Cut out a heart on the folded page so that the top of the heart still connects the front and back of the folded page (the finished cut-out should resemble a heart-shaped greeting card).

Instruct the children to write down on the inside of their paper heart an area of their lives that they struggle with. This can either be a list of difficulties, or one big concern (younger children may need you and your aide to write these things for them).

Have each child open up their paper hearts and fold them back so that the inside page becomes the cover (be sensitive that the children not feel that the class needs to see the contents).

Pass a large paper bag with the words written on it "God's Love" around the class, and allow each child to deposit their paper heart into the bag. Explain to the children that God wants us to reveal our hearts to Him and surrender everything in them to Him. It is then that He will do the miracle of taking all our sins away and washing us clean.

Pass out to each student a new heart shaped card with John 4:14 printed on it. The more this card looks like a valentine the better. Jesus will give us a new heart if we ask Him.

JOHN 4:14

"...but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer asking the Lord to fill them with the living water of His Holy Spirit. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity to do so.