

# A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

## **Jesus' First Miracle**

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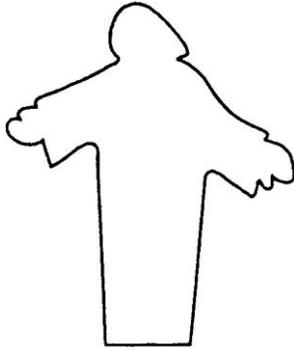
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## **JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE .... ~rATERIALS**

- medium wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden figure of Mary, Jesus' mother
  - wooden Jesus figure
  - wooden disciple figure
  - wooden servant figure
  - wooden steward figure
  - wooden bridegroom figure



Mary



Jesus



Disciple  
Bridegroom



Servant



Steward



## JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE .... JOHN 2:1-11

### ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

Gently stroke one or more of the wood figures to center yourself and the children, during the silence.

Place the Mary figure in the center of the storytelling area.

Place Jesus to the right of Mary and the disciple to the right of Jesus.

Place the servant figure at far left center.

Hold up both hands, palms up.

Turn Mary to face the Jesus figure as you speak.

Touch the Jesus figure, then shake your head as you say "not time".

Move Mary just to the right of the servant.

Pour imaginary water over your hands and "rub" them as though washing.

Begin with both palms on the floor and raise them up to about chest height to indicate the jars being filled.

### WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this story.

Jesus' mother, Mary, had been invited to a wedding.

Jesus and his disciples were also invited.

At the wedding the servants were serving wine to all the guests.

But they ran out of wine.

Mary said to Jesus, "They are out of wine. "

Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, why are you telling me? It's not time for people to know who I am."

But Mary said to the servants, "Whatever he asks you to do, do it."

There were six jars sitting nearby. The jars would be used to carry water that would make people clean before they entered the temple.

Jesus told the servants, "Fill those jars full of water. Then take some out and bring it to the man in charge of the food."

Place the steward to the far right center of the storytelling area. Pantomime taking a drink from a cup.

Touch the steward and shake your head. Then touch the disciple and the servant figures.

Place the bridegroom figure to the left of the steward. Turn them to face each other as you speak.

Move the Jesus figure away from you, slightly in front of the rest of the figures.

Move the disciple figure next to Jesus on his right.

Carefully place the wooden figures back into the basket.

When the man in charge of the food tasted the water it had become wine.

He had no idea where the wine came from. Only the servants and the disciples knew.

He called the bridegroom and said, "You were supposed to serve the good wine first and then the poor wine. But you have saved this good wine until now. "

This was the first miracle Jesus did.

When his disciples saw it they believed in him.

#### -WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder how Mary knew the wine was gone?

■ wonder why Mary told Jesus the wine was gone?

■ wonder why Jesus didn't call Mary "mother"?

■ wonder what the servants said to each other when the water changed?

■ wonder if you have ever been to a party after a wedding?

Watch carefully how ■ put these figures away, so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelf. Then return to the circle and sit down.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Be certain every child has had the opportunity to choose his or her work before dismissing them as a group.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide.

## JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE ..•. TEACHER HELPS

The story of Jesus' first miracle raises many questions, but tells a basic truth. Jesus was beginning to let the world know that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. Some of the things that bother us in this lesson are: Jesus' apparent lack of respect for his mother, the fact that he changed the water into wine after he told his mother that it wasn't yet time and, for some people, that the water became wine. Let's address those issues first.

When Jesus addressed his mother, he called her "woman". This was not a derogatory term in Jesus' day, but rather one of respect. It's important to notice a couple of things about Mary and her relationship to Jesus in this passage. First, she understood that Jesus had the power to do something about this very embarrassing situation. It makes us wonder what he had done that Mary knew, and would have prompted her to ask Jesus in such a public place to perform a sign. Second, she didn't really take his "no" for an answer. Even though Jesus told her it wasn't yet time, she told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. Somewhere in her heart Mary knew Jesus would do as his mother asked.

We don't know why Jesus changed his mind and changed the water after he told Mary that it was not yet time for him to begin his public ministry. We just know that he did it. It's fun to wonder what went through his mind, how he looked at Mary and what his thoughts were. We will never know, but can spend much happy time considering the possibilities. Did Jesus need a gentle nudge from his mother to begin that business he was sent to earth to do? Did he need to be reminded of his powers? Did he consider it carefully and decide Mary was right? Or did he know the people who hosted the wedding so well that he didn't want them to be embarrassed for lack of wine for their guests?

Because there are people who disapprove of the use of alcoholic beverages, some denominations will feel uncomfortable talking about Jesus changing water into wine. They will probably explain that it wasn't really fermented wine, or perhaps that it was not alcoholic. It's very difficult for those of us who can merely open a tap and find clean, pure water to understand what it would have been like to drink the water that was available in Judea and Galilee during this time in history. It would have been visibly dirty to the naked eye and probably carried more diseases than any other medium. Therefore, it was a very common occurrence in Jesus' day, to serve wine with nearly every meal.

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Notice that Jesus was not ready for the whole world to know what he had done. Even the bridegroom didn't know where the wine came from. Only Mary, the servants and the disciples knew. This is an often found characteristic of Jesus; his greatness was not revealed to the rich and powerful first, but rather to the poor and weak. It was the servants who were the first witnesses to the mighty power of the Son of God, not the wealthy landowners or the priests of the temple.

The first wondering question focuses on how Mary knew that the wine was gone. She was an invited guest and as such, should not have been privy to the servants' conversations. Rather than staying with the men the entire evening; she as a woman was undoubtedly closer to the kitchen area and so may have heard the talking. It is the mother who sets the stage. As she prepared for his birth, so she prepared and prepares Jesus for the first miracle.

The second question ties into the first. Why would Mary have told Jesus the wine was gone unless she expected he was able to do something about it? The children will relate to this part of the story as though they are relating to their own mothers. For the very young it will probably be that mothers always know what has to be done and always know when you should do it. Older children may respond that they feel Mary was trying to push Jesus into this miracle either to show who he was or to help her friends at the wedding save face.

We don't know why Jesus didn't call Mary "mother" when she spoke to him. He may have been angry with her. He may have been using a term that was very appropriate at that time in history. Either way, he was addressing Mary as one who was trying to bring into history an event that may have been premature. Was it really his "time"? Was the world ready now for this miracle?

We can have a lot of fun imagining what the servants said to each other and wondering what they said to their families later on. We don't have any of these words recorded for us, but oh, to have been there for that very first miracle! Later on, these servants must have told their children and grandchildren the stories of the day the man who said amazing things and did wonderful things made the water become wine. They must have been surprised. Were they also afraid? We won't ever know, but the fun comes in wondering.

A birthday party or a wedding reception is probably the closest the children can come to understanding and remembering an experience like this story. Ask them to imagine a birthday party, where they run out of cake, ice cream or even soda. Allow the talks of parties to be pleasant and happy. Then, if you've time, talk about the possibility of shortages.

Remember, the wedding hosts were to serve the best wine first. The idea was that the guests would be less discriminating about the wine served later because their senses would be somewhat dulled by the drinking of several glasses of wine. So when Jesus served the new wine and it tasted so much better the steward asks the bridegroom, "Why did you save this good wine until the end and serve the poor wine first?" As we look forward to the coming of the kingdom of God we can believe that the best is still to come.

The author of the Gospel of John is interested in making sure all readers understand that this man from Galilee is truly the Messiah, the Son of God. He uses the word "signs" rather than "miracles" because in his day miracles were equated with magic or magical tricks that anyone could learn to perform. The writer's use of signs makes it very easy for us to see that these wonders could only have occurred through the working of the Spirit of God.

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Imagine you are Jesus. Share with the class what went through your mind when you heard your mother's words.

Why would Jesus have done his first miracle in a place where only the servants and disciples were aware of it?

Have you ever done something pretty neat you didn't want people to talk about or know about? What and why?

How was Jesus' life different after this wedding?