

A Good Shepherd

Story of Jesus

The Samaritan Woman

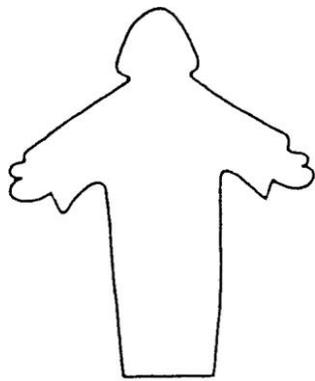
Adapted by:
Brenda J. Stobbe

Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoenberg & Tiffany DeGraaf
Activity Sheets and Art Editing by:
Tiffany DeGraaf

Good Shepherd, Inc®. 2000
Good Shepherd, a Registered Trademark of Good Shepherd, Inc.
All Rights Reserved
Printed in the U.S.A.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN ... MATERIALS

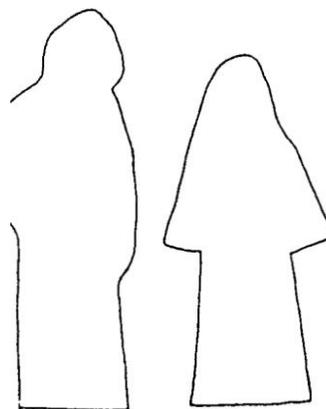
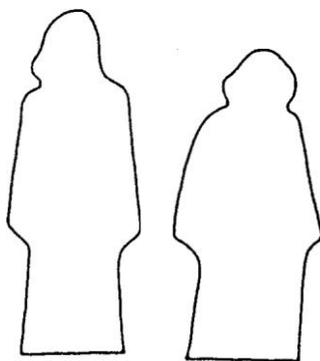
- medium wicker basket to hold
- wooden Jesus figure
- wooden Samaritan woman figure
- two wooden disciple figures
- two wooden onlooker figures



Jesus
Disciples



Samaritan Woman



Onlookers

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN ... JOHN 4: 1-42

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story basket from the shelf and return to the circle.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place Jesus and the disciples to one side of the story telling area.

Stop the three figures in the center of the storytelling area. Move the disciples out of the storytelling area.

Rest your hand on Jesus as you speak.

Place the woman in the same general area as Jesus.

Touch the woman as you speak.

Move Jesus closer to the woman.
Emphasize the word "me".

Shake your head, as though what Jesus said makes no sense.

WORDS

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

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story?

Jesus had been teaching and healing in Judea, near Jerusalem. He decided to leave and go back to Galilee.

To get to Galilee he had to go through Samaria. When he was in Samaria, at about noon Jesus stopped.

He was tired from his journey and he sat down to rest near the well of Jacob.

A Samaritan woman came to the well to get water. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink." His disciples had gone into town to buy food.

The woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (She knew that Jews did not even talk to Samaritans.)

Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God and who I am, you would ask me for a drink and I would have given you living water."

"Sir", said the woman, "you don't even have a bucket and the well is very deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob who gave us this well?"

Sweep your hand palm up from left to right to indicate "everyone."

Speak eagerly, anxious to receive the water.

Touch the woman as you speak.

Shake your head "no" as you speak.

Hold up five fingers as you speak of the five husbands.

Make sure Jesus and the woman are facing each other as she speaks.

Extend your left hand to one side and your right to the other as you speak of first the mountain and then Jerusalem.

Touch the woman and speak in a firm voice.

Touch Jesus and speak quietly.

Move the disciples next to Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty. The water I give will be like a spring of water growing to eternal life."

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

Jesus said to her, "Go and get your husband and come back"

The woman answered, "I have no husband."

Jesus said, "You are right to say you have no husband. You have had five husbands, and the man in your house now is not your husband."

"I can see that you are a prophet. Our parents worshiped God on this mountain, but you Jews claim that we must worship only in Jerusalem."

Jesus said, "The time is coming when you won't worship God either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. Both Samaritans and Jews don't understand whom they worship. True worshipers will worship God in spirit and truth. That is the kind of worshipers God wants."

The woman said to Jesus, "I know the Messiah is coming. He will explain everything to us."

Jesus told her, "I am he."

Then Jesus' disciples came back. They wondered why Jesus would be talking to a woman, but they didn't say anything.

Move the woman away from the center of the story telling area. Place two onlookers next to her.

Rest your hand on first one and then the other of the onlookers.

Move the Samaritans next to Jesus.

Nod your head as you speak.

Place the woman next to the onlookers, turning her to face them.

Place all the wooden figures in the basket, one at a time.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Dismiss the children when everyone has had a chance to choose his/her work.

The woman left her water jar and went back to the town and told the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything about myself. Could this be the Christ, the Messiah?"

Many of the Samaritans believed because of what the woman told them.

So when they came to Jesus, the Samaritans asked him to stay with them. Jesus stayed for two more days.

They listened to his words and many of them believed what he'd taught.

The people 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."

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how the woman felt when Jesus asked her for a drink?

■ wonder how Jesus knew all about the woman?

■ wonder why the people believed what the woman said?

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

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

■ wonder what you will do for your work today? Let's begin.

SAMARITAN WOMAN ... TEACHER HELPS

What do you know about the Samaritan woman? Ask any Biblically literate person that question and the response is usually, "Well, she was divorced five times and was living in sin with a man who wasn't her husband" That is the most common interpretation of this story. But I would like to step outside of that common interpretation and take a good look at the text, and the practices of Jesus day.

First, nowhere in the text does it say the woman has been divorced. It says she has had five husbands. Our assumption is that she has been divorced from those five men. It is equally possible that she has been widowed five times. Remember that Levitical law required the woman to marry her husband's brother if he died. The woman's first husband could have had brothers close to him in age, or older who took the woman as another wife. The Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Old Testament as their scriptures. And there is very little opportunity in those texts for a woman to initiate a divorce. Levitical law also said the next brother had the option to say "no" to the marriage. He still could have allowed the woman to live in his home, providing food and shelter for someone who would have no other means of support.

Some scholars have made a case that the woman came to the well at noon, an odd time for water drawing. Most of the women came early in the morning or in the evening when it was cooler. Those scholars believe she came at noon because she would have been the object of gossip by the other women. It is equally possible that she had to remain in the home to care for many children or an elderly parent. Because of her lack of status, since she was not an official wife, she may have been the "servant" filled the role of servant.

Read the story again, as I have written it and in the Bible. Notice how little attention either Jesus or the woman gave to the fact that the man she is living with is not her husband. Obviously it wasn't important to either of them. What was important is that the woman recognized that Jesus must be a prophet and Jesus entered in dialog with her. It would have been almost unheard of for a woman to have a prolonged conversation with Jesus, to say nothing of a Samaritan woman. That's why the disciples were so amazed when they came back from town. They never expected to see Jesus having a conversation with this woman who had come to draw water. But they also knew Jesus well enough now not to question him.

The conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman is the important part of the story. For generations there had been a disagreement between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans had established their own place of worship, a temple built on Mount Gerizim in about 300 BCE. It competed with the temple in Jerusalem, the only true place for worship according to the Jews. Jewish troops destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128 BCE. (*The Women's Bible Commentary*, Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, editors, p.295) The question the woman posed to Jesus was an honest, searching one that was no doubt the hinge of controversy between the two nations. The woman is the first person to enter into serious theological conversation with Jesus and he encouraged that conversation by his response to her. (*Ibid.*, p. 296) As we watch the woman's faith grow, she begins to talk of the Messiah. Perhaps she was wondering even then, what she asked the people in her town later, "Could this be the Messiah?"

A final testament to the stature of this woman in the community may be found in the response from those to whom she spoke. She left her water jar and ran to tell others about the man she had met. The text tells us that because of her testimony many believed her. Had she been a person of ill repute most likely they would not have even listened to her, much less given her testimony any credibility. Finally the people believe because of Jesus, telling her at the end "Now we believe, not just because of what you said, but because we have heard it ourselves. He is the Savior."

Again, it is so important to peel away generations of sexual overtones to this story to really get at the meat of it. Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman, not because she was "living in sin", but because he chose the "unchosen", the Samaritan, to demonstrate that his great gift of love and life was for everyone.

Our first wondering question asks how the woman felt when Jesus asked her for a drink of water. The primary response will be surprised, because that's the impression we give in the story. But there will also probably be responses that she was scared or worried. Ask the children to say more about their responses and try to get at why they feel a certain emotion would have been valid.

The second question ask how Jesus knew all about the woman. Most children believe so firmly in the divinity and the omniscience of Jesus that they will say Jesus knew everything. Others may consider that Jesus knew about people in that part of the country because he may have been there before.

The final question asks why the people would have believed the woman's words. Be open to all responses here because there could be quite a variety. Some children may say that the woman was so excited they couldn't help but believe her. Still others may say that the people had known the woman for a long time and trusted what she said. Some may say that Jesus caused them to believe through the woman. The main hope of this question is to help the children treat the woman's witness as a valid witness.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

The woman asked Jesus about the right place to worship God. Where do you think it's OK to worship God? Where is not an OK place? Do you have friends who may not attend your church? Are there houses of worship where you may not attend? Why?

When Jesus disciples came back from town they were surprised to see him talking to a woman. But they said nothing. Why do you think they kept quiet?

What do you think happened to the woman's five husbands? Why would Jesus have told her that part of her life? What part of your life would you be surprised to have Jesus talk about?