

# **A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus**

## **Life Giving Water**

Adapted by:  
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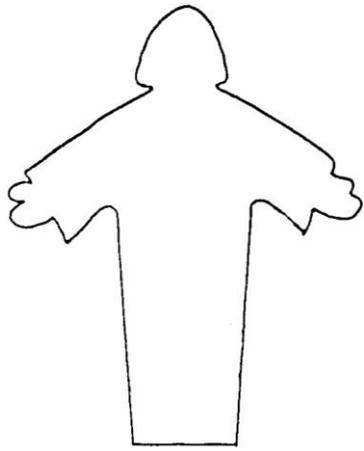
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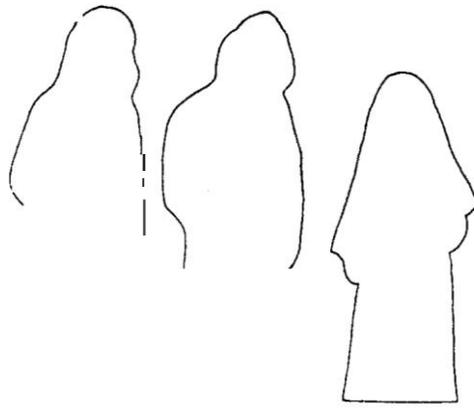
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## **LIFE-GIVING WATER ... MATERIALS**

- medium wicker basket to hold
  - wooden Jesus figure
  - 3 wooden onlooker figures
  - wooden soldier figure
  - wooden Pharisee figure
  - wooden Nicodemus figure
  - laminated water card



Jesus



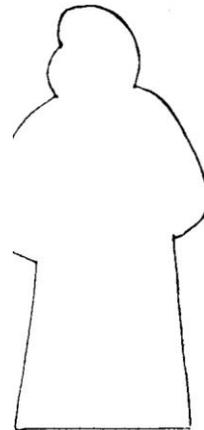
Onlookers



Soldier



Pharisee



Nicodemus

## LIFE-GIVING WATER ... JOHN 7:37-52

### 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 the Jesus figure toward at the center of the storytelling area.

Rest your hand lightly on the Jesus figure.

Place two of the onlookers next to Jesus.

Touch Jesus as you speak

Touch each of the onlooker figures.

Lift one hand, palm up to indicated the Holy Spirit.

Place the other onlooker figure and the soldier next to the others.

Touch the first onlooker figure.

### WORDS

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

All of 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 of God's people.

Jesus spent much of his time on earth helping people understand who he was.

When they wondered if Jesus was really the Savior, the Messiah he told them about himself in different ways.

Jesus had been at the festival of booths. At that time people remembered what it was like when they were in the wilderness and lived not in houses but only in tents.

On the last day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, "If you are thirsty, come to me and drink."

"Have faith in me and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you, just like the early Bible says", said Jesus.

Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit who would be given to everyone who has faith in Jesus later on.

The people who heard Jesus started to talk about him.

Some of them said, "He must be the prophet."

Touch the second onlooker.

Others said, "He is the Messiah, the Savior!"

Touch the third onlooker.

But other people asked, "Can the Messiah come from Galilee? The scriptures say the Messiah will be a relative of David.

Turn the soldier to listen to them.

Doesn't that mean the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, David's city?"

Touch each onlooker, in order.

The people started taking sides and arguing with each other about Jesus.

Move the soldier closer to Jesus. Then shake your head.

Some people even wanted to arrest Jesus. But no one touched him.

Move the soldier away from Jesus and place the Pharisee and Nicodemus next to him.

When the temple police returned to the chief priests and Pharisees they were asked, "Why didn't you bring Jesus here?"

Touch the soldier and speak as though amazed.

The police said, "No one has ever spoken like that man."

Move the Pharisee closer to the soldier.

The Pharisees asked, "Have you been fooled too? Not one of the priests or Pharisees has faith in him.

Turn the Pharisee away from the soldier.

Besides, those who don't know our scriptures are under God's curse anyway."

Move Nicodemus slightly away from the Pharisee.

But Nicodemus, who was a member of the court said, "Our Law doesn't let us curse people or say they are bad before we hear what they have to say.

Shake your head as you speak.

We cannot judge them before we know what they have done"

Move the Pharisee next to Nicodemus.

The Pharisees answered, "Nicodemus, you must be from Galilee. Read the scriptures and you will find that there is never to be a prophet who will come from Galilee.

## WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how water that gives life can be inside of us?

I wonder if Jesus heard the people arguing about him? I wonder how he felt if he did hear them?

I wonder what Jesus said that kept the temple police from arresting him?

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

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

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.

## LIFE-GIVING WATER ... TEACHER HELPS

The Setting for today's story is the Feast of Tabernacles, sometimes called the festival of booths. During the festival of booths, the Hebrew people often built booths out of branches and leaves in which they lived, to remember their time of slavery in Egypt and living in tents in the wilderness. This festival helped them remember that before they were a people with a land, God was with them.

At first Jesus was not going to attend the festival because he had been in trouble with the Jewish leaders at an ever increasing frequency. In John 7: 10 we read that Jesus left secretly for the festival after his brothers had left. Our story today takes place on the last day of the eight day festival. Each day of the festival a water ritual was celebrated. It

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was particularly stressed on the last day. It was not a spiritual ritual as much as it was connected with the need for rain, for crops and animals during the following year. (New Bible Commentary: Revised, Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs and Wisemen, p. 945) Jesus reference to himself as the source of living or life giving water moved the ritual to a new level. The gospel of John regularly records Jesus making statements that people don't understand, and today's lesson is another example. It is interesting that no one questioned his statement about water and its life-giving properties, like the Samaritan woman did in John 4: 1-42. But they did question the likelihood of Jesus being a prophet, not because of any of his teachings, but because of where he came from.

It is typical of us as humans to try to make sure God fits God's plan into our box of understanding. We know where the "good" people come from and where they live. The people in Jesus day were much the same. Galilee was not a highly thought of area. It was in the north and was far removed from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, both which had important linkages to the Davidic monarchy out of which the Messiah was to emerge.

The first wondering question asks how the water of life can be inside of us. Some very concrete thinkers may tell you that the water of life is our blood. It is what keeps us alive. Older children may be able to articulate the presence of God in each of us.

The second wondering question considers that Jesus might have overheard the people arguing about him and where he came from and then ask about his feelings. Most children will think that Jesus felt sad that people didn't think he could be a prophet or the Messiah. Some of them will indicate that perhaps Jesus was angry. And still a few will say that he felt OK cause God was with him.

Our final wondering question asks what Jesus said that kept the police from arresting him. Children will come from lots of places with their answers to this. A few of the older children may actually say that it was about what Jesus said, but because the crowds seemed to like Jesus that they didn't dare arrest him.

A few of the children may comment on the fact that this story just sort of stops. It doesn't seem complete to them. You will probably be able to respond that it seems incomplete to you as well, but that's exactly how it stops in the Bible. Encourage older children to read the text in the Bible and note the ending.

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Read John 7: 1-10. How do you feel about Jesus saying he wasn't going to the festival before going in secret later on? Why do you think Jesus didn't want to go at first? Was he scared? Was he tired?

Many of the people couldn't accept that Jesus could be a prophet or the Messiah because of where he grew up. Have you ever judged someone because of where they lived? Has someone ever done that to you? How did it feel?