

LIVING LENT IN MISSION

A Resource for Youth and Young Adults

Keeping Lent in Focus

from MISSIO Powered by the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL

Leader: Have you ever been really, really thirsty? So thirsty that you can't focus on anything and even the beverage you hate the most sounds good? Has your heart ever been thirsty? So thirsty that you beg God for help and the most unexpected person speaks to your heart?

In the Gospel story we will hear, the Samaritan woman goes to the well during the hottest part of the day when she knew that few people would be around. She knew of her sinfulness and didn't want to be judged. When she got to the well, the most unexpected person spoke to her heart.

Who are the unexpected people in your life who have spoken to your heart?

Ice Breaker

Hangin' Out

Leader: I would like everyone to form a large circle and then sit on the floor. (*Leader moves to the center of the circle, to be the first to play the game.*) The game we are going to play is called "Hangin' Out." The person in the center of the circle says, "I'm hangin' out with people who..." and then finishes the phrase by adding one descriptive phrase that describes a group of people in the circle.

Here's an example: I'm hangin' out with the people who are wearing black. Everyone in the circle who is wearing black stands up and moves to another spot in the circle and sits down. The last person left standing will be then be the new leader and will say, "I'm hangin' out with people who..." and add a new description. Be creative with your descriptions. Think about things like physical characteristics (i.e., hair or eye color, clothing style, shoe size) or non-physical attributes (i.e. places people have been on

vacation, birthday month, number of siblings, pet ownership). The more creative you are with your descriptions, the more fun you will have!

There are two rules for this game: The leader cannot repeat something that has already been said, and the people in the circle must move at least two spaces away from where you are currently sitting standing?

(Leader starts the group and then takes a place in the circle. This is a high-energy activity so help keep the game moving and be ready to jump in with ideas if someone in the middle is struggling to think of a category. The game can be played for any length of time, as long as participants are having fun and the energy remains high.)

Large Group Activity

The Outcast and the Stranger Skits

Materials Needed:

- Dry erase board or easel with newsprint
- Markers
- Props for skits (optional)

Leader: There are many stories in the Bible like the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well – stories where Jesus is seen “hanging out” with the outcasts of society. But he went beyond just sitting quietly as a bystander. He actually had conversations with these people, reaching into their lives with love and compassion, even healing.

Let’s come up with a list of people that today’s society views as outcasts. *(Leader writes response on dry erase board or newsprint. Label this LIST A.)*

Why does society view them as outcasts? *(Leader writes responses. Label this LIST B.)*

Jesus met the Woman at the Well in a place she went to everyday. Name some of the places you go to every day or every week. *(Leader writes responses. Label this LIST C.)*

We are going to break up into small groups. Your group needs to choose one category / item from each of the three lists and write a skit about a person who hangs out in public with an outcast. You will need a narrator, an outcast, a person who welcomes the outcast, a few people who disregard the outcast, and two to three bystanders. Keep it real. Think about where you spend a lot of time (i.e., in a coffee shop, at school, at a sports game, in a theater, in a shopping center, etc.). With whom would you NOT want your friends to see you?

You will have 10 minutes to work on your skit and then each group will present the skit to the large group.

(After 10 minutes, re-gather the group and invite each group to perform their skit. When all skits have been performed, lead a brief discussion about how we treat people who are different who are judged to be unworthy of our time and presence.)

Large Group Activity

The Story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well

Distribute scripts of the Gospel of John story in which Jesus meets the Samaritan Woman at a Well. If possible, select people in advance so they can practice the story or even make a video of the story.

Leader: We are going to hear a story from the Gospel of John. As you listen to the story, think about which character you are in the story. Are you an outcast like the Samaritan woman? Are you the Jesus character who has the courage to be seen and speak with people who are on the fringe of society? Are you someone in the crowd who watches and asks questions?

Ask for (or assign), five volunteers to read John 4:5-42 as noted below:

Narrator: Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there.

Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her,

Jesus: Give me a drink.

Narrator: His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him,

Samaritan Woman: How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?

Narrator: The woman said this because Jews typically did not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her,

Jesus: If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Narrator: The woman said to him,

Samaritan Woman: Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?"

Narrator: Jesus answered and said to her,

Jesus: Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Narrator: The woman said to him,

Samaritan Woman: Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.

Narrator: Jesus said to her,

Jesus: Go call your husband and come back.

Narrator: The woman answered and said to him,

Samaritan Woman: I do not have a husband.

Narrator: Jesus answered her,

Jesus: You are right in saying, "I do not have a husband." For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband.

Samaritan Woman: What you have said is true.

Narrator: The woman said to him,

Samaritan Woman: Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.

Narrator: Jesus said to her,

Jesus: Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.

Narrator: The woman said to him,

Samaritan Woman: I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.

Narrator: Jesus said to her,

Jesus: I am he, the one speaking with you.

Narrator: At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said,

Person #1: What are you looking for?

Person #2: Why are you talking with her?

Narrator: The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people,

Samaritan Woman: Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?

Narrator: They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him,

Disciples #1 and #2 (together): Rabbi, eat.

Narrator: But he said to them,

Jesus: I have food to eat of which you do not know.

Narrator: So the disciples said to one another,

Disciple #1: Could someone have brought him something to eat?

Narrator: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, "In four months the harvest will be here"? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that "one sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work.

Narrator: Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified,

Samaritan Woman: He told me everything I have done.

Narrator: When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman,

Person #2: We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.

Individual Reflection

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Music (optional)

Leader: At the beginning of the story, I asked you to think about which character you played in the story. Take a few minutes, think about what you heard and then write a short letter to Jesus from the perspective of the character with whom you identified. Tell him who you are in the story, how you feel and why. Remember that Jesus offered “living water” to the woman in the story – a chance for a new life in Him. In your letter, ask for the living water that you need. How do you need Jesus to help you turn away from sin so as to live out your Baptismal call to holiness – your call to bring others to know Jesus, as His missionary?

Your letter could start something like this: “Dear Jesus, I feel like an outcast because...” or “Jesus, I feel like I am always standing in the crowd watching what happens...” or “Jesus, I feel like I am you in situations where people are judged or bullied and being you isn’t easy.” When you are finished with your story, sit quietly until everyone has finished. When everyone has finished, we will move into small groups in which you can choose to share your letter or participate in a discussion about the Gospel. *(Allow time for writing and sharing. If appropriate, play background music.)*

Small Group Activity

Small Group Leader: Let’s talk about the Gospel story in which Jesus met the Samaritan Woman at the Well. If the story were taking place today, where do you think Jesus would meet someone? *(Pause)* Describe the kind of person you think the Samaritan Woman would look like. *(Allow time for a discussion.)*

Small Group Leader: Would anyone like to share the letter you wrote to Jesus in response to the story? *(Allow time for sharing. Remind participants that each person has the choice to decide whether or not to read the letter. No one is to be forced to do so.)*

Small Group Leader: Before we go back to the large group, let’s end our time with a prayer. *(Leader can invite participants to pray spontaneously or use the prayer below.)*

Loving Father, You sent Jesus, to help us learn to love You. Sometimes we feel left out; sometimes we are afraid to speak; and sometimes we lack the courage to love others the way You love us. Give us the living water that Jesus gave to the Samaritan woman so we can experience Your love and share it with others. Amen.

Prayer Service

Buckets of Brokenness and Wells of Living Water

Materials Needed

- Two containers: one that can be used as a bucket and one to be used as a well
- Pencils
- Small blank index cards
- Music (Optional)
- Well Cards – one per participant (Inspirational words that represent the life-giving gifts that Jesus offers. Participants will draw these from the well.)

Sample Well Cards:

Confidence	Faith
Integrity	Nourishment
Joy	Support
Happiness	Love
Peace	Encouragement

Before the prayer begins:

- Place the bucket and the well in the center or front of the room. Put the Well Cards in the Well.
- Distribute pencils and blank paper to each participant

Leader: Let us begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Loving God,

You sent Your son, Jesus, to offer life-giving water to the Samaritan woman. We, too, thirst for water that will renew our hearts. Lift our burdens to that we can run freely to your well of grace. We pray this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Leader: Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman left her water jar and her burdens at the well and ran freely to tell everyone about Jesus.

We have already been Baptized in living water but sometimes we are tired, lonely and afraid. We want to leave our burdens behind and run to tell others of the life that Jesus gives.

Think about some of the things that burden you — things from which you want to be freed. Write a few of your burdens on the index card provided and then fold it in half. No one will read these so be honest with yourself and with God. *(Pause while participants write. When all have finished, continue the prayer.)*

Leader: I invite you to come forward one at a time with your card and drop it into this bucket. Like the Samaritan woman, you can leave the bucket of burdens behind. Then, I invite you to reach into this well and receive a sign of Jesus' life-giving water. *(Leader should go to the bucket and well first and then wait until all have come forward. If appropriate, play reflective music.)*

Leader: Freed from our burdens and strengthened by the well of God's grace, we join our voices in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father...

Leader: We are called to go out and tell everyone about the Gospel message. Look around this room. No one of us is alone. We are strength for each other. Jesus promised His followers peace. As we go forth from this place, let us offer each other as sign of Christ's peace.

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FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

Leader: In this session, we will focus on our spiritual blindness and how it hinders us from living in the light of Christ.

We live in a very visual society. A large majority of us are visual learners. But how much do we really see? Close your eyes for a moment. What color is the shirt of the person sitting next to you? Open your eyes and see if you were correct. Close your eyes again. What is hanging on the walls of this room? Open your eyes and check.

In the story of the Man Born Blind, Jesus heals the man's physical blindness to remind us of our spiritual blindness. Think about how you might be blind to the needs of those around you. How do you need Jesus to heal you?

Ice Breaker

Leader: Find a partner and sit across from that person. (Pause) Take one minute to notice everything you can about the other person. (Pause) Now, both of you turn and face away from your partner. Change three things about your appearance. (Pause) Turn and face your partner and see if you can figure out what has changed.

Large Group Activity

In the Darkness of Our Minds—There is Light

Materials Needed:

- *Scripts of the "Man Born Blind" (John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38) for four student volunteers.*
- *Music (optional)*

Leader: Have you ever had trouble staying awake at Mass? Or have you even been sitting in a class and your eyelids start to feel really heavy, then your head starts to nod to one side and then suddenly you jerk your head and wake up? Most of us are trying to pay attention, but sometimes our minds and our eyelids go in a different direction.

I'm not going to ask you to even try to keep your eyes open for this next part. In fact, I'm going to ask you to CLOSE your eyes. In the darkness of your mind, I invite you to see the light of the Gospel. Take a minute to get into a comfortable position where you can close your eyes AND stay awake. *(Play instrumental music as the readers proclaim the Gospel.)*

John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

Reader A: As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth.
He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva,
and smeared the clay on his eyes,
and said to him,

Reader B: "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" — which means Sent.

Reader A: So he went and washed, and came back able to see.
His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said,

Reader C: "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?"

Reader A: Some said, "It is, "
but others said,

Reader C: "No, he just looks like him."

Reader A: He said,

Reader B: "I am."

Reader A: They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees.
Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a Sabbath.
So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.
He said to them,

Reader D: "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see."

Reader A: So some of the Pharisees said,

Reader C: "This man is not from God,
because he does not keep the Sabbath."

Reader A: But others said,

Reader E: “How can a sinful man do such signs?”

Reader A: And there was a division among them.
So they said to the blind man again,

Reader E: “What do you have to say about him,
since he opened your eyes?”

Reader D: “He is a prophet.”

Reader A: They answered and said to him,

Reader E: “You were born totally in sin,
and are you trying to teach us?”

Reader A: Then they threw him out.
When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out,
he found him and said,

Reader B: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

Reader A: He answered and said,

Reader D: “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”

Reader A: Jesus said to him,

Reader B: “You have seen him, and
the one speaking with you is he.”

Reader A: He said,

Reader D: “I do believe, Lord,”

Reader A: and he worshiped him.

Small Group Activity

Seeing and Serving the Needs of Others

Small Group Leader: The Gospel story in which Jesus heals the man who was born blind could easily be mistaken as a story about the curing of physical blindness. It is really about spiritual healing. Let’s take a few minutes to talk about “spiritual blindness.” *(Leader guides the group discussion with the questions below.)*

- What is spiritual blindness?
- Where do you see it in those around you?

- Are there places in the world today affected by spiritual blindness? Be specific.
- How do you think missionaries cut through the spiritual blindness that prevents people from believing the “Good News”?
- How do you help others come to know the “Good News” of Jesus and experience His love and compassion?
- How are YOU spiritually blind?
- How can we see more clearly?

Prayer

Materials Needed:

- *Large candle Small taper candles with wax guard for each participant*
- *Lighter*
- *Copies of the Intercessions and Closing Prayer for the readers*
- *Music (optional)*

Preparation

- **Light** a large candle and place it in the front of the room or in the center of a circle of chairs.
- **Distribute** the small candles with wax guards to participants.
- **Dim** the lights in the room.
- **Gather** appropriate music (optional).

Leader: Let us begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving God, source of all light.

We are Your people who have walked in darkness.

We long to have our eyes opened to all that You have planned for us.

Give us eyes that see beyond ourselves – to see the needs of others.

Allow us to see where You are calling us to serve in Your name.

We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: When we were Baptized, we received a candle and were instructed to “walk always as children of the light.” Living out the promises of our Baptism requires us to look beyond ourselves so we can serve the needs of others. But often times, we are blind to those needs, or perhaps we simply choose not to look at the struggles of others. When we began our Lenten journey about four weeks ago, we focused on our Baptismal call

to help those in need – to be missionaries. We can do that by praying for others, fasting from distractions and giving money or time to those in need.

Is there someone you know who may be struggling or have particular spiritual or material needs? Do you avoid these people even though you know they may need help? Is there someone for whom you want to be Christ's light? What is preventing you from doing so?

When one particular person comes to mind to whom you will commit to bringing the light of Christ's love, carry your unlit candle to the large candle in this room. Light your candle in honor of the person you just identified and then return to your seat. (Pause until all candles are lit.)

Leader: Mindful of the needs of others and our call to bear Christ's, let us stand bring our prayers to the Lord.

Reader 1: For our world, that the beacon of hope from the heart of Jesus can lead all people. We pray...

Reader 2: For our Church, that we see the work that still needs to be done. We pray...

Reader 1: For those who are still blind to the message of Jesus Christ. We pray...

Reader 2: For all those who suffer in mind, body, and spirit. (Pause for names) We pray...

Reader 1: For the missionaries who are bringing the message of Christ to those in need. We pray....

Reader 2: For ourselves, to never forget that we are all called to be missionary disciples by our prayers, actions and sacrifices. We pray....

Leader: Let us pray for all the intentions we hold in our hearts. (Pause) We pray...

Closing Prayer

(Leader invites two people to come forward to read the closing prayer.)

Leader: In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5:8-14), he challenges people to live in the light of Christ.

Reader 1: Brothers and sisters:
You were once darkness,
But now you are light in the Lord.

Reader 2: Live as children of the light,
For light produces every kind of goodness
And righteousness and truth.
Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Reader 1: Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness;
Rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention
The things done by them in secret;
For everything that becomes visible is light.

Reader 2: Therefore, it says:
Awake, O sleeper,
Arise from the dead
And Christ will give you light.”

Leader: The light is Christ is burning inside of you. As you extinguish your candle,
walk forward as a child of Christ’s light.