We drink from Jesus’ life-giving water.

- In today’s gospel, Jesus asks a Samaritan woman for water. We tell this story, but focus on the Old Testament story in which God helps Moses bring water to God’s people.
- Most young children love the chance to play freely with water. Today’s session invites young children to splash and sip the Good News!
- We continue our exploration of Lent through storytelling, art and games.

**Question of the Week**
What stale habits or taboos would you like to break?

### Core Session
- Getting Started (*pitcher of water, drinking cups, towels*)
- Old Testament Story: Water from a Rock (*pitcher of water, bowl*)
- Creative Drama (*pitcher of water, cups*)
- Praying Together (*cup of water*)

### Enrichment
- Discover the Good News
- Singing Together
- Water Art (*finger paints, sponges and/or watercolor paints in blue and yellow, wide brushes, jars, pan*)
- Exploration Center (*basin or tub, spoons; optional: sponges, sieves, watering cans, other water toys*)
- Lenten Review (*crosses, purple vestments, napkins or ribbons*)
- Info: Young Children and the Lectionary
- Info: Where You’ll Find Everything Else

### Helps for Catechists
- More about Today’s Scriptures
- Reflection
- The Scriptures and the Catechism
- Using Music and Musical Activities

### Scriptures
Exodus 17:1-7
John 4:5-42
Getting Started (5-15 minutes)

Children share water with one another as an introduction to today’s story.

Sit around a table with the children. Distribute cups. Pour a few sips of water for the child to your left and invite him or her to drink. Then pass the pitcher to this child and ask him or her to pour water for the next child. Children continue serving the water around the circle until everyone has been served, including you. As you sip the water, ask:

◆ What does water taste like?
◆ When do you like to drink water most of all?

Old Testament Story (5-10 minutes)

Water from a Rock

Story Focus: Place an empty bowl in front of you. When you reach the point in the story in which water flows from the rock, pour water from the pitcher into the bowl from as high a position as you can without making too much splashing. Regulate the flow so that the sound of splashing water lasts long enough to accompany the end of the story.

God said to God’s people, “Come out of Egypt. Follow the man Moses. He will take you to a new land.”

God’s people followed Moses into the desert—hot, hot, hot. God’s people walked in the desert for days and days—dry, dry, dry.

“Ohhh,” groaned the people, “we’re so thirsty!”

“Ohhh,” moaned the people, “we have to have water!”

“Ohhh,” wailed the people, “we should have stayed in Egypt!”

“No,” said Moses. “God is with us.” And Moses prayed to God. “Help us, God!” Moses prayed to God. “We need water!”

“Take your stick,” said God. “Hit the rock that I will show you.”

Moses walked before the people, took his stick and hit the rock. A stream of water gushed out.

“Ahhh,” whispered the people, “clear, cool water.”

“Ahhh,” sighed the people, sipping and splashing.

“Yes,” said Moses. “God is with us.”

“Thanks be to God,” the people cheered. “God gives water in the desert to God’s people.”

Creative Drama (10-20 minutes)

Children reenact today’s story. Four- and 5-year-olds often invent very complex dialogues and movements in their own invented play, but when we ask them to work together on a theme, they benefit from guidance.

Give each child a paper cup. Ask the children to call for water—join in the clamor yourself—just like the people in today’s story.

Ask a volunteer to be Moses and find water for God’s people. Encourage children to tell Moses how to find water; for example:

◆ Pray to God, Moses.
◆ Hit the rock, Moses.

When Moses pours water for you and the children, be verbal in your enjoyment of the water; for example make gulping sounds or say, “Ahhh, cool, delicious water.”

Praying Together (5 minutes)

Sit in a circle with the children. Hold a cup of water and say:

◆ I want to thank God for water today. Thank you, God, for water.
◆ Now I will pass the cup. When you hold the cup of water, you can say what you want to God today. (Pass the cup of water around the circle; wait for children’s responses.)

Close by praying:

◆ Thank you, God, for giving water to us and to all God’s people. Amen.

Note: If you use At Home with the Good News, distribute this week’s paper to the children before they leave, or e-mail it to their parents after the session.
Discover the Good News (5-10 minutes)

In today’s Discover the Good News you'll find a simple version of today's Old Testament story from the lectionary. You will also find suggestions for a simple water activity children can do with their families. You can practice this activity in the room, too. We suggest gathering a selection of items that can safely be placed in water. Consider natural items (pine cones, feathers, nuts, rocks) and man-made items (spoons, plastic cups, water toys, etc.).

Singing Together (5-10 minutes)

From Singing the Good News, sing together:
◆ “Water from the Rock” (p. 35 of the songbook)

Note: To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Singing the Good News.

This simple pentatonic melody is an especially good choice for preschoolers and kindergartners. They may enjoy singing just the first two phrases over and over:

Water from the rock!
Take your staff and strike it!
Water from the rock!
Won't the people like it!

Water Art (10-30 minutes)

Finger Paints
Briefly review today's story with the children.
◆ God's people were in the desert—hot, hot, hot.
◆ What did God’s people want to drink in the hot desert? (water)
◆ What else can we do with water? (Allow time for several responses.)

Say:
◆ We can use water to make pictures, too.

Help each child use a wet sponge to dampen the surface of a sheet of paper. Invite the child to choose one or two colors of paint to put onto the paper. Children use their hands to spread, scribble and swirl the paint around the papers.

For an interesting variation, you can have all the children work together on one long strip of paper rather than separate sheets. Use only blue paint for this variation.

Watercolors
Briefly review today's story with the children.
◆ God's people were in the desert—hot, hot, hot.
◆ What did God’s people want to drink in the hot desert? (water)
◆ What else can we do with water? (Allow time for several responses.)

Say:
◆ We can use water to make pictures, too.

Ask children to help you prepare the painting area by following these steps:
◆ Wet a waterproof surface (such as a table top) with sponge and water.
◆ Dip a sheet of paper into a pan of water. Lift it out, letting excess water drip back into the pan.
◆ Lay the wet sheet of paper carefully and smoothly on the wet painting surface.
◆ Use the sponge to wipe up excess puddles of water from the surface of the paper.
◆ Set out one or more shades of blue and a shade of yellow.
◆ Encourage children to mix paint on their papers, rather than in the jar.
◆ Have available jars of water and paint rags. After each color, painters rinse their brushes and blot them on the rags before dipping into a new color.

As children touch brushes to the wet paper, color will bloom and spread on the sheets. Invite children to explore what happens as they touch one color with a second, or let “blue play with yellow.”

You can also show children a finished watercolor painting, Hubbell’s Mountain, Cloud and Sea, attached to this document. We recommend you do this after the children paint, to avoid presenting this finished adult piece as a model for the children’s own work. Gather children around the painting Mountain, Cloud and Sea.

Explain that the artist used the same kinds of paints they did: watercolors. Discuss:
◆ What colors can you name in the picture?
◆ Which colors do you like best?
◆ What else could someone paint with these colors?
Exploration Center (10-25 minutes)

Water Play

When we use a material that is offbeat for a room, even an everyday material such as water, many children will want to explore it on their own. Depending on their pre-session experiences with water, some children will be satisfied with only a few minutes of such play; others may want to spend a long stretch of time.

Activity Soundtrack: Play “The Moldau.” (Open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.) This track suggests the sound of trickling waters coming together to form a mighty stream.

Set up a corner of the room as a free-play center. Provide any floor protection or cleanup materials necessary. Invite two children at a time to play at the center. The pitcher and cups will lead some children to reenact aspects of today’s story, so be sure the water is clean and drinkable.

Lenten Review (10-25 minutes)

Children explore water at a free-play center.

As in the sessions for the 1st and 2nd Sundays of Lent, make crosses and purple Lenten cloths (vestments, napkins or ribbons) available for the children’s exploration. Review the Lenten rhyme from those sessions by gathering children in a circle around a plain cross. Slowly recite this action rhyme with the children:

I stand here straight and tall.
(Stand, arms stretched straight over head.)

I open my arms to all.
(Slowly lower arms to cross position.)

I make a cross, as Jesus did,
(Stand with arms outstretched in cross shape.)

For people big and small.
(Keep cross shape as you rise up on tiptoes, then bend knees to stoop.)

On a cross our Jesus died.
(Cross arms over chest.)

But now our Jesus is alive.
(Stand straight, arms stretched wide and overhead.)

I make a cross, with you and you;
(Lower arms to cross shape.)

Jesus loves us. We love, too!
(Join hands with neighbors.)

Young Children and the Lectionary

In the first sessions of Lent, we share with children lectionary stories from the Old Testament that place the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the ancient story of God’s people. In today’s Old Testament story, God pours forth living water from a desert rock for God’s people. In today’s story from the Gospel of John, Jesus asks a woman for water to drink, promising her in return water that will satisfy her thirst forever.

Because children enjoy water so much, you can find many ways of including water in the session. Be practical; choose only a few activities, and remember to allow free-play time.

Where You’ll Find Everything Else

◆ Attached to this Session Plan you will find:
  — Backgrounds and reflections for today’s readings, titled More about Today’s Scriptures.
  — A printable version of today’s Old Testament Story: Water from a Rock, to use in the session or to send home with—or e-mail to—children and their parents.
  — A child-friendly version of this week’s Gospel Story: Woman at the Well.
  — A helpful tip for catechists on Using Creative Drama in faith formation.
  — Hubbell’s Mountain, Cloud and Sea, to be used in today’s second Water Art activity.
  — A family paper, At Home with the Good News, to print and distribute or to e-mail to families.

◆ Open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Seasonal Articles to find:
  — Information on Spring-A’s Models of the Faith.
  — An article for catechists and/or families on exploring Lenten Disciplines.
  — More information on The Gospel of John, suitable for catechists and/or families.
  — An article exploring Using Music and Musical Activities in the classroom.
  — The Introduction for Preschool/Kindergarten for Living the Good News.
More about Today’s Scriptures

Today’s readings deepen our understanding of the image of Jesus as thirst-quenching, life-giving water. In Exodus, despite the Israelites’ quarreling and complaining, God gives the people fresh water from a rock. To the Romans, Paul characterizes the new life that is now ours in Christ. In the gospel, Jesus offers living water to a Samaritan woman.

Exodus 17:3-7

This is the second story about thirst and water in Exodus (see 15:22-27). The geographical differences in the accounts led to the later rabbinical story that the miraculous rock, source of providential water, followed the Israelites in their wandering. Paul would later identify this rock with Christ.

For people living in an arid land, thirst was a powerful metaphor for the human need for God. Moses now uses the staff that made the Nile foul to bring forth clean water. Israel’s murmuring is a constant feature of the Exodus narratives. This incident at Massah (meaning test) and Meribah (meaning quarrel) became a byword for Israel’s faithlessness.

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Paul uses two metaphors to describe God’s redeeming act in Christ: justification, the ending of a legal dispute, and reconciliation, the termination of a state of enmity. Christ’s sacrifice demonstrates God’s justifying and reconciling love for us.

The work of salvation was begun in Christ’s ministry, death and resurrection and is now operative through the Holy Spirit. Justification marks the beginning of this process, salvation marks its future completion. We enter more fully into salvation by participating in Christ’s risen life and by anticipating a share in God’s glory.

John 4:5-42

This is the second discourse in John’s gospel on the meaning of Jesus as the revelation of God. The Samaritans were descendants of the peoples settled by the Assyrians in an area north of Judea after the fall of Israel (721 BCE). After the Jews returned from exile, enmity with the Samaritans developed and persisted because these peoples worshiped other gods as well as Yahweh. Though later the Samaritans worshiped Yahweh alone, they had their own center of worship on Mount Gerizim instead of the Jerusalem temple.

In response to the woman’s questioning, Jesus challenges her to recognize “the gift of God” (v. 10), the “living water” (v. 10) and the Messiah. Water is symbolic of wisdom in the Old Testament. In John, water represents the Holy Spirit and also Jesus’ revelation interpreted by the Spirit.

The woman first recognizes Jesus as the expected prophet-like-Moses, the one in whom the Samaritans centered their messianic expectations. She brings up the dispute over the proper place of worship, but Jesus’ answer focuses on the important issue—the response to God’s gift of life. Jesus’ reply finally invites the woman to acknowledge him as the Messiah.

Reflection

Been there, done that. We’ve all been where Jesus is today: tired from travel, thirsty, stuck where he does not much want to be, in hostile territory. We can almost feel the grit from dusty roads making his eyes water. Yet he turns this unlikely scene into a place and time (high noon is significant) of revelation.

At first, the Samaritan woman recognizes the awkwardness of a Jewish teacher breaking taboos by talking to her, and tries to brush him off. His promise of a remarkable gift intrigues her, though. She has the gift of wonder.

For his part, Jesus has utter disregard for the rules that minimize her on two counts: her gender and her nationality. The bubbling water he offers her symbolizes the full human life God wants for all people, full of hope and dignity.

Then Jesus draws her beyond the question of where to worship, a raging controversy then. More important than the place of worship, he says, is its quality. In one conversation, he frees her from calcifying attitudes and stale thought patterns. No wonder she abandons her water jar, symbol of the old drudgery. She has some good news for her village.
The Scriptures and the Catechism
Just as we need water for our bodily life, so we need faith for our spiritual life (CCC, #153–55). God gives us both. Our faith is a response to God’s gifts. The Samaritan woman shows us how to grow in our faith by responding to Jesus’ surprising presence in our lives (CCC, #74, 543, 1877–78).

Using Music and Musical Activities
by Susanne Meyer
Sadly, music is something that many adults experienced as youngsters, but haven’t kept in their lives in a meaningful way. If we left it up to the media and the only music we heard came from the radio or television, we would be robbing ourselves of a rich and vast musical and spiritual world! Music is something that young and older adults can enjoy in a myriad of ways.

Listening to music can be an intensely personal and introspective time. This intrapersonal activity of listening can be as varied as the many different personalities we come across daily. Lyrics are essentially poetry that is accompanied by music and a stanza written by a songwriter or lyricist may be just the words we needed to hear at a particular time in our lives.

Slow and meditative music can allow us to slow down, check in with ourselves and relax our physical bodies and our minds. We may access emotions or thoughts that are invited to come to the surface. The intensity of these emotions is awesome. Lively, energetic music can wake us up, again, both physically and mentally. Attending a live music concert is something we need to be reminded to do more often.

Music also is an activity to share. Making music is as important to our well-being as laughter!

Personal expression and participation is a joyful experience whether one is singing in the choir, playing in a drum circle or dancing around the room. Music making is for everyone—not just the musically gifted or talented. It is a natural human endeavor that anyone can do-alone or with a group. To open ourselves to thinking in a more musical manner, here are two creative activities that you might wish to use in your sessions:

A Sound Diary
Invite the group members to keep a Sound Diary for a few weeks, with entries that focus on sound awareness. You might suggest:
- Record the sounds you hear in a place that you frequent on a daily basis.
- Listen to and critique a new style of music.
- List which sounds you consider noise and which you consider music…and why.

Diary entries may be drawings, poems, narratives, graphic notation, colors, etc. Keeping these sound journals allows group members to become more in touch with the sounds around them and the natural music in their lives. This is an enjoyable activity that can be done alone or shared by a group.

Music Memory Posters
Distribute a sheet of poster board to each participant and offer these instructions:
- Draw 10 circles on your poster.
- In the first circle list early musical memories or songs you remember having sung to you as a child.
- In the second circle list songs from school or camp or church.
- In the third circle list any musical works that you have performed.
- In the fourth circle list songs you can sing or pieces you can play from memory.
- In the fifth circle name recordings you couldn’t live without.
- In the sixth circle list examples of your least favorite music.
- In the seventh circle list music you’ve heard in the last 24 hours.
- In the eighth circle list music that you have taught to others.
- In the ninth circle list music that intrigues or challenges you.
- In the tenth circle list musical hidden pleasures that others might be surprised to know about.

This is a great intrapersonal activity that brings out some of our deepest memories. It’s an opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with ourselves! If we then share our posters with others we can get to know each other on a deeper and more meaningful level.