



MIDDLER ♦ SESSION THREE

# Jesus Cares for a Samaritan Woman

## SCRIPTURE

John 4:1-42

## BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

*[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking.* 1 Corinthians 13:5

## LESSON FOCUS

God's love is for everyone.

## BIBLE AIMS

During this session, each student may

1. DISCOVER that Jesus showed God's love to a Samaritan woman whom others might have ignored;
2. IDENTIFY situations in which it might be hard to show God's love;
3. ASK God to help him or her show God's love to people whom others may not care about;
4. PRAY to become a member of God's family, as the Holy Spirit leads.

## TEACHER'S DEVOTIONAL

The car that just cut you off has a bumper sticker that reads, "It's all about ME!" More than ever, people seem to accept rude, selfish behavior as acceptable, perhaps even desirable. The current thinking seems to hold that it's okay to show love to others, but the most important thing is to love yourself first.

What does authentic love, God's love, teach us about dealing with others? Considering another person first—regardless of power, popularity or position—expresses love free from rudeness and self-seeking. God's love for us is the only real basis for our personal dignity or worth. Contrast Jesus' words to the outcast, derided Samaritan woman with the ways pagan cultures treat their weak, poor or outcast. Only God's love and grace give us the ability to show others kind behavior, gracious words and unselfish deeds.

Compassion and consideration for others is a natural outgrowth of receiving God's unconditional love in Christ. Only forgiven hearts produce genuinely loving actions and attitudes. When we show grace to another, instead of being rude or self-seeking, our actions acknowledge that we have received God's grace. It also gives both example and permission to the forgiven one to show grace to another. A worldwide revolution in true love begins right here, right now—as we show God's love to the children in our classes, our VBS coworkers and the other people we encounter in our everyday lives.



# 1. Set the Story (5-10 minutes)

If you only have 25 minutes for this center, omit Set the Story.

## Materials Checklist

- ◆ SonTreasure Island CD and player

### For each student—

- ◆ toothpick
- ◆ 1 Lifesavers® candy

## OPTION A: LIFESAVER PASS

**PROCEDURE:** Play “God’s Love Is for You” from CD. Give each student a toothpick. Students form a circle and use toothpicks to pass a Lifesavers® candy around the circle. Give the last student holding the candy when the music stops another candy to eat. He or she then starts the next round with the original candy. Continue until each student receives a candy, or if time is limited, offer a candy to anyone who has not received one.

**KEY CONVERSATION:** Making sure that everyone gets a treat is a way to show God’s love. What are some other ways to show God’s love? (Be kind and patient. Tell them God loves them. Help them.) These are all good ways to show God’s love. Now that we know HOW to show God’s love, it’s important to know WHO we can show God’s love to. It’s easy to show love and care to people we love—like members of our families and friends—but God’s love is for EVERYONE—even people others don’t care about.



## OPTION B: FISH TOSS

**PREPARATION:** Photocopy a set of Fish Cards onto card stock for each team of three or four students. Cut out cards. To weight cards, place a large paper clip at the top of each card. Keep cards in sets. Place containers at one end of playing area, several feet apart. Make a masking-tape line approximately 4 feet (1.2 m) in front of each container.

**PROCEDURE:** Each team of three or four members forms a line behind a masking-tape line. Give a set of Fish Cards to the first student in each line. At your signal, students try to toss the cards into their team's container. When a student has tossed all of the cards, he or she retrieves the cards that did not end up in container, hands them to the next student in line and goes to the end of the line. Teams continue until all of their cards are in their container.

Team members then race to put the verse cards in order and read the verse aloud. Repeat game as time permits.

### TABLE-TOP ALTERNATIVE:

For each team of four, make four copies of Fish Cards, cut apart and mix cards together. Teams play a game like "Go Fish," asking for cards by the words on the cards.

**KEY CONVERSATION:** We had to take turns while playing our game. What is hard about waiting to take a turn? Volunteers respond. Sometimes we get so excited it's hard to wait! Or sometimes we think we can do a better job than someone else and so we want to take over and do it for him or her. But our verse today says that love is not rude or self-seeking. What do you think "self-seeking" means? Letting other people take their turn is the opposite of being self-seeking! Someone who is not self-seeking takes time to show God's love to others, no matter who they are and no matter what the situation is.

### Materials Checklist

- ◆ Fish Cards (p. 44)
- ◆ card stock
- ◆ scissors or paper cutter
- ◆ large paper clips
- ◆ masking tape
- ◆ measuring stick

#### For each team of 3 or 4 students—

- ◆ container (treasure chest, cardboard box, wastebasket, etc.)





## 2. Tell the Story (10 minutes)

### Materials Checklist

- ◆ Session 3 Bible Story Poster from Elementary Teaching Resources

- ◆ Post-it Notes

For each student and teacher—

- ◆ Bible

**PREPARATION:** Display the Session 3 Bible Story Poster. Use Post-it Notes to mark John 4 in students' Bibles.

**STORYTELLING TIP:** Use the conversation suggested in the Introduction and Conclusion. The question in the Introduction is designed to hook students' attention by relating the story to something with which each student can personally relate. The Conclusion sums up the story action and applies it to the focus for each session as well as the life of each student.

## JESUS CARES FOR A SAMARITAN WOMAN John 4:1-42

### Introduction

**Sometimes people can surprise us.** (Share an example of a time when someone said or did something kind that you didn't expect.) **Have you ever thought you knew exactly what someone would say or do, but then they said or did something completely different?** Volunteers respond. **Today we will hear about a woman who was surprised by something Jesus said and did.**

### A Sunny Day

Jesus and His friends traveled many places to tell people about God's love. One day, the sun was shining brightly as Jesus and His friends walked on a road through the country of Samaria. Now most Jewish people in Jesus' time would not go NEAR Samaria. You see, Jews and Samaritans had disliked each other for HUNDREDS of years. But that didn't stop Jesus from visiting Samaria. He had important work to do!

It was around noon. Jesus and His friends were tired of walking and were very hot. When they came to a town, Jesus rested by the well just outside of town. **Read John 4:8 to find out where Jesus' friends went.**

### A Thirsty Woman

At that time, most water came from wells dug deep into the ground, so travelers usually carried small buckets to lower into wells to get water. The disciples must have taken the bucket with them, because Jesus had no way to get water.

Pretty soon, a woman came toward Him carrying a big jar to get water. When she set down her jar, Jesus asked her for a drink of water. The woman was VERY surprised! She wondered why Jesus talked to her AT ALL. You see, in Bible times, a man and a woman did not speak to each other if they met on the street. And Jews and Samaritans usually NEVER talked to each other!

### A Living Water

**Read John 4:10 to find out what Jesus said to the woman. How do you think the woman felt when Jesus spoke to her?** The woman didn't understand. "How can You give me water?" she asked. "You don't have a bucket or a rope. And this well is VERY deep. Where would You get this living water?"



“Anyone who drinks water from this well will become thirsty again,” Jesus said. “But whoever drinks the water I give will NEVER be thirsty again. The water I give is like a flowing stream inside a person. It will last forever!”

The woman thought about what Jesus said. “Give me some of this water!” she said. “Then I won’t have to come to the well every day for water.” She thought Jesus was talking about water she could drink. She didn’t understand that Jesus meant He could give her life from God that would last forever.

Then the woman asked Jesus some questions about why the Samaritans worshiped God in one place and why the Jews worshiped God in another place. Jesus told her that the place where people worshiped was not as important as what was in their minds and hearts as they worshiped. He said God wants people to worship Him with their whole hearts, not just pretend to be worshiping Him.

Then Jesus did something REALLY surprising. He told her some things about her that a stranger would never know. He said He knew about her sins—the wrong things she had done. Back then, most people wouldn’t have even spoken to a woman who had done so many wrong things. But even though Jesus knew about them, He still took the time to talk to her.

The woman was amazed! Even though she had just met Him, Jesus knew EVERYTHING about her! She said, “I know that when the Savior God promised comes, He will tell us everything.”

**Read John 4:26 to see how Jesus answered the woman.** That was exciting news that people had been waiting hundreds and hundreds of years to hear. And Jesus had told HER, this Samaritan woman, that He was the Savior God had promised to send!

The woman was SO excited that she left her water jug at the well and hurried back to town. “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!” the woman told the people in the town. “Could He be the Savior?” she asked. **What do you think the people did?**

People from the town followed the woman to Jesus. If the Savior had come, they wanted to see Him! Many of them believed that Jesus was the Savior because the woman told them about the things Jesus had done and said! This town in Samaria would never be the same—and it all started because Jesus showed God’s love to a woman most people would have expected Him to ignore.

## Conclusion

**Jesus cared for the Samaritan woman, even though the people in her own town probably avoided her! She was so happy that Jesus accepted her and cared enough to talk with her that she wanted to tell EVERYONE about Him. Showing God’s love to all people, even those others don’t care about, is like giving them a special treasure.**



**Because Jesus cares for us so much, He wants all of us to believe He is the Savior, just as the people in our story did. When we believe that Jesus is God’s Son, we can become members of God’s family.** Invite children interested in knowing more about becoming members of God’s family to talk with you or another teacher after class. (See “Leading a Child to Christ,” p. 8.)

## Bible Storytelling Option

Divide class into three groups. Assign each group a location in the room and an element of the Bible-story setting: the well, the road or the town.

Groups sit together, arranging themselves to form the object or place they were assigned. (Students forming the well clasp hands and stand in a circle. Students forming the road sit in parallel lines. Students forming the town sit in pairs with arms over shoulders to form buildings.) As you tell the story, move from one area to the next, as people in the story travel from place to place.

### 3. Apply the Story (10-15 minutes)

#### Materials Checklist

◆ colored markers

For each student—

◆ Session 3 Treasure Guide page

Optional—

◆ SonTreasure Gem Stickers

#### BIBLE STORY REVIEW

To review Bible story, students complete “Jesus Cares for a Samaritan Woman” activity on Session 3 page. **What people did the Jews usually not talk to?** (Samaritans.) **Who else didn’t like the woman?** (The people of the town.) **Why do you think Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman?** (He cared about her and wanted her to know that He could help her.) **What did the woman tell the townspeople?** (That Jesus was the Savior. That He knew everything about her.) **Jesus took time to talk to the woman at the well. His love and care meant so much to her that she told the townspeople all about Him. She and many other people came to believe that Jesus is God’s Son—the promised Savior!**

Indicate the Daily Treasure logo on the page. **Today’s Daily Treasure reminds us that “God’s Love Is Caring.” That doesn’t just mean caring about people that others like or people who can help us—God’s love means caring about everyone!**

#### MEMORY VERSE/APPLICATION

Students turn Session 3 page over. Point to individual students who each say one word of the verse. (Optional: Give each student a SonTreasure Gem Sticker to place next to the memory verse.) **What does our verse mean when it talks about being “self-seeking”?** (Putting yourself first. Caring about yourself more than others. Always trying to get what you want for yourself.) **When we care for others, we put them before ourselves. What are some ways to put others first?** (Letting someone else go first at the computer. Giving a sister the bigger slice of cake. Holding the door open for someone else to walk through.)

Students complete “Fishy Situations” activity. **It’s easy to show God’s love to others who are our friends and who are nice to us. But it isn’t ALWAYS easy to show God’s love to everyone. God will always help us show His love and care to others, even to people you and your friends may not like. All we have to do is ask Him.**

#### PRAYER

**Some people are easier to show God’s love to than others. It can be hard to show love to someone who’s been mean to us or someone different from us or someone our friends don’t like. Tell an age-appropriate example of a time when it was difficult for you to show God’s love to someone. The more we learn about God’s love, the easier it is to show His love to others.** Close in prayer, asking God to help us find ways to show His love to everyone.

