

REDEEMER

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- If your group is six or fewer: cloth strips for tying and a small puzzle (for the ice breaker)
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: TIED UP IN KNOTS

FOR GROUPS OF SIX OR FEWER: Have your group stand facing each other and hold out their arms. Tie each person’s wrist to the wrist of their neighbour so that all are tied together with both wrists. Next, have them put together a small puzzle without untying themselves. You may choose to set up the puzzle elsewhere in the room so that they first have to maneuver themselves around the puzzle.

(TO ALLOW FOR TIME CONSTRAINTS, CHOOSE A PUZZLE THAT IS 50 PIECES OR LESS).

FOR GROUPS OF SEVEN OR MORE: (If you have a very large group, break the group into smaller groups of 7-12). Have your group stand facing each other in a tight circle. Everyone reaches forward their left hand and grasps hands with someone across from them. Next everyone does the same with their right hand. Without letting go of hands, the group must untangle itself, for example by stepping over and under other arms till everyone is standing in a circle (shifting the grip is allowed).

(FOR AN ADDED CHALLENGE, YOU MAY CHOOSE TO HAVE YOUR GROUP UNTANGLE WITHOUT SPEAKING).

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: LOVE, IN THE FACE OF A MESS

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- (If you did the opening activity) Did you get cross with one another during the opening exercise? Did someone take charge in a way that helped the group to accomplish its task?
- Think about the people in your own life who love you the most. What are the things they say or do that tell you that you are loved?
- How do they respond when you hurt or disappoint them?
- Have you ever thought of yourself as God’s “beloved”?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Life, like the opening exercise, can be filled with challenges and obstacles. Sometimes the way we relate to one another can make a difficult situation worse. And sometimes we need help to get ourselves out of the messes we’ve made.*

REDEEMER

- *Note: Although we all live with broken human relationships, hopefully your teens have someone in their lives that they feel loved by. Today's discussion may generate some sad reflections, but the remainder of the lesson will point us towards the perfect, restorative love that Jesus has for us.*
- *There are so many ways that we can experience the love of others. For example, we may feel especially loved when someone reaches out to comfort us, when they speak words of appreciation, when they spend time with us or make sacrifices for us, when they listen to what we are saying, when they give us something thoughtful, or when they forgive us. See what your teens come up with!*
- *Even the kindest and most loving people likely become angry when we hurt or disappoint them. Sometimes, even though they love us, they may withdraw from us or lash out at us, become resentful or sullen. Note, if the responses to this question reveal an area of concern (such as violence in a relationship), take a moment to pray, and recognize that you may need to follow up further.*
- *Feel free to leave this last question hanging, as the remainder of the lesson picks up that thread.*

THE LESSON: JOHN 4

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world: have mercy upon us.

What are we saying when we give Jesus the title “Redeemer”?

The concept of redemption is present from the very beginning of scripture, but it gets a thorough introduction in the laws laid out in the book of Leviticus. Redemption was a built-in rescue clause for situations and people who got off-track or lost. For example, we read: “If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you or to a member of the stranger’s clan, then after he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brothers may redeem him” (25:47-48).

But scripture does something really interesting with this word. It doesn’t just remain a legal term used to discuss the recovery of slaves or property. It becomes an integral part of the language used to describe God’s love-relationship with his people. The book of the prophet Isaiah says this: “your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer” (54:5). Over and over again, the people of Israel needed – and experienced – God’s rescue.

God’s role as our Redeemer reaches its culmination in Jesus. Jesus was born into this world, lived and died “to give his life as a ransom” (Mark 10:45) so that we could have “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Ephesians 1:7). The price he paid for us was not in money, but in his own blood. All of this tells us that we are *beloved*. No matter how much of a mess we have gotten ourselves into, Jesus considers us of such value that he gave himself up to restore us to a loving and right relationship with himself.

Refer to John 4:5-30.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: JOHN 4:1-42.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What do we know about the woman that Jesus met at the well?
- How do you think she felt during this conversation? (How would you have felt if you were her?)
- What does this passage tell us about what Jesus is like?

REDEEMER

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- We know that the woman was a Samaritan, part of a nation of half-Jew-half-Gentiles, who followed a tainted version of the faith. Proper Jews of that time would have avoided her on those grounds alone, which is one reason why Jesus' disciples were surprised to find him speaking with her. We also know that she was a woman with a messy and sinful past and present, something that likely made her an object of contempt in her community.
- The woman seems to be surprised, intrigued, ashamed, and then overjoyed. She may not have understood all that Jesus said to her, but she understood that she was not being shunned or condemned, but rather invited into something amazing that God was doing – and she wanted to share that news with everyone she knew.
- Jesus wants to enter into relationship with us no matter where we come from or how messed up our situation is. He is patient and kind. However, that doesn't mean he's not going to confront us with the sin in our life! He wants us to be honest with him. And he wants to give us something that he knows we need and that only he can offer – eternal life.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer).)

Imagine yourself at the well with Jesus. Consider for a few moments that he knows and is able to itemize everything you have ever done: all of the sins, shame and messiness of your past and present. In spite of this, he is here with you, the Redeemer, who loves you and has paid the price to restore you. You are his beloved. Spend some time meditating on the phrase: "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (Song of Solomon 7:10).

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 226)

CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

REDEEMER

JOHN 4: **AT THE WELL WITH JESUS**

⁵So Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him...