

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Third Sunday of Lent, Year A
8 March 2026
John 4:5-15,19-26,39-42

Catechist Background

During the Assyrian occupation most of the inhabitants of Israel were carried off into exile in Babylon. Those left behind mingled with people brought in from other places by the Assyrians, and from then the remaining Jews were known as 'Samaritans'. When the Jews returned to Israel after the Exile they refused the Samaritans' help in building the Second Temple of Jerusalem. So, in the 4th century BC, the Samaritans built their own temple in Nablus, at the foot of Mt Gerizim, in the present-day West Bank. Henceforth, the Jews considered the Samaritans as foreigners, racially impure and religiously compromised, and they would detour around Samaria to avoid contact with Samaritans. Jesus however took the direct route and came to Sychar, near Jacob's Well. The woman he met there was stunned that a Jew asked her for a drink, as most Jews thought such an interaction with her (a Samaritan) would contaminate them.

Setting the Scene

- Place a bowl of water at your focal point, ready for later.
- It might help to have a poster/picture to help the children visualise a very dry, desert land.
- Ask the children:
 - Have you ever been really thirsty or without water for some reason?
 - Have you seen stories on the news about floods?
- Remind them:
 - that even when there is water everywhere people still worry about having enough safe drinking water, as people can get very sick if they drink dirty water;
 - how important water is. We need it to live (drink, wash, cook)
 - that animals and plants need water too (and we need animals and plants too);
 - This is why whenever we hear of people who need water, we try to help them.

We Say Sorry

Before listening to the Scriptures which in which Jesus asked a woman to help him, let us remember that God has always cared for us.

Leader: Lord, by water and the Spirit you give us new life,

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Christ, by the cross you brought pardon and hope,

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: Lord, by your death you brought peace and forgiveness,

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

We Pray (1)

God, help us to listen to your word so that we may see your glory. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Last week we heard about Jesus being changed. Today we hear how He changed a woman's life.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 4:5-15,19-26,39-42

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

Explain to the children that the Jews:

- saw the Samaritans as foreigners who were not like them and did not worship God properly;

- avoided the Samaritans; [*They may know this from the parable of the Good Samaritan*];
- By speaking to a Samaritan woman, Jesus was doing something very unexpectedly.

Then ask the children to picture the Gospel reading:

- what might Jesus look like? (Imagine Jesus, hot and tired, sitting down to rest at the well);
- What did the woman use to collect water? (maybe a bucket, pail, urn or pot)
- What did Jesus say to her? ("Give me a drink")
- What did she answer? Did she understand what Jesus meant? (She was confused!)
- What kind of water was the woman talking about? (normal water from the well)
- What did Jesus mean by living water? (eternal food, love and contact from/with God);

Can you think of something important which we do with water in Church which often involves babies and young children? (Baptism)

- When a person is baptised, they are then wrapped in white blanket or clothes. The colour white is important here because it is the colour which represents Jesus.
- So, when a baptised person is wrapped in white it shows they have been wrapped in Jesus.
- Jesus is the "living water" that feed us and brings us closer to God;
- We were baptised in this special "living water" too and now we have a new life in Jesus.

Response

Ask: when were you baptised? (*Most of them will have been baptised as babies; but some may have been older and might remember it. Some may have seen another child being baptised*).

- Explain that the holy water at the entrance to the church is from the font used in baptism.
- When we make the Sign of the Cross with it we remind ourselves that we are baptised.

Invite them to come to the bowl of water and make the Sign of the Cross with water.

Remind them afterwards of the words of the Sign of the Cross and say it aloud with them: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God, who created the water we need to live in the world?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, who gives us living water, the new life of baptism?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to share this 'living water' with others?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'You gave to the Samaritan woman all she needed, and so we pray...'

Leader: For the Church, its leaders, teachers and all the baptised, that we will hear your word and follow it in our lives. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For all people, that your love will bring healing and hope to all. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For all those who are sick and those who have died, that they find their home with you. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: In the stillness of our hearts, let us speak to God, who listens to us and loves us ... [*keep a time of silence*]... We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**