

TRUSTING THE WORDS OF JESUS

John 4:5-42 // Jesus and the Woman at the Well

This service is centered on John 4:5-42, when Jesus encounters the woman at the well. This Gospel reading corresponds to the third Sunday in Lent. Here are some materials to help you create your own worship service.

MAIN THEME: *How do we place our trust in Jesus?*

CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

- 🎵 **Your Love is Amazing / All Who Are Thirsty** [Key of F]
Text and Music: Brenton Brown, Glenn Robertson
Copyright 1998 Kingsways' Thank You Music

- 🎵 **Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)** [Key of E]
Text and Music: Joel Houston, Matt Crocker, Salomon Lighthelm
Copyright 2012 Hillsong Music Publishing (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

- 🎵 **'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus** [Key of F]
Text: Louisa M.R. Stead
Music: TRUST IN JESUS
Public Domain

- 🎵 **Your Grace Finds Me** [Key of A/Bb]
Text and Music: Matt Redman, Jonas Myrin
© 2013 Said And Done Music // SHOUT! Music Publishing // sixsteps Music // Thankyou Music // worshiptogether.com songs.

CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

To call the people to worship, you might begin the service with a rendition of Isaiah 55 like the one below. Consider having three individuals placed at different stations in the room read in this way:

- 1: *All who are thirsty, come to the water.*
- 2: *Come, all who are weary;*
- 3: *Come, all who yearn for forgiveness.*
- 1: *The Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ has washed over us,*
- 2: *And our gracious and holy God beckons and blessed us.*
- 3: *Drink deeply of these living waters.*

Reprinted by permission from *The Worship Sourcebook*, © 2004, CRC Publications.

Check out “Spoken Word - Woman at the Well” at [www.worshiphousemedia.com] from the perspective of the woman at the well. Purchase, download, and show this in worship, or use it as inspiration to create a monologue of your own, especially if you have a talented actor or actress in your midst.

FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

This week's scripture readings rely heavily on imagery of water. Think about creating and/or displaying art that captures the idea of water. Using brilliant blues might be a little unexpected during the season of Lent, but it might create an oasis of color, in the same way that Living Water creates a nourishing oasis in our dry and dusty lives.

We really like Mario Sironi's painting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Consider showing it while you read the scripture about Jesus' encounter with this woman.



LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

Jesus had a conversation with a new person. Ask worshipers to have a conversation with someone who they normally wouldn't have a conversation.



Are you up for something more substantial? Some people can't trust Jesus as the Living Water because they don't have access to clean drinking water themselves. This week, consider praying for and sponsoring an organization such as Watering Malawi, which advocates for long-term solutions to extreme poverty and hunger through access to clean water, irrigation, and sanitation systems.

MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPING

Add some symbolism of water this week. It might be a glass bowl of water, it might be jars or pots filled with water, or it might not be physical. Consider purchasing, downloading, and playing a loop of running water throughout the service [www.soundsnap.com] [Just be sure worshipers have, you know, used the restroom before worship begins.]

WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

Use this guided prayer activity (below) that we have created. This guided prayer experience invites worshipers to place themselves a position like the Woman at the Well. It is loosely based on John 4 and Psalm 23. In this prayer experience, worshipers will imagine that they are walking with Jesus. They will find themselves trying to get ahead of Jesus, go in a different direction, or not trusting the words and way of Jesus. Each time they do, Jesus catches up to them, takes their hand, and leads them to a new place.

Walking with Jesus

A Guided Prayer Activity

Overview

This guided prayer experience invites worshipers to place themselves a position like the Woman at the Well. It is loosely based on John 4 and Psalm 23. In this prayer experience, worshipers will imagine that they are walking with God. They will find themselves trying to get ahead of God, go in a different direction, or not trusting God's way. Each time they do, God catches up to them, takes their

hand, and leads them to a new place. The asterisk (*) in the script indicates points where the leader should pause to allow time for worshipers to imagine.

Materials Needed

- Writing utensil
- Paper or index card
- Leader to give instructions

Instructions (to be given by leader)

Tonight, we are going to spend time in prayer together. For our prayer time, you will need paper and a pen or pencil. Take these out now. ***

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

Allow yourself to get into a comfortable position. Quietly, take a few deep breaths and let yourself be still. ** You might even want to close your eyes for a moment. **

As you sit in these quiet moments, begin to imagine that it is the end of the day. You are walking on a shady path lined with trees, headed home. * It's a nice day outside, and the sun is shining through the trees. * As you continue your journey home, imagine that Jesus comes alongside you and begins to walk and talk with you. * You are a little astonished, but he tells you not to worry but to keep walking. As you walk, you enjoy nice conversation – about the weather, the day, and the place where you are going. ** You tell him you are enjoying the walk home and the time to think to yourself. * As you walk and talk, you notice that Jesus has caused you to walk at a slower pace than you were walking before he joined you. * You begin to speed up, and before you know it, you've gotten ahead of Jesus. He's not with you anymore. * You look back, and you see him running to catch up. When he catches you, he asks why you were walking so fast and why you left him behind. You shrug your shoulders, a little embarrassed. * He says not to worry, then he takes you by the hand and leads you down a path you had missed because you were walking so fast. **

At the end of that path is a small stream with rocks to sit on. He invites you to sit on a rock and rest and enjoy the still waters. * As you sit on your rock, Jesus asks you why it was so easy for you to run ahead on your own rather than walk with him. ** You begin to think about the answer to his question, and you become aware of different times in your life when you have run ahead on your own – away from the direction Jesus was walking. ** When was a time that you ran ahead in life – all by yourself – without Jesus? ** What happened? ** And, what drew you back to Jesus? ** On your paper, write about a time that you ran ahead of Jesus.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

After thinking for a while, you and Jesus get up and begin to walk together again. * As you walk, you come to a fork in the path and Jesus begins to walk to the right, but you really want to go left. So, you go left and you begin to walk faster. As you get farther down the path, it gets dark and cold, and the path ends. * Nothing is left but a dark forest. * You hear strange noises, and it is hard for you to see. You become nervous and a little frightened, and you aren't sure what to do. ** Then you hear the familiar voice of Jesus saying your name. * Jesus tells you to turn around and walk to him. * You follow his instructions, and he leads you out of that dark place and takes you back to the path you should have stayed on all along. ** As you continue walking, you begin to think about those times in your life when you have been in a seemingly dark and scary place but somehow Jesus has guided you

back on the right path. ** When was a time in your life that you were in a dark place? ** Did you make it out? ** How? ** Write about it on your paper.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

The day is nearing an end, and you are almost back home. You are walking on the path that you take home each day, but this time, Jesus says he wants to show you a new way. * He says the new way isn't necessarily shorter or easier, but he says it is a more beautiful walk. * You argue with him a little bit – you want to take the way you had originally planned, and you aren't interested in his way right now. Eventually, he convinces you to take it. So, you do. ** Along this path, you find that the trees get smaller and you can see the sunset in the distance. You find some fruits and berries along with colorful flowers, all of which are beautiful in the light of the setting sun. * This new path is refreshing to you, and you find yourself slowing down to enjoy it more. * You find yourself glad that you were willing to trust Jesus on this new road. * You remind yourself that though trusting Jesus doesn't always come easily, it is often worth the effort. * Can you remember a time in your life when you had difficulty trusting God? ** When was it? ** Did you trust God or did you decide not to trust, and what was the result? ** Write about that on your paper.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

Pray: God, thank you that you consistently call us back home to you. Even when we try to run ahead on our own, take a way that is not your way, or have problems trusting you, you always meet us where we are with arms wide open. You receive us, and you lead us in your way. Give us the strength, courage, and wisdom to trust you more than we trust ourselves. Amen.

You can also use this prayer by John Van da Meer.

*In the dry wildernesses of our lives,
in the days of heat and thirst,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.*

*When we begin to doubt your presence,
and grumble that your love is unreliable,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.*

*When life's regrets and the bad choices we have made
leave us feeling excluded and unworthy,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.*

*When circumstances, or the inhumanity of others,
have left us alone and wounded,
you offer us living water,
Thank you, gracious and generous God.*

*We thank you and praise you, O God,
that how ever we may thirst,
what ever we may need to satisfy our souls,*

*you offer it freely and abundantly in Christ;
So we drink deep of the living water
and, as we draw from your wells,
we seek to pass the cup to others
who, like us, are thirsty for your grace.
Amen.*

SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Trusting the Words of Jesus // John 4:5-42 // Jesus and the Woman at the Well

WELCOME

Say hi to other worshipers and welcome them in the name of Christ

WHAT IS LENT?

If Lent isn't common to your tradition, you might explain it at the end of the welcome and the beginning of worship. End the welcome with this call to worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

[3 readers from different points around the room]

- 1: All who are thirsty, come to the water.
- 2: Come, all who are weary;
- 3: Come, all who yearn for forgiveness.

- 1: The Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ has washed over us,
- 2: And our gracious and holy God beckons and blessed us.
- 3: Drink deeply of these living waters.

SONGS OF PRAISE

*Your Love Is Amazing
All Who are Thirsty*

PRAYER OF PRAISE

SONG OF GRACE

Your Grace Finds Me

SPOKEN MEDITATION

“Woman at the Well” by Student Life at [\[www.worshiphousemedia.com\]](http://www.worshiphousemedia.com) from the perspective of the woman at the well.

SONG OF TRUST

Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: In the dry wildernesses of our lives,

in the days of heat and thirst, you offer us living water,

All: **Thank you, gracious and generous God.**

One: When we begin to doubt your presence, and grumble that your love is unreliable, you offer us living water,

All: **Thank you, gracious and generous God.**

One: When life's regrets and the bad choices we have made leave us feeling excluded and unworthy, you offer us living water,

All: **Thank you, gracious and generous God.**

One: When circumstances, or the inhumanity of others, have left us alone and wounded, you offer us living water,

All: Thank you, gracious and generous God.

One: We thank you and praise you, O God, that how ever we may thirst, what ever we may need to satisfy our souls, you offer it freely and abundantly in Christ;

All: **So we drink deep of the living water and, as we draw from your wells, we seek to pass the cup to others who, like us, are thirsty for your grace. Amen.**

VISUAL MEDITATION

John 4:5-42 (or a shorter version of this passage)
Project an image like the one by Mario Sironi of Jesus and the Woman at the Well as the scripture is read.

MESSAGE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Guided Prayer // “Walking with Jesus”

Instructions to be given by leader:

Tonight, we are going to spend time in prayer together. For our prayer time, you will need paper and a pen or pencil. Take these out now. ***

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

Allow yourself to get into a comfortable position.

Quietly, take a few deep breaths and let yourself be still. ** You might even want to close your eyes for a moment. **

As you sit in these quiet moments, begin to imagine that it is the end of the day. You are walking on a shady path lined with trees, headed home. * It's a nice day outside, and the sun is shining through the trees. * As you continue your journey home, imagine that Jesus comes alongside you and begins to walk and talk with you. * You are a little astonished, but he tells you not to worry but to keep walking. As you walk, you enjoy nice conversation – about the weather, the day, and the place where you are going. ** You tell him you are enjoying the walk home and the time to think to yourself. *

As you walk and talk, you notice that Jesus has caused you to walk at a slower pace than you were walking before he joined you. * You begin to speed up, and before you know it, you've gotten ahead of Jesus. He's not with you anymore. * You look back, and you see him running to catch up. When he catches you, he asks why you were walking so fast and why you left him behind. You shrug your shoulders, a little embarrassed. * He says not to worry, then he takes you by the hand and leads you down a path you had missed because you were walking so fast. **

At the end of that path is a small stream with rocks to sit on. He invites you to sit on a rock and rest and enjoy the still waters. * As you sit on your rock, Jesus asks you why it was so easy for you to run ahead on your own rather than walk with him. ** You begin to think about the answer to his question, and you become aware of different times in your life when you have run ahead on your own – away from the direction Jesus was walking. ** When was a time that you ran ahead in life – all by yourself – without Jesus? ** What happened? ** And, what drew you back to Jesus? ** On your paper, write about a time that you ran ahead of Jesus.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

After thinking for a while, you and Jesus get up and begin to walk together again. * As you walk, you

come to a fork in the path and Jesus begins to walk to the right, but you really want to go left. So, you go left and you begin to walk faster. As you get farther down the path, it gets dark and cold, and the path ends. * Nothing is left but a dark forest. * You hear strange noises, and it is hard for you to see. You become nervous and a little frightened, and you aren't sure what to do. ** Then you hear the familiar voice of Jesus saying your name. * Jesus tells you to turn around and walk to him. * You follow his instructions, and he leads you out of that dark place and takes you back to the path you should have stayed on all along. ** As you continue walking, you begin to think about those times in your life when you have been in a seemingly dark and scary place but somehow Jesus has guided you back on the right path. ** When was a time in your life that you were in a dark place? ** Did you make it out? ** How? ** Write about it on your paper.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

The day is nearing an end, and you are almost back home. You are walking on the path that you take home each day, but this time, Jesus says he wants to show you a new way. * He says the new way isn't necessarily shorter or easier, but he says it is a more beautiful walk. * You argue with him a little bit – you want to take the way you had originally planned, and you aren't interested in his way right now. Eventually, he convinces you to take it. So, you do. ** Along this path, you find that the trees get smaller and you can see the sunset in the distance. You find some fruits and berries along with colorful flowers, all of which are beautiful in the light of the setting sun. * This new path is refreshing to you, and you find yourself slowing down to enjoy it more. * You find yourself glad that you were willing to trust Jesus on this new road. * You remind yourself that though trusting Jesus doesn't always come easily, it is often worth the effort. * Can you remember a time in your life when you had difficulty trusting God? ** When was it? ** Did you trust God or did you decide not to trust, and what was the result? ** Write about that on your paper.

[Allow time for worshippers to complete this task]

Pray: God, thank you that you consistently call us

back home to you. Even when we try to run ahead on our own, take a way that is not your way, or have problems trusting you, you always meet us where we are with arms wide open. You receive us, and you lead us in your way. Give us the strength, courage, and wisdom to trust you more than we trust ourselves. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Your Grace Finds Me

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

One: Go in peace to love and serve.

All: **With God's help, we will.**