

The Woman at the Well

John 4:1-42 (The Message)

Adapted for this Godly Play-style story by
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Inspired by: <https://www.lizcurtishiggs.com/bad-girls-of-the-bible-the-woman-at-the-well/>



Materials:

- Tan or Brown underlay (can use the one from Godly Play® "Parable of the Good Samaritan") (note: you might need to iron it, for wooden figures to stand). And a strip of felt for a road.
- Figures of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, additional people figures to set out at the end of the story (I use people from [Worship Woodworks](#))
- A well (can be made out of clay, or use the one from the Godly Play story "The Parable of the Deep Well")
- Small bucket (wood, clay)

Words:	Movements:
	<p>Smooth out the underlay. Add the road on your left, slightly angled and off the underlay.</p> <p>Add the well to the center of the underlay, closer to the listeners.</p> <p>Sit back, and get ready.</p>
<p>On that hot afternoon the woman walked slowly to Jacob's well. She was there at the highest point of the sun's travel across the sky, because she knew others would not venture to the well in the heat of the day.</p> <p>She thought that she would be alone.</p> <p>But God had another plan.</p>	<p>"Walk" the Samaritan women slowly to the well, carrying her bucket. She is moving from your near right to the right of the well.</p>

<p>Someone else approached the well. Jesus was seeking a moment of relief during the heat of the day and a cool drink of water.</p> <p>The wells in that place were low to the ground, encircled with packed earth to keep animals from stumbling in.</p> <p>A good place to rest and wait.</p>	<p>Walk Jesus figure toward the well, and bring him to rest next to it.</p> <p>Indicate the well.</p>
<p>Jesus and his disciples were passing through Samaria on the dusty road between Judea and Galilee, and his friends headed into the nearby town.</p> <p>But Jesus sat down by Jacob's well to rest.</p> <p>This person, who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people followed him, to listen to him teach,</p> <p>This person knew weariness, hunger, and thirst.</p>	<p>Trace the road from the far end toward you with your finger. Continue tracing off the road, making a path behind the well toward the corner the woman came from ("town").</p> <p>Cup your hand gently around Jesus.</p>
<p>He asked her for a drink.</p> <p>She knew what that meant. In their world, giving and receiving water was an invitation. <i>Let's converse. Let's talk, Let's become acquainted. Let's become friends.</i></p> <p>She pushed back, reminding him of their differences there at the well.</p> <p>She said: "You are a Jewish man and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (John 4:9)</p>	<p>[You do not need to move the figures or do anything with your hands in this section. This is an important conversation, and does not need to be over-animated.]</p> <p>(You might make a gentle "push" motion in the air; in front of you, not the figures.)</p>

<p>Despite her resistance, Jesus didn't walk away from the Samaritan woman. Didn't judge her, or call her question foolish.</p> <p>Instead, there at the well, he sought to meet her deepest need. He said:</p> <p>"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (John 4:10, NIV)</p> <p>She'd come for well water, now this stranger promised her "living water?" (John 4:10).</p> <p>She was even more skeptical. Who wouldn't be? "You don't even have a bucket to draw from this deep well that our ancestor Jacob passed down to us.</p>	<p>Gesture toward the well.</p> <p>Indicate her bucket.</p>
<p>Jesus surely gestured toward the well when he told her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again" (John 4:13).</p> <p>"But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14)</p>	<p>Cup your hand over Jesus figure.</p>
<p>What can fully quench our spiritual longing?</p> <p>Imagine feeling refreshed instead of depleted. Feeling full rather than empty. Imagine a life without wanting and wishing and striving and stressing.</p>	<p>Pause and sit back. This is commentary, not part of the story.</p>

<p>As they spoke, he seemed somehow to know her — to know everything she had ever done! Then she knew, he was a prophet.</p> <p>He told her: “The time is coming when what you are called will not matter and where you worship will not matter. It’s who you are and the way you live that count before God.</p> <p>Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. God is calling: those who simply and honestly are <i>themselves</i> before God in their worship.”</p>	
<p>The woman listened, and quietly told him, “The One who is coming will have the whole story.</p> <p>“I am he,” Jesus said.</p>	<p>Pause for a few moments.</p>
<p>Then, the woman left her bucket behind when she went back to the town. She was in a hurry now, to share with the people what she had received.</p> <p>Her thirst was quenched. All she could think about was sharing this message of living water with others.</p>	<p>Leave the bucket in the sand, and walk the woman back toward you in the desert bag (on your right).</p>
<p>“Come,” the prophet Isaiah had said, “Come, all you who are thirsty.” (Isaiah 55:1)</p>	<p>Slowly, with care, add additional people figures to the story all around the woman, around the well, and around Jesus.</p>

- I wonder what part of the story you liked best.
- I wonder what part of the story was most important for you, today.
- I wonder where you are in the story, what part felt like it was about you — or for you.
- I wonder what has sated your spiritual thirst or watered your deepest need.
- I wonder when you have known a well or spring of living waters.
- I wonder what witness and work has been living water for you.
- I wonder when worship has engaged your spirit in the pursuit of truth.

