

Agua Viva / Living Water

Noah built an Ark

Day one

Youth

THEME:	God uses water to teach us about obedience
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Genesis 6:11-22 (optional: Genesis 7:11-12, 8:6-13, 9:8-16)
MEMORY VERSE:	"Noah did everything just as God commanded him." <i>Genesis 6:22 (NIV)</i>

Objective Preparation

The young people will know about the love and mercy of God.

- Pray asking the Lord to give you wisdom, understanding and the right words to teach the lesson. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those who will be listening.
- Read Genesis 6:9-22, 7:1-24, 8:1:22 and 9:8-16, so you may have a better perspective of what happen before and after the flood. Also so you may have a better perspective of God's mercy and how much He dislikes sin.
- Read and study your lesson in Genesis 6:9-22, 7:1, 4, 5, 10, 17, 18 and 23.
- Read the cultural and Biblical background.
- Don't forget to have your Bible with you so that the young people can see it and know that what they are about to hear comes from the Word of God.
- Practice the lesson so you can measure the length of the class.
- White sheets of paper, pencils, and pens.
- Optional: A roll of butcher paper. Find the biggest one, this will be used to build a big paper boat. If the group is large you may need two rolls of paper.
- A photocopy for each student of worksheet number 1.
- A photocopy for each student of worksheet number 2.

Material

Biblical and cultural background.

First, consider the fact that we are talking about the first book of the Bible: Genesis. Genesis means "origin" or "beginning". It's the book that narrates the beginning of everything. Genesis proclaims the only and eternal God, creator of all that exists. This book establishes from the beginning the relationship God had with human beings. Human beings had been created by Him and had been trusted to rule the earth. God wanted goodness and happiness for people, but also wanted obedience and loyalty. Genesis also talks about the origin of sin and about suffering when one prefers to do his/her will instead of God's will. Genesis also tells us how God acts in history with the purpose of redeeming human beings.

You will discover in Genesis chapters 6:9-11, 7 and 8, that the earth was no longer the perfect paradise that God had created. Soon humanity had forgotten God and there was only evil in

their hearts and the intention of doing wrong. But there was a man named Noah, whose name in Hebrew means "rest", who worshiped God with his family. The Bible says that Noah was a righteous man, blameless, perfect in his generations that lived according to God's will. When the Bible says that Noah was perfect in his generations, not only is it referring to his descendants (Shem, Ham and Japheth), we must consider Noah's ancestry: Noah's father -Lamech, Noah's grandfather Methuselah, and his great grandfather Enoch who walked with God and was taken away by God (Genesis 5:24). Noah is a descendant of Seth, son of Adam. When Enoch was born to Seth, "People began to call on the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26).

God is faithful and keeps His promises. But He also punishes sin because He is just and Noah's story is a clear example of it.

Introduction

- *Greet the group. Let the young people know how happy you are to be there with them. Make them feel welcome and happy to be learning about God.*
- *Meanwhile hand out nametags to the students and write their names on a list.*
- *Invite one of the students to give thanks to God for the opportunity of being together and also ask God to give them understanding and open up their hearts and minds so they may understand God's teaching for the day.*
- *Practice the memory verse. "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Genesis 6:22. Encourage students to look for the memory verse in the Bible.*

Studying the Bible passage

Ask the youth:

- Do you know what an ark is?
- Show the students a picture of an ark. How many animals do you think would fit inside an ark, including the birds? (Some books say that there were 45,000 animals inside the ark)*
- "Noah did everything as God commanded him." When has it been harder for you to obey your parents, now or when you were little kids?
 - Is it hard for you to work with others in a team? Why?
 - Imagine God asks you to build an ark like the one in the picture. Would you do it or would you say it's too hard?
 - Have you ever thought about a plan for your life?
 - Is your plan for life based on God or is it just a professional, financial or social thing?
 - Why is it hard to commit to a ministry or service to God within our churches?
 - Are you scared of other people mocking you or scared about not being able to do what is expected? Do you feel like you won't be able because you lack spiritual growth or lack communion with God?
 - Why do you think it is harder to obey our parents and other adults when we are young adults?
 - Do you think your problems are really big and have no solution? Yes? No? Why?
 - Who's got the solution? Whom should we trust?

Ask the young people to look up in their Bibles the following Bible passages: Genesis 6:9-22, 7:1, 4, 5, 10, 17, 18 and 23. Ask students to read one verse each.

- *Before you start the Bible story hand out a white sheet of paper and a pencil to each student. Tell them to turn the paper horizontally. Ask them to write their name in the lower right corner and the title: "Noah's ark" at the bottom and center of the page.*

The Bible tells the story of a man called Noah. Noah lived in a place and time when no one knew anything about boats, ships, arks or any of the sorts. The place where he lived was in fact a dry place, but God asked Noah to build an ark. Did Noah build an ark? How long do you think it took Noah and his family to build the ark?

The word of God says that Noah was a good man; he was righteous and perfect in his generations, he walked with God and always obeyed Him. Among the people of his time, only he and his family lived according to God's will. Noah's family was his wife, his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives.

In those days the people had become corrupt and the earth was full of violence due to the wickedness of people. God was sad and told Noah: "I've decided to wipe out people for the earth is full evil and violence. I will destroy the earth with all the people in it. Build an ark with cypress wood; there will be rooms in the ark and you will caulk the ark (cover all the crevices between the wood boards) with pitch from the inside and from the outside (pitch is a black, sticky liquid that is obtained from petroleum). The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for the ark and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

Tell the students to draw the ark on the paper they were given and invite them to write the measurements on the paper. Ask them to draw as if they were an engineer about to build the ark. Read the building instructions twice and give them a few extra minutes to finish. Ask a student to help you picking up the pencils and papers.

God told Noah the exact measurements for the ark, the material he was to use and Noah did everything as the Lord commanded him. God told Noah he would send strong and constant rain that would flood the earth and destroy all living things under heaven. All that existed on earth would die. God was sad because people had chosen to do evil instead of God's will. Sometimes we are like those people because we choose to disobey and do wrong even though we know it's not the right thing to do. But we prefer to do evil instead of looking bad before our "friends" or because we don't want them to make fun of us. We don't think about the consequences it may bring to our lives.

In this story we see how God decided to end evil, He decided to destroy everything but Noah and his family who lived according to God's will.

When your parents take away privileges because you've done wrong, you might feel angry, or you might feel like not talking to them or even feel like moving away to live on your own where no one will try to control you. Sometimes you might even think you are capable of living on your own and survive, but the truth is your parents take away privileges and might even punish you because they love you. They don't want you to suffer. They've been your age and know what is like, maybe they suffered and don't want you to go through the same experience. Maybe they obeyed and resisted temptation and want you to experience the same blessings they did.

So, whether you like your parents' orders or not, you should obey. When you obey your parents you are obeying God and doing His will.

God made a pact with Noah. A pact is an agreement between two groups. God told Noah: "Go inside the ark with your wife, your sons and daughters-in-law, take in with you a male and female of each animal type of the world so they may live as well as you". In Genesis chapter seven, verses two and three you may read all the instructions about the animals God gave Noah. Ask one of the

students to read this scripture passage. God also told Noah to gather food for them and for the animals, and **Noah did everything just as God commanded him.**

You might be thinking, "How did Noah gather the animals plus build an ark?"

Noah acted out God's will and so did the rest of creation. God took care of all the small details, while Noah did his part.

When we have a task to carry out in our own lives, we worry about things over which we have no control. While we worry about those things, we neglect those things over which we do have control: attitudes, responsibilities, relations, and our communion with God. We must do what God calls us to do and trust Him. Trust that God is there, doing His part, working on those things which He alone can control.

Many years went by before Noah and his family were able to finish the ark, and during that time people made fun of Noah. People didn't believe the possibility of a flood as Noah was telling them because their hearts were full of evil and were not repentant of their sins.

Ask a student to read I Peter 3:20. Noah's case was the opposite because unlike the people of his time, he did obey by faith like it's stated in Hebrews 11:7. (Ask a student to read this Bible verse).

When Noah finished the ark, he did what God had told him to do and he got in the ark with his family and the animals. God told him that in seven days rain would fall for forty days and forty nights. **Noah did just as God commanded him** and later rain started. The earth was flooded and all people died along with the animals and the birds that weren't inside the ark because they did not obey God. The people had only the desire in their hearts to do evil things that weren't pleasing to God. The only survivors from the flood were Noah and all with him in the ark because they chose to obey God and trust Him.

Genesis chapter 9 talks about the pact between God and Noah (*ask students to read this chapter at home*). This pact is also between God and us. God promised that he would never again destroy the earth by a flood like He did in Noah's time (Gen.9: 1-17). God sent His son to die in our place not to wash sins away with water again, but to wash our sins with Jesus' precious blood.

God gives us the opportunity to repent of our sins, accept Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, our ark of salvation. Ask God to forgive you for the sins you have committed and start all over again. If you haven't given your life to Jesus for him to be the captain of the ark of your life, now would be the perfect moment.

Ask the students that haven't asked Jesus to come into their hearts to repeat out loud after you. (Pray a prayer of repentance and accepting Christ into their hearts and lives). While you pray, ask those who have accepted Christ to pray silently and ask Christ to forgive their sins so that they may go on serving Him.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

- *Give each student a photocopy of the work sheet number 1. Divide the group into teams and divide the questions to be answered into those teams. Give each group some time to analyze and answer their questions. After a few minutes give each team some time to share with the rest of the class their point of view about the theme they discussed and about how, in a practical way, this may be applied to their lives.*
- *Recite the memory verse for today with the students.*
- *Give each student a photocopy of the work sheet number 2 added at the end of the lesson. Instead of pencils, give them pens. Tell the students they may only have a pen in one hand and the work sheet in front of them facing down. They may not speak to others around*

them and have only 5 minutes to answer the questions on that worksheet. Ask them to read the instructions before starting. Say "Start" for the students to start reading. Those students who finish before the 5 minutes are over ask them to turn their paper facing down (so others can't see it), place their pens down and wait quietly for others to finish.

Applying the Bible passage to our life

Once everyone has finished, explain the following:

Noah was a man that loved God and lived according to His will. Noah did everything JUST AS God commanded him to do. Noah followed all of God's instructions without changing a thing. Noah learned to be patient because he trusted God would always be with him to help him. Noah didn't care about how long it would take him to do what God told him because he trusted God.

For some of us it's hard to follow instructions or rules, especially when we are not allowed to go places where we want to go, but if we follow instructions we may learn and everything will be easier. Sometimes we don't want to obey because at the time we are given an order we're playing or we are doing something we don't want to stop doing or we want to go somewhere with our friends. But if we love God and our parents we must learn to listen to what they say and obeying may be easier. Sometimes we feel angry because our parents rebuke us when we're doing something that is wrong, but they do it because they love us and want what is best for us. So, instead of being angry, be happy for the love of your parents. If obeying is hard for you, ask God to help you be obedient and God will surely be with you and take care of you like He did with Noah.

Noah did everything according to what God commanded him to do and we, also, can follow Noah's example and obey God and our parents. When you choose to disobey your parents, they may ground you because they know what is good for you, God does the same, and He also punishes those who disobey. God wants our obedience and our love. God only asks us to do what is best for us. You can discover what God wants you to do by reading the Bible and listening to teachers at church.

- *Take one of the students' papers and say: When we drew the ark it might have seemed difficult but the only thing you had to do was to listen and follow the instructions. In the second work sheet you only had to read the instructions to answer correctly. Those who did read the instructions as they were told discovered that the only thing that had to be done was write your name, the date and the memory verse at the end. It wasn't necessary to do anything else.*

Optional Activity

If you were able to bring two big rolls of butcher paper, invite the students to break into two teams (depending on how many rolls of paper you have) so they can make a big paper boat.

The purpose of this activity is to let students experience the fact that building a huge ark was indeed a very difficult task. The ark Noah had to make was more difficult to build.

Although we are different from Noah, we are able to do great things together.

Conclusion

Just like in Noah's time, it seems that obeying God is a difficult thing to do because the World is full of wickedness. Everywhere we look there is evil and things that offend God.

The Bible says in Matthew 7: 13, 14 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it."

For many, it is easier to do bad things and disobey. It seems that it's more fun to disobey than obey but it isn't so. If you feel bad because you obey and your friends make fun of you, you might feel alone at first especially if you try to do God's will. But in the end you will be receive a reward that is only for the children of God, for those who do His will.

Just like Noah did, regardless of the difficulty of the task at hand, when you obey God, you can be certain that God is there to help you. If it seems too hard, ask God in prayer to help you.

Close in prayer.

Worksheet 1

The 13 things I learned about life from Noah' ark...

- 1.- It's important to be punctual and not be late to an appointed time.
- 2.- Remember that all of us are different, but we're all in the same boat.
- 3.- Plan for your future. It wasn't raining when Noah began building the ark.
- 4.- Never feel old even if some tell you that your time has gone by, or that at your age you can't do a significant great thing only because you're 600 years old.
- 5.- Don't pay attention to those who criticize you, go on with the job God has given you.
- 6.- All you do and build, do it well, even if your not a professional or it's not something you know how to do.
- 7.- When looking for company for life's journey, look for someone that is similar to you. Opposites may attract but won't achieve much. Plus you have to look for someone in the same path towards God so you may encourage each other to continue traveling towards the ark.
- 8.- If you feel that your spiritual growth is slow, don't worry. More than speed, God wants perseverance. Remember there were turtles in the ark along with the horses, wild cats and other "fast" animals.
- 9.- Although at first you may feel alone and others may make fun of you, in the long run there is a reward for trying to live according to the Word of God.
- 10.- Don't minimize the efforts of simple people. Remember the ark was built by amateurs and the Titanic was built by professionals.
- 11.- Regardless of how strong the storm is, if you stay close to God, there will always be a rainbow waiting for you.

"SUCESS IS NOT FOR THOSE WHO THINK THAT IT CAN BE DONE,
IT IS FOR THOSE WHO DO IT "

Worksheet 2

Read carefully all the instructions and all the questions before answering. Remember you only have five minutes to answer.

1.- Write your full name: _____

2.- What is the name of the main character in today's story? Write his name in big letters in the back part of this sheet.

3.- How many people were saved during the flood? _____

4.- Do you think the duck-billed platypus was saved during the flood? Yes _____ No _____

5.- Why?: _____

6.- Which animal do you think was the last to go into the ark?: _____

7.- Write today's date in the upper right margin of this sheet.

8.- Draw a perfect square in the middle left margin of this sheet.

9.- Draw an *x* inside the square, using all the inside of the square to make 4 triangles inside.

10.- Write the phrase: *I'M THE BEST* in the upper left corner of your sheet.

11. Get up and say "I've done it" and sit down again to continue, remember you only have five minutes.

12.- Quietly take your left shoe off and put it on again.

13.- Write the memory verse you learned today (Genesis 6:22) and write it in the central right margin on your sheet.

14. Draw a circle in the lower right of this sheet.

15. Draw a diamond on the lower right corner of this page.

16. Answer only questions one, seven, and thirteen and turn your paper over.

Living Water / Agua Viva

Moses Strikes the Rock

Day Two Youth

THEME:	God uses water to teach us about trusting in God's care.
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Exodus 17:1-7
MEMORY VERSE:	<i>God made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers.</i> Psalm 78:16 (NRSV)

Objective	The student will know the story of Moses, who trusted God's care of the Israelites.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray that God will give you understanding and wisdom to understand God's word and pray for the children who'll be in class.• Always have the Bible in your hand, so the students will know and understand that what they are going to learn is coming from God's word.• Don't forget to practice telling the story, and practice the entire lesson, to measure the time and then pray asking for God's help and God's blessing for the teaching team and the students.• Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to meet the lesson's objective so that the lesson might be a great blessing for the children and may touch the hearts of those in need.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saltine crackers• Paper cups and water• Paper and pens• Pretend microphone

Introduction

- *Welcome the group and if there is a new child, introduce him/her to the group. Allow the children to feel happy and comfortable to be learning about God.*
- *Hand out nametags to the students and fill out the attendance sheet.*
- *Offer a prayer giving thanks for the day, asking the direction of the Holy Spirit to teach this lesson according to God's will.*
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Studying the Bible passage

Go around the group and share your name and something you recently complained about (heat, sleeping on floor, someone snoring, etc...). Then ask them to share who they most often complain to (parent, friend, sibling, etc...)

Today's lesson revolves around the Israelites, who were complaining loudly to Moses. Ask the youth to help you remember what we know about Moses (*let them share what they know; and below is a*

list that highlights what we know about Moses up to this point in the book of Exodus- fill in whatever they don't remember):

- Moses as a baby, being placed in a basket by his mother who was trying to protect him and being "found" by the Pharaoh's daughter;
- That he was the one that heard God in the Burning Bush and was called into action to deliver God's people, the Israelites, from slavery;
- That he went to Pharaoh asking that God's people be let go from slavery;
- That God brought ten plagues on the Egyptians, trying to convince Pharaoh that he should let the Israelites go, and that Moses warned him of these plagues;
- That on the night that we know as the Passover, Moses led God's people from Egypt by parting the Red Sea; and God led them in a Pillar of Cloud by day and a Pillar of Fire by night;
- That after they had been wandering in the wilderness, they were soon without food and complained so that Moses prayed to God on their behalf and God provided manna and quail to eat;
- And then we have today's story, when the Israelites now have no water, and are back to complaining again.
- They also might remember that Moses received the Ten Commandments, although he has not yet received them by this point in our story... it is yet to come.

Next, have the youth read the scripture aloud.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

Ask and discuss the following questions:

- How did God make God's presence known in this story?
- How did God provide for the Israelites?
- How did they feel when they were thirsty?
- How did they feel when they had water?
- Did the Israelites understand at this time why God had led them to the desert?
- What do you think was the worst thing that happened to the Israelites and why do you think that? (Be sure that slavery in Egypt is mentioned as well as the remembering no food and no water).
- How did the people know God cared for them when the worst thing happened?
- Why do you think the Israelites kept forgetting that God was caring for them?
- What prevented them from trusting in God's care?

Applying the Bible passage to our life

Below are a few options for an activity to do with the youth.

Activity Choice #1: Modern Day Complaining

Create a modern-day version of the complaining of the Israelites. (things such as: Imagine you had to drive all the way to Mexico. Imagine no McDonald's on the way. How would it be if you were traveling with your family? With the others on this mission trip? Etc...) They can act this out for

each other; divide into small groups and have them act out a situation in which they would complain. Then reflect on the following:

- How were you feeling in your difficult circumstance?
- Did complaining make you feel better? What would make you feel better?
- Did it feel like God was closer to you in your difficulty or more distant because it seems that there was no response from God?

Activity Choice # 2: Thirst visualization activity:

Let's try to understand how the Israelites might have felt. Please join me in this visualization activity. Read the following slowly to the youth.

Sit back and close your eyes.

Imagine that you are in the desert.

Feel the hot sun beating down on you.

You search desperately for a tree, anything, to shade you from the cruel heat.

There is nothing but sand.

You've been walking for many hours.

You have some food. *(Hand out a couple of crackers to each person to eat.)* Pause to let everyone eat their crackers.

But you have nothing to drink.

The sun seems to be getting hotter. The sand is getting into your shoes and your clothes and worst of all, your mouth.

You think of cold streams of clear, fresh water, of raindrops falling gently.

What would make you feel good right now? *(Let them answer, still with eyes closed.)*

Bring the water out and pour it into the cups while they keep their eyes closed.

Ask: Anyone for some water? Then open your eyes and have a drink. *(Hand the water cups around.)*

Activity Choice #3: Create a newscast

If you choose this option, it would be helpful to include the story of being hungry in the wilderness, which is found in Exodus 16:1-18.

Choose someone to be the newscaster who is interviewing disgruntled Israelites. Encourage the newscaster to ask things like: How are you feeling? What message do you want to send to God?

Encourage the different Israelite characters to respond, remembering that they are one of the Israelites who has fled Egypt and they are traveling on foot with hundreds and hundreds of people. They are thirsty and are scared they will starve. Choose a particular point of view- perhaps Moses, a mother, a father, a child.

Below is the information they have to go on:

Headline: Bread Falls From Sky to Feed Starving Israelites

Subhead: Moses credits God for saving people from starvation

Byline:

Dateline: Wilderness of Sin

Two months and 15 days after fleeing Egypt.

People tell Moses they would have been better off as slaves in Egypt than to starve to death in the wilderness

God tells Moses to tell people their complaining has been heard

Quails in evening provide feast

Next morning, under the dew, found flaky substance

Moses told them it was bread sent from God

God tested people: God told them to gather enough each day for that day only, some gathered more; it spoiled. God told them to gather enough on the sixth day to last for the Sabbath, the seventh day, and not to go out together on the Sabbath. Some went out anyway; there was none.

Israelites ate manna in this manner for forty years.

Moses told Aaron to gather some in a jar to keep to show future generations how God fed God's people in the wilderness.

Headline: Rock Yields Water for Thirsty Israelites

Byline:

Dateline: Rephidim

Camped at Rephidim

No water there

People complained

Moses cried out to God

God told Moses to strike a rock with his staff

Water started pouring from it

Conclusion

End your time together with a prayer- thanking God for God's faithful care and asking for help in having the courage to trust God's care for us.

References:

"The Whole People of God" Biblical Background for March 7, 1999; "Lenten Conversations...about Thirsting," March 7, 1999.

Agua Viva / Living Water

Jonah is swallowed by a fish

Day Three Youth

THEME:	God uses water to teach us about repentance
BIBLE PASSAGE:	Jonah 1:1-17 and 2:10 (optional: Jonah 2:1-10)
MEMORY VERSE:	"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15 (NIV)

Objective	The student, through the Bible story, will learn the true meaning of repentance so that he may receive God's forgiveness and be able to live with peace in his heart.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare your heart in prayer asking for Jesus Christ's guidance. Pray for the new souls that will listen to the Word of God, so that they may be reached today.• The young people in this class are living in a difficult stage in life. Handle the class and any commentary they make with caution and understanding.• Read the lesson several times to be confident in front of the students about what you are going to say.• In all your classes, emphasize the fact that all that is being taught was and is true and it comes from the word of God, that is "the Bible" (always have it at hand).
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible• Photocopies of the questionnaire at the end of this lesson to complete at the end of the class.• Pencils.

Introduction

- *Welcome students and encourage them to share with the rest of the class how they've felt the past two days in the VBS. Also encourage them to share about what God is doing in their lives.*
- *Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance for today' class. Ask the group if there's a volunteer to participate praying.*
- *Start the class by asking the students: Have you ever done anything that you wished you hadn't done and repented for it? (Give two or three students the opportunity to share).*

Give a brief explanation about the meaning of the word "repentance" and also about what the concept implies.

Studying the Bible passage

Jonah was a prophet that heard the voice of God telling him: "Go to Nineveh, the great city, and talk to the people about me, for there's great wickedness in them". "I won't do that", thought Jonah, "I don't want to do it". So Jonah ran away from the presence of God as fast as he could, so God wouldn't see him. He arrived at Joppa where he saw a ship sailing towards another city that wasn't Nineveh, so he got on board the ship and fled. But who can hide from God if He's everywhere? God knows exactly everything we do, everything we think and every thing we say, so Jonah couldn't hide from the presence of God. A little time later, a violent storm began, the wind blew very hard, and waves rose up the size of mountains that hit the ship making it creak. All the sailors and people on board were scared, but Jonah was peacefully sleeping below deck. The captain woke him up. Then the sailors said to each other, "let us cast lots to see who has to leave the ship." Guess who the lot fell on? (Wait for answers). Jonah was thrown overboard into the sea.

This happened because God had a plan for Jonah. When Jonah was at sea, a big sea monster came from the depths and swallowed Jonah. The Bible says that for three days and three nights Jonah was in the big fish's belly, and while he was there the Holy Spirit touched his heart. Jonah repented for not doing what God had told him to do. Jonah felt great sadness in his heart and prayed full of humility and repentance. Jonah told God that he would never again disobey any of His commands and that he would do it whole-heartedly. After God heard Jonah's prayer (God listens to all those who truly repent and forgives them), the big fish spewed Jonah on the beach and when he saw the sky and the sun again, he gratefully knelt down and worshiped God. Jonah was truly forgiven and his response to that was obedience. He got up, sailed on a boat to Nineveh and once he was there, he started to preach to the people about God and all the wonders He does in a person's life.

Through this Bible story, God teaches us today that we must obey His commands written in His word (*show the Bible*), not because a big fish will come and swallow us but because we love Him.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

- The added questionnaire will encourage students to meditate on their lives.
- Emphasize the fact that true repentance is felt in one's heart.

When one feels true repentance, one should pray to God asking for His forgiveness and start doing God's will.

Applying the Bible passage to our life

- How should you feel when you do something you know is wrong?

Every time you do something that isn't right, come to God in prayer. Ask God to forgive you for what you did and DON'T DO IT AGAIN.

Optional Activity:

Give each student a photocopy of the questionnaire. Encourage students to be honest when answering the questionnaire. Tell them no one will look at their answers but themselves. The purpose of answering the questions is for them to meditate on their answers.

When all students finish, invite some volunteers to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Ask students to share their thoughts on repentance after listening to the Bible story.

Conclusion

- *Review the memory verse learned today.*
- *Encourage students to invite friends to come to VBS so they can also listen to what God teaches in the Bible.*

Close with prayer. Invite students to take this opportunity to examine their hearts and ask God to forgive them for the wrong things they've done.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Read the questions and answer honestly.

1. What is your reaction when you do something wrong before others and above all in the eyes of *God*?
2. Have you truly obeyed all that *God* asks you to do? If not, what are some things that you have not done?
3. If you feel in your heart you've done wrong, in what way could you undo the wrong you've done?
4. Would you be willing to pray to *God* asking Him to forgive the wrong you've done?
5. Do you think *God* will forgive you? Why?
6. Would you do the same things again that you know are wrong?

Living Water / Agua Viva

Jesus Meets the Samaritan Woman at the Well

Day Four Youth

THEME:	God uses water to teach us about receiving new life.
BIBLE PASSAGE:	John 4:5-30 and 39-42(optional: John 4:31-38)
MEMORY VERSE:	<i>But those who drink of the water that I will give will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.</i> John 4:14 (NRSV)

Objective	The student will know the story of Jesus, who meets the Samaritan woman at the well.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray that God will give you understanding and wisdom to understand God's word and pray for the children who'll be in class. • Always have the Bible in your hand, so the students will know and understand that what they are going to learn is coming from God's word. • Don't forget to practice the entire lesson, to measure the time and then pray asking for God's help and God's blessing for the teaching team and the students. • Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to meet the lesson's objective so that the lesson might be a great blessing for the children and may touch the hearts of those in need.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jigsaw puzzles, preferably either 48 piece or 100 piece; 1 puzzle for each group of 4 or 5 youth • Watercolors • Pastels • Torn tissue mosaics • Colored pencils or crayons • White paper • Pictures of the Woman at the Well

Biblical Explanation and Background:

Jesus chose to go through Samaria, and the route took them past the historic place called "Jacob's Well". (This well still exists today, and is reputed to be 75 to 100 feet deep and to still give good water.) This is notable, because most Jews would have bypassed Samaria to avoid contact with the Samaritans.

While the disciples were gone to get food, Jesus engages in the longest dialog ever recorded between Jesus and another person. Jesus spoke to this Samaritan woman who had come to the well to get water, and he asked her to give him a drink. To us this seems inconsequential, but

in Jesus' time, it was unheard of for a Jewish man, let alone a Rabbi, to speak to a Samaritan woman. This woman seems to have come alone to the well at a time when other women were home resting in the cool shade. Jesus knew she had great emotional and spiritual needs; he loves all people at all times, and he was not considering his own reputation. He was reaching out to her by asking her for a drink.

The woman immediately questioned Jesus about his asking her for a drink; she knew the social prohibitions; she knew the Jews hated the Samaritans, and she no doubt knew Jesus was a stranger, not from the local town. Jesus replied with a revelation about himself, (verse 10) "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." (The term "living water" can mean "fresh, flowing water" as opposed to stagnant water.) We know from our memory verse, John 7:37, that Jesus meant that if she believed that he was the "anointed one" or the Messiah that God had promised to take away the sins of the world, that she would have "living water". "Living water" refers to Jesus' spirit, the Holy Spirit, who lives in the believer. John 7:38 quotes Jesus saying, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:39 explains that this refers to the Holy Spirit in the believer.

The woman was intrigued by Jesus' words; she asked him two more questions. First, she wanted to know where and how Jesus would get "living water", and second, she was awed by Jesus' authority; she asked him to tell her who he is. Notice that Jesus had deliberately invited her into this conversation, and she was willing to learn more about Jesus. She was not proud; she was not rejecting him because of her own religious beliefs or prejudices. She had the attitude of a child, willing to know Jesus. Remember, Jesus said when he blessed the little children, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Luke 18:17)

Jesus answered the woman with the promise, "...whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst...the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14) The woman asked Jesus for the living water "that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." (John 4:15) She wasn't sure what Jesus was offering her, but she wanted it. Children also sometimes are not sure what Jesus is offering, but they know they "love Jesus". Still, Jesus sees to the core of human nature, and he saw sin in the core of the woman. Isaiah 59:2 says that our sin has separated us from God, but John 3:16 gives us God's solution for sin, eternal life through his Son.

Faith in Jesus, the Son of God, is the "spring of water welling up to eternal life". To expose the woman to her own need, Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come back." (John 4:16) She admitted honestly (again, like a child) to Jesus that she had no husband, and Jesus told her that he knew she'd had five husbands and was now living with a man to whom she was not married. Inwardly, this shocked the woman, for we know that later she told the people in the town to "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:29) Outwardly, in verse 20, she betrayed her spiritual hunger to Jesus by saying, "Sir, I perceive you are a prophet.." and asking about where God should be worshipped. Jesus again answered her eager question; he explained that "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

The woman's reply to Jesus indicated that he had reached her heart. She said, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." (John 4:25) And then Jesus openly told her, since she was ready to receive him, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:26) What love Jesus showed for her in revealing himself to her as the Son of God! She joyfully believed him, and she ran off to tell the town's people that she'd found the Messiah. Children also can joyfully believe Jesus when they learn that their sins separate them from God, and that Jesus, God's Son, has paid the penalty for sin.

Jesus' disciples were puzzled when they returned and found him talking with a Samaritan woman. They urged him to eat, and his answer, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about" reminds us of his mission: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) The joy Jesus felt in the woman's faith filled him; it was enough.

Introduction

- Welcome the group and if there is a new child, introduce him/her to the group. Allow the children to feel happy and comfortable to be learning about God.
- Hand out nametags to the students and fill out the attendance sheet.
- Offer a prayer giving thanks for the day, asking the direction of the Holy Spirit to teach this lesson according to God's will.
- Explain to the students that the story for today is about a Samaritan woman. Back when this story took place, Jews, which is what Jesus was, were not allowed to speak to people from Samaria. Also, Jewish men were not permitted to speak to women, who were strangers to them.

Studying the Bible passage

Divide the group into at least two teams (if there are enough students; if not, let the entire class work as a group.) Give each team a jigsaw puzzle. Turn the pieces face down and see which team can assemble the most pieces within a given time limit. (1 or 2 minutes is enough). At the end of the time limit talk about the difficulty of doing this without 1) seeing the pieces, and 2) knowing what the picture is like.

Next, let the groups turn their pieces face up and try again. Set another time limit. At the end of the time discuss the difficulty of this again—was it easier with more information?

Finally, let them see the puzzle box, so they know what their pictures look like. Set a final time limit, and ask them to assemble as much of the puzzle as they can this time.

After announcing a winner, discuss how difficult it is to do some things with just a little bit of information. But after you collect enough facts, the answer/solution seems very clear. As we study today's story of the woman at the well, observe how she collects bits of information about Jesus and eventually sees who he really is.

Next, have the youth read the Bible Story aloud.

Reflecting on the Bible passage

- The Samaritans were a mixed group with ties to Jews and foreigners who were brought in to settle Israel after the northern kingdom was captured by the Assyrians and many of the Jews were deported to Assyria. Conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans is mentioned in a number of places throughout the Bible. Jesus could have bypassed Samaria, as many other Jews would have. Why do you think he didn't? Accept any answer but point out that this single visit would have long-lasting impact, both on this community where he stayed, and on his disciples.
- What excuses might Jesus have used to keep from talking to this woman? Accept any answer but some that might be included are: Men did not talk to women; he knew the woman had a bad reputation; it was hot and he was tired; his disciples would not understand; Jews and Samaritans didn't get along; etc.
- Who might be people that we look down on today or are outcast in our society that would be like the Samaritan woman? Who is looked down upon in your community- in your school? Accept any answer. Some might include certain ethnic groups, visibly disabled people, impoverished people, etc...
- How would you feel if someone started telling you about personal things in your life that you thought were well hidden? Would it make a difference whether or not you thought the person was accusing you of something?
- We have seen that the woman discovered things about Jesus little by little. Did she leave it up to others to discover who Jesus was in the same way? What can we learn from her response? She was quick to share the truth she had discovered.
- Like the woman at the well, all people are thirsty. What would a person who has lost a loved one be thirsty for? What would the new kid in school be thirsty for?
- Can you share a time when you have been thirsty for God?
- Do we always receive new life when we are thirsty- is it something given to us before we ask, or is it something we have to choose to accept?

Applying the Bible passage to our life

Have the youth look at the pictures of Christ and the woman of Samaria. Consider the similarities and differences in the pictures.

What three elements do we find in every one? (Jesus, woman, well)

How does the woman look? (happy, sad, tired, scared)

In some pictures there is a wooden support for the well, what does it remind us of? (the cross)

What is the well made of? (stones, bricks)

What is the land around the well like? (trees, green, dusty, desert)

Then use a variety of materials to create their own "Christ and the woman of Samaria" scene. Possible materials include: watercolors, pastels, torn tissue mosaics and pencil drawings.

This web site has links to a lot of the great art for the Woman at the Well.

www.textweek.com/art/samaritan_woman.htm

Conclusion

Let the youth work on their artwork until time runs out; close your time together with a prayer, asking for God to breathe new life into all those who are thirsty.

References:

Woman at the Well Rotation Lesson Set from Silverdale United Methodist Church (SUMC), posted at www.rotation.org
"The Whole People of God" Biblical Background for March 7, 1999; "Lenten Conversations...about Thirsting," March 7, 1999.
Woman at the Well Lesson Set from Brenthaven Church, posted at www.rotation.org
Woman at the Well Art Lesson from the Presbyterian Church of Sunnyvale, posted at www.rotation.org
Woman at the Well Art Lesson from Chris Himes, Pompey United Church, Pompey NY; posted at www.rotation.org

Agua Viva / Living Water

Let's go Fishing

Day Five

Youth

THEME:	God uses the miraculous catch of fish so we may learn to trust in Him.
BIBLE PASSAGE:	John 21: 1-1
MEMORY VERSE:	"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them" Matthew 6:26 (NIV)

Objective

That every young person could see that he/she can learn to trust in God. He is the One who can supply all of our needs.

Preparation

- Prepare and study the class material well. Use your own words to make the story more interesting to the youth. The knowledge of the lesson and of your students will make the lesson more accessible to the class. Your students are youth, and life is not easy for them because of the challenges they face. They want to have whatever things the other young people have.
- Ask for God's direction that you may be able to fulfill the class objective and that the lesson might be a blessing to the young lives in your class.

Material

- Your Bible.
- Paper and pencils.

Introduction

- *Welcome everyone; ask them to greet each other. This is the last day so they should know each other pretty well.*
- *Ask someone to pray, giving thanks for this day and asking for the lesson God wants to teach them.*
- *Read and practice the memory verse.*
- *Ask if any one has gone deep-sea fishing.*
- *If someone has done it, ask how many fish he/she caught.*
- *Guide them into a good talk about fishing. Someone could tell a fishing story about themselves or even a friend.*
- *How would they feel in they went fishing for the whole day and they were not able to catch any fish?*

Background of the Bible story.

In John chapter 21 we find 7 disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias, wondering what to do. For three years they had walked with Jesus. From the moment that Jesus called them, they left their daily tasks and followed the Master to live with Him and learn from Him. During the time of their discipleship they depended on Him. They went with Him everywhere, rested where lodging was offered. They ate meals bought with the offerings given by those who already believed in Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, the whole time they walked with Jesus, they depended on Him.

Jesus had everything they needed. Now, Jesus had been crucified, had risen, but He was neither with them, nor they with Him. The question was: How are we going to eat now?

Studying the Bible Passage

These fishermen were very special friends of Jesus; we call them his disciples. We go back by the Sea of Tiberias and we find them again, seven disciples, Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John, Jacob and two other whose names we don't know.

Because Jesus was not with them anymore, they could not depend on Him for their daily needs, so they were thinking: what should we do? How would they find a way to meet the needs of their families and their personal needs? Peter and others were fishermen. As always, Peter took the initiative and said: "I do not know about you all, but I am going fishing." So, they decided to do the same and went fishing once again. They had to get some food for their families, their families depended on them.

The Bible tells us that the disciples went far out to sea, where they knew there were fish, and they were fishing all night. They threw their nets once they were at sea, waited and pulled them back in and there were no fish. Over and over again, doing the same thing and nothing; the disciples caught nothing, no fish. They were so tired, frustrated and hungry that they pulled their nets and began sail back to shore.

John tells us that when they were near the beach, where they knew there were no fish, they saw a person on the beach. The person was Jesus, but they did not recognize Him because of the distance and because it was dawn. He called out to them "Friends, haven't you any fish?" In other words, do you have anything to eat for you and your families? The disciples had to answer: No! Then Jesus told them "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some"

They obeyed and threw their nets on the right side and "were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish, 153!" When they arrived at the beach, what did they find? The Bible tells us that a "fire of burning coals was there with fish on it, and some bread." And "Jesus said to them "Come and have breakfast" In other words Jesus was telling them, You must learn to trust and depend on me. You have no fish, I will give them to you, you have nothing to eat, and I will feed you whatever you need. Learn to depend on me, as you did when you walked with me.

This lesson was not only for the disciples, but it is for you and me, for all of us. Jesus is with us today. We might not see Him as the disciples did, but He can see us. Jesus sees you and knows what you need.

The disciples learned that everything comes from God and He is the one who gives whatever the person needs. You and I must learn also that all things come from the Lord and He is the one who gives whatever we might need today.

Let's learn to depend on God, to trust in God, who will supply all our needs for us and for our families.

Reflecting on the Bible passage.

- What was the key for the disciples to be able to get enough fish for them and their families?
- Wasn't it because they were willing to obey what Jesus told them, even though it seemed illogical?
- Remember that they were fishermen and they went fishing where they knew the fish would be, which would not be by the shore.

- What do we do when we do not have what we wish? Like books, cell phone, iPod, good clothing.
- God knows what we need and is ready to give it to us. In many occasions what which we need is not what we want; or what we want is not what we need.

Activity

- *Divide the group in small groups of two or three.*
- *Ask every small group to write in one or two sheets of paper:*
 - 1) *Ways in which God has been their provider.*
 - 2) *Why is it so hard to trust in God?*
- *After a good moment, ask the groups to come together to read what they have written and discuss it.*
- *Motivate them to participate.*

Conclusion

Tell the group: It has been a pleasure to have you in class all week. We have learned so much about the love God has for us as we read those stories in which water played such an important role. What are some of the lessons that really stuck with you from this week?

(If you need to refresh their memory, you can tell them that first Noah and the flood showed us how to obey God, Moses reminded us that God gives us water and everything we need to live, from inside the big fish Jonah invites us to confess our sins so we may follow God's plans for us, the Samaritan woman learned by the well that in Jesus we have new life, and finally today Jesus showed his disciples as they fished that they should turn to Jesus to provide for their needs.)

I hope that you have learned a lot and that you had a lot of fun. I hope that you continue coming to church, because the Bible has many more stories that talk to us about how much God loves us. No, let us say a prayer and I'll ask God to continue to bless you and your families:

Conclude with prayer.