

Group discussion Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”

Read John 4:4-26 aloud.

1. Why was the Samaritan woman surprised by Jesus’ request (9)?

What might have normally happened if a Samaritan woman and a Jewish man crossed paths?

Probably an awkward silence, like sharing an elevator with someone who is obviously different from you.

What can we learn from Jesus’ ability to bypass social boundaries?

What groups might be awkward for us to talk to?

2. In verses 10 & 13, how well did Jesus’ answers respond to the woman’s questions?

He did not answer her questions but changed the discussion.

What was Jesus doing by not answering her questions?

3. When the conversation turned to the woman’s personal life, how did she respond (19)?

She changed the subject to worship.

Why is worship a good topic if you want to change the conversation?

How did Jesus deal with the worship question? How did he keep the conversation moving where he wanted it to go?

4. Why did Jesus tell the woman he was the Messiah?

How often did Jesus state his identity so clearly?

Depends on which gospel you read. In Mark, Jesus’ identity is a mystery – nobody can figure him out and he is not telling. In John, he frequently stated his identity.

5. How did being in community with the Father and the Holy Spirit help Jesus?

How does our faith help us?

6. How did Jesus’ connection with the Father and Holy Spirit affect the way he related to other people?

The disciples?

The Samaritan people?

What can we learn from the way Jesus’ faith overflowed into kindness toward others?

7. Group reflection...

How is the mission of our group similar to the mission of Jesus?

What is our mission with non-group members?

Serving and inviting.

How well are we doing with this mission?

† **The big question** If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.

Jesus was effective because he was invested in three communities.

Which of level of community is weakest for you...

a. your connection with God?

b. spiritual friendships with other believers?

c. allowing your faith to influence your interactions with non-believers?

Resources

Bible notes

- The Samaritans were descendants of the nation of Israel, which once had Samaria as its capital. When their land was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC, the people intermarried, thus “polluting” their Jewish bloodline. Relations between Judah and Israel were uneasy from the start, but the tension increased once the Samaritans embraced the foreign invaders.
- The woman’s question in verse 20 refers to an old feud between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews denied the Samaritans access to the Temple that was re-built around 520, so the Samaritans constructed a rival Temple on Mt. Gerizim. The Jews destroyed the Samaritan Temple in 128 BC (not exactly a gesture of peace!), but the Samaritans continued to worship at the ruins.
- Relationships were so bad between Jews and Samaritans during Jesus’ day that some Jews would go miles out of their way to avoid Samaritan territory. There could be significance to the fact that Jesus chose to travel through Samaria.

Prayer ideas

Thank God for the relationship you enjoy with him.

Thank God for people who encourage your faith and pray for your peers.

Ask God to show you people your group needs to serve.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Option 1 – bring craft supplies and decorate your grocery boxes to be given to Headstart families on Dec. 13.

Option 2 – Set up a taste test. Give participants small samples of bottled water, tap water, and sugar water, but don’t let them know which is which. Ask which one they like best – sample A, B, or C.

Read John 4:4-15 aloud.

What kind of water was Jesus offering the woman?

How does Jesus provide living water today? How can we be in touch with this living water? How does Jesus change us for the better?

Pray for faith to choose Jesus over less refreshing alternatives.



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LIFE Group Guide

John 4 – Three communities

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **like Jesus, we each need three communities in order to be faithful.**

John 4 gives us a look at how Jesus interacted with outsiders. He meets a woman who has limited knowledge of God, and he launches a conversation that leads to new faith for her entire village. The sermon and this guide both suggest that his relationship with God drew him to other believers and energized his love for strangers.

Leadership tip: What is your group’s mission? This discussion is about mission – how loving God leads us into loving community with one another, and then together we serve others. This would be a great time to re-focus the group’s energy toward your mission. Pull out your covenant as a reminder or find a copy at collegehills.org.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What was your Halloween costume?
- ❖ Talk about your plans for grocery boxes for Headstart families.
 - If each group will take at least 3 boxes, we should have enough for all of our guests.
 - Grocery lists and boxes are in the lobby at College Hills.
 - Your group can decorate the boxes or leave them plain.
 - You have until Dec. 10 to return the full boxes to College Hills.
- ❖ What do you say when you share an elevator with someone who is obviously different from you?