

Engage Encourage Equip Enjoy

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we ponder these four words today, help us to be ever aware of how we engage others as we witness to them of You, encourage others in their daily struggles, equip others for service through the study of Your Word, and enjoy the gift of salvation. Bless our time as we study Your Word and apply it to our daily lives. In His name we pray. Amen.

For a moment, ponder the four words we have used as our theme. Think of a common denominator, something that ties them all together. _____

I thought of the word “service,” encompassing so many facets of our life in Christ — who showed the greatest example. In our study, we take a look at how He skillfully served others using these four E’s: engage, encourage, equip, and enjoy.

Look up **Matthew 20:28**. What does Jesus say He came to do in this passage? _____

A. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.
²⁸even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

A familiar account that shows how Jesus used these tools of service is that of the woman at the well. Look up **John 4:1–39**.

Note to the Leader: It is not necessary to read the entire account before proceeding.

⁴Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ²(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), ³he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” ¹³Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” ¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” ¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.” ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” ²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” ³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”

Jesus is traveling the short route to the Galilee area through the much-despised Samaria. This whole trip was light years more than just a chance encounter at high noon on a dusty road. Our Savior saw an opportunity to make an impact on many people’s lives at a well in Samaria. For some background, read **John 4:1–5**. It appears that, not wishing to have a premature run in with the Pharisees, Jesus decided to leave that area of Judea and travel back to Galilee – perhaps part of his reasoning to leave when He did and to travel to Samaria.

¹Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ²(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), ³he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

No self-respecting Jew would ever be caught going through that area, though it was the most direct route. This watered-down, diluted bunch of Jews called Samaritans had intermarried with foreigners and were now labeled as a corrupt, despised people. Jesus had a mission to complete here. He would use four E’s of service to change the life of one who was labeled as the lowest of the low. In doing so, He enabled an outcast of society to become a powerful witness.

What was Jesus’ physical state as He sat beside this well? Read **John 4:6**. _____

A. He was weary.

⁶Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Setting the scene: Jesus sits beside the well, most likely in the heat of the day. Putting weariness aside, He begins to engage this solitary woman who has come at a time she hoped would allow her time alone, without the rude stares and words of others.

Reading **verse 7**, how does Jesus *engage* this woman? _____

A. He asks her for a drink.

⁷A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

In the asking, He is drawing a reply from her as a tool to then *equip* her. How does she answer in **verse 9**? _____

A. “How is it that you a Jew would ask a drink of me a woman of Samaria?”

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

This would not be thought to be a noble act of service for Jesus, a Jew, to associate with someone from Samaria – much less a woman of such low esteem, one scorned by others and who no doubt feels her unworthiness to even look upon Him.

How does Jesus further *engage* and also *equip* her in **verse 10**? _____

A. “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.”

¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

Although it is clear this woman does not understand, Jesus gently enlightens her by teaching her about the spiritual thirst that only He can quench and, even though she is asking about temporal thirst, she wants this clear, refreshing drink.

How is that evident in **verse 15**? _____

A. She asks, “Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water again.”

¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Jesus then *encourages* her by giving her a simple, yet very complex, command. What is that in **verse 16**? _____

A. “Go call your husband and come here.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

Jesus knows her situation, but in this simple question He is doing much: He reveals to her the knowledge of Who He is. As He elicits out of her the truth of her condition, He also reveals Who He really is. As He exposes her sinful life, she can do little. She looks down and scuffs the dirt with her toes in the gritty, powdery Samaritan clay. Seeing the small puffs of dirty clay play around her feet, with a downcast spirit she replies, “I have no husband.”

As our Servant Savior Jesus exposes the sin in our lives, we too can do little but look down, scuff our feet in the dirty filth of our sin and feel the grit. It covers not only our feet, but also settles on our entire being. The Ten Commandments, written on those tablets of stone long ago, show us our guilt and shame.

While Jesus continues to equip her, He reveals to her His knowledge of her entire life.

Celebrating this year the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the diamond anniversary of LWML, we note that the very cornerstone of our Lutheran doctrine comes to play here. This woman does nothing to receive this gift of salvation. It comes to her at this moment in the form of the God Man Christ, her Redeemer.

We do nothing as well; we do not deserve the gift of salvation. God gives it to us through Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. We do nothing; it is simply there. We can, however, reject this gift, just as the woman at the well could have run away to find her latest partner, therefore rejecting Christ. We cannot even reach out by our power to receive this gift of salvation.

Who calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us and keeps us in the true faith? See The Third Article of *The Small Catechism* in *LSB*, page 323; *LW*, pages 301–302. _____

A. **The Holy Spirit.**

“In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.” (See reference above.)

This life-saving gift of faith comes through the work of the Holy Spirit.

When this Samaritan woman admits that she knows a Messiah is coming who will explain everything, what statement does Jesus make that amazes her? See **verse 26**. _____

A. "I am He who speaks!"

²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

That the Savior of the world would take a moment to meet this lowly woman – engage her, equip her with the knowledge of her sin, reveal His true identity, encourage her in her newfound faith – shows true servanthood. He does the same through His Word and Sacraments for us who feel this inadequacy.

He uses these four E's in our lives as we attend worship weekly and study His Word on a daily basis. We receive encouragement as we take and eat His true body and drink His true blood in the Holy Sacrament. We confess we are by nature sinful and unclean and deserve eternal punishment. We look down at the grit and filth in our lives. Then, as we look up, we hear the priceless words of absolution: "Your sins are forgiven." What a weight drops from our shoulders. What joy!

Read **verses 28–30**. What does this woman do which shows her *enjoyment* at meeting her Lord and Savior? _____

A. She goes quickly into town and tells others of her find.

²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.

When we encounter our Lord and Savior, we, as this woman, cannot help but tell others of the joy we find in our salvation. It is then we find working for our Lord a divine opportunity of service.

Spend several minutes sharing ways in which your congregation and LWML unit will use these four E's this year to reach out and serve. _____

A. Answers will vary.

Closing

Note to the Leader: In order to bring group's focus back to the study and tie it to the plans made, it will be helpful to read the following summary prior to prayer:

Jesus' coming to Engage, Encourage and Equip sinners like the Samaritan woman – like us – putting weariness, past conflicts, and the Samaritan woman's question in v. 9 aside, enables us to do the same, with (En)joyous results (v. 39). The power of God's Gospel message working in and through us to heal the separation caused by our sins, we serve the Lord with gladness!

The Lord's Prayer. Sing or say together "Lord, Help us Walk Your Servant Way" (*LSB* #857) OR "Almighty Father, Bless the Word" (*LSB* #923; *LW* #216; *TLH* #52).

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