



# Engage! Encourage! Equip! Enjoy!

By Betty Marshner

## 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 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**.

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.

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**. \_\_\_\_\_

**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? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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? \_\_\_\_\_

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? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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 Samarian 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 the Reformation and the diamond anniversary of LWML, we note that 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. \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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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? \_\_\_\_\_

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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. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Closing

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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