

The Woman at the Well: Insta-GIG

Today we are talking about being bridge builders. We are InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and we believe that Jesus is the best bridge builder in history. In Jesus' time, there were lots of divisions and resentments, not unlike what we experience today. Let's see what we can learn from Jesus in a famous story from the Bible in John chapter 4, depicted in this artwork. *[Hand out copies of the Insta-GIG]*

Jesus is all about living in God's love and power, and sharing that with others. Where everyone else sees the walls and boundaries between people, Jesus moves in God's power and love to break down these barriers.

At this time, Jews and Samaritans are enemies. They have a long history of division and resentment, and they avoid social interaction at all costs... but not Jesus. He wants to teach his disciples to lean on God's power to engage with others from separate communities. In order to do this, he intentionally takes them into Samaritan territory and models for them how to interact with those whom they had been taught to hate and fear.

When Jesus arrives in Samaria, he first meets a Samaritan woman who has a broken heart. She is alone at the well, drawing water. He asks her for a drink, and she is **shocked** and says: *[Point to woman with her hand in the air]*

"You are Jewish and I am a Samaritan Woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"

Jesus says that he is offering **living water**, for those who are thirsty. She is interested. And Jesus replies: *[Point to water coming out of Jesus' mouth]*

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I gave them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

To her surprise, Jesus reveals that he knows about her 5 previous marriages and the pain in her life that has caused her **broken heart**. He says to her: *[Point to her purple heart with the 5 scars]*

"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband."

The woman is amazed and intrigued that Jesus knows about her life, so she begins to ask more spiritual questions. Instead of judging her pain, Jesus reveals that he is the **Messiah**, the one who has come to restore all things. The woman tells Jesus: *[Point to the halo of living water around Jesus' head]*

"I know that the Messiah is coming...when he comes, he will tell us all things."

And he replies:

"I who speak to you am he."

The woman embraces his healing and his living water, and her scars are transformed by his love and power. She is so moved by his forgiveness and love, that she rushes back to her **town** to declare: *[Point to the crowds]*

"Come and meet a man who told me all I have ever done."

Her joy of this new living water overflows to the whole village, and they all become followers of Jesus. The woman experiences personal **healing** as she shares about Jesus with her town. *[Point to her healed red heart on the right]*

"Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did'."

Meanwhile the **disciples** are silent. Because they are not willing to cross cultural barriers, they've missed out on what Jesus was trying to show them.

[Point to the disciples at the bottom left corner]

"Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that we was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking to her?'"

This story ends in healing for the woman, restored community for the town, and noticeable silence from the disciples.

- Which characters do you relate with most? Where do you see yourself in this story?
- Where are you experiencing thirst/scars on your heart?
- What would it take for you to share your story with Jesus?