

Honoring the Body



Intergenerational

About this Setting

Bringing together people of all ages gives each person the opportunity to learn from others and to share something of value. In these activities, celebrate the uniqueness of each person and have some fun doing physical things together. For children, this may be a great opportunity to get to know the adults of the church and begin to have conversations with them. For the adults, the children's faith and energy are strong reminders of the joy of faith.

About this Faith Practice

Honoring the body means choosing a life of wholeness, holiness, and joy. In a time when the body is idealized or objectified—often, disrespected—people of faith claim its God-made nature and its potential to express itself as spiritual treasure. Although created in the image of God, every culture and generation expresses different understandings of adornment and beauty, but all experience the effects of time. Honoring one's body and empowering others to honor theirs means, ethically and theologically, creating a space stretching across barriers of culture, ability, gender, sexuality, and age. Through Jesus, God is embodied in human form and we discern the power and importance of touch, hygiene, and health. Through Jesus, we experience our humanness as personal and communal and physical and spiritual. Honoring this incarnational experience, we learn to see all persons as graceful and beautiful. We discover the importance of Sabbath. This practice addresses these issues while allowing participants to explore how they understand their own bodies as gifts from God.

Intergenerational Options

These activities may be used to build an intergenerational event (up to three hours) for the commencement or conclusion of your series “Honoring the Body.” They could also be used independently (15–20 minutes each), interwoven with age-specific activities throughout the series. An intergenerational event might be used during a time of year that is already set aside as special, such as Advent, Kwanzaa, Lent, vacation Bible school, or forty days of prayer for children. Familiarize yourself with all twelve activities, four each from “Exploring and Engaging,” “Discerning and Deciding,” and “Sending and Serving.” Consider the age of participants and the time available for this event and choose a group of activities that will meet your needs.

For an event lasting one to two hours, choose three or four activities from the twelve. There are enough activities for three or four events. You could also choose a single activity (15–30 minutes) to use as the activity at a community meal or other gathering. Wearing name tags at events is a good idea, as often older and younger members of a church do not know one another’s names.

Gather as a church family to grow together and have fun!

Explorations



Discovery: In this Exploration we encounter the practice and look at how it intersects with human needs in community and personal life.



Scripture: Christian faith practices grow out of the biblical story of the people of faith. For each faith practice, twelve Bible stories (two for each Exploration) inform and give direction to practicing our faith.



Discipleship: Discipleship is about following. In this Exploration we consider what prompts people of faith to become disciples and probe how the Spirit leads us in the communal life of the Christian community and in our personal lives in the world.



Christian Tradition: Practices of faith have been shaped by those who have preceded us in the history of the Christian church. The future will be shaped by the way we practice our faith today. Just as a map provides the landmarks we need to follow when we navigate in the world, this rich history of the Christian tradition guides us as we practice our faith today.



Context and Mission: In order to claim a role in the mission God gives to the church, you have to know where you are, your local context. In the Context and Mission Exploration we consider ways to practice faith in our community and world.



Future and Vision: Practicing our faith leads us into the future. We seek to move into the future with a vision of where we are headed. In the Future and Vision Exploration we consider what impels us into the future. We know that we are still practicing our faith; we won’t do it perfectly. We are empowered to keep practicing.

Exploring & Engaging Activities

Whether we are new to a particular faith practice or an old hand with much experience, all of us benefit from new opportunities to explore the shape of the faith practice and to engage the issues of faith that the practice offers. Sometimes this is a matter of learning new ideas about the practice. Sometimes this is more about reflecting on what we have done in our practice. The activities in Exploring and Engaging help us figure out how a faith practice intersects with our life and the life of the community of faith. (Activities 1, 2, 10, 11)

Discerning & Deciding Activities

Practicing our faith always involves discernment: naming the realities of our community and world and seeking the will of God for our lives and for the world. We then decide how we will act, what we will do, what values move us forward, what faith has called us to do. These activities give us opportunity to practice by discerning and deciding. (Activities 3, 4, 6, 7)

Sending & Serving Activities

Practicing our faith involves serving others and being sent out as empowered disciples of Jesus Christ. We need time in our exploration to plan how we will serve. We need moments that send us forth blessed by the community from which we venture out. These activities offer opportunities to practice our faith through sending and serving. (Activities 5, 8, 9, 12)

Intergenerational Leader Preparation

As you prepare yourself to help guide an intergenerational event, what are some of your concerns? List these. Do you need or want to recruit people to help you with these challenges? When you think of honoring the body God has given you, what do you celebrate? What are you not too certain about? Your joys and concerns may be similar to those of participants in your group. They may be very different. It is helpful as a leader to be aware of what your experiences and feelings are as you lead the group. It is important to be aware of other viewpoints and life experiences. How well do you know the majority of those you believe will participate? Getting name tags could be helpful for you and for them to help create familiarity. Invite several spiritual leaders in the congregation to pray with you in advance of this event and during it, that each person may sense the wonder and gift of his or her own body and the body of others as well.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Psalm 71

Exodus 3:1-12

John 4:1-42

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

Luke 7:36-50

Matthew 22:34-40

Hebrews 12:1-2

Prayer: God who created me and each person who will come, fill us with your Spirit. Help us to be aware of you, of one another, and of your hopes and dreams for us and all of your people. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Exploration: Discovery

1 Make Human Statues (Easy Preparation) (Exploring & Engaging)

Leader preparation: Think about how many learners you anticipate coming to your session. Decide in advance whether to break into groups of four to six people to work separately on portions of this scripture, or to work as a total group to create human statues that illustrate the sections of Psalm 71. A reader reads the section, and then the participants work together to use their bodies to stand or sit or pose in another way to show or demonstrate what the scripture says. No one moves for a moment or two once the sculpture is completed. The seven suggested sections of Psalm 71 are verses 1–3, 4–8, 9–13, 14–16, 17–18, 19–21, and 22–24. You may choose to divide Psalm 71 differently, or to do only a few of these sections depending on the time available to you and your group’s interest level.

Supplies:

- Bibles

Either as a total group or in small groups, ask each group to select a sculptor or someone who will help guide the group to stand, sit, or pose in such a way that they demonstrate an interpretation of their assigned verses. Be sure each group has a Bible or their scripture printed out. You may want to show the total group an example, such as the story of the birth of Jesus. Someone could pose as a baby. Joseph might be holding him. Mary might be resting. Someone could be a cow or a sheep or angel. Those in the sculpture hold the pose. Ask each group to read their scripture and work on their sculpture for about ten minutes. Each group then presents its sculpture to the total group as their scripture is read out loud. If your total group is working together, choose three or four of the passages or more. You may want to invite different people to be the chief sculptor.

2 You Got to Be in Pictures! (Exploring & Engaging)

Leader preparation: Read Genesis 2:5–25. Consider for a moment the uniqueness of the creation of man and woman. In the first story of creation in Genesis 1:27, God even identifies man and woman as being made in God’s own image. Activity 2 is designed to have fun and celebrate the beauty of our bodies and of creation itself, if weather is permitting. Gather several inexpensive digital cameras. Cameras with film are also a possibility, but they do not allow you to have immediate results and there is a cost to print the pictures. You may be surprised how many young children are already very good at taking pictures. Before publishing any photos in any form you must have signed permission from those in the photo or the parents/guardians/caregivers of minor children and youth. This is important in order to protect those in your group who should not be publicly photographed for safety reasons or due to caregivers’ concerns.

Supplies:

- Bible or children’s Bible storybook
- several inexpensive digital cameras; a couple of video cameras could be used as an alternative
- (optional) computer

Talk with the learners about some of the things they create. What are those things? Help them think of everything from school art to kitchen recipes to workbench

projects, everything from art to music to poetry to journal entries. Ask them how they feel about some of the special things they have made. Do they keep them? Hang them up? Share them? Give them away? Read Genesis 2:5–25. Talk about how God may feel about creation. Ask: *How do you think God particularly feels about men and women and children? In what ways are we God's special artwork?*

Invite the group to get into pairs or small groups, depending on the number of digital cameras available. Each pair or small group is to take photos of each other. Encourage them to smile, dance, pose, make faces, frown, stand like statues, or do any kind of pose. If it is a nice day outside and you have a safe area with no traffic that has clear boundaries, you may want to go outside and add some of God's other creations in the photo. As an alternative, use a couple of video cameras and have each person shoot a short piece.

If possible, while you continue with another activity, have someone—possibly a few of your teens—download the photos into a PowerPoint presentation. This can be used at the end of your session. If caregivers are accepting of the photos being used in worship, this could be a great piece to share a little bit of what your group has been doing together.



Exploration: Scripture



③ Take Off Your Shoes (Easy Preparation) (Discerning & Deciding)

Leader preparation: Be sure you have an open area where everyone can safely play. If you have individuals who are not physically able to play, invite them to cheer, coach, and encourage and/or time the group. If your group is larger than ten participants, you may want to break up into groups with four to six people of mixed ages for conversation.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- open area

Ask the group: *Who created our bodies? What does God hope we will do with our bodies?* Talk with the group about how important it is for us to use our bodies to do God's work. Explain that right now, as you talk with them, you are using your voice to help others grow closer to God. Ask all to think about one part the body they have used to help themselves or others know God. List their ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard, and talk about them.

In Exodus 3:1–12, God talks with Moses and asks for his help to free the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. Read the story to the group. You may want to use an illustrated children's Bible if you prefer it for your group. God tells Moses to take off his shoes or sandals, for where he is with God is holy ground. God doesn't tell Moses to take off his feet or get off the land, God just tells him to be aware that talking with God and following God is an honor. It is holy and sacred and very important.

As we use our bodies to help God, we can serve others and help them just like

Moses did. We can use our voices, our ears, our hands, our feet, our heads, and more.

Invite the group to enjoy helping each other to take off their shoes. Each person takes off another's shoes and put them in a common pile in the middle of your room. Tell the group the goal of this game is to find another person's shoes and help him or her to get them on. You are not allowed to get your own shoes, and you may not put on your own shoes; you must get someone else's shoes and help him or her. Time the group to see how quickly everyone can get his or her shoes back on.

When finished, ask some of the following questions:

- What made this easy?
- What made it hard?
- How did it feel to help someone else put on shoes?
- How did it feel to have someone put on shoes for you?



4 Exploring What We Need (Discerning & Deciding)

Leader preparation: Prepare an imaginary well for acting out the scripture. Read through the attachment in the supply list. You will need “The Public Fountain” by Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Consider the options you have to experience water together. Do you have an indoor fountain to run in your room, a fountain you can walk to in your sanctuary or outside, or other kinds of bowls or glasses you could use to bring water to your group? Familiarize yourself with the scripture if you have not already done so.

Supplies:

- “Woman at the Well,” Attachment: Activity 4
- artwork: “The Public Fountain” by Manuel Alvarez Bravo, https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1033816467?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=37962&store_id=1401
- bowls with water or a small fountain in your room (or go outside to a larger fountain if one is available)
- glasses for each person to have a drink
- “Water for All,” http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=action_what_water_main
- (optional) pool

Prepare for the scripture drama of John 4:1–42 in Attachment: Activity 4 by picking a reader, the Samaritan woman, Jesus, the disciples, and the villagers. Designate the spots for the well and the village. Encourage the group to think about what each person in the story is physically needing or wanting to help take care of their bodies as you act out the scripture. See Attachment: Activity 4 for directions.

When finished, talk about what Jesus needed. What did the woman need? How about the disciples and the villagers? Discuss how important it is to give the body water, food, and rest. Show the group the artwork “The Public Fountain” by Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Discuss what each person sees the child doing. Imagine together where the child lives. Ask some of the following questions:

- How often do you think this child comes here to drink?
- Does the child have to walk a long way or a short way to get to the foun-

tain?

- Is the water clean and healthy for the child to drink?
- What happens to our bodies when we don't get enough water?

"More than a billion people worldwide lack clean water, and more than 2.1 million people, most of them children, die each year from waterborne disease. Water cannot be taken for granted." (Church World Service website) Investigate the CWS website "Water for All." Download "Worship with the World: Water," and use some of the resources for worship with the group.

Talk about things that are good for the body that are connected to water. Either in your room, or in another part of the building, or outside, enjoy touching, drinking, and possibly entering water. This activity could easily be connected with a swimming party for your group.

Invite the group to write its own benediction. Write their ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard and work together on composing the prayer. It may be as simple as "Go. You are not alone. God is always with you." Let the group's benediction be your closing prayer.



Exploration: Discipleship



5 Follow the Leader (Easy Preparation) (Sending & Serving)

Leader preparation: Arrange for a space where your group can run and jump and make noise without disturbing others for the last part of this activity. If the weather permits, this could be a great outside activity. If you have participants with mobility restrictions or concerns, be certain to pick an area that allows them to participate as much as possible.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- open play area

Jesus was called Rabbi. This means that he was a teacher. When he chose his disciples, he wanted them to learn to do the things he did and tell people some of the same stories he did. A disciple means "one who follows or learns." There is an old blessing among ancient Jews, "May you walk in the dust of your rabbi." What they meant by that is that they wanted you to be so close to your rabbi or teacher and what he taught that if you were walking, you would be covered by the dust kicked up by his heels. A disciple was and is someone who follows another person and seeks to think and act as he or she would. Christians are called to be disciples of Jesus.

Jesus taught many people. One man was Jairus. Read about him in Mark 5:21–24 and 35–43. *What were some things Jesus taught Jairus?* When you have discussed this, invite the group to play Follow the Leader in an open space, if it is available. *What are some things Jesus and his disciples did with their bodies? Did they run, jump, laugh, skip, go fishing, sleep, and so forth?* Encourage a wide variety of motions and rotate who is the leader.

Close with a prayer: *Teach us to be your disciples. With every part of our bodies—our arms, our legs, our minds, our toes, our hearts, and everything—help us to follow you. Amen.*

6 Find the Way (Easy Preparation) (Discerning & Deciding)

Leader preparation: Be sure that you have an open area and that participants who are not physically able to participate are included by giving appropriate guidance to the group.

Supplies:

- Bibles

Depending on the size of your group, you may do this as a total group or break into groups of eight to ten for safety and ease. Have the group(s) make a large circle. Have everyone raise his or her left hand (help younger children, if needed) and put that left hand in the middle. Ask them all to hold hands with someone in the circle, not directly next to them. Repeat with the right hand, and be sure to hold hands with a different person, who is not directly next to them. Working together, untie the knot until you have returned to your circle.

When finished read Matthew 22:34–40. Ask some of the following questions for discussion in small groups of six to eight.

- How did the group show love to one another as you worked together?
- Was everyone included?
- How did differences in opinion on how to untie the knot get resolved?
- How well did you keep everyone involved and engaged?

As we seek to be disciples who follow Jesus' ways and we invite others to become disciples of Jesus, how we work together to solve problems and create new things will either help draw others closer to Jesus or it could make it harder for them to see him in his followers.

Depending on your time and age groups present, you might also discuss ways your church works together to bring new disciples to Jesus. In what ways do you do this well? If you do not do this well, what are some barriers to welcoming others?

If time permits, you may want to make another human knot and see how well you can work together to untie it after your discussion.



Exploration: Christian Tradition

7 Lean on Me (Discerning & Deciding)

Leader preparation: Depending on the length and depth you want for this activity, you may want to recruit biblical characters to come dressed in costume. Each can take 2–5 minutes to tell his or her story of faith. Each one could encourage the group to use their lives well to serve God and promise to cheer them on. Choose characters whose stories are most relevant to where your group is today. If you choose to have characters, be sure to have them cheer on the group as they do the Lean on Me activity.

Supplies:

- Bible

- (optional) people dressed as characters, such as Abraham, Noah, Ruth, Moses, Mary, Peter, Lydia, Paul, and so forth to tell a short part of their story of faith
- (optional) song: “Lean on Me” by Bill Withers, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPoTGyWT0Cg&feature=related>

Ask the group how many have ever been in a race or competition. How many of them have ever cheered a runner or competitor in a game? In Hebrews, in the Christian Scriptures or New Testament, we are told that we are cheered throughout our lives and encouraged by people of faith who have gone before us. They ran their race of faith well in their lives, and they want for us to do so, too. Read Hebrews 12:1–2.

Either have people come in dressed in biblical costumes to share their story of faith and encouragement, or have a variety of people read the following passages about some people in the book of Hebrews 11:4; 11:5–6; 11:8–12; 11:23–29, or ones you choose.

In small groups of six to eight, ask each group to name some things these biblical characters have taught us about how to live our faith today. Ask the small groups to talk about the idea of people going before them cheering them on. Who are the biblical characters and others they know who have gone before, whose lives encourage them now?

If members have knee or back issues, encourage them to cheer the group during this activity. Invite either the small groups or the total group to join together in a circle holding hands. Remind them that what we know about the faith and what we share with one another, such as the Bible, worship practices, and the church itself, are all because we lean on God and we lean on the foundations laid by those who have gone before us. We lean on one another, too. Ask the group to drop hands and take one step in until they are shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone turn to the right. They will most likely need to take another side step into the circle to make it tighter. Explain that if everyone works together (this works even when some are small and some are large), participants can all sit on one another’s knees and support one another. On the count of one, each person begins to bend his or her knees as though going to sit. On the count of two, each one goes down further. On three, each person should be sitting on the person behind him or her. This may take a few times for the group to adjust and learn that each person is solidly in front of the person behind him or her. Have fun with this, and be sure to have those in costume cheering. If you read the passages, remind the group that they are being cheered on by those who have gone before.

You may want to play the song “Lean on Me” while the group stands in a closing circle. Share a prayer together, thanking God for all the people throughout the years who have passed on their faith and experiences to us and thanking God for each person who helped to make today’s activities great!

8 Anoint One Another (Sending & Serving)

Leader preparation: Get a vial of anointing oil or a small bowl with water. You may also want to talk with your pastor or other church leader to have them be part of the anointing experience.

Supplies:

- anointing oil or small bowl with water
- Bible

Anointing is a gift that helps to prepare someone for a new commitment or time of life. In Luke 7:36–50 a woman anointed Jesus for his ministry and work. She understood he needed to be loved and encouraged. Read the Luke passage together. How do the learners imagine Jesus felt about being anointed? How did the woman feel about being given the opportunity to anoint Jesus?

Ask the group to stand in a circle. Invite the learners to anoint and be anointed by one other. Be open to some learners choosing not to participate. Invite one of the participants to help you demonstrate. It will encourage others to participate if they see you anoint and be anointed first. Show the group how to use the anointing oil or water to make the sign of the cross on the back of the person's hand or on her or his forehead. Encourage them to say something like, "I anoint you to follow Jesus," as they draw the sign of the cross. As an alternative, one or two people could anoint all of the others. Close this activity by saying the Prayer of Jesus together.



Exploration: Context and Mission

9 Gather Food (Sending & Serving)

Leader preparation: Prior to gathering, invite learners to bring nonperishable food to the event. You will also be doing a food scavenger hunt to help to collect food for those in need. Be certain you have enough adults to provide supervision for the food scavenger hunt. If possible, do the hunt on foot. You may want to give each group a specific area where they can gather food, so homes are not visited more than once. If you will need cars for transportation, be certain you have enough seat belts for each person, as well as car seats for younger learners.

Supplies:

- (optional) maps of designated areas for each group
- (optional) cards or brochures with the name, address, and phone number of your church for identification
- marker and newsprint or whiteboard

Talk with the group about what our bodies need to grow. One item listed will be food. Explain that in your city there are people who go to bed hungry at night. You may want to talk with your local food bank in advance to find out the number of people in your area who are hungry. In some places around the world, and perhaps in your city, there are people who are starving. God asks us to help those in need. Today you will help to collect food for your local food bank.

Divide the group into groups of four to six people. You will want to keep the size manageable for the sake of safety. Each group has a designated time to collect as much food as they can to go along with any food they have brought. Be sure to go over how to ask for the food, letting people know who your group is and where the food will be going. You might give each group a supply of calling cards or brochures that identify your church. Whether or not the people give, be sure to say thank you for their time and/or their donation. As you go out into the community, it is important to remember that you represent God. You may meet people who need your help in some way. Be open to opportunities that occur. When the groups return, ask each group to stack their food and create some kind of statue or creation. As they stack, ask them to count how many items they collected.

On newsprint or a whiteboard write the number of items each group collected and add the total together. When we all work together, we can help so much more than we can on our own.

Give thanks to God for all those who gave food and for those who will be helped with the food you have collected.

10 **Where Are We Now? (Easy Preparation) (Exploring & Engaging)**

Leader preparation: Provide a piece of newsprint and marker for each group of six to eight participants that you will have.

Supplies:

- marker and newsprint for each small group.

This activity is best done inside. If you prefer to be outside, questions will need to be altered to include specific parts of your area, such as roads, trees, and so forth. After your group gathers, and after you have done at least one other activity, break the group into small groups of six to eight people. Ask them to stand in a circle. Invite each person to close his or her eyes. Ask them to keep their eyes closed as they answer the following questions about your space in their small groups. With their eyes closed they will need to learn to take turns speaking without visual cues. Questions could include these:

- How many doors does this room have?
- How many fire extinguishers are in the room, and where are they placed?
- How many windows are there?
- Is there a water source? If so, what is it?
- What are some potential hazards or dangerous things in the room?

Add additional questions, if you like.

Invite the group to open their eyes. Review the questions together. How accurate were they with their answers? As we seek to care for the bodies God has given us and to care for others, we need to be aware of what is around us and them. What resources might help? What are potential dangers? Talk in small groups about some of the ways the space you are in could be made safer or more flexible for learning. Can people who have difficulty walking enter? Can those who have trouble hearing have hearing assistance? Is there good lighting for those whose eyes may not be strong? Does the furniture help with activities? Is the temperature well controlled? and so forth. Ask each group to come up with a list of three to six things about your room that are great and three to six things that could be better. Ask them to write their answers on newsprint and then share with the total group.

Close with a prayer thanking God for the space you have and the wisdom to use it well and make improvements if they are needed.



Exploration: Future and Vision

⑩ Moving Bubbles Together (Exploring & Engaging)

Leader preparation: If you have a group of more than ten, you may want to break up into groups of four to six to talk about the questions. If you do so, be sure to mix age groups as much as possible. Determine how many participants you will have and get enough bubble bottles with wands for each group of ten to have at least two. You may want to purchase the small bottles used at weddings so everyone can have a bottle to blow bubbles at the end together.

Supplies:

- Bible
- bubbles and bubble wands
- two hula hoops or more, depending on the size of your group

It is recorded in Matthew 22:34–40 that Jesus told the synagogue leaders what the most important law for them to follow was. Ask the group if anyone knows what Jesus said. Read Matthew 22:34–40 together, even if the answer has been given. Part of loving others is learning how to work together. Sometimes that is easy to do, and sometimes it is difficult. Ask these or similar questions:

- What are some things that make it easy to work with others?
- What are some things that make it difficult?
- If they had a choice, would they join a group that was easy to work with, or would they go to a group that was harder to work with?
- Why would they choose the group they chose?

When the discussion is finished, ask each person to find a partner. Then ask those partners to pick another set of partners. Repeat this until you have four or five sets of partners (eight to ten people) in a group. Designate a 6- to 8-foot space and ask each group to line up at one end. On the opposite end have someone hold up a hula hoop. You will need one hula hoop for each group. Each group receives two bottles of bubbles and wands. (You may want a spare bottle just in case one is dropped.) Each set of partners must blow as many bubbles as they need to work together to blow a bubble through the hula hoop on the other side. The next set of partners in the group begins to blow bubbles and blow them toward the hula hoop only after the first set of partners has succeeded. See how quickly each group can succeed at this task. After you play once, you may want to ask the “winning” group what helped them succeed and what made it more difficult. If time permits, try the activity again with the new information.

Give thanks for each other and the joy of using your bodies. You may want to finish by blowing bubbles and enjoying them together.



⑪ Whom Do We Love? (Sending & Serving)

Leader preparation: Take time to really study the artwork “Golden Rule” by Norman Rockwell. Whom do you see in this picture that may be hard for you to love? How does your own faith challenge you to go beyond what is easy for you when it comes to loving others? All participants in your group will have prejudices and biases learned in their homes. Some will be aware of these and others will assume they are facts and not biases. Getting the group to talk about

their assumptions about others is a good place to start as you seek to connect them with the commonalities we all have as God's children.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- artwork: "Golden Rule" by Norman Rockwell, <http://www.art.com/products/p9388041612-sa-i5446642/norman-rockwell-golden-rule-do-onto-others-april-1-1961.htm?sorig=cat&sorigid=0&dimvals=5000032&ui=6c6a730242504593a62db31e60ee1963&ssk=norman+rockwell>

Show the group the artwork "Golden Rule" by Norman Rockwell. Ask each person to pick one person in the picture he or she would like to get to know. Invite everyone to tell why he or she chose that particular person in the art. Then ask each to identify anyone in the picture that he or she might not want to know. Talk about each person selected from the picture—if someone was selected. Why did each participant choose that particular person? As you can, talk about their answers and ask how they know the person is scary or mean or not nice, or why that person pictured makes them uncomfortable.

Norman Rockwell created this picture to show people what it might look like if we all did what Jesus taught us to do in Matthew 22:34–40. Read this passage together. Ask the group to think about how Norman Rockwell showed that we should love God and love others. *Why do they think it was so important that Norman Rockwell include so many different kinds of people? As we all try to create a better world, how important is it that we get to know all kinds of people?*

End this activity by having the learners talk to one or more people in the group they do not know well. Exchange names and possibly talk a little bit about how they are connected to your church.

Reflect

How well did the age groups interact? From the oldest to the youngest, were people valued as they spoke and participated? How well did you honor the diversity of each person's physical abilities as you did activities together? In what ways did you feel God present in your midst?

Woman at the Well

John 41–42 Paraphrased

(Identify the location of your pretend well and your village. You may want to use blocks to build a well or put a dark circle on the floor. Choose one person to be Jesus and one to be the woman. Part of your group can be the disciples and part of them the people from the village.)

Some of the people in Judea didn't like the way Jesus was teaching and talking to people. Jesus decided he would leave that area and go to Galilee. The shortest way to walk there was through Samaria. So, even though Jesus had been taught that the Samaritans did not love and serve God the way they should and he should stay away from them, he took his disciples and walked into Samaria.

(Disciples and Jesus walk toward a place in your room where you have a pretend well.)

He came to a town called Sychar. When he saw Jacob's well, a very sacred place to Jews and Samaritans, he realized he was tired. It was really hot. It was about lunchtime. *(Jesus can sigh, mop brow, and so forth.)*

He sent the disciples into town to buy food. *(Disciples head off as Jesus points them away.)*

A Samaritan woman came to the well to get water. *(Woman comes to the well.)* Most of the women came early in the morning, but she came alone late in the day when it was really hot.

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink of water." *(The two converse. Depending on your group, they may repeat after you and create their own inflections, or they simply act out the conversation.)*

She was shocked! "You are a Jew, and you are asking me for water?" She knew Jews and Samaritans never used the same cups and bowls. *(She shows her shock.)*

Jesus answered her, "If you only knew what God wants to give you and who I am, you would ask me for living water."

She said, "But mister, you don't even have anything to lower into this well to get me water! Do you think you can do things no one else has ever done?"

Attachment: Activity 4 *(continued)*

Jesus said, “Look, whoever drinks this water is going to get thirsty again. The water I give will become like a spring inside of a person and will give him or her life that lasts forever.”

The woman said, “Mister, give me that water!”

Jesus talked more with the woman. He talked with her about the things in her life that were hurting her. She was amazed at what he knew about her. *(Disciples begin to re-enter.)*

When the disciples came back, they were shocked! But none of them questioned Jesus. *(Disciples act shocked.)*

The woman was so excited, she left her water jar and ran back to the village. *(Woman runs off toward the village.)* To anyone who would listen she said, “I met a man who told me everything I ever did. Do you think he is the Messiah? Is he the one God is sending to us?”

Many went to meet Jesus. *(People come from the village to Jesus.)* When they heard what he had to teach, they believed his message too. *(They pretend to listen and nod their heads.)*