The background is a dark blue night sky with a starburst of yellow light at the top center. A thin yellow line extends from the starburst towards the text. At the bottom, there is a light blue curved shape representing the horizon, with a dark blue silhouette of a whale swimming. The text is written in a golden-yellow, brush-stroke style font.

For God So Loved
the World
Curriculum

CONTENTS

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD SERIES INTRODUCTION	4
WEEK 1 // “SIGN #1: WATER TO WINE”	6
JOHN 2:1-12	
WEEK 2 // “JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE”	12
JOHN 2:13-25	
WEEK 3 // “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD”	16
JOHN 3:1-21	
WEEK 4 // “HE MUST INCREASE”	20
JOHN 3:22-36	
WEEK 5 // “THE WOMAN AT THE WELL”	24
JOHN 4:1-26	
WEEK 6 // “THE HARVEST IS HERE!”	28
JOHN 4:27-42	
WEEK 7 // “SIGN #2: JESUS HEALS OFFICIAL’S SON”	32
JOHN 4:43-54	

WEEK 2: NOVEMBER 18, 2018

“JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE”
JOHN 2:13-25

UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS

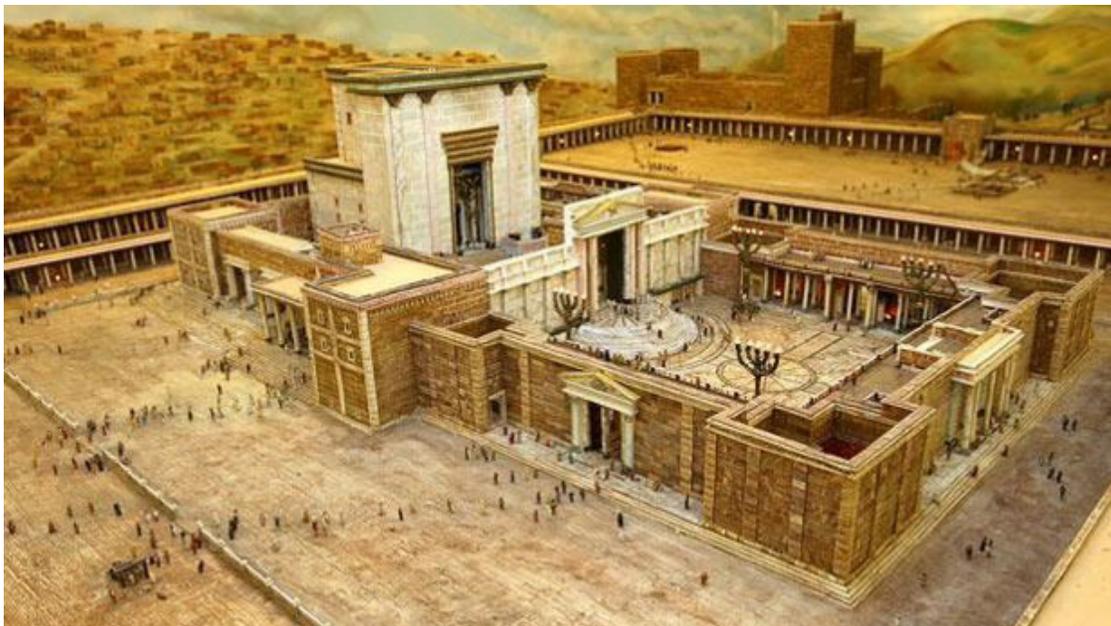
Passover (2:13): Exodus 12 explains this feast. Also called “The Feast of Unleavened Bread,” it is celebrated because of God’s mercy in saving them when the Angel of death took out the entire firstborn of Egypt, humans as well as animals, while He “passed over” the obedient Hebrews.

Temple (2:14): Herod the Great was in the midst of building a great Temple to win the favor of his subjects. It was begun in 19 BC and not finished until 64 AD. Although only half-done when Jesus was there, it was majestic and in full operation.

The Temple (Holy Place) was surrounded by several courts. The innermost court was open only to Jewish men; the next admitted Jewish men and women, and the outermost admitted Gentiles as well as Jews. The Court of the Gentiles was massive at 500 by 300 yards, and it was here that Jesus probably found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

These businesses were essential to the sacrificial system. People who came from far away could not bring animals with them, so they needed to buy them in Jerusalem. The exchanging of money could have easily been done nearby, but outside the Temple. See *the model below*.

My Father’s House (2:16): A Jew might speak of “my Father in heaven” or “our Father in heaven,” but never of “my Father.” But Jesus often referred to God in this familiar way.



A Model of Herod's Temple (<https://revdbrbrian.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/monday-a-question-to-not-answer-a-story-to-not-tell-a-tax-to-not-pay/>)

TALKABOUT //////////////////////////////////////

→→Read John 2: 13-22 as a group. What difference does it make that Jesus, not a building, is our temple; and that access to God is through Him, not through religious ritual?

INVESTIGATE //////////////////////////////////////

Compare the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple of John 2:14-16 with Mark 11:15-18 and Luke 19:45-47. What are the similarities? Are there any differences?

What do the events of verses 13-16 show that Jesus hates?

What does Jesus passionately desire (v. 17)? See Psalm 69:9 for reference. Define zeal. In what ways do believers show zeal in their life? In your life?

Why is the question asked by “the Jews” (that is, the leaders of the Jewish religion) a fair one (v. 18)?

What will be the evidence that Jesus has the authority to dictate matters in the temple (vv. 19-21)?

“...that whoever believes in Him...”

The purpose of giving His Son was to make God's great gift of eternal life available to anyone who personally trusts in Him. Belief is a key concept throughout the book of John. The Greek term is pisteuo, “to believe as true, to trust, to place confidence in.” It's simply this: When one trusts in God's gift rather than his or her own merit, eternal life flows like water. How simple!

“...shall not perish...”

The word “perish” is from the Greek word apolyimi, meaning “to be destroyed, to be utterly lost.” What security!

“...but have eternal life.”

We are destined to die physically. Nothing can halt the process of decay nor prevent the end of physical life; God's grace will not allow death to reign supreme. Life which is eternal, incorruptible, and abundant, is offered to all who will receive it through faith. What grace!

JOHN 3:16 – THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL //////////////////////////////////////

Luther called John 3:16 “the heart of the Bible – the Gospel in miniature.” It's so simple a child can understand it; yet it condenses the deep and marvelous truths of redemption into these few concise words:

“God”	The greatest Lover
“So loved”	The greatest degree
“The world”	The greatest number
“That He gave”	The greatest act
“His only begotten Son”	The greatest gift
“That whosoever”	The greatest invitation
“Believeth”	The greatest simplicity
“In Him”	The greatest Person
“Should not perish”	The greatest deliverance
“But”	The greatest difference
“Have”	The greatest certainty
“Everlasting Life”	The greatest possession

INVESTIGATE //////////////////////////////////////

→→Read John 3:22-36 as a group. What report do John the Baptist's disciples bring to him (vv. 25-26)? What is their concern?

How does John respond to the concern expressed by his disciples (vv. 28-30)? Read John 1:19-23 for further insight.

How did John view himself in relation to Jesus (v. 29)? Read John 1:15 for further insight.

In the ancient Near East, the "friend of the bridegroom" is basically the Best Man and was responsible for putting many elements of the wedding together. Why does John the Baptist use the Best Man to illustrate his feelings about Jesus' eclipsing him in both popularity and ministry?

TUGGING AT THE HEART //////////////////////////////////////

How is pride at the root of all sins? How does the truth (define in your group) help us fight selfishness, greed, lust, anger, jealousy, and other deeds of the flesh?

John the Baptist was bold as a lion and yet humble. How does boldness fit with humility?

4 EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY //////////////////////////////////////

Christ's Example

Read Philippians 2:3-8. How did Paul describe the humility of Christ?

Moses' Example

The Bible states that *“the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth”* (Number 12:3). Imagine being the meekest man on earth! How are meekness and humility similar? Why is meekness NOT weakness?

Ephaphroditus' Example

Ephaphroditus nearly died for the sake of the gospel. Read Philippians 2:22-30. After reading this passage, how was humbleness shown by Ephaphroditus?

Paul's Example

Read Philippians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 15:9; and 1 Timothy 1:15. How was Paul's humility seen in these passages?

SUMMARIZE //////////////////////////////////////

Finally, take another look at verses 31-36. How would you sum up these verses? From these verses how would you describe Jesus? How would you describe God? How would you describe the Holy Spirit?

UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS

John (4:1): Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who was a prophet.

Samaria (4:4): A nation bordering Israel. Jews and Samaritans were ethnically linked, but hated each other.

"Sixth hour" (4:6): About noon. Sunset was the usual time to draw water.

"This mountain" (4:20): Mt. Gerizim, the center of Samaritan worship; their equivalent of the temple in Jerusalem for Jews.

"Talking with a woman" (4:27): The rabbis avoided carrying on conversations with women of their own families, and to do so with any other woman was unheard of.

APPLY

Look back to your answer to **TALKABOUT** at the beginning of our study. Many of these things do provide a measure of satisfaction and identity. But evaluate where they lie on a line between partial and full satisfaction, and a line between temporary and lasting satisfaction. Discuss in your group.

GETTING PERSONAL

What are the patterns in your life? Where do you keep going to find satisfaction and identity? Are the words "if only" used often in your life? What comes after the words "if only?"

God-alternatives provide satisfaction, but only partial and temporary satisfaction. This is why our desires so often draw us deeper into slavery: we need a bigger and bigger fix because we're always left empty. Can you see this pattern in your own life?

WORSHIP DEFINED

How does Jesus define true worship (vv. 20-24)?

ONE FINAL QUESTION

What was the response of the woman when Jesus said, "I who speak to you am He?"

JESUS' LESSON FOR THE DISCIPLES AND US //////////////////////////////////////

→→ Read John 4:31-38. The time between Jesus' discussion with the woman and His ministering to the rest of the town allows us to see why this was included in John's gospel. Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" (v. 4) to redeem this woman, who then brought her town to Christ with her testimony. It was also necessary for the disciples to learn about harvesting souls.

How did the disciples miss the point (vv. 31-33)? What is actually going on?

What harvest was Jesus referring to in verses 34-38?

Jesus impressed on His disciples the urgent need for laborers to harvest souls prepared by the Holy Spirit. The disciples show several attitudes that often keep us from harvesting souls.

1. We are put off by prejudice and bigotry. The disciples saw Jesus talking to a person low on the social ladder. They could not believe it! Fortunately, God doesn't rank people on a scale of worthiness. We are all unworthy of salvation, yet are loved equally by Him.

Do we care about the salvation of some people more than others? How can we not let prejudice or bigotry stop us from sharing the Good News?

2. We are consumed with the mundane details of life. The disciples couldn't stop thinking about food long enough to catch Jesus' excitement. They left Him tired, hungry, and thirsty from travel; they return to find Him with energy. You would think the disciples would pick up on this but they didn't. They were self-serving and shortsighted.

We spend most of our day dealing with the necessities of life: food, schedules, making a living. Can you set aside time and make specific plans to share the Good News at work or with someone with whom you interacted? How does prayer help in making this happen?

3. We are lulled into inaction by the promise of tomorrow. For some reason, when it comes to witnessing for Christ, it is always the wrong time and the wrong place. In this story, the disciples didn't appreciate the urgency of their call. Yet NOW is the time!

Realize the urgency in sharing with others. Read Ecclesiastes 11:4. What is the takeaway from this verse?

We all have a part in the harvest. There is no competition in the Lord's harvest. Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-9. Reflect back to a time when you were a Paul, or an Apollos. How did God use you in this example? Be encouraged!

From the encounter with the Samaritan woman, what did the disciples learn:

a) About Jesus

b) About themselves

c) About their mission

WHY? //////////////////////////////////////

→→Read John 4:39-42

Why would Jesus return home to Galilee even when He knew 4:44 was true? What does this say about His character and His mission (see John 1:11)?

FINAL THOUGHT //////////////////////////////////////

It is interesting to trace Jesus' movements that brought Him to Samaria. He was in Jerusalem (John 2:23) and then came into Judea (John 3:22). From Judea He went to Samaria (John 4:4), and the Samaritans declared Him to be "the Savior of the world." This parallels Acts 1:8 "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus has set the example. If we follow, He will give us the harvest.

A STEP TO FAITH //

Let's review how various people have moved to faith in Jesus Christ. What moved each of the following people to believe in Jesus?

His disciples (read John 1:35-49, 2:11)

The people in Jerusalem (read John 2:23)

The woman of Sychar (read John 4:16-29)

The other Samaritans of Sychar (read John 4:39-42)

What is wrong with the kind of belief that is based only on seeing signs and wonders (v. 48)?

How did Jesus require a deeper faith from the royal official (vv. 49-53)?

A SIGN POINTS TO GOD //

A sign points toward God, reveals the nature of Jesus' mission and character, and demands a response. How did this second sign at Cana do each of these things?

How did it point toward God?

What did it reveal about Jesus' mission and character?

What response did it demand?

FINAL REFLECTIONS //////////////////////////////////////

What would you say to someone who said, "I'd believe in Jesus if he did a miracle right in front of me?"

In what circumstances in your own life do you find it hard to believe that God could be at work?
How does this story encourage you?

Are there people of whom you only see their prestige or power, but not their spiritual need?
What would change if you realized that few are without difficulties and no one is without sin?

