



TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL SESSION 4

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 4 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 4
- his or her own Bible, a pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least two colors per student)
- a large compass
- three or four small magnets per student (You can purchase packs of 20 round magnets in the craft section of Kmart or Wal-Mart or at a craft-supply store.)

EXERCISE HEADS-UP: Session 5 Teach It guides contain a closing option of taking communion as a group, which will take some extra prep. You may want to look at that option now.

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 4

As students experience this session, they will—

- examine the details of a dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman.
- discover the kind of worshiper for whom God is looking.
- be challenged to become that kind of worshiper.

PRAYER

Help your group members prepare their hearts by reading aloud the verses below from Habakkuk. (Feel free to read from an easy-to-read version or paraphrase if you have one handy.) Share that it's easy to let things we can see (the physical) rather than what we can't see (the spiritual) shape our worship. Ask the Lord to open their spiritual eyes to the worship he desires through this study in John 4.

“Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’ Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’ Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” (Habakkuk 2:19-20)

OPEN

Distractions

Give each of your students some magnets—three or four per person. Show them the compass. Explain that a compass will always point to a true direction. Situate the compass on a table or floor so it's pointing north. Now ask a volunteer to go to the compass and place one of his or her magnets near it. Ask—

What happens when you move the magnet near the compass?

The magnet is a pole, and it will pull the compass in its direction.

Explain that we are often like a compass. We start out going in a certain direction, but then we're easily pulled away or distracted, much like the compass is pulled away by the magnet. Ask—

What are the things in your life that pull you away from what you should be doing or where you should be going? Come up with one distraction for each of the magnets you hold.

If time permits, have your students take turns going to the compass and passing each of their magnets over it as they name a distraction.

Collect the magnets for a later exercise. Then ask the question below, and let the group brainstorm 10 to 12 ideas. List these on one side of the whiteboard—then don't erase it. You'll refer to this list later in the session.

One of the times we are most easily distracted is when we're trying to have our quiet times or when we're in a church service. What are some things that can distract you when you're trying to worship?

- hunger
- a busy schedule
- the temperature of the room
- daydreaming
- friends talking
- mistakes in the church bulletin or worship folder


Transition into the study with a statement like this—

Our physical surroundings have a way of crowding out our spiritual needs. That's why it's so easy to get distracted when we worship.

3. Digging In

Testing the Waters

Ask the group to read John 4:1-15 using their Scripture sheets. As they read, tell them—

Mark every mention of water with an ocean wave . It will help if you use two colors—one to mark physical water (the woman's type of water) and another for spiritual water (Jesus' water).

When most students have finished, discuss what the group learned about Jesus' water. Record their insights beside the distractions you've already listed on the whiteboard. Your list will look something like this:

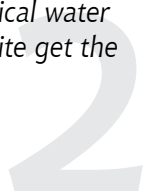
Jesus' Water

- Jesus gives it (v. 10).
- It's living (v. 10).
- If you drink it, you'll never thirst again (v. 14).
- It will become a spring that wells up into eternal life (v. 14).

After you've listed these main points, ask—

How much do you think the woman understood about Jesus' living water?

Not much. After some discussion, draw their attention to verse 15. The woman understood what physical water was, and she wanted some because she was tired of bringing her bucket to the well. But she didn't quite get the idea of "living" water.



Remember our list of distractions? How does what we listed earlier relate to this conversation between Jesus and the woman?

The woman was missing the point because she was so completely focused on physical water. Point out the list of things the students said distracted them from worship written on the whiteboard. Guide them to the idea that we can get so caught up in physical things that we miss the spiritual gift Jesus wants to give us.

Explain that each student will do the next two exercises, Digging Deeper and Cross-Checking, as a personal retreat with God. Before they disperse, give a few instructions:

- 1. Find quiet places—such as a corner of the room, a hallway, or an empty room nearby—where you can listen to God without any distractions.**
- 2. Be sure to take your Bibles, Scripture sheets, journal pages, and pens.**
- 3. You'll be doing the Digging Deeper and Cross-Checking exercises on your journal pages.**

Students will read the passages under Digging Deeper and Cross-Checking printed on their journal pages and list what they find. We've provided possible observations from the exercises below for your reference.

4. Digging Deeper



This Just In

Jesus on Worship

- True worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth (v. 23).
- The Father seeks this kind of worshiper (v. 23).
- God is spirit; his worshipers must worship him in spirit and truth (v. 24).

5. Cross-Checking



The Perfect Metaphor

What do you learn about salvation and spiritual water?

John 7:37-39

Whoever believes in Jesus will have streams of living water flowing from within. Jesus was referring to the Spirit, whom believers would receive.

6. Taking It Inward

The Truth of Worship

While your students are working alone, place all the magnets around the compass in a visible place. After most of your students have finished, call the group back together. Help them process their experience in Scripture by asking these questions:

Look back at John 4:23. What kind of people is God seeking?

He is seeking those who worship him in spirit and truth.

The opposite of worshiping in spirit is worshiping in the physical realm. Which do you think our group (or church) does more—worship in the physical realm or the spiritual realm?

How can you tell the difference?

Name one person you know who you think really worships in spirit and truth.

What is the ultimate truth Jesus conveyed to the Samaritan woman? (Hint: See John 4:25-26.)

He is the Messiah.

How does this revelation relate to what Jesus taught the woman about worship?

Point out to your students that to “worship in truth” means to worship in authenticity and sincerity. But true worship must also entail recognizing Jesus as the Messiah—anything less than that isn’t authentic worship and may simply be a form of “playing church.”

7. Wrapping It Up

Jesus-Style Worship

Ask your students the question below. Then have the students retrieve three magnets from around the compass; make sure all the magnets are taken so the compass can point a true direction. Then ask the question again, and have the students write a response on their journal pages that will remind them of what God said to them during this session.

Jesus wasn’t just referring to Sunday-morning worship, but to a lifestyle of worship. What distractions do you need to get rid of in order to worship daily in spirit and truth?

Before closing with prayer, ask any volunteers to share their insights. Tell them they can take their magnets home and use them to stick their list of distractions to the fridge as a reminder to get rid of the things that distract them. Discuss setting a time when the group can practice worshipping in spirit and in truth. It doesn’t have to be elaborate (with a band, lighting, etc.). In fact, it’s better to keep it simple and free of distractions. Maybe you could gather at a nearby park, or you could meet in the basement or great room of a student’s home. Commit to making it a time of distraction-free, sincere worship.