

THE WEDDING FEAST

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 2:1-12



Jesus is the Creator.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Mary called to Jesus - Mary's faith and confidence in Jesus was displayed in the way she approached her son for help. Weddings in Jesus' day lasted seven days. It would be a terrible embarrassment to run out of wine. Jesus initially objected. But Mary, persistent and full of faith, simply directed the servants to do whatever Jesus said. Mary didn't tell Jesus what to do; she simply entrusted the problem to Him. In a similar way, God honors our faith in Him and our persistent prayers. Jesus honored His mother's request; by doing so He begins His supernatural ministry and reveals that He is no ordinary man.

Jesus creates wine from water - Though Jesus initially told His mother that His time had not yet come, He decided to step out in power to honor the host, honor His mother, and give a powerful picture of His divinity. The host would not run out of wine again. Jesus created about 150 gallons of wine. Colossians 1:16 tells us that Jesus is the creator of the world, and that in Him all things were made. Jesus demonstrated His power to create by changing the water into wine. When the master of the feast tasted the wine, he was quite impressed with the quality. Wine normally takes weeks and months to be aged to perfection- that is, unless it is perfectly made!

Jesus had a family - Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus was born. Jesus had younger brothers and sisters! One of Jesus' brothers, James, became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem. Most people attribute the Book of James to him. Joseph is notably absent in the life of Jesus at the wedding. It is likely that Joseph died at some point, leaving Mary a widow with children. Jesus, as the eldest son, would have had a special sense of care for His mother. He carried this responsibility all the way to the cross, where He charged the disciple John to care for Mary as his own mother (John 19:27).

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In response to the need for wine, Jesus told His mother, "My hour has not yet come." Jesus understood the hour was approaching when He would miraculously provide the wine of the new covenant, in His blood, on the cross. Jesus was already planning to offer men the wine they could not provide for themselves. But that hour had not yet come.

With a demonstration of His power, in turning the water to wine, Jesus' ministry was about to begin. And once started, it would move ever closer to the cross. It is no accident that Jesus' first miracle speaks powerfully of the cross and the gospel. He wanted it that way. Jesus came to offer mankind the wine of His blood for the forgiveness of sins. He came for their participation in the great wedding yet to come. The new wine was for their great joy. Mary's talk of the need for wine, at a wedding, reminded Jesus of the wine of the new covenant. It reminded Him of His mission to call to Himself a bride without spot or blemish. Jesus knew that the hour was coming when His blood would be shed and the greater miracle of salvation would be accomplished.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 62:11,12

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Isaiah proclaimed the Savior is coming! Isaiah refers to Jesus. When He comes, the people He saves will be called "Holy People" and "Redeemed of the Lord". It is through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that we are redeemed and are made holy.

Questions for reflection:

- How can we, a sinful people, be called holy? (Jesus lived a sinless life. We can be holy because Jesus extends His holiness and righteousness to us. We are holy, only in Christ!)
- Given what Jesus did for us, how should we live? (We don't do good works to try to save ourselves, but we should do good works so as to walk in the salvation God purchased for us through His Son. When we do good works, we walk in the blessing of our righteousness in Christ.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

SAVE THE BEST FOR LAST

Supplies:

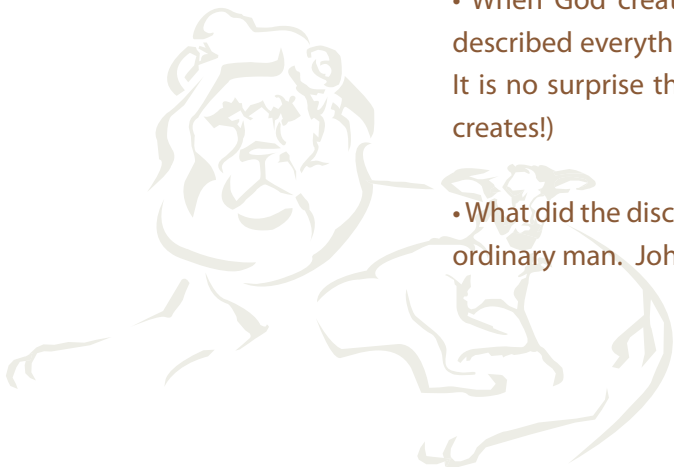
- two or more large pitchers (one clear)
- grape-flavored powdered drink mix
- small 4 ounce cups (enough for the entire class)
- a salty snack like pretzel sticks.

Use this activity to help the story to come alive. Prepare a drink mix at 1/3 strength. Begin to tell the story of the wedding. Pass out the drinks and pretzel sticks. Try to make your retelling dramatic. Feel the freedom to add fictional elements to the story (such as name of the bride and groom and perhaps how they know Jesus and His family).

Place a predetermined amount of powdered drink mix (to make the drink full strength) in the clear pitcher. When you get to the part where Jesus turns the water into wine, pour water into the clear pitcher with the drink mix in the bottom. The water will instantly change. Go back around to the children and pour the full strength mix into their cups. (They should marvel at the full strength flavor just about the time when you talk about the master of the banquet's comments that the best wine was saved for last.)

- When God creates something, how does He describe it? (After creating, God described everything He created as being good, or in the case of man, very good. It is no surprise that the wine Jesus created was also good, that is just how God creates!)

- What did the disciples learn about Jesus that day? (They learned that Jesus was no ordinary man. John 2:11 says His disciples believed in Him).



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TURN THE WATER INTO WINE

Supplies:

- water pitcher
- glasses

Tell the story of Jesus turning the water into wine as though you just read it in a book and you think that it is a cool trick. Pretend to believe that you are looking for someone who can repeat the transformation and tell you how to do the trick.

Ask for volunteers. Give them a water pitcher and glasses and ask them to go ahead and turn it into wine. Don't let them give you excuses, and keep pointing to what Jesus did. Argue that He was a man so we should be able to do the same things. After calling a few children forward to try to turn the water to wine, allow the class to correct you and then ask the following questions:

- Why was Jesus able to turn the water into wine and we could not? (Jesus is the Creator. He made everything. He could turn the water to anything He wanted. See Colossians 1:16-17)
- Have the children read through the first chapter of Colossians and list the various things we learn about Jesus from the text.

THE QUALITIES OF GOD

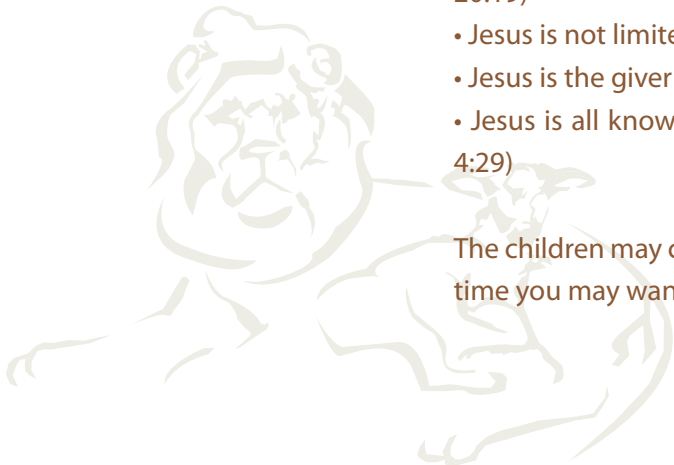
Supplies:

- white board
- markers

This exercise is designed to help the children see how Jesus' miracles and wonders help us to see that He is God. Have the children give you suggestions for miracles and wonders that show the following:

- Jesus is creator – Turning the water to wine (John 2:7-9)
- Jesus commands the creation – Commanding the wind and waves to be still (Mark 4:39)
- Jesus is not limited by space and time – Jesus came through a locked door (John 20:19)
- Jesus is not limited by death – Jesus rose again (Matthew 28:6)
- Jesus is the giver of life – Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave (John 12:1)
- Jesus is all knowing – Jesus knew the life story of the woman at the well (John 4:29)

The children may come up with additional examples that are not listed. If you have time you may want to turn to some or all of these examples.



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of the water being poured out of a large jar into a smaller pitcher. Color the water pouring out of the jar blue down to the half way point. From there, color it and the liquid in the pitcher purple signifying the change from water into wine.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

COMPARE THE USE OF "HOUR"

Supplies:

paper and pencil

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the following verses. Have them quote their verse and then give an explanation of the significance of the word "hour" in their verse. The word "hour" refers to a period of time, but is used in such a way that it points to a few specific events in the life of Christ.

Matthew 24:44 – The hour represents the time of Jesus' second coming

Matthew 25:13 – The hour represents the time of Jesus' second coming

Matthew 26:45 – The hour of Jesus' death

Mark 13:32 – The hour represents the time of Jesus' second coming

Mark 14:35 – The hour of Jesus' death

Mark 14:41 – The hour of Jesus' death

What do we learn from these verses? (There are two important hours in the ministry of Jesus – His death and His second coming.)

What is the warning associated with the "hour" of His second coming? (Since we do not know the day or time we need to be ready.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The master of the banquets was to oversee the feast and regulate the distribution of wine. Often wine was diluted with water. The best wine was offered at the beginning of the feast, knowing that after seven days of celebration it would be harder to notice a poor quality wine. In addition to creating wine to save His host embarrassment, Jesus honors him by creating a quality wine. This late in the celebration, no one, least of all the master of the banquet, expects the best to be saved for last.

