

Saving the Best for Last



Theme: Eternal life in Christ. 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany - Year C

Object: A piece of pie

Scripture: And the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." John 2:9-10 (NIV)

Do you like pie? I do! Today, I am going to teach you how to eat a piece of pie. You are probably thinking, "What is he talking about? I know how to eat a piece of pie." Well, you may think you do, but what I am going to teach you today may change forever the way you eat a piece of pie. You see, most people eat a piece of pie starting here at the pointed end. If you eat your pie starting at the pointed end, what do you get in your last bite? That's right! You get crust! Now pie crust is pretty good, but the best part of the pie is the filling. That is why I start eating my piece of pie at the crusty end. That way, I save the best bite for last.

One day, Jesus went to a wedding. His mother was there and so were his disciples. Everyone was having a good time until the wedding host ran out of wine. The party was about to be ruined when Jesus' mother went to him and asked him to help. Then she told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do.

Nearby there were six stone water jars, each holding about twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so the servants filled them to the brim. Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did as they were told, and when the master of the banquet tasted the water, it had been turned into wine. Not only that -- it was the very best wine he had tasted all evening.

The master of the banquet called the bridegroom aside and said to him, "Most people serve the best wine first and then serve cheap wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best until the last."

This was the first of Jesus' miracles on the earth, but it wasn't his last. When we walk with Jesus every day, we become accustomed to the miracles he performs. He does so many great and wonderful things for us. He supplies everything we need -- a roof over our head, and a nice warm bed. We have clothes to wear and plenty to eat and drink. Oh yes, he is so good, but do you know what? He is saving the best for last. What is it? Eternal life. If we put our trust in Jesus as our Savior, we will live forever in heaven with him. Now, that's what I call "saving the best for last!"

Dear Father, we thank you for all of the good things which you provide each and

every day, but most of all, we thank you for eternal life which we have in Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WATER JUG RELAY: Divide the children into teams and give each team a large bowl of water, a spoon, and a pot. Set a timer for the amount of time you want the game to last. Each team player will take a turn in spooning some water into the pot and then take the spoon back to the next player who will then go and spoon water into the pot. Continue until the timer runs out. The team with the most water in their pot is the winner!

FILLING THE JARS WITH WATER: Give the children six jars and tell them to fill the six jars with water. When all six jars are filled, tell the children to listen to our Bible lesson to learn what Jesus did with six jars filled with water.

MIRACLE BOOK MARKS: Provide supplies for the children to make a bookmark with the words "I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!"

ETERNAL LIFE COLLAGE: Give the children some magazine pictures of things God has given us such as clothes, food, homes, beds, sheets, and toys. After gluing pictures on the poster, title the collage GOOD THINGS FROM GOD. When the collage is finished, the teacher will give the children a sign that says, "ETERNAL LIFE - SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST". Tape or glue the sign over the collage pictures.

GRAPE JUICE BOTTLES: Give each child a small bottle of grape juice. Provide children with a strip of paper to write I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, or other phrases from today's lesson and wrap around the bottle of juice and tape to the bottle. Let children drink from their grape juice bottles during snack time. (This could also be considered the snack.)

Water Into Wine



Theme: Jesus turns water into wine. 2nd Sunday after Epiphany - Year C

Object: A newspaper. (You might also design a "newspaper" on your computer and call it "The Daily Galilean" or "The Jerusalem Times.")

Scripture: This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. John 2:11 (NIV)

I try to find time to read the newspaper every day. It is a good way to keep up with what is happening in the world around us. Have you ever thought about being a newspaper reporter when you grow up? Just think! If you were a sports reporter, you would get to go to all of the sports events. Not only that, you would get in free get paid for going! If you were a news reporter, you could just walk around town and see what was going on, then you would write a news story about it.

I thought it would be fun to take our Bible lesson today and re-write it as if I were a reporter writing an article in a daily newspaper. The story is actually from the gospel of John, but the word gospel means "good news," so let's imagine that we are reading an article from the "Daily Galilean" or perhaps "The Jerusalem Times."

Wow! Listen to this headline! "Wedding guest turns water into wine."

Hmmm...That sounds interesting. Let's read the rest of the story!

On Tuesday, a woman named Mary was in Cana to attend a wedding. A large number of guests, including her son, a man named Jesus, also attended the wedding. Guests at the wedding were reportedly having a good time until the host ran out of wine. At that point, it seemed that the happy celebration might turn into a disaster.

Some of the wedding guests thought that perhaps Jesus might have a solution to the problem, so they reported to him that they were out of wine. When told about the problem, Jesus at first seemed unwilling to do anything, but after some encouragement from his mother, he finally agreed to help.

Eye witnesses at the wedding reported that Jesus noticed several large water jars nearby and instructed some servants to fill them with water. After the jars had been filled with water, he told them to dip some of the water out of the jars and take it to the man who was in charge of serving the wine. When the wine steward tasted the water, he discovered that the water had been turned into wine.

Wedding guests were amazed at the turn of events and said that the wine was the best that they had ever tasted.

As a result of this miraculous event, many people are following Jesus everywhere he goes, and many believe that he might even be the long-awaited Messiah.

Well, that made a pretty good news story, didn't it? Do you know what is really great about this story? Just as Jesus performed a miracle by changing the water into wine at the wedding celebration two thousand years ago, he is still working miracles in the hearts and lives of people today. If you will let him, he will work a miracle in you.

Dear Jesus, worker of miracles, work a miracle in us today. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams

Sermon Title: "Water Into Wine"

Scripture Reading: John 2:1-11

WATER JUG RELAY: Divide the children into teams and give each team a large bowl of water, a spoon, and a pot. Set a timer for the amount of time you want the game to last. Each team player will take his turn in spooning some water into the pot and then take the spoon back to the next player who will then go and spoon water into the pot. Continue until the timer runs out. The team with the most water in their pot is the winner!

DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU TO DO CLASS GAME: The teacher will call on one of the children to come to the front of the class. Tell the class that they must "do whatever he/she tells you to do." The child will tell the children to hop, skip, jump, sing, or something similar. After the children have followed the child's directions, the teacher will call on someone else and will tell the children to DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU TO DO, etc. Give everyone an opportunity to do something for the class to follow.

I BELIEVE LETTERS: The children will cut out the letters for I BELIEVE and then decorate and glitter the letters, etc. They will then glue the letters onto a rectangular piece of construction paper and hang it on the wall. Have the children to sign their own name to their I BELIEVE sign.

BELIEVING FLIPCHART: Give each child several pieces of construction paper that has been cut into quarters. Hole punch the tops of each sheet of paper and put a flipchart ring in the hole. Let children draw pictures of today's lesson on each sheet of paper and take turns telling the story to their classmates when

everyone is done. Make sure that children write I BELIEVE, on their flipchart pages.

SCRIBBLE ART: Give the children paper and markers to scribble circles all over the paper. Then take a red marker and fill in some of the scribbling circles to form the words I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, etc. Hang the art on the classroom wall.

GRAPE JUICE BOTTLES: Give each child a small bottle of grape juice. Provide children with a strip of paper to write I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, or other phrases from today's lesson and wrap around the bottle of juice and tape to the bottle. Let children drink from their grape juice bottles during snack time.

BELIEVE BOOK MARKERS: Provide supplies for children to make a bookmark with words from today's lesson -- such as faith, believe, Jesus, miracles, etc.

MIRACLES CHALKBOARD: Give colored chalk to the children and let them take turns going to the chalkboard and drawing a quick picture that represents a miracle that Jesus did in the Bible or a miracle that Jesus could do today! Encourage children to LOOK for miracles this week!!

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CARD: Let each child take a quarter sheet of construction paper and write I BELIEVE IN JESUS and decorate their card. When the teacher says to pass the card to your right, children will pass their card and the next child will write his/her name on the card, and then continue to pass the card around the room until it returns to the owner of the card. Children will enjoy writing their own names on everyone's cards in a bright colored marker and their own design.