



SESSION TWENTY-SEVEN:

jesus' encounters

SESSION OVERVIEW

SUPPLIES

- ▶ **Echo the Story DVD/video** for this session
- ▶ **Echo the Story Sketch Journals** for every participant
- ▶ Markers, pens, and colored pencils

① **rewind** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The Story So Far video begins with a two-minute interaction for your group. Following this interaction, the video will show a fast-paced, animated review of the previous sessions' stories.

② **prepare** FOR THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

Participants will draw their own version of this session's story symbol in their Sketch Journals. Then, a participant will read a section from the Sketch Journal that helps ready the group for imaginative listening.

③ **imagine** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The leader will now tell this session's Bible story. A carefully crafted narrative script of the story is provided in this Leader Guide.

④ **capture** WHAT YOU NOTICE [5 MINUTES]

The leader will ask someone of a different gender to do a second telling of the story. During this telling, participants will use their Sketch Journals to capture aspects of the story that stand out to them.

⑤ **remix** THE STORY *TIME PERMITTING [10 MINUTES]

Participants will be invited to choose from two REMIX activities (included in the Sketch Journal) that guide them to retell part of the Bible story in their own unique way.

⑥ **connect** TO YOUR STORY [20 MINUTES]

Finally, the leader will guide a group dialogue where participants are asked to share their observations and insights from the story. Dialogue questions are provided in this Leader Guide.

THE STORY SO FAR VIDEO

Leader Says:

Right now we're going to continue our journey through the Bible.

We're going to start with a short video. The first two minutes give you a chance to answer a question with a partner.

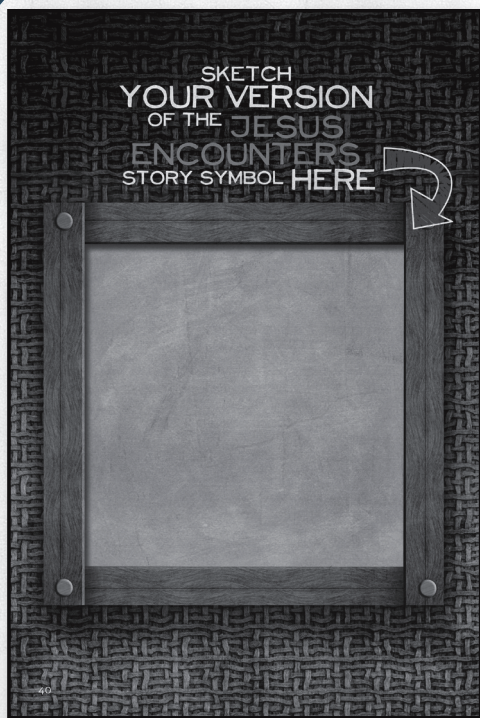
After the timer finishes, the next part of the video will start right away, reviewing the stories from our last few sessions. So find a partner and get ready, because this video moves really fast. You'll have to pay attention and listen carefully. *Are you ready?*

► CUE: Play The Story So Far video for this session.



Even though this is written like a script, please personalize the "Leader Says" parts. You'll be more effective if you're not just reading directly from the page!

prepare FOR THE STORY



DRAW THE STORY SYMBOL

- ▶ **CUE:** If you collected the Sketch Journals last session, pass them out to each participant. Remember to give Sketch Journals to any new people joining your group. Provide pens, markers, and colored pencils for participants to use.

Leader Says:

Our Sketch Journals are an important part of our Echo experience. They'll give us space to express our creativity, explore our questions, and capture the thoughts and ideas that these stories spark in us.

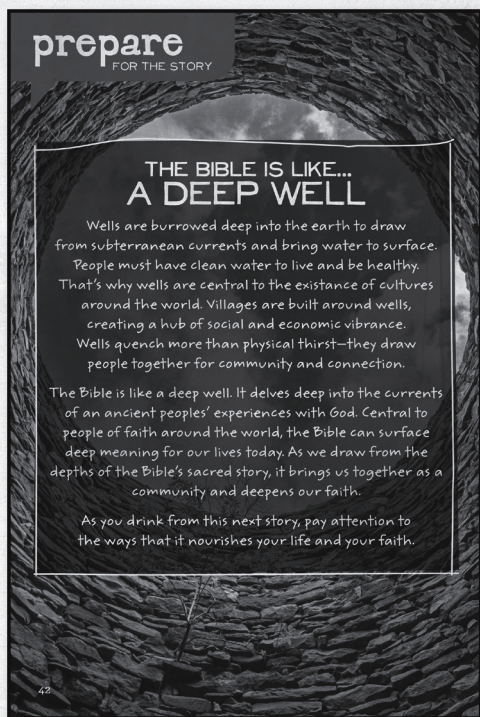
↪ Each story will have its own **symbol** as a visual reminder of what happens in the story. Right now, turn to **page 40** and *draw your own version* of the symbol for the next story: JESUS' ENCOUNTERS (a well) in your Sketch Journal.

Encourage participants to draw their own version of the story symbol, regardless of their artistic ability. The goal is not to create an exact replica but to capture your own interpretation.

You may be wondering why we are redrawing this symbol when it's printed on the next page. When we each create our own version of this story's symbol it helps embed this image in our minds and helps get our **creativity flowing** for the rest of the activities we'll do later.

The goal isn't to copy the symbol—*be creative and make it your own!*

- ▶ **CUE:** Don't spend a lot of time on this activity—*two minutes or less.*



THE BIBLE IS LIKE . . .

Leader Says:

Each session of Echo will invite us to experience a story from the Bible. But before we dive into each story, we'll slow down and take time to *prepare ourselves*. To help us do this, we'll compare the Bible to a different image or object.

↪ The image for this session is **a deep well**.

Let's hear more about this from **page 42** of your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** Ask for a volunteer from your group to read page 42 of their Sketch Journal.

ABOUT THIS STORY [read silently]

Leader Says:

Take a moment **in silence** to look at the **ABOUT THIS STORY** section on **page 43** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty seconds of silent reading, move to the next section. (You don't need to discuss the "Think About" question.)

IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

Leader Says:

In a world where creativity is the new currency, your imagination is more valuable than ever. As you listen to the next story, allow your imagination to fuel your creativity, seeing these stories come to life and finding yourself as a character in the ancient world we are hearing about. Focus your attention and energy on the story so that your creativity and imagination can do what they do best.

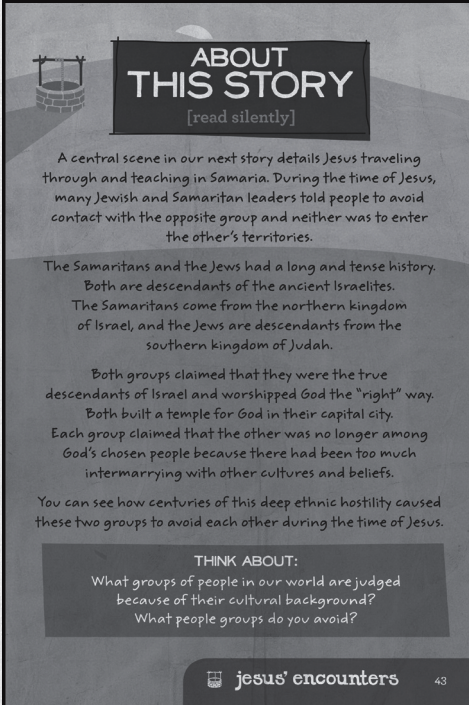
Let's slow down and prepare ourselves for the next story. Push out any distractions and use your imagination to enter the story, seeing it come to life in your mind.

You might want to close your eyes or focus on the image on **pages 44-45**. After we hear the story read once, you'll have a chance to capture what you noticed in your Sketch Journal.

Are you ready?

Take a moment of silence. Sit up straight in your chair. Take a deep breath, slow down, and clear your mind. Whisper a prayer asking God to show you something meaningful from this story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After about fifteen seconds of quiet, begin narrating the story.



ABOUT THIS STORY
[read silently]

A central scene in our next story details Jesus traveling through and teaching in Samaria. During the time of Jesus, many Jewish and Samaritan leaders told people to avoid contact with the opposite group and neither was to enter the other's territories.

The Samaritans and the Jews had a long and tense history. Both are descendants of the ancient Israelites. The Samaritans come from the northern kingdom of Israel, and the Jews are descendants from the southern kingdom of Judah.

Both groups claimed that they were the true descendants of Israel and worshipped God the "right" way. Both built a temple for God in their capital city. Each group claimed that the other was no longer among God's chosen people because there had been too much intermarrying with other cultures and beliefs.

You can see how centuries of this deep ethnic hostility caused these two groups to avoid each other during the time of Jesus.

THINK ABOUT:
What groups of people in our world are judged because of their cultural background?
What people groups do you avoid?

jesus' encounters 43



imagine
THE STORY

LISTEN & IMAGINE THE STORY RIGHT NOW

44

imagine THE STORY

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

Leader Narrates:

SCENE ONE: NICODEMUS

Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus tried to help the people he encountered understand God and God's kingdom.

Late one night, one of the Jewish religious leaders, named Nicodemus, visited Jesus. He was a wealthy and powerful man and also a sincere man of faith.

Nicodemus said to Jesus, *"It's obvious God has sent you to teach us. No one could do these amazing miracles if God weren't with them."*

Jesus replied, *"The truth is . . . unless you experience a new birth, you'll never see God's kingdom."*

Nicodemus said, *"Well, how can a grown man do this? I can't climb back into my mothers' womb and start over!"*

Jesus answered, *"Entering God's kingdom requires a different kind of birth—one of water and spirit. Don't be surprised by this—only God's Spirit can give new life in the kingdom."*

"How can this be true?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus replied, *"You're the most respected teacher in Israel, but you don't know these simple truths? If you won't believe me when I teach you about everyday things, how will you believe me about God's kingdom?"* [pause]

Jesus continued, *"Out of great love God has sent me—God's only son. I'm here to rescue people, not to judge them. Many will still choose to live in darkness. But anyone who believes in me and follows my ways will find life that is complete and eternal."*

SCENE TWO: THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Soon, Jesus and his disciples traveled through the region of Samaria. Because of centuries of deep ethnic hostility between Samaritans and Jews, most Jews chose to avoid this area and travel around it. But Jesus still chose to walk right through Samaria.

When Jesus' disciples went to a nearby village to buy some food, Jesus—tired and thirsty under the hot midday sun—sat down on the edge of a well.

Before long, a Samaritan woman came alone to draw water from the well.

This was unusual—women typically traveled in groups and drew water early in the morning to avoid the heat.

As the woman approached, Jesus asked her, *“Would you give me a drink?”*

At that time, Jewish men would never speak to—or even make eye contact with—a woman who was alone in public. Also, a Jew wouldn’t drink from a Samaritan’s bucket, as it would be considered unclean.

Surprised, the woman said, *“Why would you, a Jew, speak to me, a Samaritan woman . . . much less ask me for a drink?”*

Jesus replied, *“If you knew who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I’d give you fresh, living water.”*

“But you don’t have a rope or a bucket—where will you get this ‘living water’?” the Samaritan woman asked.

“Anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. It will be a fresh spring within them, giving them endless life,” Jesus said.

“Please, sir, give me this water!” the woman exclaimed. *“Then I’ll never be thirsty and won’t have to come to this well again!”*

Then Jesus told her, *“Go and bring your husband here.”*

The woman replied, *“I don’t have a husband.”*

“Well that’s true,” Jesus said. *“You’ve had five, and you aren’t married to the man you live with now.”*

“I see that you are a prophet,” the woman said to Jesus. *“So tell me why you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place to worship, while we Samaritans say that it’s here at Mount Gerizim?”*

“Believe me,” Jesus said. *“Soon people will not go to a mountain or to a city to worship God. The time has come for true worshipers to worship God in spirit and truth.”*

The woman replied, *“I know the messiah is coming and will reveal all of this to us.”*

Then Jesus told her, *“I AM the messiah you speak of!”*

The woman left her water jar and ran back to the village, telling everyone, *“You must meet the man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could he be the messiah?”*

Tell the story from beginning to end—don’t stop!

You’ll cause confusion by stopping to answer a question, teach, clarify, give application, or make an observation in the middle of the story.

imagine THE STORY

The Samaritan villagers gathered around Jesus and begged him to stay with them. So Jesus spent two days teaching the Samaritans about God's kingdom, and many believed that Jesus was the true messiah.

SCENE THREE: DEFENDING A SINFUL WOMAN

Some time later, early in the morning, Jesus stood outside the Temple in Jerusalem. A crowd gathered, so Jesus sat down and began to teach them.

As Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and religious leaders brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd for everybody to see.

"Teacher," they said to Jesus. "This woman was caught in the act of adultery. The laws given to Moses say that we should kill such women by stoning. What do you say about this?"

The leaders were trying to trap Jesus. If he went against Moses' law, he would be discredited as a teacher. If he said *"kill her,"* he would be arrested by the Romans, who didn't allow Jews to execute someone.

As the Pharisees and the crowd looked on, Jesus stooped down to the ground and began writing in the dust with his finger. The Pharisees became impatient and demanded that Jesus give them an answer.

So Jesus stood up and said, *"All right, put her to death. The person who has never sinned can throw the first stone."*

Then, Jesus stooped down and continued writing in the dirt.

Everyone stood silent. One by one, the woman's accusers walked away, from oldest to youngest. Only Jesus and the woman were left there, surrounded by the crowd.

Then Jesus stood up again and asked the woman, *"Where are they? Did no one step forward to judge you?"*

"No one, sir," she said.

"I don't judge you either," Jesus said. *"Go—and live in God's better way."*

capture WHAT YOU NOTICE

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Leader Says:

Take a moment to close your eyes and let the story replay in your mind. Pay attention to what stands out to you from the story.

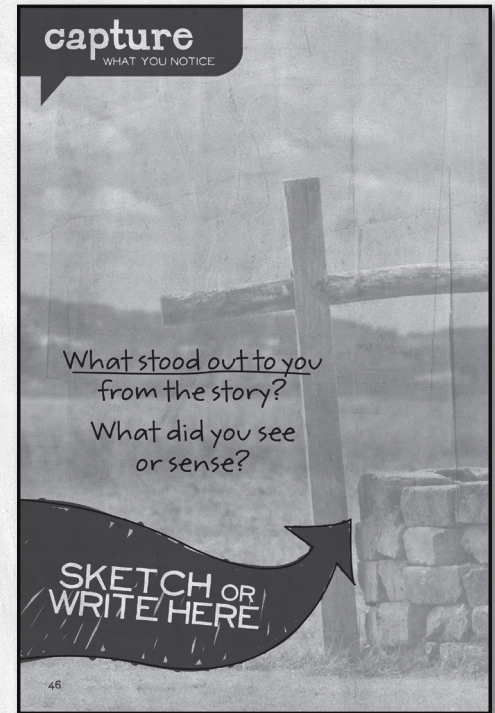
- ▶ CUE: After fifteen to twenty seconds, transition to the second reading.

SECOND TELLING & CAPTURING

We're going to listen to the story one more time, but this time with a **different voice telling it**. During this telling of the story turn to **pages 46-47** and write or draw the words or images that come to mind. Use these pages to capture anything that you notice—even if it seems like a small detail.

Use sketches or words—however you best express what stands out to you from this story.

- ▶ CUE: For this second telling, use a storyteller of a **different gender** from the person who read the first time. *Different voices help people to listen with fresh ears.*



Work at being fully present,
attentively listening and
making eye contact.

remix THE STORY

[*TIME PERMITTING]

REMIX ACTIVITIES

Leader Says:

Now that we've heard the story twice and begun to capture what we noticed, let's REMIX the story. There are two REMIX activities, designed to help you retell part of the story in your own unique way.

There is a **drawing activity** on pages 48-49

and a **creative writing activity** on pages 50-51.

These are not fill-in-the-blank activities! These activities are designed to help you express yourself and share what you see in the story.

Or if you'd prefer, you may instead **continue to develop** your thoughts and drawings from the CAPTURE pages you just worked on.

Whatever you choose, take the next ten minutes to **use your imagination** to create your REMIX and then we will share them with each other. Invest yourself honestly in this and you will be surprised at your insight and creativity.

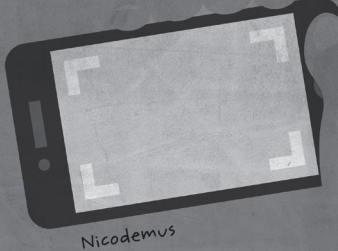
► **CUE:** After ten minutes (or less if your group finishes sooner), go to the next section.

remix
THE STORY

From the next few pages, choose a REMIX activity—either DRAWING or creative writing—and start REMIXing!

DRAWING: SELFIE WITH JESUS

- 1 Draw a picture of each character taking a selfie with Jesus after their encounter with him.
- 2 How can their pose, expression, and the background convey the encounter they just had?
- 3 Add a caption and/or hashtags!



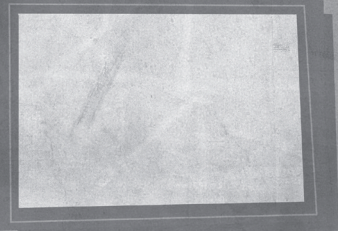
Nicodemus

48

remix
THE STORY

**CREATIVE WRITING:
STORIES OF
ENCOUNTER**

- 1 In the boxes provided, describe how each of the three characters would've retold their encounter with Jesus to a friend.
- 2 Scripture is provided from each story to help jog your memory.



Nicodemus
JOHN 3:3-5
Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

50

RAPID-SHARE

Leader Says:

In a moment you will quickly share what you've written and drawn on your CAPTURE and REMIX pages. Remember to encourage each other . . . and not make fun of anyone's art or ideas.

This is a special **rapid-share** where you will each have **twenty seconds to share what you've created**.

Who would like to go first?

- ▶ **CUE:** After everyone has shared his or her CAPTURE or REMIX, begin the dialogue.

GROUP DIALOGUE

Leader Says:

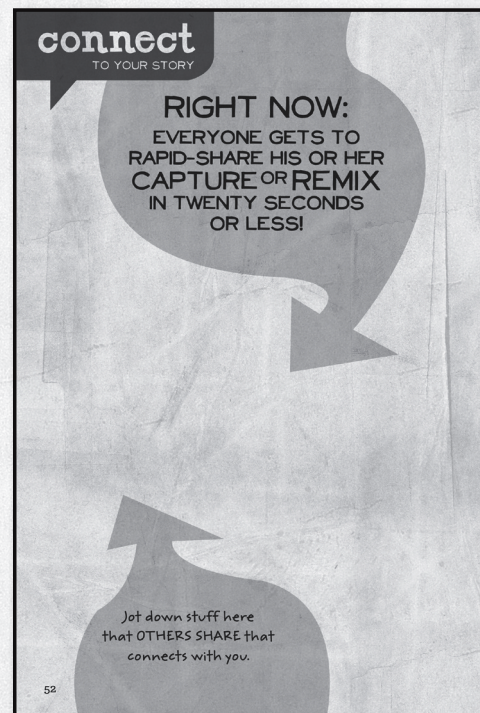
Let's talk more about this Bible story. **I really want to see the story through your eyes.**

Remember, when someone else shares something that you connect with, write it down on **page 52** of your Sketch Journal.

- + So what stood out to you from this story?
- + What did this story make you wonder about?
- + Would anyone like to share more from your CAPTURE or REMIX sections?
- + Take a moment and close your eyes. (Pause, then continue slowly.) Imagine you have a camera and you are watching this story take place right in front of you. Pick a moment in the story to take a picture of. (Pause for ten seconds.) Do you have your picture? Who would like to share what you snapped a picture of?

DIALOGUE PREP

1. There are probably more questions here than you'll have time to ask. Pick a few questions ahead of time that you want to make sure to ask.
2. Questions in gray and marked with a dash are for follow-up. Ask them as time allows and as they are needed.



connect TO YOUR STORY

Find key moments to encourage quiet people to share. Say something like, "I'd love to hear from some of you who haven't shared yet."

Leader Says:

I have a few more questions for you about this story. I want us to see this story through each other's eyes, so it is important for you to share what you noticed, even if it is something small.

Take a moment and think back to the first scene of this story. It described Jesus' encounter with a Jewish leader named Nicodemus. (After a moment ask:)

- + Why do you think the Nicodemus arranged to meet with Jesus at night?
- + What do you think Jesus meant by saying "unless you experience a new birth (of water and spirit), you'll never see God's kingdom"?
- + How might God's Spirit give people new life (as Jesus described)?

Now, let's think about the second scene that described Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. Take a moment to just replay that scene in your mind. (After a moment ask:)

- + What stood out to you about Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well?
- + What might Jesus have been risking by talking to her—especially alone?
 - Why would Jesus take this risk?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
 - What is Jesus like?
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

The last scene describes Jesus defending a woman caught in adultery who is about to be stoned.

- + What stood out to you from this scene?

Kick it back out to the group, asking, "What do you all think about what he/she just said?"

- + What do you think it was like for the woman to be in the center of the crowd?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
 - What is Jesus like?
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

FINAL QUESTION

Take a quiet moment to think about this final question:

- + What does this story say about us? About you?

Write a quick response on **page 53** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty to thirty seconds of quiet, ask a few participants to share. Encourage participants to personalize their ideas using "I" and "me" instead of "you" and "we" to keep them from being overly general or preachy.

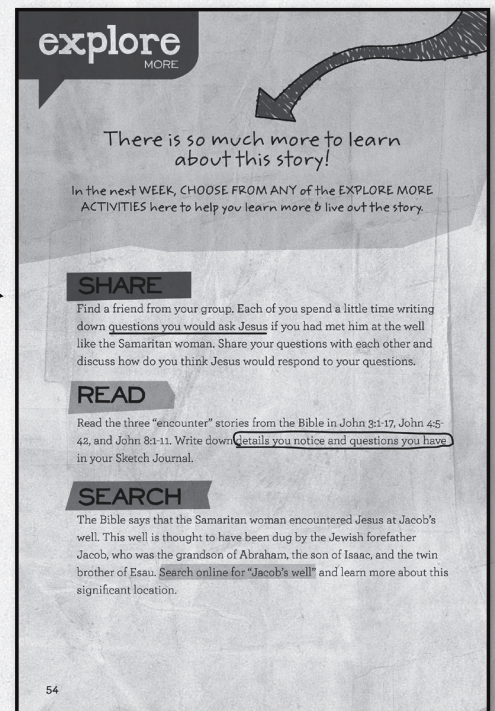
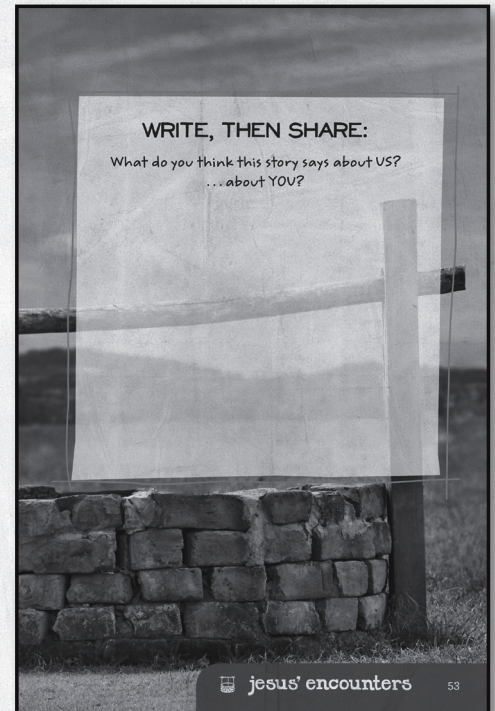
Leader Says:

This was a really meaningful time. *Thank you!* You did a great job. I'm looking forward to gathering together again so we can experience the next story.

If you'd like to learn more about this story, there's a section called EXPLORE MORE on **pages 54-55** of your Sketch Journal.

You are welcome to take your Sketch Journal with you and try some of these activities, but be sure to bring it back for the next story. If you're worried about forgetting it, you can leave your Sketch Journal with me

- ▶ **CUE:** To close this session, ask someone to lead the group in prayer.



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO GO DEEPER:

- + Why would Jesus walk through Samaria, a region that most Jews avoided?
- + What do you think Jesus meant when he told the Samaritan woman that he had “living water”?
- + How do you think the Samaritan woman convinced everyone from her village to come meet Jesus?
- + How do you think the Pharisees would respond if they knew Jesus stayed with Samaritans for a few days?
- + How do you think the Pharisees expected Jesus to react to the woman caught in adultery? Why do you think Jesus’ response was so disarming?