

Seasons of the Spirit Tip of the Week

Looking forward to January 17, 2010

Title: Extravagant Sign

Focus passage: John 2:1-11

This is the second week of the Season after the Epiphany and marks the beginning of a season of "Ordinary time" in the cycle of the church year. The liturgical colour for this time of the church year is green, symbolic of the growth of discipleship. This is also the season of "revealing" and today's focus passage, the story of holy encounter in the miracle at Cana, offers a glimpse into the extravagant gifts of God, revealed through Jesus and his ministry. We don't necessarily need to take the story literally, or even metaphorically; but we can take it seriously, listening to and through the story to see what is being revealed about God and about us. As you prepare for leadership this week listen to the story and to the Holy Spirit. In what ways do you see the extravagance of God's gifts reflected in your group and in the world today?

As with many readings in the gospel of John this story is replete with symbols and signs and many age-level materials include resource sheets with background information (see article list below).

Extravagant love is a theme running through the sessions for this week, and various age-level resources include ideas for extending hospitality. The **Ages 3-5** materials include the option of making magnetic hearts to welcome visitors and new members to church. **Ages 6-8** and **Multiage** groups have an option for making treats and planning a party for others. This might be a congregation-wide event—a time to celebrate being a community that reflects God's abundant love.

The **Timeline activity** in the **Ages 9-11** resources, begun on December 27, is an on-going activity which will act as a review of the stories heard during this season. After each week's story children work together to create a drawing to illustrate the story they have heard and add to the timeline (see options for creating the timeline on p. 31). At the beginning of each week's Engage section this timeline will provide a way of reviewing previous weeks' stories.

Music The song "Listen to Jesus" (p. 6, *Music Section*; #15 on the *Seasons Music CD, volume 8*) is a lively song that connects well to the focus passage this week, and Mary's instructions to the servants. See the margin notes in the *Music Section* for ideas for adding motions to the song.

Art engagement Artist, Margaret Kyle, created her painting *Outside the Lines* in response to the song, "My Love Colours Outside the Lines" by Gordon Light. The **Ages 12-14** and **Ages 15-18** materials include the lyrics for this song on a resource sheet "Behind *Outside the Lines*" (p. 50). Kyle states, "For me the painting is about a faith that is transformational...doors are opened and boundaries break away. It's the ebb and flow of change." In what ways do the colours and movement in this painting reveal God's extravagant abundance?

Some articles and resource sheets of interest this week:

Note: page numbers below refer to the *SeasonsPrint* versions and the Complete/Full Version files of resources on the *SeasonsDisk* version. Articles from *Congregational Life* are also included in the "Articles" folder on the *SeasonsDisk* version and are on the Data CD; these digital files can be used to send resources by email to members of the congregation.

"The Wedding Feast" (p. 49, Ages 9-11; p. 65, Multiage) offers a "reader's theatre" presentation of the focus passage)

"Glossary" (p. 49, Adult study) and "Digging into the Story" (p. 49, Ages 15-18) offer background information for the symbols and metaphors in the reading, and discussion questions for digging deeper into the text

"Jesus' Jewish Identity" (p. 93, *Congregational Life*) offers an excerpt from *The Misunderstood Jew* by Amy Jill Levine

"Jewish Wedding Rituals" (p. 94, *Congregational Life*) offers background information from Rabbi Adam Morris, a consultant for the *Seasons* editorial team

Special days (see further information on p. 92 of *Congregational Life*)
January 18: Confession of St. Peter

January 18-25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Canada, US, UK)

January 18: Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 19: Orthodox Epiphany

For books and other resources from the publisher of *Seasons of the Spirit* visit www.woodlakebooks.com.

Contact Information

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