

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK FOUR: JESUS IS KIND

READING

1 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" 11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. John 2 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this story, Jesus and his friends are at a wedding celebration and everyone is having a great time until they discover a big problem: they've run out of wine. Imagine inviting your friends and family over for a cookout and then running out of juice or soda while everyone is still eating. What would you do? You would probably just run to the closest grocery store to get some more or offer people water from your sink. But neither of those were an option in Jesus' time.

Taking good care of your guests was a major deal in this culture and running out of drink at a party would have been very embarrassing for the hosts. But thankfully for them, Jesus was at their wedding. And he performed a miracle – his first one! He turned the water into wine – making it drinkable and ensuring that the party could continue.

There are three important things we can learn from this story:

- 1) Jesus is not an ordinary person.** Ordinary people don't turn water into wine. Jesus is beginning to show his friends that he is God. He is beginning to reveal "his glory."
- 2) Jesus is kind.** This seems like an odd choice for a first miracle, but one thing it teaches us is that Jesus is kind. With this miracle, he spared the bride and groom a ton of embarrassment.
- 3) When you experience the kindness and power of Jesus, you believe in him.** Jesus' friends "believed in him." As we learn more about Jesus, we will continue to see his power and his kindness working together. Power without kindness can be cruel. Kindness without power can't change our situations or lives. Jesus came to earth full of both.

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever been to a wedding? What do you like about weddings?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- What does it mean to be kind?
- How is Jesus different from you and me? Is he kind?

CHILDREN:

- What does it mean to be kind?
- How does this story show us that Jesus is kind?
- How has Jesus been kind to you?

TEENAGERS:

- How does this story teach us that Jesus is kind?
- How does experiencing the kindness of Jesus help us be kind to others?
- Why is it important that Jesus came to earth full of both kindness and power?

ADULTS:

- Is kindness an undervalued characteristic in our world today? Why or why not?
- How does experiencing the kindness of Jesus help us be kind to others?
- Who is someone in your life that you could show God's kindness to this week?

PRAYER

God, thank you for your kindness. It is your kindness that leads us to trust you and love you and serve you. Help me to experience your kindness in a way that makes my heart more kind toward others—especially to those who are hard to love. Help me to trust more in your power and your kindness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

Jesus offers a strange objection to his mother's request for help. He says, "My time has not yet come." The word "time" can be translated "hour." In the gospel of John, anytime Jesus speaks of his hour, he is looking forward to his greater work. So, there is something about this scene and this request that makes him think about the cross. In this story, Jesus provides natural wine to bring joy to the party. But he knows that the real reason he came was to provide his blood (symbolized by wine—see Matt. 26:27-29) to bring lasting joy to his people.

There is some debate about the nature of the wine in this story. While we may not know with certainty the exact nature of the wine, we do know that the Scriptures warn in many places about the dangers of alcohol. Drunkenness is clearly identified as a behavior outside of God's will for his children (Gal. 5:21). We can be sure that Jesus' intent here was not to encourage or enable drunkenness, but to provide for the basic needs of the celebration.