



## GSR in the Classroom: LENT

# GUIDE – LISTENING MORE DEEPLY DURING LENT

### BACKGROUND:

Lent is a time of listening. We pause to listen to timeless stories and discover deeper realities. New signs of our times emerge – new challenges to vulnerable people and to our planet. The signs shed new light on Christ’s compassionate presence among us. Lent is a time to explore deeper meaning in the truth Jesus shares and the hope it brings to those suffering today.

### FOCUS:

We listen in Lent’s [third Sunday](#) to the story of Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. It might at first seem like a story about two people whose paths converge at a well because they are thirsty, but there’s much more to it than that. The woman soon will discover that she’s there, at that place and at that time, for reasons she never imagined. Once she lets down her guard and listens to him, her life will never be the same. Like he did for her, Jesus helps us see deeper realities and become bearers of the Good News.

### ACTIVITY:

Begin by announcing that you have a special prize for the thirstiest person in the room, but to win it, they’ll have to jot down on a slip of paper the reason they’re so thirsty. Give students a minute to submit their answers. Look at the first slip and gasp, shrug your shoulders and say “Wow! Well, nothing’s going to top that. We have a winner!” Hand that student a bottle or container of water.

Then say, “Before you take a sip, you should know that this is my special recipe. It’s detox water, responsibly sourced from an artesian spring and infused with kiwi, mint, ginger, magnesium, zinc, potassium and a double-shot of caffeine. You won’t be thirsty again – or sleepy, for that matter, until noon tomorrow, but don’t stray too far from a restroom. Drink up!”

## DISCUSSION:

Explain that the water is really just normal tap water. Then:

- Ask class, “Why do you think (winner’s name) reason for being thirsty won the prize?” (Explain that you were just pretending to be shocked so that people would think it was scandalous).
- Ask winner, “Was the water I described more than you bargained for?”

Share this thought: “In John’s gospel, Jesus encounters a woman at a well. It’s about noon, and nobody’s around because most people don’t want to carry heavy jugs of water in the midday heat. She’s probably there then because she’s lived a scandalous life.” Then ask, “Why is it worth it to her to haul water in the heat?” (To avoid the scorn and gossip of her neighbors.)

Continue by saying, “Jesus also is bending some pretty major norms of those days. He’s a Jew, she’s a Samaritan, and Jews and Samaritans just didn’t get along or share anything. On top of that, he risked big-time scandal for talking alone with a woman he didn’t know.” Then ask “Why was it worth it to Jesus to cross these lines?” (Jesus came to bring good news to all people.)

Continue by saying, “Jesus knows the woman needs more than just what’s in the well, or even some concoction to help her make it through noon tomorrow. She needs living water, a source of eternal life.” Then ask, “What does ‘living water’ mean?” (Answers could include salvation, hope, love, etc.)

Conclude by saying, “By listening closely to the gospel, we can discover deeper reality and meaning for our own lives. Like the woman, we can realize our true thirst and become bearers of the good news.”

## PRAYER:

Meet us where we’re at, Lord,  
in our thirst for deeper meaning and purpose.  
Open our eyes to the source  
of your compassion and goodness,  
Let us drink deeply  
of the living water only you can provide.  
Amen.

