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## Session: Water Walk

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### Description

My family has a place in a small town on the Oregon Coast. Our kids are the fourth generation blessed to have grown up spending time in the summers there, collecting sand dollars and driftwood, riding bikes and walking to the little store for Tillamook ice cream. I still love to go there and often find myself sitting for what seems like hours mesmerized by the ebb and flow of the sea. One wave retreats always replaced by another - a never ending abundance. Water is life.

In many parts of the world, such as the US we are blessed this way. We have oceans filled with life and we also have plenty of sources of fresh clean drinking water. As I travel to Africa, Central America and other parts of the world however, this is not always the case.

Part of good stewardship is having a reverence toward God's creation. We are interdependent on one another, both in our global community as human beings and in the natural world. As good stewards we are called to use the resources we've been given sustainably, in a way that will provide for future generations.

In a book called *Life in the Spirit*, authors Greenman and Kalatzis say, "Just me and Jesus growing closer all the time, while the world suffers outside of my field of vision, is a way of being Christian that can flow only from cloistered privilege – or perhaps in some cases from such extraordinary personal misery that an inward spiritual retreat is the only path to emotional survival."<sup>i</sup>

In the case of many "Holy Heroes" in the Bible they did not view their money or possessions as their own. It was tantamount to theft to think so.<sup>ii</sup> All they had belonged to God. That's a powerful thought. Using what I have only for myself is essentially stealing from God because it's all God's anyway. We may think that having more will give us peace, but often peace is found in the absence of wanting.

The Bible mentions the poor and oppressed and social justice over 300 times. The poor are clearly the apple of Jesus' eye. He loves them. Knowing that, I ask myself, "Are my actions a reflection of Jesus' love?" When we love the poor, when we serve them, when we acknowledge that all we have is God's and our earthly treasures are to be used for others, it's like bringing some of heaven down to earth.

In this session you will be walking for water. The majority of Americans today can simply open a tap in their homes when they need water for cooking, drinking, bathing or to use the toilet. Today the tap will be off, and your family will have the opportunity to think about how you steward water.

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### Materials Needed

One paper and pen. One gallon-sized container like a milk jug. One bucket or container for each member of your family. A small teapot works well for a younger child. Before the day of your water walk, find a place about ½ mile to a mile from your home where you can collect water. Examples: A ditch, pond, big puddles, stream or even a neighbor's hose if you have no natural options.

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### Handouts

Water Handout, Sample Family Philanthropy Plan and Family Philanthropy Plan Template.

## Water Walk

### Read aloud the quote or scripture

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” *Matthew 25: 30-40.*

### Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. What does that scripture mean to you? Does that motivate you to want to do anything differently? Why or why not?
2. What does it mean to steward a physical thing like water? If good stewardship produces good fruit, how might this apply to water?
3. What do you think the expression “water is life” means? The Bible talks about “living water”. What does that mean to you personally?
4. Jesus often used water in parables such as walking on water, boats and fish, turning water into wine, the story of the woman at the well. Why do you think he used water in his parables so often?

### Rule of life activity

1. A day or more before you start the activity you will want to go for a walk in your neighborhood and find a water source where you can fill buckets and containers. This should be far enough away to be doable but still be hard work to carry it back to your house.
2. Water Walk Day: Get your paper and pen and sit down at a table together.
3. As a family (with every person contributing) start listing all the ways your family uses water.
4. Small kids may need to walk through the house to remember things like the toilet, garden hose or icemaker.

5. Explain (if you have younger kids) that there are many people in the world who have no clean water to drink. They walk an average of 6k each day to collect their water for the day.
  - a. Look at the Water Handout
6. Now get a one-gallon sized container and ask everyone to make guesses– how many gallons of water do you think we use as a family in a day?
  - a. Read this: The average US family of 4 uses between 80 and 100 gallons of water each day.<sup>iii</sup>
7. Now gather your buckets and containers and bring them back to the table.
8. As a family, estimate how many gallons of water you will be carrying in your buckets total (for your whole family).
9. Head out for your water walk! Walking together, each person carries their own container, fill it as full as you can when you reach your water point, then each person carries their own container back home.
10. Now come back together at the table. Before your walk you estimated how many gallons you would be carrying. Now estimate how many trips you would have to take to collect the whole 80 – 100 gallons you will need for one day's water.
  - a. Talk about this. How does that make you feel? If you had to walk for water would you try to be more careful about how you use it?
  - b. For families who want to help other families get clean water you can use the Family Philanthropy Plan Template and include Clean Water in your giving plan.
11. For families who want to take this a step further, you could fill containers and your bathtub with clean water and then try to live a whole day using only that water – no water from the tap or hose.

## Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why
3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?

# Practice

## STEWARDSHIP



Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Give to a reputable clean water provider like World Vision.
- Purchase a goat or cow for someone in a third-world country.
- Volunteer for a day at a US Fish and Wildlife Services location near you.
- Sign up to deliver Meals on Wheels to seniors each week.
- Install a library book cupboard in your neighborhood. Maybe include a book on caring for creation.

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<sup>i</sup> Life in the Spirit Greenman and Kalatzis page 213

<sup>ii</sup> Sittser Water from a Deep Well page 135

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/water-qa-how-much-water-do-i-use-home-each-day?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/water-qa-how-much-water-do-i-use-home-each-day?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects)