

Homework for Lesson 12: Simple Worship

In this lesson, our group explored the things that are important to the heart of United Methodist worship and examined some of the things that often are not. We pack a lot of things into our worship services; what is really essential in United Methodist worship? We'll look at our own practices of worship and dig into a story where a woman challenges Jesus about what true worship means and where it takes place.

Connect:

Here are objects generally involved in standard practices of worship:

<input type="checkbox"/>	candles
<input type="checkbox"/>	hymnals
<input type="checkbox"/>	chairs
<input type="checkbox"/>	guitars
<input type="checkbox"/>	sheet music
<input type="checkbox"/>	a laptop
<input type="checkbox"/>	a projector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bibles
<input type="checkbox"/>	bread
<input type="checkbox"/>	grape juice
<input type="checkbox"/>	a bulletin

Put a number for these items in order of importance in a worship service. Be prepared to defend your selections! If you think that the bread is more important than the grape juice you'd better have a reason. One more thing: no ties. You have to put everything in order.

DISCUSS:

1. What was your process for deciding the order of importance for all of these things we use in worship?
2. Why do we use each of these things in worship?
3. How would your process have been different if, for example, you had to narrow the number of items down to five?
4. How does our church determine what is necessary for worship?

Jews and Samaritans didn't get along at all. After the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria, outsiders—the Samaritans—were brought in to care for the land. When Jews later returned to Jerusalem, they clashed—to say the least. Most of the time they would avoid one another all together in public.

So, it was incredibly unusual for a Jewish man (Jesus) to be speaking to a Samaritan woman, and that's exactly what happens in the story we're about to read. The woman in the story has been married several times, but we don't know what circumstances were involved. She recognizes the authority with which Jesus speaks, and proceeds to ask him a question about worship.

Read John 4:1-24?

What do you think this story has to do with worship?

What did the woman think was important about worship?

What did Jesus suggest was more important about worship?