

# SOMETHING MORE

## LEADER'S GUIDE *beta version*

### What is an Encounter Article?

The goal of an Encounter article is to help someone encounter the person of Jesus and to offer that person an opportunity to make a deeper commitment to Him. We all need to encounter and re-encounter our Lord throughout our lives; these articles provide a tangible way to do so.

### How Does This Article Work?

The experience of an Encounter article could be compared to a one-on-one Bible study. The goal is to present the narrative, provide essential information on the topic, and ask questions that spark a conversation about the text and a relationship with Jesus.

This article, which is just for leaders, will provide the Scripture passages, essential information, and discussion questions. The participant only needs to bring a Bible, or you could provide one.

The easiest way to move through this article is to have the leader read the information while the participant reads the Scripture passages, and then both can discuss the questions the leader asks.

### Some Recommendations for Leading This Article

- Before leading this article, pray with the passage. Even if you know the passage or have taken someone through it before, allow yourself to encounter the person of Jesus yourself before presenting it to someone else.
- The questions below are recommended. As you familiarize yourself with the passage and become better acquainted with your participant, feel free to adjust them accordingly.
- If you want additional details about this passage, there is an optional section at the end with more information. Some of these details can be added as you go, if you think they would be helpful.

### Introduction

Begin your time together by using examples from our culture to show that people desire something more in life. We'll model how to do this below, but feel free to tweak the examples and to put them in your own words. Consider referencing a movie, song, or personal experience to make your point.

In our time together, we're going to explore this question: Is there something more to life?

In our culture, it seems that everywhere you look people are searching for something more. Some seek to be more well-known and recognized as they use social media to attract attention. Others desire to be known and loved through dating relationships, while others seek power or status by finding the right job with the right salary.

Whether it happens through a drastic event (like a quarter- or mid-life crisis) or in a brief moment during our day, we sometimes question our purpose. Our hearts and minds often wonder, "Is my life missing something?" Many can relate to the lyrics from the eternally popular U2 song: "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Ultimately, everyone is looking for happiness.

In the passage we'll look at today, we'll hear a conversation that Jesus has with a woman from Samaria. As we witness their encounter, we'll discover Jesus' response to her desire (and ours) for something more.

**Read John 4:1–9.**

The author mentions that Jesus talks to this woman in Samaria. Why do you think this point is important?

There's a lot that could be said about the Jews and Samaritans, but the most important point is that they did not get along. Imagine a big, ugly family feud carried out over the course of dozens of generations and hundreds of years. The gist of it was this: The Samaritans and Jews used to be one nation, but through civil war and exile, they were separated—and as a result, they hated each other and tried not to interact with one another.

Do any other details stand out to you?

In verse six, we learn that Jesus is extremely tired. He's probably been walking a long way in the hot Palestinian sun. Imagine how thirsty He must have been.

In verse seven, He meets a Samaritan woman. Alright—so what's the big deal?

Well, for starters, at what time does He meet her? The sixth hour (that's around noon). This is not the normal time for women to be dragging their jugs to the well to fill them with water; the usual time was in the early morning or evening, when it was cooler. At those times, the women of the village would come together and socialize. A woman coming to the well at noon indicates that something strange is going on.

**Let's read John 4:10–15 to continue the story.**

Jesus and the woman are both talking about water, but they seem to be talking about two different things. What is the woman talking about? What is Jesus talking about?

The woman is talking about physical water. Water that could forever quench her thirst sounds great to her, but she's wondering if it's too good to be true. It sounds a little like one of those infomercials we see today that promises us happiness, even if the product is something like a blender or workout equipment. She suspiciously says, "Are you greater than Jacob?"

But Jesus is using water to talk about higher things. The woman is thirsty and desires water, but Jesus possesses so much more: eternal life.

What do you think people thirst for?

What does the culture offer to quench this thirst? Do these things satisfy?

**Read John 4:16–19.**

Now we know why the woman is coming for water at midday, when no one is around: Because of her multiple marriages, we can presume that many in her community have shunned her, and so she wouldn't be welcome when the other women normally gathered for water and socialized.

What do you think it's like to be the Samaritan woman?

What do you think she's thinking as she discusses her thirst with Jesus and the areas of her life where she's tried to quench her thirst but failed?

When we are far from God, guilt and shame can cause us to believe that God doesn't want to have anything to do with us. Even though Jesus knows the sins of this woman, He still wants to have a conversation with her. What does this say about His approach to us, even when we've messed up?

**Read John 4:25–30.**

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is a great model for our own relationship with Jesus. In our desire for something more, we often attempt to fill the void in our lives with something other than God.

## For Discussion:

- Throughout this Scripture passage, we explored the theme of thirst. Right now, what are you thirsting for?
- The Samaritan woman drops her jar as she runs to the town to tell people about Jesus. Some have pointed out that dropping the jar symbolizes that she is giving up her old life and her pursuit of earthly things. In light of your encounter with Jesus, what water jugs can you let go of?

## More About This Passage

Want to learn more about this passage? Here are a few extra tidbits:

### Why didn't the Jews and Samaritans get along?

A few centuries earlier, the Samaritans had been the northern tribes of the kingdom of Israel, while the Jews made up the southern tribes. But the kingdom was divided by civil war, and eventually, the northern tribes were taken into exile. During this time, the northern tribes intermarried with five other nations (2 Kgs 17:24). Because of the civil war and intermarriage, many Jews despised the Samaritans and wouldn't associate with them. (We also see this demonstrated in the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37.)

### Why is the fact that the woman has been married to five men so significant for the Samaritan people?

As mentioned before, the Samaritans intermarried with the five foreign nations. These nations introduced their own gods; the main one was Baal, which in Hebrew means "husband." When the Samaritans intermarried, they also accepted foreign gods and spurned their relationship with God Himself, their true husband.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites' worship of foreign gods is compared to adultery. Perhaps the clearest example can be found in the Book of Hosea. As Hosea prophesies to the ten northern tribes, God asks him to marry a prostitute who continues her unfaithfulness after their marriage, symbolizing the unfaithful actions of the ten northern tribes (Hos 2:14-23).

God's point is this: He is the only one who can fill our need for love, yet we continue to chase other things to fill this void. Jesus and the Samaritan woman symbolize this dynamic. Jesus comes as the true husband to this Samaritan woman, the Samaritan people—and the world.