

Pure Water, Pure Love Christmas Project Idea

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Synopsis:

Our small church (from a previous pastorate) raised just over \$750 for the Pure Water Pure Love (PWPL) ministry during an impromptu 2-week period right before Christmas 2008. This was in addition to, rather than in place of, generous giving for the Lottie Moon offering.

After the morning message (about world missions), the pastor showed a short video about making Christmas more meaningful. The presentation illustrated how just a fraction of the money we spend on Christmas each year could actually solve the world water crisis once and for all. (This video is available as a free download at www.adventconspiracy.org. It was originally intended to raise awareness of Living Water International's ministry in other countries. However, I have read on their website that they encourage you to give to the water ministry of your choice, and so I didn't have any qualms about using this to raise general awareness in our church.)

After the video, the pastor invited me to come forward and talk about the project I'd helped the children's Sunday school put together. I shared with the congregation the burden God had laid on my heart for the parents around the world who bury their children every year simply because they lack clean water. I also assured them that I was not trying to lay a guilt trip on anyone to give to one more worthy cause.

"However," I said, "if you have someone on your Christmas list who already has everything they could ever want or need, if you always find yourself searching hours for something to give them, and if in frustration you usually end up giving them an unusual candle or a pomegranate-scented shower gel, I'd like to offer you the opportunity to give someone else the gift of clean water in their honor."

That's all it took! Feel free to copy, improve upon, or use our idea as an inspiration for your own ideas. It is an opportunity to give a gift to Jesus in honor of His birthday. I hope you won't miss out. "*Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.*" (Matthew 25:40)¹

... For more details, please see attached pages.

¹*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.* 1995 (Mt 25:40). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Sunday School or Missions Leader Directions

Have preschool and children's classes meet together for a lesson about the woman at the well (John 4), acted out by the older children's class.

Lead the group to give the older class a big hand, then hold up an empty cup and ask for a volunteer to get you a drink of water from a nearby sink or water fountain. When it's brought back, take it around to let the children see the water inside. Ask them if the water is clean or dirty. (Hopefully, they will agree that is clean!)

Tell them that not everyone in the world can go to a fountain and get clean water. Many have to walk for miles to get water, and then usually it is so dirty that it makes them sick. Share with them that the church is going to raise money to provide clean water for those who don't have it, and that you'd like them to help by making "thank you" Christmas ornaments in the shape of a water drop.

Divide up to make the ornaments. We made them in the shape of a water drop with a stained glass look by sandwiching tissue paper between contact paper and making a frame out of heavy blue construction paper (the ornament frames should be pre-prepared). The children were free to design their own water drops – some made crosses inside, some made Christmas trees, some used a lot of tissue paper, and some only used a few pieces to give it a "glassy" effect. Many of the children signed their names to the ornament with a gold paint pen. We also used the paint pen to write, "Pure Water Pure Love 2008" on the ornament.

Part 2 -- In another session, or with a different group, un-label a new case of water bottles and re-label them with a custom-designed label with information about Pure Water Pure Love and their contact information. (I used glossy brochure paper to make it look as professional as possible. Another suggestion someone gave me: go to the scrapbooking section of a craft store and get double-sided roll-on tape.) **For legality sake, it'd be best to keep the water bottle labels to put inside the gift bags. Or... use empty water bottles instead.**

Part 3 -- Print up donation cards and purchase gift bags (I found some blue ones for 20 cents/bag). Make a display for the church foyer with information about your project, and set out the prepackaged "gifts". In exchange for a "name your own price" donation so that everyone can participate, church members receive a gift bag with the water bottle in it, along with a card explaining the gift, and a thank you ornament. (Some people gave us \$20; some gave \$200. No one gave us less than \$10/gift.) I tried to give parents who had donated money the ornaments that their own children had made. In keeping with the spirit of the Advent Conspiracy project, the giver can also bake something or make something for the recipient to give the gift a more personal, relational touch.

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Children's Lesson Outline



1. Meet in Fellowship Hall for a short lesson on the woman at the well. Older Children's class will do a short role play, and then the teacher will talk about PWPL.

2. Classes (esp. the younger ones) can then go to their rooms to make the ornaments or stay in the fellowship hall.

Supplies needed:

Hole punchers – (One-hole punch is preferred.)

Scissors – one pair per child

2 - 9 square x 12 square precut sheets of contact paper per ornament

1 - 11" blue string per ornament

Gold paint markers

Small boxes of pre-cut tissue paper squares

2 blue construction paper frames (pre-cut for younger children and pre-traced for middle children)

White template for tracing and extra blue construction paper if you have time to make more ornaments

Please make a front and back tracing so that you can hide the tracing lines on the inside. (You can make 5 per page if you lay them out creatively. To save time, you can trace with marker and photocopy if your construction paper fits the copy machine.)

Instructions:

Place front (untraced) side of frame down on contact paper.

Have students lay tissue paper within the frame only.

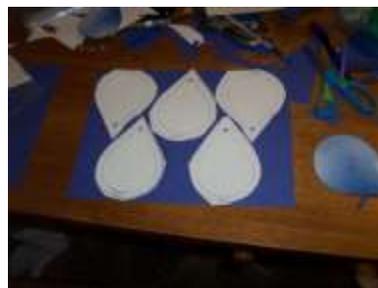
Trim any excess tissue paper that does not stick to front.

Cover the back side with a frame to hide tracing marks.

Carefully cover back side with contact paper.

Trim as needed, but leave enough contact paper edging so that it can stick together.

Punch hole just under the point of the frame and tie ribbon. Write 'Pure Water – Pure Love across the bottom frame with marker. You may also want to include the year the ornament was made.



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Script for Lesson – (Children Are Encouraged to Dramatize the Scene Using Cues from the Story)

(This was taken verbatim from John 4:1-15a in the New Century Version)

Narrator: The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more followers than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize people, but his followers did. Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard about him, so he left Judea and went back to Galilee. But on the way he had to go through the country of Samaria.

In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sychar, which is near the field Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip, so he sat down beside the well. It was about twelve o'clock noon. When a Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water, Jesus said to her,

Jesus: "Please give me a drink."

Narrator: (This happened while Jesus' followers were in town buying some food.) The woman said,

Woman: "I am surprised that you ask me for a drink, since you are a Jewish man and I am a Samaritan woman."

Narrator: (Jewish people are not friends with Samaritans.) Jesus said,

Jesus: "If you only knew the free gift of God and who it is that is asking you for water, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

Narrator: The woman said,

Woman: "Sir, where will you get this living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with. Are you greater than Jacob, our father, who gave us this well and drank from it himself along with his sons and flocks?"

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty. The water I give will become a spring of water gushing up inside that person, giving eternal life."

Narrator: The woman said to him,

Woman: "Sir, give me this water so I will never be thirsty again."²

²*The Holy Bible: New Century Version*. 1991 (Jn 4:1). Dallas, TX: Word Bibles.

