Dear Center for,

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These excellent discussion sheets are designed to enhance your Sabbath school class or small group. Suitable for photocopying, *Sharing Scripture* contains thought questions and exercises that transform ordinary study times into dynamic learning adventures.

Grace to you!
Center for Creative Ministry

*Contemporary Comments*

"Jesus and the Social Outcasts"
February 15, 2014
If you had lived in Ancient Greece, you would have wanted to "mind your Ps and Qs." If you didn't, the locals could quickly label you an outcast. If you behaved in a manner that hurt or offended someone, the community would gather and vote on your fate. If they thought you were guilty, they would write your name on a piece of broken pottery or a stone. These voting ballots were called an ostracon-from which we get the word, "ostracize." Once they were counted, if you had a significant number of votes, you would be considered an outcast. And that meant ten years of exile.1

How do we treat the outcasts of our day? We may not write their names on a piece of broken pottery, but as a church we sometimes do something just as damaging. We do nothing. We ignore them.

Dr. Scott Larson strongly feels that this is a mistake. He's the founder and president of Straight Ahead Ministries-an international ministry for juvenile offenders. He asks this very important question in the online magazine, Relevant: "Does your church have enough outcasts?"2 In his article, Larson challenges churches to go into their local "Samaria." He writes, "While there may be an initial resistance to going into Samaria, if people get beyond that and actually venture out to those in prisons, group homes, AIDS clinics, alzheimer's wards or homeless shelters, fruit is inevitably born. And it also brings enormous energy back into the Church." Larson believes that in order to reach the outcasts, we need to follow Jesus' example. And what did Jesus do? He asked the Samaritan woman for help. He asked her for a drink of water.

Larson says, "I find that you can get troubled kids, prisoners, nearly any Samaritan to your church simply by asking them to help you. Help you with setting up, with the sound, with directing parking or any number of things. Samaritans, like the rest of us, often need to feel they belong before they can believe."

He challenges Christians, "When is the last time you were challenged to reach into Samaria? And where is Samaria?"

Take a look at Jesus' life here on earth. "Samaria" was really every town that Jesus visited. He was constantly loving, showing compassion, and giving worth to the outcasts. They needed what Jesus offered most. Society had shut them out and He was their only hope.

Jesus saved the life of the woman caught in adultery. Then He forgave her and showed her a new way of life. Jesus did not run in fear from the man who was possessed. He freed the man, and then sent him on to be a witness. Jesus went to dinner in a house filled with tax collectors and sinners. His very presence gave them a new sense of worth.

If we want to be like Jesus, then we need to treat the outcasts the way Christ did. We need to go into our Samaria.

~ nc

Reenactment of the Woman at the Well: youtu.be
About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.